

AUGUST 1973

# HIGH FIDELITY®

AUGUST 1973 75¢  
08398

## Sylvania's Receiver Ad Claims vs. Lab Tests

## SPECIAL TAPE ISSUE



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POPS AND CLASSICS



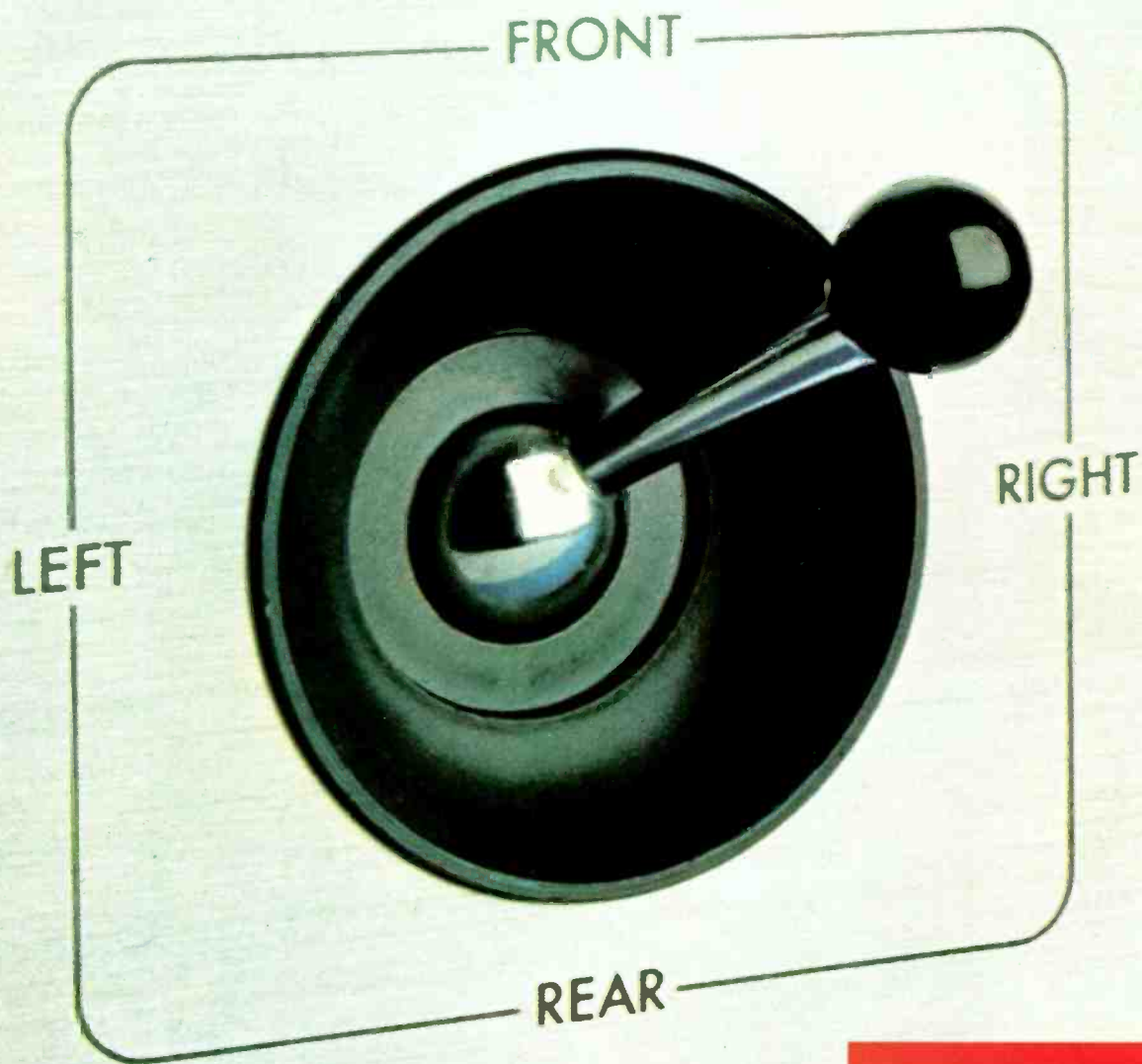
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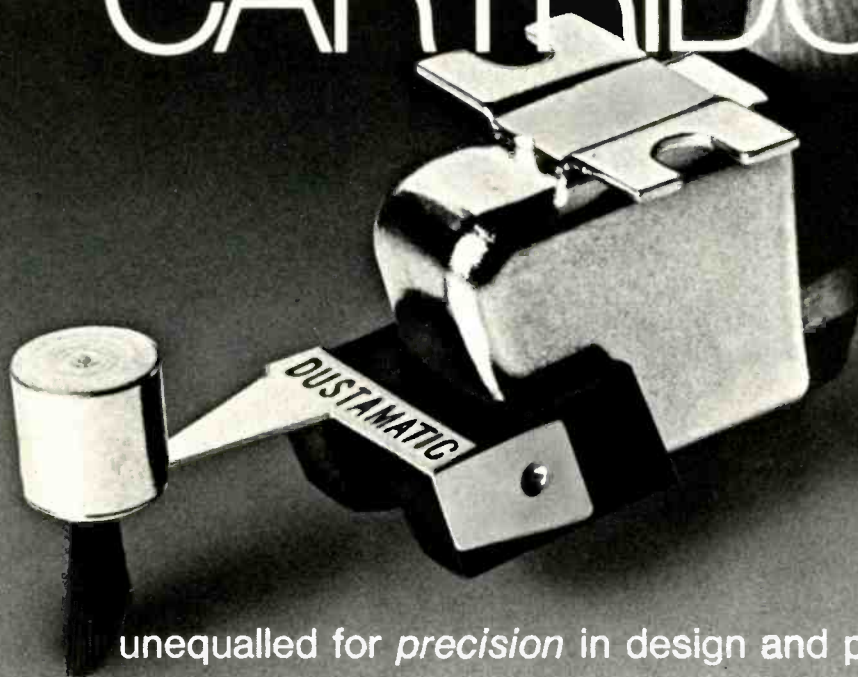
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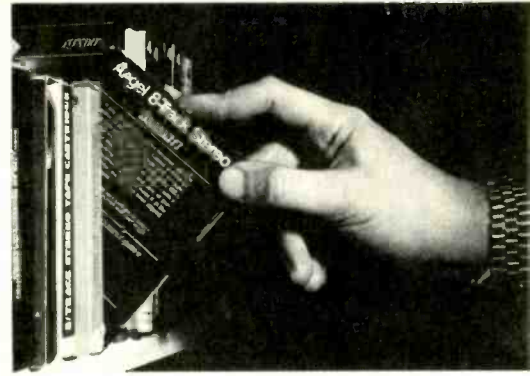


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CIRCLE 19 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# letters

## Distorted Distortion?

We (Design Acoustics) were surprised at the levels of distortion shown in the June test report of the D-6 speaker. We discussed the method of measurement with CBS Laboratories and learned that for all enclosures tested in that issue the microphone was located one meter from the center of the enclosure, with all enclosures oriented identically. In the D-6 system, however, the low-frequency driver is mounted on the rear panel. With this method of measurement the microphone to speaker distance is practically twice that of other units for the D-6 thus resulting in a 6 dB lower sound pressure level at the microphone, for the same radiated acoustic power. In addition, the obstacle effect of the cabinet will produce an additional reduction. In fact, at 300 Hz the measured discrepancy was a total of 12 dB. Thus, a reading cited as a 90 dB sound pressure level in the report should really be taken as 102 dB. The difference at 80 Hz was not as readily obtained experimentally because of departures from free field conditions in the anechoic room at this frequency. However, we would expect the differences to be less than 12 dB but more than 6 dB, because of the lesser effects of directivity and obstacle effect at the lower frequency.

George W. Sioles  
President, Design Acoustics  
Palos Verdes, Calif.

*The aim of the lab method is to test over-all performance of loudspeaker systems (rather than behavior of individual elements) under conditions that are as nearly identical and repeatable as possible. Such a "common test bed" method will perform suit some products better than others. Because of the back-firing driver, the bass from the D-6 does indeed get absorbed more than usual in the anechoic chamber—though not, of course, in a normal listening room—and hence requires harder driving before a given output level can be measured from in front of the enclosure. For example, one conventional system of similar efficiency required 2 watts of electrical power to deliver 90 dB at 300 Hz from its front-firing woofer; the D-6 required over 11 watts. Once reflecting walls are put behind the unit, more of the woofer's energy is delivered into the room, and the drive level—and therefore the distortion—can consequently be reduced. We do not think (nor did the review imply) that distortion is high when the D-6 is used in a normal room.*

## Puccini's Image

"The Objectionable Appeal of Giacomo Puccini" by Jan Meyerowitz [May 1973] reveals a great deal but, it seems to me, nothing relevant about Puccini or his music. To aver that an artist reflects his times is perhaps the only valid supposition that was hinted at. However, to call music "sentimental," to refer to the "gluey sweetness of the augmented chord" or "the sugary taste of thirds," to call the effect of an

orchestration "nasty and voluptuous"—all reveal the limits of Mr. Meyerowitz's own musical stance. There is no "case" against Puccini. With his conditioning, his prejudices, and his opinions standing in the way, Mr. Meyerowitz certainly cannot be "hearing" music. He should rediscover what music is all about by simply listening to it with his whole self, a self devoid of discriminating thoughts or projections.

Elwyn Maddox  
Menlo Park, Calif.

The biographical footnote indicates a very valid reason for the author's hating everything for which fascism stood; it also indicates that he has musical qualifications that, all things being equal, entitle his views to carry weight. However, the self-revelation of character that he professes to hear in Puccini's music seems to me to be present in his own article, in that the facts are "bent" to suit a preconceived idea.

Many composers—Beethoven and Verdi to name but two—have received either acclaim or abuse in a political context merely because they lived and wrote in times of political stress and change, but it does not follow that their political leanings in any way influenced their music or vice versa. A composer is first and foremost a professional man and must above all please the public ear if he is to succeed. The public loves images, and if a popular figure can be associated with a popular movement, then so much the better for both. The "character" that one can read into these pieces of music is frequently only a measure of the composer's shrewdness. It is known that Puccini wrote his operas with one eye on the sales of sheet music and the concert platform. Each aria and introduction had to be a "little gem" in itself, whereas Wagner's music dramas were supposed to be conceived in one piece and to bleed when hacked into chunks. (This however did not prevent Richard from making "arrangements" himself—he too was shrewd!)

I agree that Puccini was not in the same league with Verdi. Nevertheless he was tal-

ented, shrewd, and hard-working, and had a facile knack for writing weepy, sentimental music in an age that went overboard for this kind of thing. Is he to be blamed that he "did his thing" to the limits of his ability, and in so doing became both wealthy and adored? Is his success to be counted against him?

The worst that can honestly be said of Puccini, even granting Mr. Meyerowitz's premise that he is not weeping with us when he wrings our withers with his gift of supersentimentality, is that he probably laughed all the way to the bank. When the sixth curtain call has been taken after a performance of *Bohème* or *Butterfly* and the orchestra is filing out, you may think you hear a ghostly voice saying: "Suckers!"

Stanley F. Bramham  
Downsview, Ont., Canada

Puccini was a composer of melodrama who saw his characters as rather stupid people but rich in the kind of human foibles that make them so fascinating: Manon's cupidity, Mimi's easy virtue, Cavaradossi's political dilettantism, Minnie's cheating, Pinkerton's cruelty. According to Mr. Meyerowitz, technically there is little that Puccini could do right. He either composed effeminate dissonances or flaunted heresy in the face of classical harmony. That in this epoch a musician of Meyerowitz's stature should upbraid Puccini for disobeying the canons of classical harmony is uproariously funny.

Deviation, whether sexual or musical, seems to preoccupy Meyerowitz. He asks us to be on guard against Puccini's epicene charms but to give ourselves wholly to the healthy passions of *Elektra* and *Salome*! It is apparently quite defensible to lust for one's brother or one's stepdaughter, but it is sick to enjoy the charms of a sweet little tart like Mimi. What Meyerowitz overlooks in his shallow condemnation is that Puccini was basically a money-grubber. For the right amount he would have composed for Moscow (Czarist or Soviet), New York, or London.

In reality the article is a confession. Meyer-



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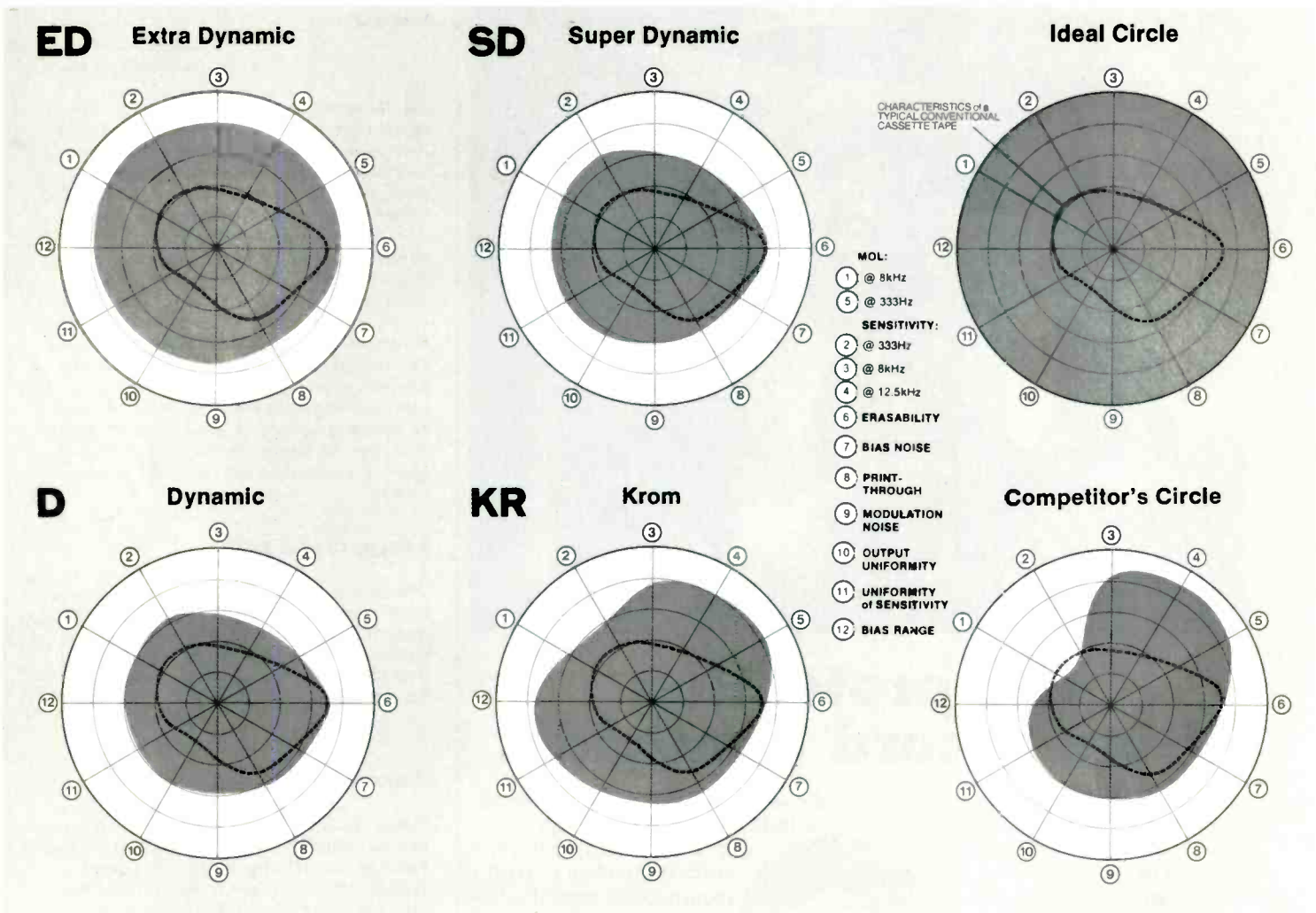
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owitz has found out that he was seduced—a victim of aural defloration. He has been hoodwinked by a lyric legerdemainist and feels compelled to warn us about the Puccinian primrose path. If he must continue to search for perversions among the chord structures of other composers (imagine what he could do with Ravel), the *Berkeley Barb* would be a more appropriate journal for his talents.

Edward M. Silva  
Berkeley, Calif.

To indict Puccini is to indict the whole Italian race for a historical nuance in the development of their character. Whatever Meyerowitz saw in the "sweet" eyes of his Nazi captors cannot be ascribed to the music of Puccini. Hatred, cruelty, and vengeance certainly abound in Puccini, as they do in Verdi and

Mascagni and the other Italians. But it is a hatred, cruelty, and vengeance peculiarly Italian, and understandable by no other.

It is sublime hatred, cruelty, and vengeance—to be called forth only when honor demands it. How else explain Azucena's nurturing a son to manhood, loving him, only to plan his destruction at the hands of his brother? This is vengeance, this is malediction, this is cruelty, this is gore. But alas only the Italian can understand it.

Long live the gore of Puccini. *Vesti la giubba*.

Eugene Puglia  
Brownsville, Pa.

Mr. Meyerowitz replies: Mr. Silva should be relieved to know that I never criticized Puccini's advanced harmonies as such, but rather the ex-

pressive implications of his handling of them. And at the risk of stating the obvious, I would point out to Mr. Puglia that Azucena is the creature of a Spanish playwright, who was himself inspired by a German play.

### Smetana and the Pagans

May I correct an error in R. D. Darrell's April "Tape Deck"? Reviewing the DG release of Smetana tone poems, he says that *Richard III*, Smetana's first, was written in the year of Liszt's final tone poem *Hamlet* (1858). Actually, Liszt's last such work was *From the Cradle to the Grave* (1882). I would also take issue with Mr. Darrell when he says that in *Hakon Jarl* Smetana was "celebrating the victory of Christianity over the last of the pagan rulers of Norway." Students of this composer's music, including Brian Large in a recent biography, believe that the strongly nationalistic Smetana had little sympathy for the Christian intruders and wrote *Hakon Jarl* as an elegy in memory of the pagan after whom it is named.

Lester Sullivan Jr.  
New Orleans, La.

Mr. Darrell replies: I abashedly plead guilty as charged for curtailing the long list of Liszt's tone poems. And the reference was unnecessary: The only pertinent point was that in the same year Smetana and his admired Liszt both wrote tone poems on Shakespearean subjects. About the "program" of *Hakon Jarl* I'm more disposed to argue. Smetana wrote the "argument" himself (quoted in part in *Deutsche Grammophon's* cassette notes), and it can hardly be interpreted otherwise than I—dutifully following in the ranks of many commentators and reference books—did. The notion that Smetana secretly sympathized with the pagans over the Christians is not unreasonable. But until Rosemary Brown or some other medium clears up the matter directly with Smetana's Spirit, I see no need to change the orthodox reading.

### A Foggy Crystal Ball?

Whatever else one may think of Gene Lees's lucubrations on "Whither Art in America?" [June 1973], he should be required to turn in his Over-Thirty pin for crediting *Over There* to Irving Berlin. It was, of course, composed by the great George M. Cohan.

George R. Bauer  
Green Bay, Wis.

### Warranties

Dennis Tuchler's muckraking attack on the warranty situation ["Warranties—Do They Do You Any Good?" May 1973] took courage to publish and should forever dispel claims that your magazine pulls punches because you depend on advertising. As a dedicated audiophile who has purchased over \$2,500 of equipment in the past three years (from reputable companies that include Kenwood, Bose, Infinity, SAE, Phase Linear, and MacIntosh). I can state unequivocally that repairs on brand-new equipment have been *standard*, regardless of price or prestigious name. One piece of equipment was replaced with a new unit, only to turn up a severe malfunction in the second unit. Because I had been foolish enough to



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Many elements threaten the life of your records. Dust, dirt and grit are record wreckers. They murder the sparkle of the original sound. Revitalize your records with a Watts Parastat. This heavy duty cleaning tool is for both

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This keeps the stylus at a 90° tangent to the grooves. Consequently tracking error is reduced to virtual zero. (Independent test labs have found the test instruments they use are incapable of measuring the tracking error of the Zero 100.) Theoretical calculations of the Zero 100's tracking error indicate that it is as low as 1/160 that of conventional tone arms.

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The reviewers have done exhaustive reports on Zero 100. We believe they are worth reading, so we'd be happy to send them to you along with a color brochure on the Zero 100. Write to us at: British Industries Co., Dept. H-23 Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

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send in the warranty card. I had to wait six weeks while the manufacturer repaired it. Mr. Tuchler's article should be shouted from the rooftops! Let the buyer beware: a high level of caution should be exercised, for much otherwise excellent equipment may have "bugs" that have to be ironed out. Do not send in that card!

Laurence L. Greenhill  
Bronx, N.Y.

## Too Many Missas?

After reading H. C. Robbins Landon's review of Eugen Jochum's Philips recording of the Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* [May 1973], I checked to make sure that my ears were attached right and then relistened to my copy and confirmed my opinion of a few months ago—that it is one of the great *Missas*, certainly one worthy of thoughtful criticism. This makes me doubly sad that your reviewer felt at liberty to dismiss it with a few euphemisms ("decent" and "honest" seem very popular these days) and to use it as a platform from which to launch into some comments on the recording industry which, however just, might much more appropriately have taken their starting point from any of a half dozen recently released recordings. My real disappointment was not with the content of the review, but with its decorum.

Henry S. Limouze  
Baltimore, Md.

Congratulations to H. C. Robbins Landon for his review of the *Missa Solemnis*. With many great works—yes, even greater works—either unrecorded or underrecorded, what do we get? The nth recording of the *Missa Solemnis*. Perhaps if more critics were as courageous as Mr. Robbins Landon, and speak out against such madness (Beethoven mania), they might well rectify the situation.

Robert E. Wallace  
Webster Springs, W. Va.

## The Culshaw Memoirs

Re John Culshaw's "Fragments from an Unwritten Autobiography" in the June issue: Give us the book.

George Sponhaltz  
A & R Department  
Angel Records  
Los Angeles, Calif.

High Fidelity, August 1973, Vol. 23, No. 8. Published monthly by Billboard Publications, Inc., publisher of Stereo, Stereo International, Modern Photography, American Artist, Billboard, Vend, Amusement Business, Merchandising Week, Music Labo, Photo Weekly, Gift & Tableware Reporter, Record & Tape Retailer, Record Mirror, Discografia Internazionale, World Radio TV Handbook.

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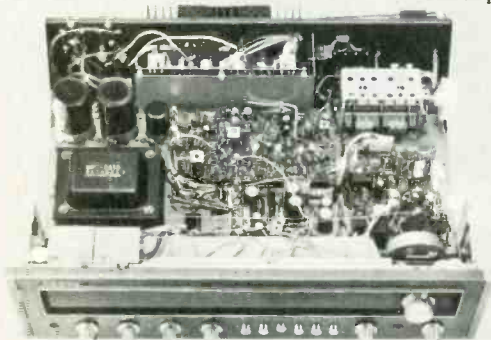
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The verdict is in. Hirsch-Houk Laboratories for Stereo Review (March '73) and High Fidelity (May '73) say that the TX-666 is a winner! Said Hirsch-Houk: "... a first-rate tuner and powerful, low distortion amplifier ... with (fine) operating 'feel'. Everything works smoothly... Muting is flawless, free from noise or "thumps". Dial Calibration is unusually accurate... FM Frequency Response and Stereo Separation are exceptionally uniform... Selectivity is excellent... Amplifier ratings are quite conser-

## We're Not Just Another Pretty Face. Onkyo TX-666.

vative... Phono-overload capability is extraordinary."

High Fidelity highlights these comments: "The TX-666 is a solidly built, well-planned unit... distortion readings are exceptionally good... excellent harmonic distortion... and the amplifier section proved a hard act to follow." Audition this fine instrument. Its "pretty face" is in a smartly styled, walnut cabinet with a brushed black gold panel. The price is \$469.95. A 43W (RMS) per channel model, the TX-555, is available at a lower price.



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# Some infrequently-frequency response

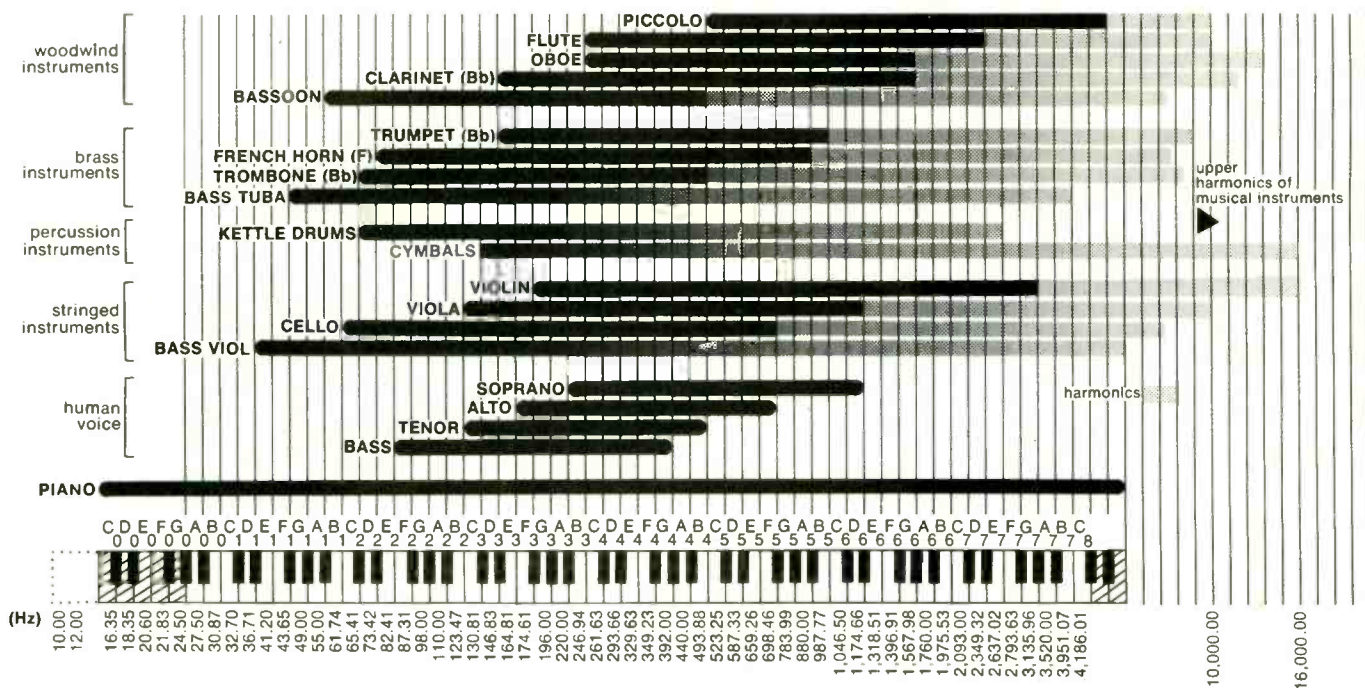


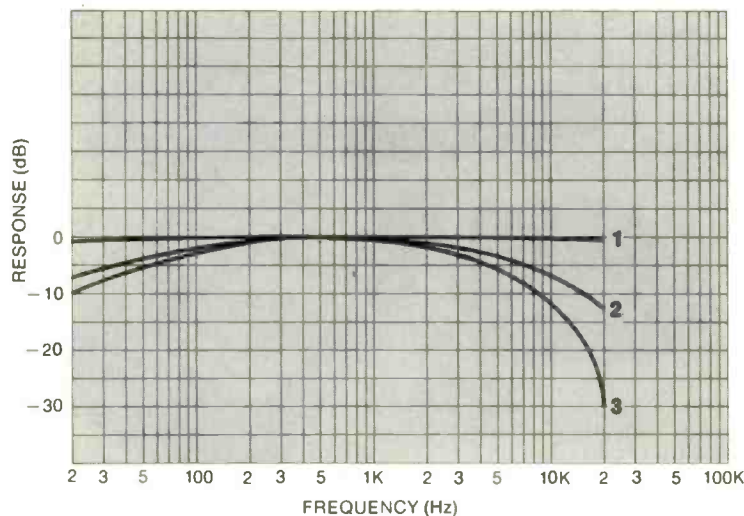
Chart 1. Frequency ranges of musical instruments and the human voice.

## Chart 2.

An approximation of volume levels of various types of orchestral music.

(This is a guideline chart, naturally subject to variables of orchestration, micing and mastering equalization.)

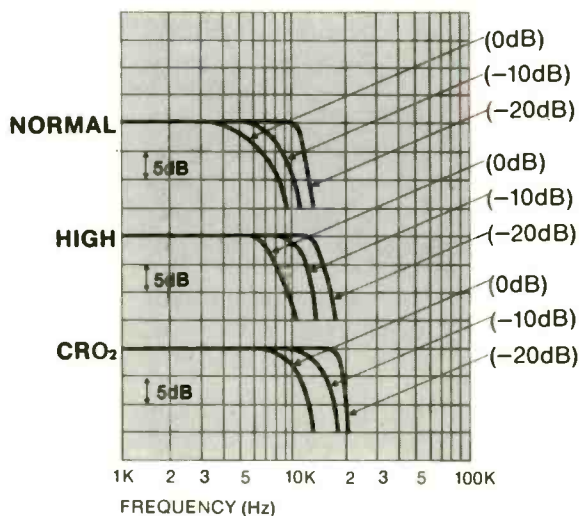
1. Electronic music (rock, underground and synthesized)
2. Semi-electronic music (pop-rock, some country-western and contemporary jazz)
3. Average "normal" acoustic orchestra (classic, semi-classic, "easy-listening" and jazz)



## Chart 3.

Showing high-end frequency-response loss at various dynamic levels, and comparing this phenomenon for different tape formulations.

(Note: Tape response characteristics will vary somewhat from brand to brand, and machine to machine).





# known facts about

Audio buffs are discovering that even with increasingly sophisticated equipment, their recordings sometimes lack high-end frequency response. Despite your careful attention to recording levels, as shown on the meters, this high-end rolloff can occur with all decks—reel-to-reel and cassette—and at all recording speeds. However, it is more evident in cassette recording. It results from a phenomenon of tape called “saturation.”

Once you understand the cause, the cure is simple.

High-end frequency-response losses occur when the head is unable to impress on, or retrieve from the tape's oxide particles the shorter wave lengths of the signal. In other words, when the wave length is actually shorter than the gap in the playback head, the head is simply unable to detect the signal. Increasing the record levels past this point demands more of the oxide particles than their magnetic properties permit, and distortion and saturation occur. However, this phenomenon, while somewhat due to the limitations of tape, is to a great extent a function of speed.

To put it another way: tape can only take so much high-end at high levels before losing response. Let's look at

## 7½ is longer than 1⅞

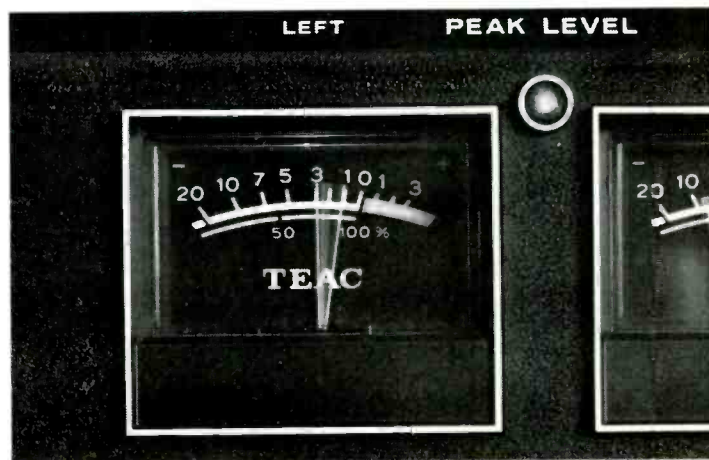
With reel-to-reel, all the information in one second of time is distributed over 7½ inches of oxide particles. In the case of cassettes, this identical amount of information must be contained within 1⅞ inches of oxide particles. Thus, cassette tape flowing slowly at 1⅞ is more vulnerable to revealing distortion and high-end saturation. Reel-to-reel tape flowing at 7½ ips is much more “forgiving”. The magnetic fields are longer, and these aberrations of the signal tend not to be revealed.

## How music differs from music.

Most “normal” music—that is, classical and jazz recorded with acoustic instruments—is well within acceptable levels, and there is little danger of saturation. However, rock and the “new music” recorded with electronic instruments are loaded with high frequencies at excessively high levels. Look out. This is where a cassette

transfer made at a “normal” -4 to 0 VU will saturate. Back off to around -8 to -4.

Chart 2 shows the volume levels of various types of music. A normal acoustic orchestra shows normal



volume levels, with a “natural” rolloff at the high end. (Natural harmonics at 15 kHz are generally down over 20 dB). With this type of orchestra high-end loss will not be a problem.

However, look at the contours of pop and electronic music; these high-frequency, high-level signals will saturate quickly at 1⅞. So back off to a level that will give you a satisfactory compromise between frequency response and signal-to-noise. Remember, contemporary music puts extraordinary demands on cassette decks, so keep cassette limitations in mind. To help you avoid high-frequency loss, TEAC suggests you consider some not-so-evident facts:

## Level meters and TEAC's LED: guides, not gods.

Any type of meter is a limited instrument. It cannot respond accurately to transient highs—those sharp, high-level sounds that last a fraction of a second, just long enough to saturate your tape. For this reason, TEAC has a Light Emitting Diode (LED) as featured on our top-of-the-line stereo cassette decks, to help you avoid tape saturation. TEAC's LED will supplement the meters by giving you an instantaneous peak-level indicator. When the LED flashes, you're saturating—regardless of what your meters

are telling you. The LED should be your overriding guide; if it is flickering and your music characteristically has high frequencies at high levels, back off 2 to 5 dB on your meters. However, with “normal” music an occasional

LED flicker is tolerable. Remember, your meters and LED are indicators, not controls. Look at Chart 3 showing high-end dropoff at various levels. You'll note that chromium dioxide tape resists saturation somewhat more than the new ferric oxides which saturate at a lower level, and normal ferric oxides saturate at a lower level yet.

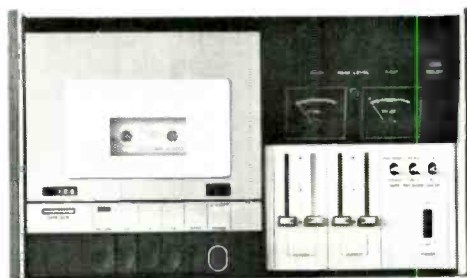
## The ultimate input: your own creativity and judgement.

There are compromises to be made all down the line, and your personal taste is the final arbiter. If you're not getting good frequency response, analyze the elements we've discussed. Then experiment. Make a test recording, backing well off on your meters to keep your LED from flickering (but not so far that on playback level you bring up “hiss” and suffer signal-to-noise loss). Regardless of what the ads say, even the finest equipment has limitations. Learn them.

Remember, saturation isn't normally caused by your tape deck—it's caused by a combination of the music, the tape and your judgement.

To help you sharpen that judgment, we've prepared a handbook we'd like you to have. It's called, *TEAC White Paper on Tape Technology*. Drop us a line and ask for it. And if you have any questions about recording techniques, we'd be happy to discuss them

with you. Meanwhile enjoy your tape deck. And remember—use your wrist. It's good for your ear.



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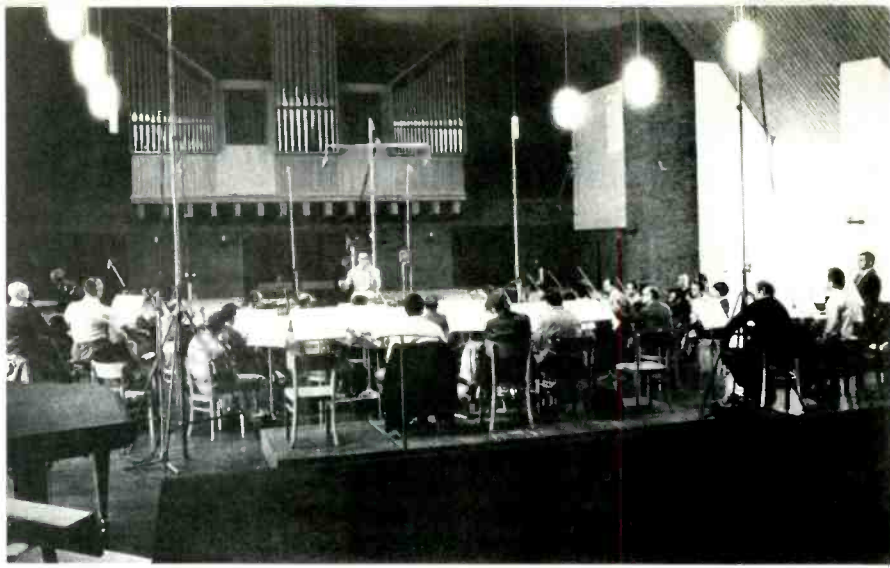
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## speaking of records

# Next— The Haydn Operas?

by Antal Dorati



Antal Dorati leads the Philharmonia Hungarica in one of the Haydn symphonies recording sessions at the Saint Bonifacius Church in Marl, West Germany.

EARLY in my recording career. I did a number of Haydn symphonies—and if I may say so. I've come a long way since then. My earlier version of Haydn's *Farewell* Symphony was conducted very angrily, very stiffly; my last was quite mellow. The contrast is equally strong between my earlier and later recordings of Haydn's Symphonies Nos. 70, 80, 85, and the last twelve.

Why is this? For one thing, I've become a better conductor; for another, I've learned a lot more about Haydn. How could I not have, now that I've completed the biggest recording task of my career: the complete Haydn symphonies—forty-eight LPs! Imagine all the time and energy spent pouring over that vast amount of musical material, which, if one counts the extra finales, is the equivalent of 110 symphonies. And then to actually *learn* all this music, to work out every single movement, every phrase for every single instrument—all those bowings! The difficulties of such a task were endless. A principal problem was that we did not record these symphonies in chronological order—practical considerations dictated otherwise—and so I constantly had to bear in mind just where the particular symphony we were working on related to Haydn's development, how the microcosmos of each individual symphony fit into the macrocosmos of Haydn's entire output. Consider too that while the recording period itself covered three and a half years, an additional two years went into preparation and three years into study. So for me the project was a decade's work. With all that exposure to this one composer's work, I can now look back on many earlier recordings—my own among them—and see how necessary it was to have a new, complete, and “critical” recorded edition of Haydn's symphonic oeuvre.

I conceived the idea of doing this complete recording many years ago. It en-

tered the realm of reality when the scores and parts of all the symphonies were newly published in Vienna a few years back.

Is this a “definitive” version of these symphonies? For the time being, yes, I think it is. When dealing with masterpieces there is never a definitive interpretation, as there is no definitive version of, say, spring or summer. But there is an accumulation of thought, knowledge, and experience that will constitute (paired with sufficient talent for communication) a temporary definitive interpretation for awhile—until additional experience and knowledge lends further insights for an even more definitive version—and so on ad infinitum.

In preparing for this task, I realized that I needed the help of a musicologist. I contacted noted Haydn expert H. C. Robbins Landon. One problem we discussed was the four finales to No. 63. Why are there so many? One can only guess. The first is somewhat slow, interesting in itself, but rather detached in spirit from the rest of the work. It probably did not catch on with the public, so Haydn wrote another one, which may have won public approval. Then—perhaps because he considered the second rather vulgar—Haydn wrote a third, also lively but more refined. I already knew these three finales but I was astonished when Landon produced a fourth one probably written not by Haydn but by a pupil, which he accepted for performance at some place or other.

There were other complicated choices to be made. The thorniest was the role of the harpsichord. It's a commonly held view that Haydn wrote his first forty symphonies with the harpsichord in mind and the rest without it. But I rebelled against such a notion: Haydn did not simply stop one day and decide never again to use the harpsichord. More likely, its use faded out gradually. So that is how I treat it in my recordings.

You will find, if you listen to these forty-eight LPs in succession, that the cembalo is quite prevalent at the start, but then becomes less and less so. Eventually entire movements are without harpsichord, and finally entire symphonies (though a cembalo is again employed in Symphony No. 98, which may surprise the listener).

A nonmusicological decision involved my choice of the Philharmonia Hungarica. Geographical and racial factors indicated a temperamental suitability. Also, I had a special relationship to this unique group of musicians. They are all refugees who left Hungary during the 1956 upheaval. In Vienna the musicians got together and formed an orchestra. American composer Nicholas Nabokov, who then headed a Paris-based organization called the Conference of Cultural Freedom, became interested in the group. He contacted the Ford and Rockefeller foundations in America, and they in turn contacted me. I was touring with the Minneapolis Symphony at the time and it was convenient for me to stop off in Vienna on my way home from the Middle East to listen to the Hungarian orchestra and conduct a rehearsal with them. I was convinced that they had a good future, that they were worth subsidizing.

Both foundations came through with quite a generous sum of money, though a strange proviso was tacked on to it: Nabokov and I had to guarantee that within three years the orchestra would find a permanent abode. I was astonished. It seemed so silly. How could I—or anyone—guarantee such a thing? But then Nabokov and I decided over a few drinks—in a burst of bravado, recklessness, or optimism—that we *would* give Ford and Rockefeller this guarantee. We did and the foundations began their support.

Happily, it all worked out well. We were lucky in engaging a young, ex-

# Never before has this little noise accompanied this much music.

If you're sophisticated enough to be reading this magazine, you're probably familiar with the two main characteristics of cassette decks: hiss and nonlinear frequency response.

Which should make you thoroughly unfamiliar with the performance capabilities of our new HK-1000. As the charts indicate, it behaves more like reel-to-reel than a cassette deck:

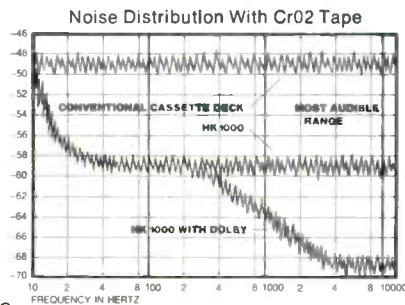
Signal-to-noise (unweighted) is  $-58$  dB with Dolby and  $-70$  dB in the audible hiss level above 4,000 Hz. The frequency response curve is essentially flat from less than 30 to beyond 15 kHz,  $\pm 1.5$  dB, with CrO<sub>2</sub> tape. (This curve is due largely to the way we drive our heads. Instead of the conventional constant *voltage* drive to the head, the HK-1000 is designed for constant *current* drive. Many studio model reel-to-reel decks are designed the same way.)

Because of a new low in noise and a new wide in frequency, the HK-1000 brings you a new clarity in music.

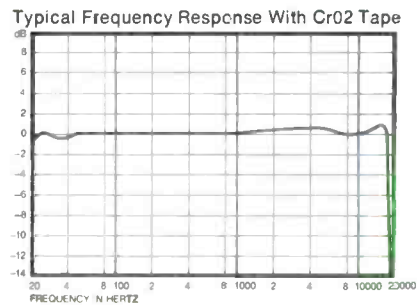
Ours is the first cassette deck designed for maximum phase linearity. Square wave response is better than every other cassette deck and even some expensive reel-to-reel decks. And the better the square waves, the cleaner and more transparent the music.

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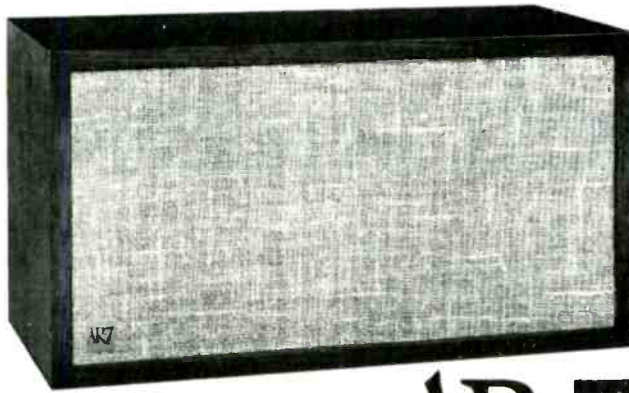
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## AR-7



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tremely capable manager for the orchestra, now the vice director of the Burgtheater in Vienna—Dr. Heinrich Kraus, a man of most extraordinary perception and initiative. It was Dr. Kraus who found a home for the orchestra in Marl, Westphalia. Though Marl is undergoing rapid expansion, it is still too small to support an orchestra all year round and the Philharmonia Hungarica plays in other cities as well as in Marl.

The fact that the orchestra was not playing full seasons might have proven a liability, but I was able to turn this to my own advantage, since for the Haydn project—which ultimately involved 281 sessions over a three-and-a-half-year period—I needed a group with lots of time to spare. The Philharmonia Hungarica seemed the ideal orchestra for my project. However, I could not interest any record companies in my grandiose enterprise until I went to London, where I talked with Decca/London's Ray Minshull, who took to it immediately.

We did have problems, however. The recording site was in Bielefeld, a horrible place, and shuttling back and forth from that city to Vienna involved many miles of travel for the orchestra. But the concert hall's acoustics were excellent and we recorded our first three LPs there. Then we faced another problem. Air-conditioning equipment had to be installed, and because the installation conflicted with our tight recording schedule, we were forced to find another recording site. We couldn't find one and almost gave up. Kenneth Wilkinson, senior acoustician for Decca/London, finally found a place right under our noses in Marl! It was Saint Bonifacius Church. Wilkinson was ecstatic over his find. "That's it! It's as good as Snape!" he exclaimed, referring to the Aldeburgh hall, which for the Decca/London people is the *ne plus ultra* of acoustical excellence. It was there that we carried on the Haydn project. We found it an exacting but altogether glorious experience, and a close musical and personal friendship developed between performers and recording personnel. I cannot praise too highly the patience, tact, energy, and most of all, the technological knowledge of the recording crew under director James Mallinson.

When it was all over, we celebrated with a banquet. There, somebody asked me whether I had any new undertaking in mind, anything comparable to the one just finished. I admitted I had. It would be Haydn again, but a part of his output that is unrepresented on records: his twelve operas. Some of these are comedies; some are serious; some are one-acters; others are full-length. In toto, they would fill thirty-two LPs.

"Well," said someone, "if you want to do this, I guess London will have to go

along with it!" Ray Minshull nodded, a bit sadly.

London however has little to be sad about. The first five three-disc sets of Haydn's symphonies have sold over half a million. On the other hand, there would admittedly be problems in producing these operas—mainly, assembling singers and finding the time to rehearse them adequately.

Another source of pride for me has been my success in persuading London Records to record the excellent National Symphony Orchestra of Washington—whose music director I have been for the past three years. Anyone even superficially interested in recording will realize the difficulty of bringing a relatively new symphony orchestra into the international recording circuit. What convinced London Records was my suggestion that the orchestra would present an "unusual" repertory. The plan is to have the National Symphony Orchestra make one "out of the way" record per year, together with one of "popular" music (that is, nonexperimental music by known and beloved composers). Even in the latter category we will choose works that are off the beaten path. Last season we recorded Messiaen's *La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur Jesus Christ*, a huge work that fills two discs, and later this year we will record Roberto Gerhard's dramatic cantata for orchestra, chorus, and narrator, based on the Camus novel *The Plague*. We do not as yet have a narrator so we will simply record the music, then dub in the narrator's part later. To widen the album's appeal, we may use an American actor for the American album, and an English actor for the European market. Other projects include all six of Tchaikovsky's tone poems, as well as Dallapiccola's opera *Il Prigioniero*.

Surprisingly, although we'll be recording in Washington, it won't be at the Kennedy Center but at the orchestra's former home—the oft-vilified Constitution Hall. Some of the musicians were downcast at the news, but the London engineers were amused. If the musicians liked playing in Kennedy Center, they said, it was a sure sign that it was unsuitable for recording. The normal concert hall, they point out, doesn't work for recording; even in London, recordings are seldom made in such places as the Royal Festival or Albert halls.

Escaping from Constitution Hall, that acoustical purgatory, had been a decided step forward for the musicians of the National Symphony Orchestra and now London was sending them back. It seemed as if we were playing that old children's game—one giant step forward, one back. However, now that the recordings are being released, they may feel as I do—that we have taken several giant steps forward.



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CIRCLE 16 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



## too hot to handle

**Your report on the Teac 3300-10, which appeared in the January 1972 issue, showed figures all of which are as shown in the manufacturer's literature except for record/playback signal-to-noise ratio. Teac says it is 58 dB; your test report shows 53 dB (reference 0 VU). Why the difference? Was it the test method used?—Walter Uyerlinda, New York, N.Y.**

You can expect such a discrepancy in our tape-equipment reports since our measurement technique differs from what appears to be prevailing practice among tape-equipment manufacturers. Most appear to measure the S/N ratio using only the record/playback electronics themselves, setting input gain at minimum and hence ignoring noise originating before the recording level controls. In actual recording situations the recording level must be turned at least part way up however. The lab makes our measurements with the line inputs turned all the way up—in effect measuring the minimum S/N you would encounter with any input signal levels strong enough to drive the recording amps to full (0 VU) level. Therefore our figure represents in this respect a worst-case measurement, while manufacturers usually show a best-case measurement. In normal practice noise levels obviously will fall somewhere between the two. Just where will depend on the strength of the input signals and the consequent setting of the recording level controls. The figures might also be stated another way: With the 3300-10 you can expect noise levels 58 dB below 0 VU in the record/playback electronics (combined with the tape), and 53 dB below line input levels of approximately 100 mV (the average input sensitivity). Increase voltages at the input terminals, and the S/N will improve—but never to a figure greater than that for the record/playback section alone.

**I understand that Sansul has signed up to produce CD-4 equipment for playing RCA's Quadradiscs. Does this mean they've finally given up on their QS matrix system?—A. M. Cantor, Phoenix, Ariz.**

Not at all. All it means is that they want to offer equipment that will encompass more than just their own quadraphonic system. JVC and Panasonic (major factors in the development of CD-4) offer matrix equipment as well, and Sansui appears to be doing no more than reciprocating.

**Can an eight-track recording head be put into an open-reel deck without any other alteration to the deck? While my eight-track cartridge recorder seems to be good**

**enough as such things go, I would expect improvements in wow and flutter and in head contact if the eight-track tapes were made on the deck.—William Vestal, Athens, Tenn.**

Your expectations may well be correct, but the problems of making the conversion seem formidable. Even assuming you can find an eight-track head that will match the electrical parameters of the deck's original heads—and therefore those of the electronics in the deck—you would have to build into the deck the mechanism for shifting the eight-track head from one "program" to the next. And even if you manage that successfully you may still find less improvement than you had hoped for because the shifting mechanism itself is one of the fidelity deterrents in the eight-track system: It works against stability of tape-to-head contact and long-term head alignment.

**Why don't you ever test products from RCA? RCA is one of the largest and most experienced record and tape producers. It also is one of the oldest phonograph manufacturers. I've heard RCA's top-of-the-line custom-built console stereo, the VRT84. With its 100-watt rms amplifier (frequency response 10 to 20,000 Hz) and the six-driver Elastomer Surround Speaker System, I found this system rivaled the sound of components. Do yourself a favor and listen to one yourself.—Anthony Mikolich, Struthers, Ohio.**

After such a report, how could we do otherwise! As a matter of fact we do make a point of listening to such products. We do test noncomponent products from time to time. But in spite of (or more often because of) these forays into mass-market wares we're convinced that even if you ignore the important virtues offered by the flexibility of the component concept, the console is basically a very inefficient device for delivering sound into a typical listening room, no matter how good the unit may be as a console. To cite two obvious reasons: A console gives you no control over speaker spacing (and therefore over the stereo image), and none to speak of over acoustic feedback from the speakers to the pickup cartridge.

**Generally when one buys an item in bulk the cost per unit does down. Why then does a 10½-inch reel of most brands of tape cost more than three times the price of half the tape quantity, bought on a 7-inch reel?—George R. Androvette, Manchester, N.H.**

I have a problem with warped plastic reels

**for my open-reel deck. Not only are they wearing out my tapes, but they cause many dropouts. Is there any way to unwarpage them? I can't afford to buy metal reels for all my tapes.—Wally Bonham, Cape Girardeau, Mo.**

We know of no way of unwarpage them, but we've seldom had a problem with warped reels except in budget tape brands—whose reels are less sturdy and more subject to deformation, it seems, than those used by the major tape manufacturers. Your implied suggestion of precision metal reels as an (expensive) alternative is well taken and answers Mr. Androvette's question. The 10½-inch metal NAB reels do cost significantly more than the plastic reels used for the 7-inch size. (Plastic NAB reels have been made but generally have lacked the precision demanded by professional users.) Also it's much easier to get two good 1,800-foot lengths of tape from a given production batch than it is to get one unblemished 3,600-foot length. So what's waste tape for the NAB format may be saved in the smaller sizes, and prices reflect this saving.

**I've recently bought two more speakers and a second stereo integrated amplifier so that I could convert to quadraphonics. There is a "Quadradial" jack for the quadraphonic adapter on the back of my Marantz Model 120 stereo tuner, but the instruction manual doesn't say much about it. What adapter should I use and how should I wire it into the quadraphonic setup?—Henry E. Cook, Jr., Willoughby, Ohio.**

You shouldn't—yet. The jack is for a quadraphonic-broadcast adapter, and the adapter can't even be designed until there's an approved broadcast method for discrete quadraphonics. In the meantime, however, you can listen to matrixed quadraphonic broadcasts—but not through that jack. Treat the signals just as you would those from matrixed quadraphonic discs, arriving via the preamp of your front-channel stereo amp. You'll need a matrix decoder connected to the tape-recording jacks on the front amp and feeding the tape-monitor connections on both amps.

**In the January 1973 report on the new Decca pickup cartridge I note that you list three sources in the continental United States, but (as usual—or am I being a bit paranoid?) you say nothing about availability in Puerto Rico. How about it?—Luis Rivera, San Juan, P.R.**

It comes as a shock to realize that you're right: We on the mainland seldom take into account any special problems of availability in offshore areas. While it's our understanding that many components are handled in Puerto Rico (as in Hawaii) through the same companies that distribute them on the mainland, the Decca cartridge has a local representative: Mr. T. A. Bernardini, P.O. Box 1409, Hato Rey, Puerto Rico 00919.

**Who makes four-channel cartridge recorders?—George C. Cash, Olean, N.Y.**

Panasonic and Wollensak, for starters. More are expected to join in at any moment.

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CIRCLE 41 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## Re-enter Goddard Lieberson

You can take the man out of the record business, but you can't take the record business out of the man. Or so it seems with the return of Goddard Lieberson—since 1971 a senior vice president of CBS—to his old job, president of the CBS Records Group. Both as an executive and as an active producer, Lieberson was one of the key figures in the recording industry in the Fifties and Sixties, establishing Columbia's leadership in classical music (including a strong commitment to contemporary music), theater and film, jazz, and spoken word. He replaces Clive J. Davis, Group president from 1971 until his sudden dismissal this past May by CBS, which has charged him in a civil suit with misuse of company funds for personal expenses.

Lieberson, now sixty-one, shelved retirement plans "for as long as I'm needed" to answer the CBS call.

Serving under him are two division heads: Irwin Segelstein, a former CBS Television vice president newly appointed president of the CBS Records Division, and Walter Yetnikoff, who remains as president of the CBS Records International Division.

By coincidence Lieberson had recently returned to the recording studio for the first time in years to produce the original-cast album of *A Little Night Music* ("Behind the Scenes," HF, July 1973). We asked him whether Columbia's classical activities might be bolstered now that there's once again a "friend at the top."

"There are all kinds of ways to lose money," he replied. "And we have to look at what we've been doing. It's a question of priorities. We plan to re-examine ours." Which could be good news for Columbia Masterworks.

---

### Rationed Classics?

The looming worldwide shortage of polyvinyl chloride, reported recently in the trade press, has caused record manufacturers to look sharply at the priorities they will have to adopt should there be less than enough for full record production in coming months. Informants at Columbia, RCA, and WEA (the Warner group)—all of whom declined to be identified—indicate that big sellers will get the lion's share of the available PVC. Unless a classical disc shows signs of really grabbing the public imagination it will be pressed in limited quantity if at all. Quadradiscs too may suffer. WEA, which had planned to stock both stereo and Quadradisc versions of new recordings, intends to give priority to stereo versions, though at this writing its recent announcement in favor of the Quadradisc system has yet to bear fruit in terms of actual product.

How severe or long-lived the PVC shortage will be remains to be seen. Some insiders seem to think it may not materialize at all; worst forecasts call for severe shortages over several months.

### Together at Last

For some time observers had predicted that this summer quadrasonic equipment manufacturers would begin introducing totally compatible receivers—units incorporating separate circuitry for the three major quadrasonic disc systems: SQ, QS (RM), and CD-4 (Quadradisc). They were right.

This spring both Onkyo and Pioneer each unveiled multisystem receivers, while Akai had shown its pro-

totype late last winter. All of these have front-panel switching for the three types of discs (plus stereo of course). Onkyo's TS-500 is unique among the new units in that it incorporates a sensing circuit to distinguish automatically between formats, according to the company. This would allow a listener to mix record types on his changer without touching the front-panel switch. The detection of Quadradisc signals is relatively easy since only Quadradiscs contain the supersonic carrier. But the ability to distinguish accurately between the two common types of matrixing, RM and SQ, appears to be a more striking feat. Both the Onkyo and the top Pioneer Model (QX-949) are expected to sell in the \$600–\$700 range.

We would expect that units such as these, since they eliminate much of the fuss of adjusting separate switches and outboard components, will make four-channel software and hardware far more attractive to many audiophiles.

### A Non-Shibata Quadradisc Stylus

Two major United States phono cartridge brands have introduced CD-4 (Quadradisc) models with a stylus significantly different from the more familiar Shibata design. Although the stylus employed by Stanton and Pickering resembles the Shibata in presenting a bearing surface that is relatively large (by comparison to ellipticals and sphericals) in the vertical plane, it differs in its actual configuration, which is symmetrical front to back.

(Other companies—notably Shure Bros. and Ortofon—have also hinted that they soon may be offering



# Are you playing your records or ruining them?

If you're like most music listeners, you never think about your records after putting them on your record player.

You just sit back and enjoy the music.

Chances are you'd be less relaxed, if you knew that your records might be losing something with every play.

Like the high notes.

It's something to think about. Especially when you consider how many hundreds or even thousands of dollars you have invested in your record collection. And will be investing in the future.

## What happens during play.

Even the cheapest record changer can bring its tonearm to the record and lift it off again. But what happens during the twenty minutes or so of playing time is something else.

The stylus is responding with incredible speed to the roller-coaster contours of the stereo grooves. This action recreates all the music you hear, whether it's the wall-shaking cacophony of a rock band or the richness of a symphony orchestra.

The higher the frequency of the music, the more rapidly the contours change, and the sharper the peaks the stylus has to trace. If the tonearm bears down too heavily, the diamond-tipped stylus won't go around those soft-vinyl peaks. Instead, it will lop them off. The record will look unchanged, but your piccolos will never sound quite the same again. Nor will Jascha Heifetz.

## It's all up to the tonearm.

What does it take for the stylus to travel the obstacle course of the stereo groove without a trace that it's been there?

It takes a precision tonearm. One that can allow today's finest cartridges to track optimally at low pressures of one gram or less. For

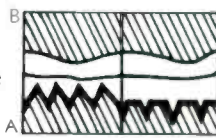
flawless tracking, the tonearm should be perfectly balanced with the weight of the cartridge, and must maintain the stylus pressure equally on each side wall of the stereo groove. And in order to maintain this equal pressure during play, the tonearm must not introduce any drag. This requires extremely low friction pivot bearings.

There is much more to the design and engineering of tonearms and turntables. But this should be sufficient to give you the idea.

## Dual: the music lovers' preference.

By now you probably understand why serious music lovers won't play their precious records on anything but a precision turntable. And the most serious of these people, the readers of the leading music magazines, buy more Duals than any other make of quality turntable.

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High frequency peaks can be lopped off as in A right. Less fragile low frequency contours are shown in B.

## How Dual protects your records.



Tonearm counterweight is elastically isolated from shaft to absorb any external shock, and is continually adjustable on vernier threads for perfect balance.

Gyroscopic gimbal suspension of 1229 and 1218 is best known scientific means for balancing precision instruments that must remain balanced in all planes of motion.

In all Duals, stylus pressure is applied around the pivot maintaining perfect dynamic balance of tonearm.

1229 tonearm is 8 3/4" from pivot to stylus, essentially eliminating tracking error while maintaining one-piece stability.

Unlike conventional tonearms, the 1218 and 1229 track records at the original cutting angle. The 1229 parallels single records, moves up to parallel changer stack. The 1218 has a similar adjustment in the cartridge housing.

For perfect tracking balance in each wall of the stereo groove, separate anti-skating calibrations for conical and elliptical styli are provided on all Duals.

Dual 1214, \$109.50

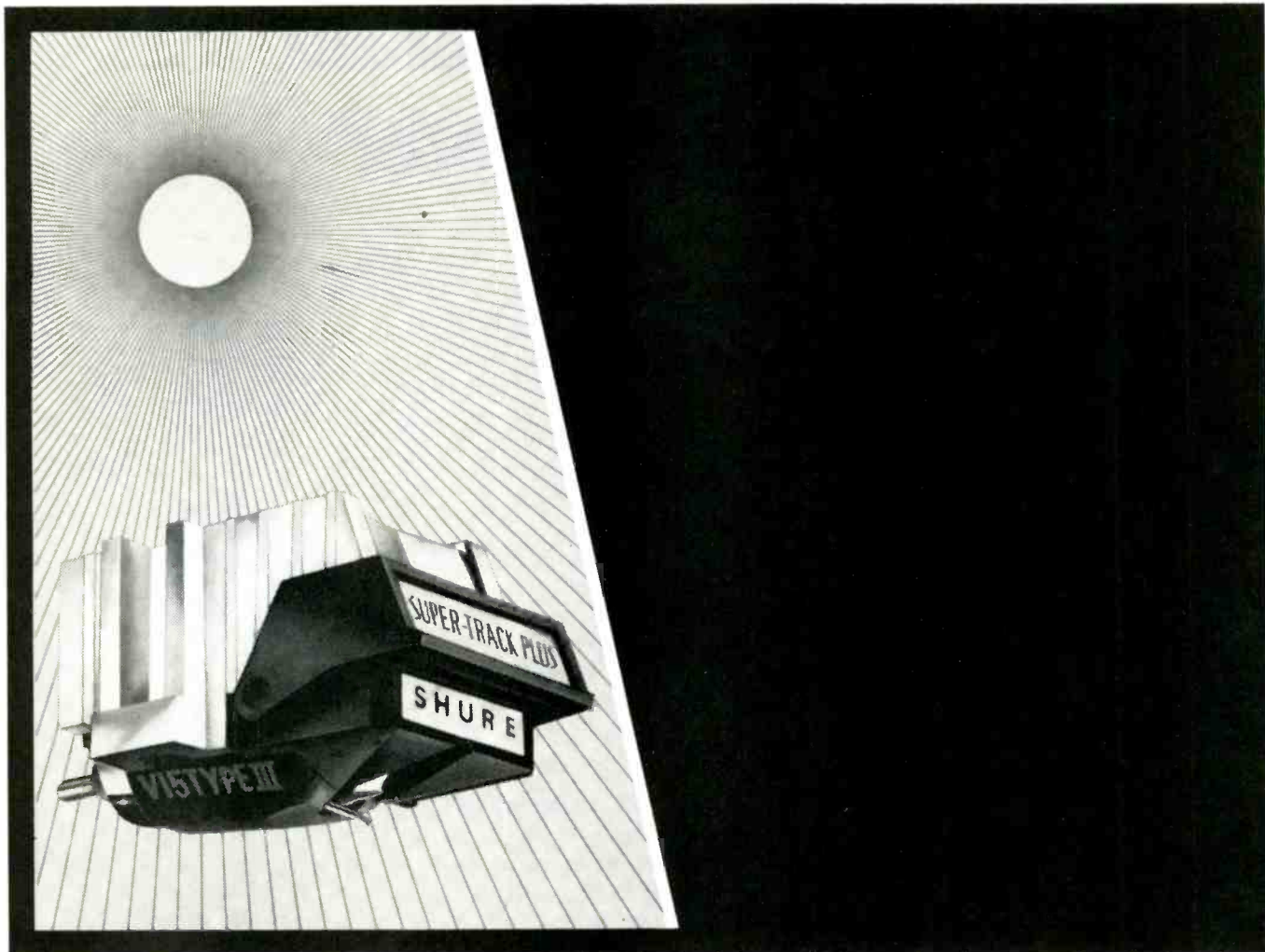
Dual 1216, \$139.50

Dual 1229, \$225.00

Dual 1218, \$169.50

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Paradoxically, the sound from the V-15 Type III is due in large part to an absence of a sound of its own. Its sound is so neutral and coloration-free that your finest recordings can be reproduced precisely as they were recorded, without peaks, frequency boosts and roll-offs.

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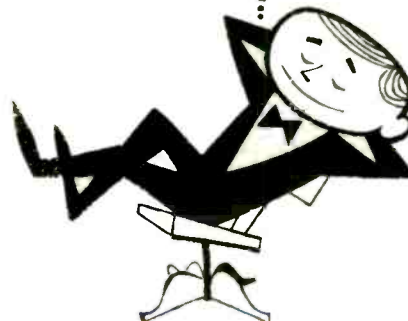
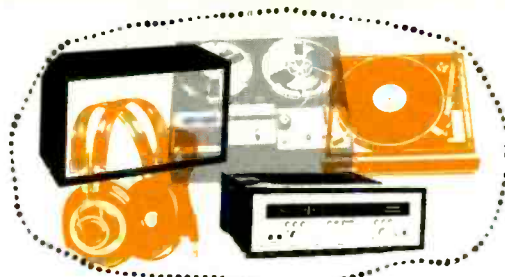


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Instantaneously, the logic is checked for permissibility. If acceptable, a relay is activated.

Within 15 milliseconds, power is supplied to the pinch roller solenoid, the brake solenoid, the back tension motor, a second relay and, at the same time, the photocell is checked for the presence of tape. If present, Relay One self-holds.

Elapsed time, 25 milliseconds.

At 30 milliseconds, Relay Two closes and puts accelerating tension

on the take-up motor.

The logic checks are now complete and power is available to actuate all necessary functions.

From 30 milliseconds to 300 milliseconds, mechanical inertia is being overcome and the motors and solenoids are settling down.

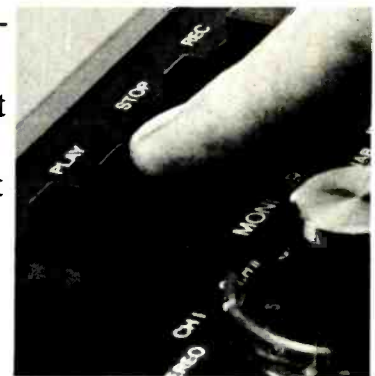
By 300 milliseconds, the brakes have been released, the pinch roller is in contact with the capstan shaft, the tape lifter retracted, the playback muting removed and the motors have come up to operating speed.

At 350 milliseconds power is cut off from Relay Two, which changes over to another set of contacts, releasing the accelerating tension on the take-up motor and completing a circuit through Relay One that, in turn, restores normal tension to the take-up motor.

Total elapsed time, 400 milliseconds. The Revox is now in the play mode.

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Quadradisc cartridges. A Shure engineering sample was demonstrated to us last winter at the JVC engineering labs in Japan.)

CIRCLE 157 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

### RCA to Junk "Single Inventory"?

As we near press time for this issue it seems likely that RCA soon will reverse itself about maintaining only one disc inventory on recordings made quadratically. So far RCA's Quadradiscs have sold at standard LP prices (matrixed discs generally cost \$1.00 more) and had no stereo counterparts. If you wanted Henry Mancini's "Godfather" album you bought the Quadradisc for either quadrasonic or stereo play. Remembering the problems of duplicate mono and stereo inventory a decade ago, RCA wanted—this time around—to minimize confusion on the part of public and dealers alike.

But it hasn't worked out that way. Dealers often have consigned the Quadradiscs to special quadrasonic displays and omitted them from regular (stereo) stock. And some prospective purchasers seemed to feel that if a record carried the Quadradisc logo it *couldn't* be played on regular stereo equipment. (This may be why the logo was conspicuously missing from the cover of RCA's new Elvis Presley disc; only the disc label itself used the logo.) And now that the Warner group has decided to issue stereo as well as Quadradisc versions of its new recordings, and to charge the extra dollar for the quadrasonic product, RCA appears ready to follow suit.

### Parlez-vous QS?

The French branch of Decca/London is offering matrix-

encoded four-channel discs to the French market, using the Sansui QS matrix system. Initially seven discs have been released, with four more scheduled for this fall.

Like EMI's British SQ-encoded releases, however, these recordings are unlikely to create much interest outside of the market for which they are intended; the artists involved are generally of only local renown.

### Silently Significant

With a reticence atypical of the tape industry, Maxell has quietly upgraded its top-of-the-line UD (Ultra Dynamic) cassettes with a new tape formulation and cassette shell.

Its new formulation incorporates PX (pure crystal) gamma hematite, which reportedly offers significantly improved crystallization and granulation and an extremely low percentage of voids. The cassette shell itself is made from a highly durable polycarbonate resin; inside it is a unique collection of features. The pressure pad is bonded into a pan-shaped retainer and is precision-aligned. A new leader strip on the tape serves as a nonabrasive head cleaner. It indicates tape direction by arrows and shows which side is ready for use by the letters A or B; a cueing line indicates the point on the leader that is exactly five seconds ahead of the start of the oxide surface. Maxell attributes most of the improvements directly to the application of technology used in manufacturing its precision data-acquisition cassettes.

If you're not sure which version of UD you've got, look at the shell color. Maxell switched from gray to black at about the time it went to the new formulation. (We checked our samples for the tape test published in our March issue; they're the new UD.)

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## equipment in the news

### Sherwood presents a quadrasonic receiver



Sherwood Electronic Laboratories' new S-7244 Stereoquad receiver contains a full-logic SQ decoding circuit and a "strapped" power-amplifier circuit to allow use of full power in stereo by "paralleling" quadrasonic channels. The rated quadrasonic output is 20 watts continuous power per channel into 8 ohms, for a maximum of 0.6% THD, 20 Hz to 20 kHz, with all four channels driven. The FM section is listed as "four-channel ready" using an FM output and the aux 2 inputs to accommodate an adapter. The unit has an optional remote quadrasonic balance/loudness control. The price is \$449.95 including wood case.

CIRCLE 150 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

### The Rhapsody speakers from Bozak

The Rhapsody B-401 is a three-way floor-standing speaker from R. T. Bozak Mfg. Co. The ingredients include a B-199A extended travel woofer, a B-209B midrange, and a B-200Y dual tweeter separately mounted. Crossovers are at 800 and 2,500 Hz. Bozak recommends the speaker for use with amplifiers delivering up to 60 watts average power per channel. The unit has a three-position brightness switch. The walnut-veneered enclosure is designed to allow the addition of a marble, glass, or slate slab on top to convert it to use as a table. The price is \$249.50. The speaker is also available as the B-402, a bookshelf model otherwise identical to the B-401.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



CIRCLE 55 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →

# SONY<sup>®</sup> 1055 and 5055

## One good Sony deserves another



Sony offers you ten individual choices in tuners, amplifiers and preamps, plus an infinite variety of combinations. For every listening requirement in every price range. We're going to tell you about two new low-priced models that offer all the traditional Sony performance and value.

The Sony TA-1055 delivers 20+20W RMS continuous power into 8 ohms per channel, from 40Hz to 20kHz. The power you pay for is the power you get, at every frequency from low, low bass (where you really need it) right up to the highest highs. And these Sony circuit features keep that power

clean and quiet—direct coupled differential output and wide range, integrated circuit phono preamp. It has all the operating features, including such luxury touches as two sets of tape output and monitor connections (use one for an SQ decoder) with direct dubbing, front panel Aux and MIC inputs and slide controls. \$169.50\*

The deserving tuner for the TA-1055 is Sony's ST-5055. Its sensitivity is 2.2 $\mu$ V IHF, moderate by today's standards, but when you combine it with a capture ratio of 1 dB, performance is outstanding. There's a high blend switch for quiet stereo reception of

weak signals, built in AFC, signal-strength meter and switchable muting. \$169.50\*

Each is the lowest priced tuner and amplifier offered by Sony. Imagine the performance and value offered by the eight other models. Sony's wide selection of deserving amplifiers and tuners goes right on up to the ultimate combination of the super-powered 3200F, deluxe 2000F preamp, and 5130 tuner. Visit your dealer and audition these Sonys. You deserve it. Sony

Sony Corporation of America, 47-47 Van Dam Street, Long Island City, New York 11101. \*Suggested retail

**Sony Tuners and Amplifiers: now 10 great choices**

## A private four-channel world

If you want to enjoy the pleasures of four-channel sound (or—with the flick of a switch—stereo) in private, check into Stanton's Dyna-phase Sixty Five Four C headphones. This unit is said to have a frequency response of 20 to 20,000 Hz and has two color-coded plugs for front (blue) and back (black) speakers. The headphones weigh 19 ounces, have vinyl-covered foam ear cushions, and an 11-foot coiled cord. They cost \$64.95.

CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



## The latest Dolby cassette deck from Teac

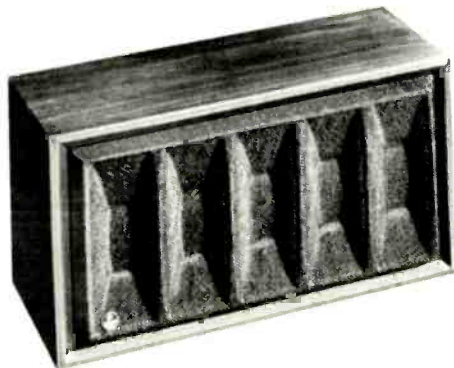
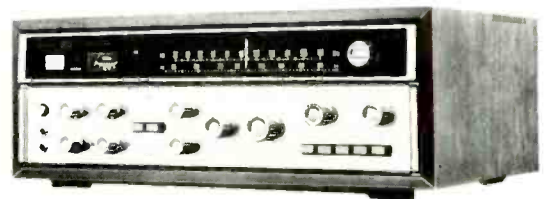
The Model 450 cassette deck from Teac Corp. of America offers Dolby noise reduction, separate microphone and line inputs that allow mixing, two VU meters with a peak level indicator, separate three-position (chromium dioxide, normal, and high-performance ferric oxide) switch controls for tape bias and equalization, dual output jacks, and output level controls. The unit is driven by a dynamically balanced synchronous motor; wow and flutter is said to be 0.07% or better. The Dolby switching allows use in a decode-only mode—for listening to Dolby-encoded FM broadcasts, for example. Price: \$379.50.

CIRCLE 153 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## Sansui's QRX-3500 quadrasonic receiver

The heart of Sansui's new QRX-3500 receiver—"moderately priced" companion to the top-of-the-line QRX-6500—is the company's new QS vario matrix decoder/synthesizer, said to be capable of decoding both RM and SQ matrixed recordings. Sansui says the unit delivers 22 watts of continuous power per channel into 8 ohms at 1 kHz with THD and IM distortion of less than 0.5%. The QRX-3500 has three rotary balance controls, three monitor switches, and a loudness switch for all speakers. The price is \$579.95 including walnut case. A remote-control unit to adjust volume and balance is optional.

CIRCLE 154 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



## Fisher offers a series of moderate-priced speakers

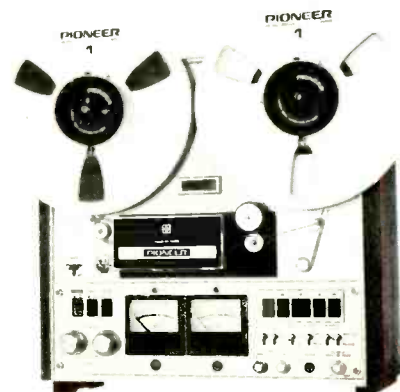
The ST-465 is the top of the new ST-400 series of three speakers from Fisher Radio Corp. All are 8-ohm acoustic-suspension systems and are similar in appearance. The ST-465 is a three-way system said to have a frequency response of 40 to 20,000 Hz and a minimum continuous power requirement of 25 watts at 8 ohms. The unit consists of a 12-inch woofer, 3½-inch flare dome midrange, and a Mylar dome tweeter. It costs \$169.95; the other new models are the ST-445 at \$99.95 and the ST-425 at \$79.95.

CIRCLE 155 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## Pioneer unveils its first NAB-reel tape deck

U.S. Pioneer's RT-1020L open-reel tape deck records in stereo, plays back in stereo or quadrasonic sound, and can accommodate 10½-inch reels. The two-speed (3¼ and 7½ ips) deck has three motors (including a hysteresis synchronous capstan drive motor) and three heads: two-channel recording, stereo/quadrasonic playback, and stereo erase. Other features include a two-step equalizer, three-step bias selector (equipped with a timing relay to suppress head magnetization resulting from bias current), automatic recording when coupled with a preset timer, and independent mike and line level controls that permit mixing. Price: \$599.95.

CIRCLE 156 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



CIRCLE 60 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →



**If you could buy a cassette deck with Dolby... automatic tape-end shutoff... memory rewind... tape bias selection... pause control... peak and tape running indicator lights... sliding level controls... an over-level limiter... a speed up skip button... digital tape counter... dual level meters... piano-key controls – would you expect it to be reasonably priced, too?**

Yes, when it's the Pioneer CT-4141. We know you may never have heard of some of these features. That's because they're exclusive firsts with Pioneer. For example, the unique over-level limiter. It monitors and controls overstrength signals to prevent distortion. Then there's the memory rewind switch that simplifies the location of any one particular selection recorded on the tape, automatically.

Sure, we could go on and tell you about the extended life ferrite head, the superb 30-16 000 Hz frequency response. But do yourself a favor. Get a first hand demonstration at your Pioneer dealer.

At \$269.95, the CT-4141 is the finest example of Pioneer's extra margin of value. Also, though more moderately priced at \$199.95, Pioneer's CT-3131 high performance cassette deck contains most of the

advanced features of the CT-4141. See them both at your Pioneer dealer. U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 178 Commerce Road, Carlstadt, New Jersey 07072. West: 13300 S. Estralla, Los Angeles 90248 / Midwest: 1500 Greenleaf, Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007 / Canada: S.H. Parker Co.

**PIONEER**  
when you want something better



# The ADC-XLM "...in a class by itself."



That's the way Stereo Review described our XLM. High Fidelity headlined their review, "Superb new pickup from ADC" and went on to say, "...must be counted among the state of the art contenders." And Audio echoed them with, "The ADC-XLM appears to be state of the art."

With the critics so lavish in their praise of the XLM, there's hardly any necessity to add anything. Far better to let the experts continue to speak for us.

**Frequency response** The CBS STR-100 test record showed less than  $\pm 1.5$ dB variation up to 20,000Hz. *Stereo Review*  
...response is within  $\pm 2$ dB over the entire range. *Audio*  
Frequency response is exceptionally flat. *High Fidelity*

**Tracking** This is the only cartridge we have seen that is really capable of tracking almost all stereo discs at 0.4 grams. *Stereo Review*  
The XLM went through the usual torture test at 0.4 grams (some top models require more than a gram). *High Fidelity*  
The XLM is capable of reproducing anything found on a phonograph record. *Audio*

**Distortion** Distortion readings ... are almost without exception better than those for any other model we've tested. *High Fidelity*

The XLM has remarkably low distortion in comparison with others. *Audio*  
At 0.6 grams the distortion was low (under 1.5 per cent). *Stereo Review*

**Hum and noise** The XLM could be instrumental in lowering the input noise from the first stage of a modern transistor amplifier. *Audio*  
The cartridge had very good shielding against induced hum. *Stereo Review*

**Price** This would be a very hard cartridge to surpass at any price. *Stereo Review*  
We found it impossible to attribute superior sound to costlier competing models. *High Fidelity*  
Priced as it is, it is a real bargain in cartridges. *Audio*

The Pritchard *High Definition*  
ADC-XLM \$50.

## Nakamichi's \$1,100 Cassette Deck



**The Equipment:** Nakamichi 1000, a stereo cassette deck with true tape/source monitor and Dolby B plus DNL noise reduction, in wood case. Dimensions: 20% by 11% by 8½ inches (intended for use standing vertically; can be removed from case and rack mounted). Price: \$1,100. Manufacturer: Nakamichi Research, Inc., Japan; U.S. distributor: Nakamichi Research (USA), Inc., 220 Westbury Ave., Carle Place, N.Y. 11514.

**Comment:** Nakamichi describes its 1000 as a "professional" deck—and that word means something here. (It seldom does in equipment available to the consumer.) Although most of its many special features should have a great deal of appeal to consumers willing to pay the premium price, some (notably the simultaneous recording/monitor and the accessible azimuth controls) take it well beyond the capability range of cassette decks as we've come to know them and into a range that makes possible professional applications that would be virtually unthinkable otherwise.

The front panel is divided into three basic sections. At the left center is the cassette well, which is top loading. This configuration, with the heads above (rather than in front of) the cassette when it's in playing position, produces tape motion from right to left. (Through long habit with conventional left-to-right decks we found this a bit confusing at first; users who have waited for such a professional unit before going to cassettes at all should experience no confusion whatever—even momentarily.) Below are the transport controls: a series of buttons (for pause, recording, fast forward, rewind, stop, and play) that—like those on many modern elevator systems—require no physical pressure for activation, only finger

contact. Each has a small pilot light. Above the cassette well is a pop-out panel that conceals the head-alignment and speed controls. At the upper left is the speed vernier, which the lab found to be close to accurate (0.4% fast) in its "normal" position (which has a detent) at all tested line voltages. The adjustment range exceeded by a small margin the  $\pm 6\%$  (approximately a half tone each way) specified for it. Next are two lights used in azimuth (perpendicularity) alignment and a test-tone on/off switch. Below, in the head cover itself, are a screwdriver adjustment for playback head alignment and a small knob for recording-head alignment. Beneath the head cover are (from right to left) the erase head and the first pinch roller, the recording head, the playback head (in the usual centered position), a dummy head that acts only as a tape guide, and the second pinch roller.

The playback head is factory-set for correct alignment, though it can be checked using any of the standard alignment tapes. Azimuth of the recording head is user-adjustable to match that of the playback head. To do this you switch on the test-tone oscillator and record its 423-Hz output on a test cassette. Circuitry within the 1000 compares the phase in the two channels of the signals delivered by the playback head and lights one or the other of the two lights depending on which channel's signal leads the other. As the knob is rotated to correct for the mismatch the two lights begin to flicker on and off alternately; when they light equally, the head is aligned. For the very best results, we did find that rechecking azimuth was advisable before beginning

### REPORT POLICY

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

recording, particularly in switching from one tape type to another. (Presumably different physical properties in the tape alter the way in which skew—which is present in all tape equipment—affects motion past the head.) But under normal circumstances little readjustment is called for and most users probably will be satisfied to check azimuth only periodically. Either way, the phase-sensing system in the 1000 makes it an extremely simple proposition.

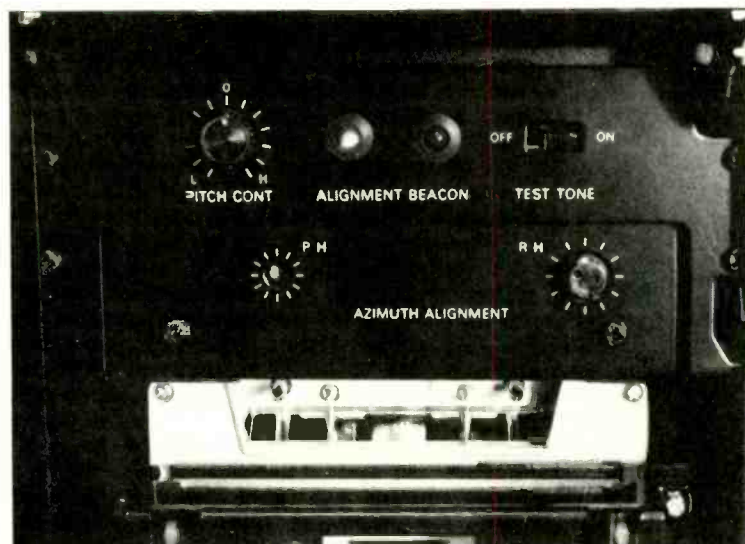
Toward the center of the front panel is the next group of controls: luminous tape-motion indicator, eject button (which causes the cassette holder to open slowly and gently—a far cry from the hyperthyroid action of some eject mechanisms we've worked with), counter and reset button, on/off switches for automatic rewind and for memory rewind, and a stereo headphone jack.

The action of these rewind switches is best explained by recounting one practical use we found for them. We were copying a series of short selections and weren't sure whether enough tape remained for the next number. (A professional probably would have used a timer for this purpose; the amateur can view the window in the cassette case by removing the cover from the cassette well, but the *exact* quantity of tape remaining can only be guessed at.) Before beginning the next number, we reset the counter to 000 and switched on both the automatic rewind and the memory rewind. Before the number was completed the tape ran out. Instead of just stopping and disengaging (as it would normally do) the transport automatically began rewinding in response to the first switch; when the counter returned to 000 the transport stopped in response to the second switch. We returned to the recording mode to erase the recorded portion of the last number and switched off the automatic rewind. At the end of the tape the transport stopped; we turned over the cassette and began the number afresh at the beginning of Side 2.

The right-hand section of the panel is headed by the two peak-reading meters. Below them are switches for tape (CrO<sub>2</sub>/ferric), limiter (on/off), DNL (in/out), Dolby (in/out), monitor (tape/source), and AC power (on/off). The limiter's action is excellent, though the owner's manual correctly exhorts you to use it only to control occasional instantaneous peaks and only on program material that has extreme dynamic range—meaning, typically, live recordings. Along the bottom of this area are pairs of slider level controls for output, line input, and stereo mike input, plus a single slider for "blend mike"—an input that feeds equally to both channels. All inputs can be mixed ad lib. The three mike inputs (left, right, and blend) are phone jacks at the lower right of the panel.

On the back panel there are two DIN sockets: one for a stereo pair of mikes, the other for the normal DIN input/output cable. Most U.S. users will ignore both of these in favor of the domestically standard connections. Those for line input and output are pin-jack pairs next to the DIN sockets. Next comes a multiplex filter switch to keep 19-kHz pilot tones from affecting Dolby action in recording from FM. Then there is a screwdriver adjustment for calibration of the built-in tone generator and similar recording calibration adjustments for each channel and for both chromium dioxide and standard tapes. These adjustments can be used to optimize Dolby action for the tape type actually in use. Also on the back panel is a multipin receptacle for an optional remote-control unit that duplicates the functions of the touchbuttons just below the cassette well.

Many manufacturers throw in little accessories (in ad-



dition to the necessary interconnect cables) with their components. These "bonuses" generally cost the company little yet give the purchaser an extra measure of satisfaction upon opening the box. Nakamichi does more. In a linen-bound "book" very similar in size and appearance to some European multidisc LP sets are a Dolby alignment cassette, a mirror device mounted in a cassette case to facilitate viewing the action of the heads and capstans during servicing, a sample chromium dioxide cassette (for use in making test recordings during alignment), a box containing cleaning sticks with replaceable felt applicators and a bottle of cleaning solvent, a head-cleaning wand, and a dusting cloth for the exposed surfaces of the deck. Like the design of the unit itself, this accessory kit obviously goes far beyond established norms even for a top consumer model.

CBS Labs' data show the performance of the 1000 to be very good indeed. Distortion figures are about par for the best cassette decks. Particularly notable is the THD at 10 kHz, a frequency at which distortion usually rises sharply. While we have occasionally seen slightly better figures for IM distortion and for midband THD, we know of no single machine that can be said to better the 1000 in both respects. Similarly, we have seen somewhat flatter frequency response in the extreme bass, but never more extended response at the top; so on averages we would say that no machine we've tested exceeds the linearity and bandwidth of the 1000. (Contributing to its excellent top end, surely, is the separate playback head, which gives Nakamichi the opportunity to use a narrower head gap—and therefore greater high-frequency resolving power—than is normally practical in a combined record/play head.) Wow and flutter figures are, by a small margin, the best the lab has measured so far and is about half the typical values for the better decks. Other measured parameters are about par for a good unit; none is below par.

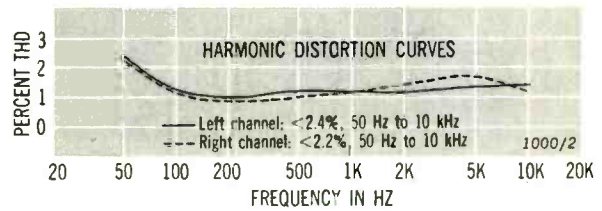
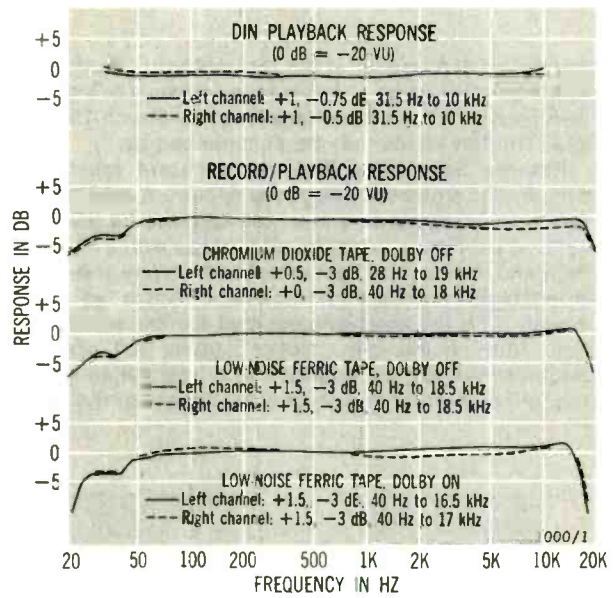
Even this long description by no means exhausts the subject. For example, we have not mentioned the built-in logic system. When you switch from one transport mode to another, this logic system is carefully designed to time the sequencing of events. Nakamichi's data explain how it works. Let's say you want to record. When you press both "record" and "play" the record bias will be full up within 0.0005 seconds, while tape motion will begin in 0.008 seconds and achieve full speed in 0.1 seconds. Only once this has happened—0.52 sec-

Speed and head-alignment controls are at top. Light in left-hand "beacon" normally means that the record-head alignment knob (RH) should be turned clockwise; here it means only that this light flashed on in time with our shutter. Special mirror cassette is in position, affording a view of playback head (center, actually hidden from direct view behind alignment-control plate).

onds after the buttons are pressed—will the recording current and playback amp switch on. At 0.59 seconds the recording current will be full up and at 0.75 seconds the monitor amp will be too. All this avoids audible start-and-stop wows and switching transients in the monitor circuit. It does have one (very minor) drawback, however. If you are piecing a recording together by using the pause control, the slight discontinuity in recording current will introduce a momentary "dropout" and very faint switching clicks wherever you have used the pause. If you choose your edit points in silent passages, the clicks can be heard—though barely; with noisy backgrounds (for example between numbers of a live concert) the "dropout" becomes audible. The effect lasts only about a half-second; otherwise the performance of the logic system is extremely elegant.

So is the over-all "feel" and operation of the unit. It is a little awing to work with a unit costing more than twice the price of anything else on the market, but a source of great satisfaction—if you are willing to expend the degree of care that the deck deserves—to work with a unit that will do things no other cassette deck on the market can manage. The ability to monitor playback while you are recording is—as open-reel recordists have known for years—an important one for really fine results. Malfunctions, excessively high level settings, and incorrect equalization all will make themselves heard if you can listen to the tape rather than the source while you work. (Other monitor-head cassette equipment has been announced, but this is the first production sample we've seen.) When you want noise reduction in the recordings you're making, the Dolby B system is there; when you want to reduce apparent hiss without audibly affecting the music, the DNL system is there as well. These two can be used simultaneously. In copying from slightly hissy tapes we used the Dolby circuit in recording to avoid adding any more hiss and the DNL (which operates in the playback circuit only of course) to suppress the hiss already there. The ability to optimize Dolby action and azimuth for best possible performance with any tape you may choose to use certainly is important too. But most important of all, we were unable to find any signal source with anything like a normal dynamic range that could not be reproduced on the 1000 so faithfully that we were unable to distinguish between the copy and the original. All told, a unique and fascinating product.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



### Nakamichi 1000 Additional Data

Speed accuracy (pitch control set at "0")	0.4% fast at 105, 120, and 127 VAC	
Wow and flutter	playback: 0.06%	record/play: 0.07%
Rewind time, C-60 cassette	56 sec.	
Fast-forward time, same cassette	56 sec.	
S/N ratio (ref. DIN 0 VU, Dolby off)		
playback	L ch: 53.5 dB	R ch: 54 dB
record/play	L ch: 51 dB	R ch: 51.5 dB
Erase (400 Hz at normal level)	61 dB	
Crosstalk (at 400 Hz)		
record left, play right	36 dB	
record right, play left	40 dB	
Sensitivity (for 0-VU recording level)		
line input	L ch: 125 mV	R ch: 120 mV
mike input	L ch: 0.50 mV	R ch: 0.50 mV
blend mike input	0.55 mV	
Meter action	adjustable	
IM distortion (record/play, -10 VU)		
L ch: 6%	R ch: 5.1%	
Maximum output (line, 0 VU)		
L ch: 1.25 V	R ch: 1.25 V	

## Reports on Five Cassette Tapes

A detailed description of the test method, criteria, and terms used in testing cassette tapes appeared (together with reports on ten other tapes) in our March 1972 issue. The key terms may be summarized as:

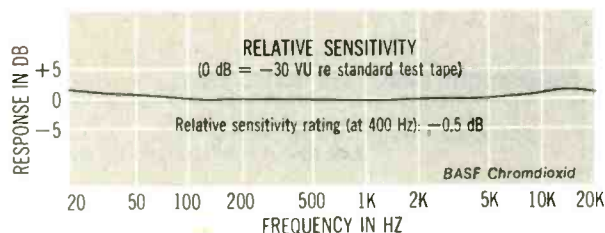
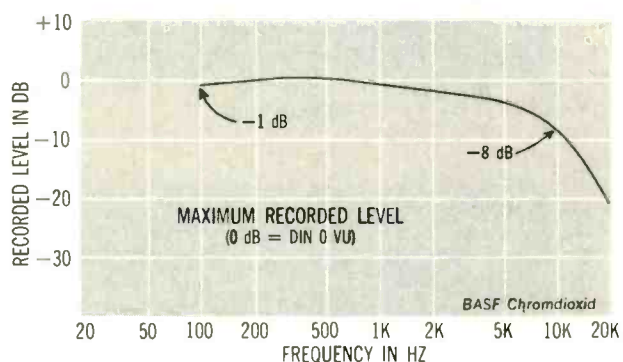
**Relative Sensitivity.** The curve shown represents sensitivity across the frequency spectrum relative to a reference cassette on a machine adjusted for that cassette. If your deck is optimized for tape with a "hotter" high end, it would be best matched by tapes showing a rising high-frequency characteristic in this test; conversely if it is adjusted for tapes that are less sensitive at high frequencies, the "hotter" tapes will produce brighter than normal sound. The numerical sensitivity rating indicates output level with respect to the refer-

ence cassette for a given recording level at 400 Hz.

**Maximum Recorded Level.** The curve indicates the levels at which the tape is driven to 3 per cent total harmonic distortion or into self-erasure, whichever occurs first, and indicates the headroom or overload margin across the frequency spectrum.

**S/N Ratio.** The figure shown is frequency-weighted on the basis of audibility factors and is measured with respect to the DIN 0-VU level.

**Dropout Count.** Two samples of tape are measured for 15 minutes apiece on automatic equipment that distinguishes between major (audible in almost any type of music), medium (audible in fairly continuous music), and minor (barely perceptible) dropouts.



### BASF Chromium Dioxide Cassette

**The Equipment:** BASF Chromdioxid, a chromium dioxide tape cassette. Price: \$3.89 for a C-60; also available in C-90 and C-120 sizes. Manufacturer: BASF, West Germany; U.S. distributor: BASF Systems, Inc., Crosby Dr., Bedford, Mass. 01730.

**Comment:** As we have noted repeatedly in these reports, the differences between various brands of chromium dioxide tape are minor. The BASF entry is, electromagnetically, typical of the breed. This means that by contrast to the premium ferric tapes it has excellent dynamic range, greater high-frequency headroom, and somewhat less midrange headroom.

Mechanically, it is not typical. Its SM (Special Mechanics) design contains pivoted arms that help to guide the tape as it moves from one "pancake" to the other (a design feature that's shared only by the Norlco 400, also a chromium dioxide cassette, among the ones we've tested); and indeed the pancake wind seems unusually even. Next to the erasure-prevention recess, with its break-off flap, is another recess for another automatic switch: one that will alter equalization and bias to match chromium dioxide. (So far we know of no equipment that incorporates the switch, but it's nice to know the cassette is ready.) The case is held together with screws, has metal idler pins, and has a silver-paper label with good writing area. The plastic library/mailer box comes with an index card and stick-on labels.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



SM (special mechanics) design of BASF Chromdioxid cassette features guide arms pivoted near idlers at front corners of the case.

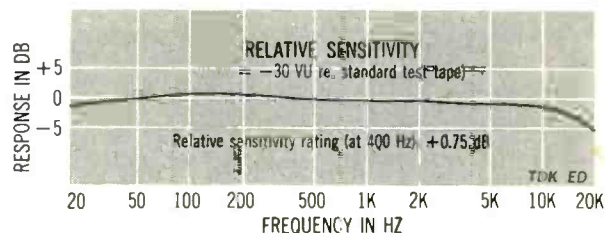
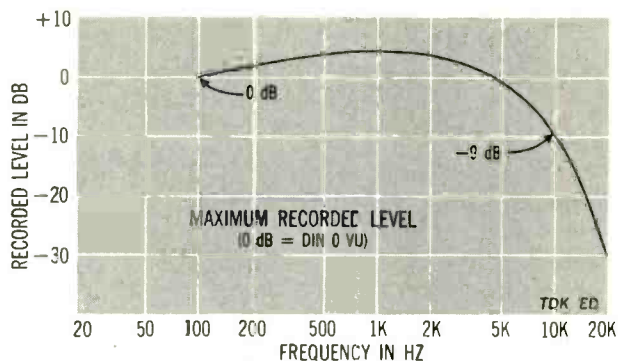
## TDK ED Cassette

**The Equipment:** TDK Extra Dynamic, a low-noise, high-output ferric oxide tape cassette. Price: \$3.00 in C-60; C-40 and C-90 also available. Manufacturer: TDK, Japan; U.S. distributor: TDK Electronics Corp., 23-73 48th St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11103.

**Comment:** ED is, with Krom-0, the most recent (and most expensive) tape in the TDK cassette line. Though it is measurably better than TDK's previous "best," the SD, we judged it to be only marginally so. Overload and sensitivity curves are very similar indeed. ED's output at 400 Hz is higher, but only by 0.75 dB. Its dropout count is near perfect; SD's was merely very good, but this difference too might dwindle or even disappear in testing other samples of these same tapes. Both can be described as among the "hotter" (but not the hottest) and certainly among the best of currently available cassettes.

The case—like that of all TDK products we have examined—is molded with exceptional care and closed with screws. Metal idler pins are used. Labeling provision on both the case and the Philips-style box are excellent.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



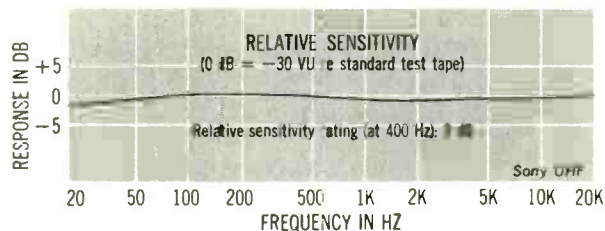
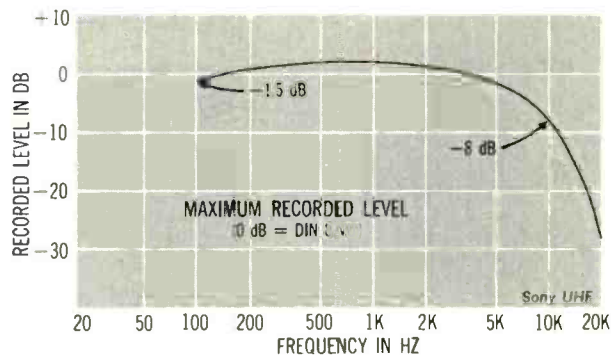
## Sony UHF Cassette

**The Equipment:** Sony UHF, a low-noise, high-output ferric oxide tape cassette. Price: \$2.99 in C-60; also available in C-90 and C-120 sizes. Manufacturer: Sony Corp. of Japan; U.S. distributor: Superscope, Inc., 8150 Vineland Ave., Sun Valley, Calif. 91352.

**Comment:** The sensitivity curve for UHF is fairly representative of the newer low-noise tapes: not quite as "hot" as some of the very latest superperformance types, but definitely hotter than those for the earlier varieties. In this respect, therefore, UHF is not only the cassette for which Sony equipment is optimized, but may be taken as interchangeable with the tapes for which much competing equipment is set up. (Of course you may prefer the slightly brighter sound of a hotter tape, even though UHF is, technically, a better match.) The near-perfect dropout count has been bettered by only three tapes in these tests; no tape has registered a perfect count. Otherwise the figures for UHF are about par.

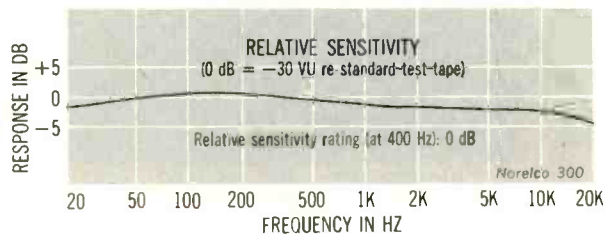
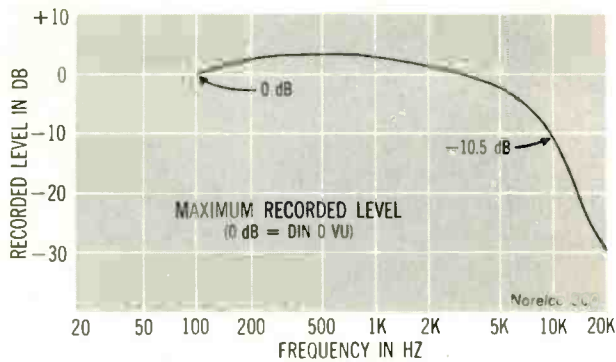
The cassette case is held by screws that defy removal and has a somewhat larger-than-standard window. Idlers are held on molded-in plastic pins. The white paper label on the case offers a better than average labeling area, but no label is provided on the snap-on outer plastic cover. This cover, which we judged to offer good dust protection, has a grained surface that will accept pencil and felt pen on its side surfaces (though both smudge with handling) or narrow commercially available stick-on labels on its smooth-surfaced "spine" (which protects the head openings in the cassette case).

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



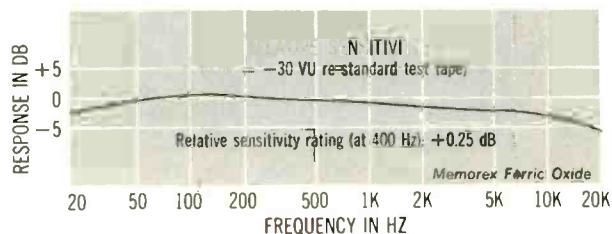
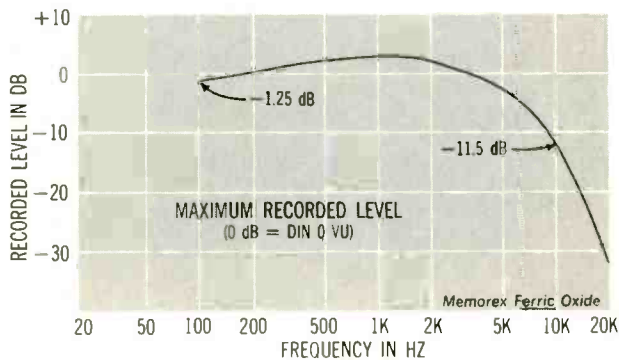
### Sony UHF Additional Data

S/N ratio (NAB)	56 dB		
Dropout count	Major	Medium	Minor
sample 1	0	0	0
sample 2	0	0	2



### Norelco 300 Additional Data

S/N ratio (NAB)	56 dB		
Dropout count	Major	Medium	Minor
sample 1	0	1	9
sample 2	0	0	1



### Memorex Low Noise Additional Data

S/N ratio (NAB)	56 dB		
Dropout count	Major	Medium	Minor
sample 1	0	0	2
sample 2	0	0	0

## Norelco 300 Cassette

**The Equipment:** Norelco 300, a low-noise, high-output ferric oxide cassette. Price: \$2.95 for C-60; also available in the C-90 size. Manufacturer: Philips of the Netherlands; U.S. distributor: North American Philips Co., 100 E. 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

**Comment:** Though the Norelco 300 is described (correctly) as a low-noise, high-output tape, its high-end sensitivity is a shade less "hot" than that of some tapes bearing that designation. The MRL curve shows that headroom is good, particularly in the midrange; high-end sensitivity is about par; so are the 400 Hz sensitivity and S/N. On averages, then, Norelco 300 falls somewhere between average performance for the routine low-noise cassettes, and that for the premium high-performance, low-noise, high-output types.

The cassette case is held together with screws and contains metal idler pins. The label on the case offers somewhat less than average writing area; the insert in the Philips outer box offers at least average space. We note one difference between the 300's construction and that of any other sample we've tested: The slip-sheets between the tape "pancake" and the case are made of what appears to be waxed card-weight paper, rather than the usual lubricated or low-friction plastic, and are exceptionally stiff. We can't be sure how this feature affects performance (if at all), but we do note that the pancake's wind is perhaps a little less smooth than average for this class of cassette.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## Memorex Low-Noise Cassette

**The Equipment:** Memorex low-noise, high-output ferric oxide cassette. Price: \$2.19 for C-60; also available in C-30, C-45, C-90, and C-120 sizes. Manufacturer: Memorex Recording Tape, 1180 Shulman Ave., Santa Clara, Calif. 95050.

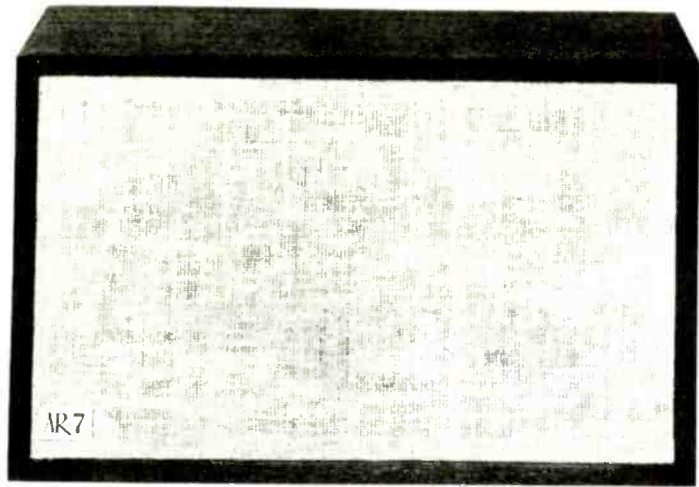
**Comment:** Since this is the only Memorex ferric oxide cassette, no special designation appears on the cassette itself. (The company's chromium dioxide cassettes are so identified on the label, the only other distinguishing characteristic—once you've removed the outer wrapper—being the color of molded parts: dark blue for chromium dioxide, black for ferric.) The ferric formulation is a shade less "hot" than most we have measured in the low-noise, high-output group, though it is noticeably hotter than would be expected of tape called, simply, "low-noise." Other figures are about par, except for the dropout count, which is excellent.

Our comments on the cassette design in reviewing the chromium dioxide cassette (March 1973) apply equally here, since the case design is identical. Note, however, that the previous report was incorrect in saying the case is held by screws; it is welded. Pressure pad, head shield, and viewing window all are larger than average; "idlers" are fixed studs; size of the silver-paper labels is good on the case, small on the distinctively designed box.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



## AR's New Baby



**The Equipment:** AR-7, a compact full-range speaker system in enclosure. Dimensions: 15¾ by 9¾ by 6¼ inches. Price: \$60. Manufacturer: Acoustic Research, Inc., 10 American Drive, Norwood, Mass. 02062.

**Comment:** For years AR has been demonstrating, with several speaker systems, that genuine high fidelity sound can be achieved with small boxes. The company did, after all, introduce the acoustic-suspension principle nearly twenty years ago. So it should come as no surprise that AR's latest model—the smallest and lowest-priced speaker system the company has yet produced—is an outstanding performer for its size and cost.

The AR-7 is a two-way system using an 8-inch acoustic-suspension woofer crossed over via an internal network at 2,000 Hz to a 1½-inch wide-dispersion tweeter. The woofer is a new design made especially for a cabinet of these dimensions; the tweeter is very similar to that used in the AR-6. The AR-7 is housed in a neat walnut enclosure fronted with a neutral-tint grille cloth. The rear contains knurled-nut terminals for connection (via stripped leads or spade lugs) to the amplifier, and a two-position toggle switch for high-frequency level adjustment. Input impedance is rated at 8 ohms, and the system is recommended for use with amplifiers that can supply at least 15 watts per channel. The AR-7 weighs 11 pounds and may be positioned vertically or horizontally—even on a wall, for which mounting hardware is supplied with the speaker.

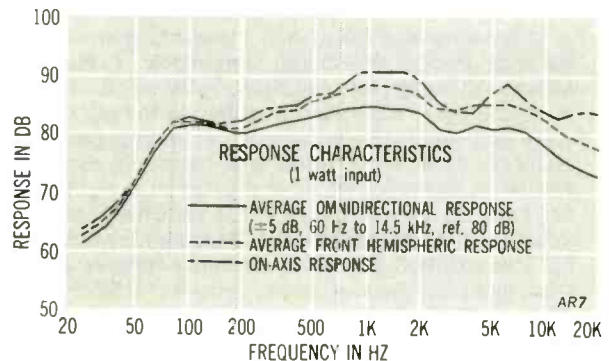
In CBS Labs' measurements, the AR-7's impedance, following the characteristic bass rise, was found to be 6 ohms, rising across the audio range very smoothly and maintaining an average of 8 ohms to 20,000 Hz. The speaker needed 4.5 watts to produce the standard output of 94 dB at 1 meter on axis, and it could take up to 100 watts on a steady-state basis to produce an output of 104 dB before distorting significantly. It could handle pulses of up to 504 peak watts to produce an output of 111 dB, but with some distortion. Since in normal home use it is highly unlikely that the AR-7 ever would be driven to such levels, one must conclude that the CBS Labs data indicate ample power-handling ability, very robust construction, and better-than-average dynamic range for its size and price.

Over-all response, as plotted on the accompanying graph, runs within plus or minus 5 dB from 60 Hz to 14.5 kHz, with zero dB taken at an 80-dB output level. The curves shown were made with the tweeter switch in the "flat" position. In the "normal" position response is lower by about 1 dB from about 2.5 to 7 kHz, and by about 2.5 dB from 7 kHz to 20 kHz. The difference, audibly, is very subtle but it does give you some option for adjust-

ing the very high end. Response below 60 Hz rolls off, with some fundamental bass still evident to about 40 Hz, though if you drive the system hard at this frequency it will double. In reproducing test tones the AR-7 sounds very smooth and evenly balanced throughout the range, with scarcely any signs of directivity in the highs. Tones beyond 10 kHz remain clearly audible well off axis; white response is generally smooth and well dispersed into the listening area.

The sound of the AR-7 on program material is clean and neutral, with ample transient "bite" but not "brashness," and with more apparent bass foundation than one might expect from such a small system. We'd say that AR has succeeded handily in its avowed design aim with the AR-7: to offer a compact speaker that would be well suited for four-channel installations and which also could serve as the reproducer in a modestly priced, but high-quality, stereo system.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



AR-7 Speaker System Harmonic Distortion\*\*

Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	0.40	0.35	0.30	0.55
75	0.35	0.20	0.25	0.58
80	0.35	0.30	0.32	0.66
85	0.35	0.45	0.60	0.80
90	0.50	0.70	1.4	0.91
95	0.68	0.70	3.0	1.0
100			5.2	2.0
104			6.2	3.3

\*\*Distortion data are taken on all tested speakers until distortion exceeds the 10 per cent level or the speaker produces the spurious output known as buzzing, whichever occurs first.

# Sylvania's "Most Stereo Receiver"

## -Is It?



## Controversial Ad Raises Questions that the Lab Data Answer

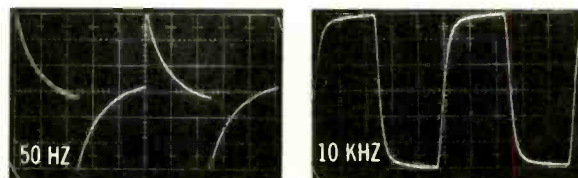
**The Equipment:** Sylvania CR-2743A, a stereo FM/AM receiver in wood case. Dimensions: 16 $\frac{1}{8}$  by 5 by 15 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Price: \$279.95. Manufacturer: GTE Sylvania, Inc., 700 Ellicott St., Batavia, N.Y. 10420.

**Comment:** A widely-read two-page Sylvania ad for this product has as its banner headline: "Who gives you the most stereo receiver for \$279.95? Fisher? Marantz? Pioneer?" Then in tabular form the ad compares the published specs of the CR-2743 (the somewhat improved 2743A is reviewed here) with those of receivers from Marantz, Kenwood, Pioneer, Panasonic, Fisher, and Sansui—all selling at suggested retail prices ranging from \$299.95 to \$349.95. According to the ad, the Sylvania outpoints all the others on continuous power per channel into 8 ohms, rated total harmonic distortion, and rated intermodulation; the Sylvania is right in the ball park on a third spec, IHF FM sensitivity, and bettered by only one other model (Sansui's) in capture ratio. The ad's text draws the obvious conclusion: "Sylvania gives you the most stereo receiver for \$279.95."

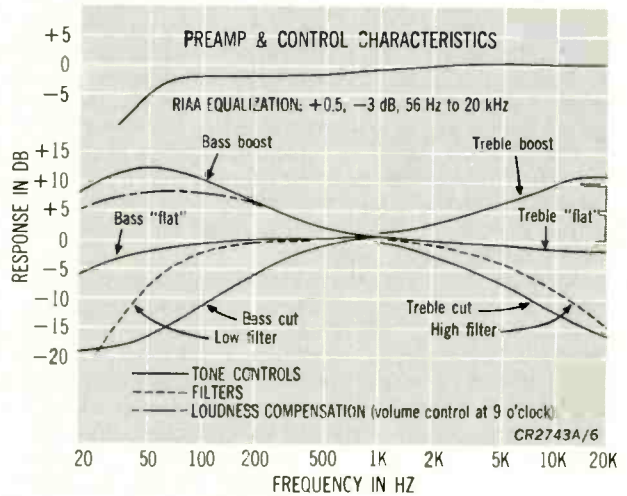
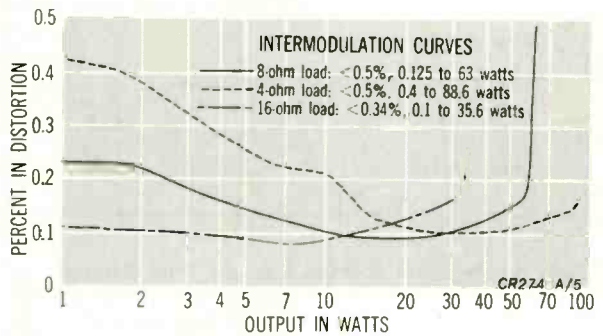
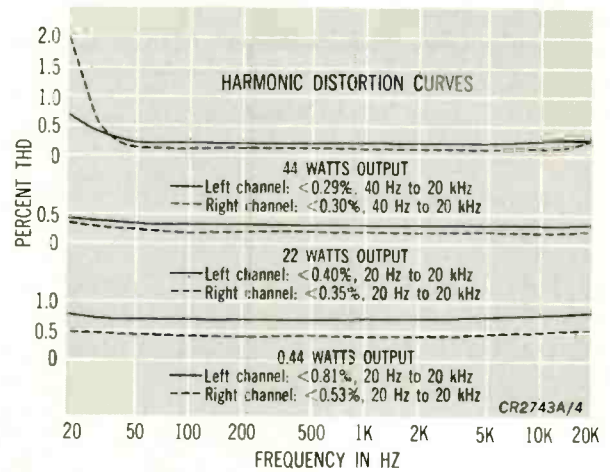
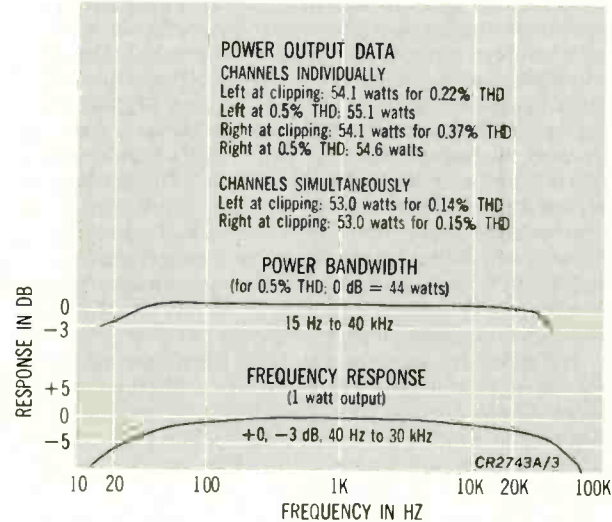
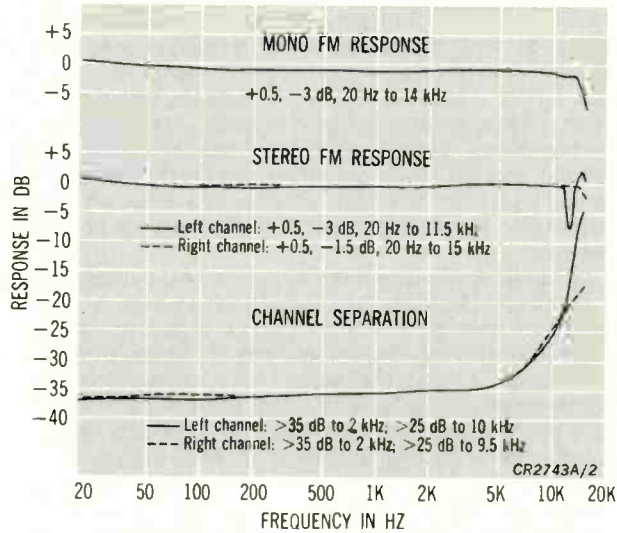
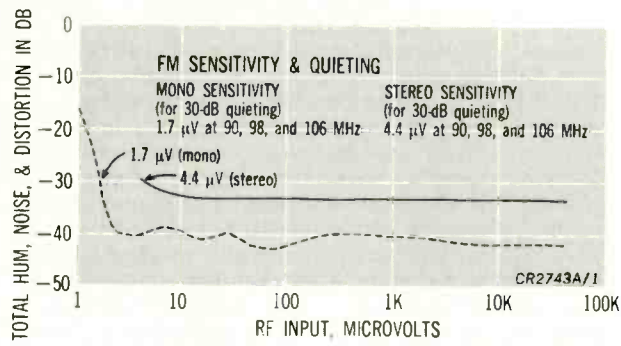
It can safely be assumed that any company—even one without Sylvania's years of experience in the marketplace—would check its facts carefully before running an ad that invites nit-picking. Manufacturers do change their specifications from time to time either because improved manufacturing techniques have allowed them to improve performance or because production models can't be made to do what prototypes did—or simply because the manufacturer has altered his way of expressing the performance of his product. So it would be idle to play a numbers game by comparing the Sylvania ad with the printed literature from which its specifics may or may not have been derived. But in testing the unit we have paid unusual attention to the way its performance compares with the figures shown in the ad—and to performance areas not specified in the ad.

Let's begin with the ad's specifics. Sylvania says the receiver will produce 50 watts per channel continuous output into 8 ohms. Sylvania elsewhere gives this power

rating for less than 0.5% THD at 1 kHz and 44 watts per channel at 0.5% THD over the full range of 20 Hz to 20 kHz. CBS Labs used the latter as the basis for its power measurement (normal practice for us now that most manufacturers give both ratings). The actual unit did better than the 1-kHz rating used for the ad: At clipping, distortion was still well under the rating point and power slightly above the rating point even with both channels driven. But in the extreme bass (at 20 Hz) distortion did exceed the 0.5% rating (0.7% in the left channel, 2.1% in the right) even though testing was at the more conservative power figure. Sylvania's specs elsewhere show 0.1% THD at half power; the lab measured double that distortion, or more, even at mid-frequencies. IM is claimed to be 0.5%. With an 8-ohm load the receiver delivered lower IM than this from the lower limit of testing (0.125 watts) to about 63 watts. With a 4-ohm load it did even better: just under 0.5% at the lower limit of testing (0.394 watts) but 0.15% or below over much of the range out to beyond 88 watts. Power capability without exceeding rated IM distortion is relatively restricted at 16 ohms (as it is in all solid-state amplifiers), with distortion rising sharply above 35 watts, but averaging around 0.1% over much of the range. In sum, then, the amplifier section does what the Sylvania ad specifies it will—even with some room to spare within the normal definitions of the terms used. (Though no impedance is specified in the IM figure, power is specified at 8 ohms; the IM spec could thus be taken as applying only at that impedance.) Furthermore, while these figures break no



Square-wave response



records for a moderate-priced receiver, they are certainly thoroughly respectable in high-fidelity terms.

Tuner sensitivity is rated at 1.9 microvolts in the ad. (The other models specified all have sensitivity ratings between 1.8 and 2.0 microvolts—the differences being the merest of quibbles.) Lab tests showed the Sylvania to come in at 1.7 microvolts—better than specified, though again the difference is no more than a quibble. Capture ratio is listed at 2 dB; in the lab it turned out to be 1.5 dB. Again performance exceeds specification and represents attractive figures for this class of equipment.

Now let's look at the specifics that Sylvania does *not* mention in its ad. In the amplifier and preamp sections the only big surprises are to be found in frequency-response curves. At the 1-watt output level we generally expect a minimum spec of +0, -3 dB from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. Of the two other units we have tested from among those mentioned in the Sylvania ad, both do much better than this bare minimum. The Sylvania does not. Set for a 1-watt output at 1 kHz, it is down 3 dB (that is, down to a half watt) at 40 Hz and 30 kHz. At both extremes of the range from 100 Hz to 10 kHz—where most amplifier sections, even in low-priced units, are ruler-flat at 1

## Sylvania CR-2743A Receiver Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	1.5 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	62 dB		
S/N ratio	64 dB		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	1.0%	0.70%	2.6%
1 kHz	0.9%	0.95%	0.9%
10 kHz	3.4%	13%	14%
IM distortion	0.5%		
19-kHz pilot	-42 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-31.5 dB		
Amplifier Section			
Damping factor	30		
Input characteristics (for 50 watts output)	Sensitivity	S/N ratio	
phono 1 & 2	2.7 mV	63 dB	
aux	93 mV	68.5 dB	
tape monitor	93 mV	65 dB	

watt, the Sylvania is down 1.25 dB. This drooping response shows up on all frequency measurements—the lab's curves for tone controls and filter action, for example, all of which droop significantly at the "wrong" end of the spectrum (a portion of the curves that we normally omit because it is close to flat but include here)—but is particularly noticeable in the RIAA equalization curve. Some drop in low-end response is common on budget products; the Sylvania's curve is down by more than 15 dB at 20 Hz and looks like a low-filter curve. To give it the benefit of any possible doubt we might point out that such a curve is an excellent rumble preventative; but if it is intentional, 60 Hz seems a high frequency at which to begin rolloff. We should note too that the power bandwidth is surprisingly good for a unit with such poor frequency response.

A similar situation exists in the tuner section of the receiver. Some minor peculiarities aside (see the high-frequency behavior in the left channel) the FM response and separation curves are excellent. We have encountered 10-kHz harmonic distortion measurements even higher than those shown here on some extremely fine components; as we've pointed out on those occasions, the 10-kHz measurements reflect electrical behavior rather than audible performance since the harmonic products of 10 kHz all are beyond audibility. The remaining harmonic distortion figures average about 1%—a barely respectable figure on the surface of things but, as we shall see, a contributory factor in what turns out to be the tuner section's least attractive attribute. Other figures in this group also are no better than so-so—ignoring the good capture ratio, which we have discussed already. Selectivity and S/N ratio certainly are acceptable, suppression of the 19-kHz pilot and 38-kHz subcarrier are minimal. The real trouble with the tuner section becomes apparent in the quieting curves. While the raw sensitivity numbers suggest adequate or better performance, the curves themselves flatten out too

soon. Mono quieting descends to only about 40 dB over most of the operating range—performance that can be described as no better than fair. The mono curve is in fact the poorest we have seen in a long time. In stereo the curve barely gets below 30 dB, which must be counted as poor; we have yet to measure worse stereo quieting. The lab double-checked these figures with a second sample and got very similar results. Much of the unwanted signal producing these poor quieting figures appears to be distortion, which therefore presumably is higher at 400 Hz (the signal frequency at which the quieting curves are made) than it is at 1 kHz (shown in the distortion table).

The front panel is of fairly standard design. The tuning meter centers (imprecisely on the sample we used in the home) for FM tuning, shows maximum signal strength in AM tuning. There are knobs for balance, treble, bass, and volume; buttons for tape monitor, AC power, and mode (mono/stereo), plus input selection (FM, AM, phono, and aux); lever on/off switches for loudness, FM mute, high filter, low filter, remote speakers, and main speakers. The tuning "knob" is a horizontal knurled wheel.

On the back panel are two accessory AC outlets, both unswitched. Screws that accept spade lugs or bare wires are used for 300-ohm FM-antenna and grounding connections; no provision is made for an external AM antenna or 75-ohm FM lead-in. All the remaining connections are pin jacks—including those for the speakers. We have seen such jacks used in compacts and occasionally to handle extension-speaker outputs from components. At background-music levels or with relatively short wiring runs they may be adequate. Since the mating connectors—which normally are used only for low-level signals—are difficult to use with the heavy wiring needed in speaker hookups that handle higher current levels or longer runs, they seem a poor choice for the main speaker leads in our opinion. There are three pairs of speaker jacks: main, remote, and "PQ-4." This last is described in the rather sketchy owner's material (it can't be called a manual) as a "matrix system [that] gives the effect of four-channel sound." The schematic shows this feature to consist of a pair of back-channel connections driven from the front-channel signals via a resistor in the ground return. A PQ-4 switch allows you to turn off these back speakers; the main speakers (and the remote speakers) continue to be fed directly from the power amplifier with this switch in either position.

The other pin jacks on the back panel are for tape-recording output, tape-play input, aux input, and phono input. There are two pairs for phono, selectable by a back-panel switch; a second switch alters phono input characteristics depending on whether you are using a magnetic cartridge or a ceramic.

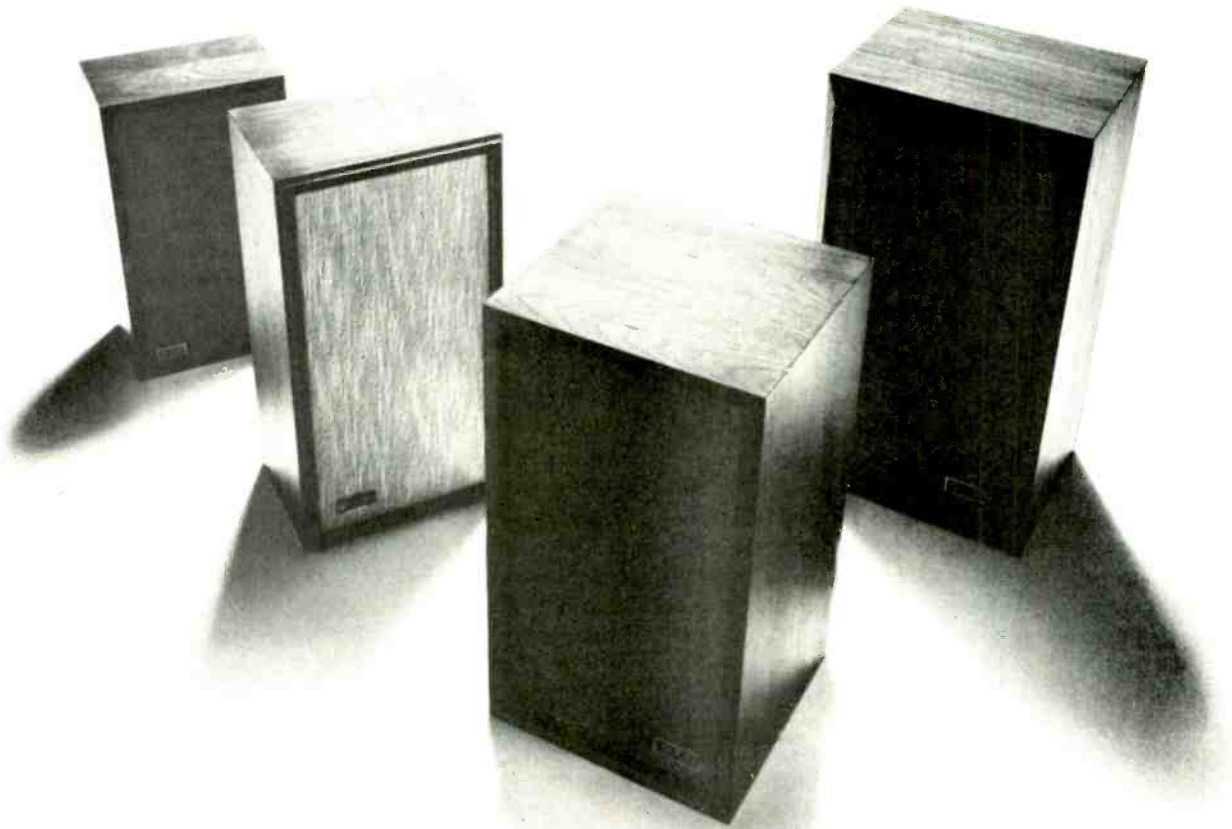
Earlier this year, in reviewing a receiver from Magnavox, another manufacturer with a longer history in consoles and compacts than in components, we described the product as a "near miss" by component standards. The Sylvania might also be so described, but the miss is not nearly so near. In particular the frequency-response measurements and those for FM quieting would require an unusually lenient interpretation of expected standards to be considered adequate. The comparison between this unit and the others mentioned in the Sylvania ad is to that extent invalid, therefore, and we can't agree that the CR-2743A "gives you the most stereo receiver" for the money.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

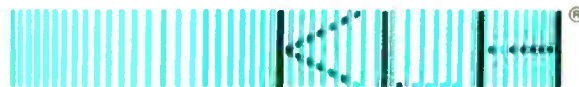
The classics from KLH. Four bookshelf loudspeakers of such extraordinary quality that each has set the standard of excellence in its price range. Pictured to the far left, our popular little Thirty-Two (\$55.00†). Next, one of the best selling loudspeakers in the country, the Seventeen (\$79.95†). Up front, everybody's favorite, the Six (\$139.95†). And finally, our most spectacular bookshelf model, the Five (\$199.95†). If you really

want to know what KLH is all about, we suggest you listen to any one or all of these fine loudspeakers. And when you do, we're sure you'll agree that KLH is about the best thing to happen to bookshelves since books.

For more information, visit your KLH dealer or write to KLH Research and Development Corp., 30 Cross Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.



## What's a bookshelf without the classics?



KLH RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORP.  
30 Cross St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139

†Suggested retail prices—slightly higher in the South and West.

CIRCLE 31 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

A black and white photograph of a hand holding a CD case in a library. The hand is wearing a watch and a patterned sleeve. The CD case is titled 'H.M.S. PINAFÖRE' and features an illustration of a ship. The background shows shelves filled with CD cases. The text 'The Curious Case of' is overlaid in a large, bold, pink font.

# The Curious Case of

# the Open-Reel Revival

by William L. Slatkin

*Last-ditch efforts to save this medium have given it new vitality. But it is still not out of danger.*

A FEW YEARS BACK all tape-industry pundits seemed agreed that the days of the open reel were numbered. Sales figures showed cartridges (for a while, even four-track cartridges) and cartridge equipment booming, with cassettes rising fast. Open-reel recorded tapes, never big sellers, were slipping; and even the open-reel recorder was said to be on its way out of the home. Jack Trux, then a marketing executive with Ampex Corp.—and as such a major industry figure—was fond of saying that the cassette equipment, as it improved, would nibble away at one price category of open-reel equipment after another. First the \$200 class would fall to the cassette. That's already happened, of course. Then the cassette would begin work on the \$300 class. That too is happening. Before many years had gone by, Trux and others seemed to believe, open reels would be synonymous only with studio recording. And the denuded open-reel shelves (where you can find them at all) in most recorded-tape departments from Sam Goody in Manhattan to San Francisco's Tower Records would suggest that Trux was right.

Yet consider what's been happening in recent months. RCA has returned (via Magtec processing) to the open-reel field after a lapse of several years. Commercial producers like Ampex and Columbia, as well as sales operations like New York's Barclay-Crocker, have found an active mail-order trade in open reels. Ampex has launched both a major program (combining a new tape formulation with Dolby-B processing) to reduce the noise in its open-reel product and a new series of Ampex-label budget classics in which a Dolby-B open reel sells at or below the going price of a stereo LP. Vanguard, after introducing the first quadrasonic open-reel tapes four years ago and then taking a recess, has recently again begun to add new titles; now there are more than a half-dozen reels available with all four channels Dolby-B processed. Ampex also has begun adding quadrasonic titles (without Dolby), drawing on the masters of companies (like London) that have yet to issue their first quadrasonic discs.

Teac, meanwhile, has come out with a convertible stereo/quadrasonic Dolby-B noise-reduction unit, and demand for the TC-3340 quadrasonic open-reel unit is said to be running well

ahead of availability. Other manufacturers of premium open-reel equipment also seem to be finding the demand as great as ever—or greater. In fact when HIGH FIDELITY prepared an article on open-reel equipment one year ago it was shocked to discover that, though low-priced units were disappearing, the total number of recorders expected on the market in the fall of 1972 was *greater* than it had been in the previous year.

### What's It All About?

As recently as 1968, according to Ampex Stereo Tapes, ten per cent of the money spent for recorded music purchased open-reel tapes. That was the same level at which consumers were buying recordings on cassettes. Of course, tape was then just beginning to challenge discs as a popular recorded format, and most of the dollars for tapes came from young people who bought the eight-track and four-track issues for their automobile cartridge players. It was these fans of "convenience music" in fact who dictated the trend from then on, and the record and tape companies followed that lead. Although the business of selling taped music has increased substantially every year since 1968, that growth has continued at the expense of open-reel recordings. Last year, open reels accounted for a mere one per cent of the dollars changing hands for music recorded on tape.

Students of economics may recognize the symptoms of a classic pattern. For the local record dealer, the secret to success is fast turnover. So the growing demand for records, cassettes, and cartridges influenced him to channel more of his limited funds and floor space into the merchandise that was moving best, and his open-reel department was neglected. The burgeoning business in cassettes and cartridges conveyed a clear message to retailers—a message that was passed on to manufacturers, who began overlooking the open-reel format when selecting the ways in which their masters would be copied for the marketplace.

Is there any wonder that hard-core open-reel

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*Mr. Slatkin is a public relations executive (and free-lance author) who was formerly with Ampex Corp.*

# Open-Reel Revival

users—both rock fanciers and classical buffs—began recording their own albums from FM broadcasts or borrowed discs? The practice seems a perfectly reasonable way to build an open-reel library. At the same time it fuels the fire that threatens to devour the open-reel tape business.

## The Quality Crunch

To this gloomy picture, add the problem of product quality. With the growth in demand for recorders at \$500 and up has come a concomitant demand for near perfection in the commercially produced tapes to be played on them. Thus for the few companies struggling to keep open-reel recording alive, the challenge has been to reverse the economics of the past and simultaneously to improve the quality of the products.

Perhaps the most obvious problem in the area of sound quality is the reluctance of recording companies to part with the original master tapes once their disc masters have been cut. In most cases the master goes into the vault and the tape producer is furnished a copy for duplication. Naturally, minor distortions introduced during production of intermasters are automatically copied into the duplicates offered for sale. In some instances preparation of these intermasters can be downright sloppy. Processors cite poor signal levels and inconsistencies in the use of Dolby equipment as among the unpleasant surprises to be found in the intermasters they receive.

This situation seems unlikely to change. Both the recording companies and tape producers consider most errors introduced during the master copying process to be insignificant. Consequently, tape producers are focusing their resources on the areas where they have total control—and with considerable success.

At Ampex, for instance, this has meant closer attention to mechanical adjustments and to signal and biasing levels on the duplicating line. In addition, the company is installing new copying equipment in order to reduce unwanted noise and distortion and to eliminate the speed variations that sometimes occur during the duplicating process.

Magtec, which produces open-reel copies exclusively—for such labels as RCA, Reprise, Elektra, and United Artists—maintains a policy of following precise tolerances with respect to mechanical and signal performance. Several tapes from each production run are monitored from beginning to end to verify their compliance with those standards. The company claims that it also monitors all intermasters received from the recording companies

and refuses to accept those that don't meet required standards.

But better quality control is only the beginning. New technologies in low-noise recording and in tape formulations ("Ampex 2" for example) regularly are being applied to open-reel production lines. Initially, the Dolby-B process had been applied successfully to cassette recordings; until recently it was ignored by open-reel processors. Now Ampex lists more than fifty Dolby-processed reels at present and promises to issue several more throughout the year. Of course the degree to which Dolby B improves the signal-to-noise ratio of open-reel recordings depends on the equipment and the judgment of the listener—and, more important, on the quality of the intermasters from which the copies were processed.

According to officials at Magtec, the noise level of recordings played at 7½ ips isn't significant enough to warrant Dolby processing. Yet Ampex maintains that its Dolbyized open-reel tapes yield an over-all improvement of 15 dB in dynamic range when played on recorders equipped with Dolby-B decoders. Both seem to be overstating their cases. Assuming a good master to begin with, the noise reduction provided by the new Ampex Dolby processing is clearly audible. But Dolby Laboratories itself claims an improvement of only 10 dB for the B process.

Most producers of recorded tapes, incidentally, maintain that the perfect recording is not technically or practically feasible on any mechanical or electromagnetic format. But they believe the quarter-inch tape, moving at 7½ ips, offers the best potential for reducing recording/playback imperfections to an imperceptible level. And they seem determined to achieve that goal on a consistent basis.

While the influence of new technologies offers a more promising future for open-reel recordings, it may take nothing less than broad acceptance of discrete quadraphonics to insure a permanently healthy existence for open reels. Until recently, only Q-8 recordings were making any real stand against encoded discs and broadcasts in the battle between "pure" and matrixed quadraphonics. Now open-reel versions of discrete recordings are showing up in the Ampex and Magtec catalogues, at last offering something to listen to besides those stock quad tape samplers.

Between Ampex and Magtec there are roughly three dozen quadraphonic titles available on open reel—offering a choice of rock, classical, and middle-of-the-road. And the companies say new titles will be issued each year. Of course, for the listener who insists on full quadraphonic channel sep-



aration and top fidelity, the four-channel open-reel tapes and equipment offer the only way to go.

### Refinding the Market

Even with these encouraging signs, tape producers anticipate an uphill battle to keep open reel alive and well. While 700,000 cassette and cartridge machines were purchased last year (nearly double the number of cassette and cartridge units sold the previous year), about 400,000 new open-reel units were purchased—ten per cent fewer than the year before. It's interesting to note, however, that though the number of open-reel units has dropped, the total cost of units sold remained approximately constant, which means that purchasers of open-reel equipment are opting for more deluxe models.

Meanwhile, tape companies persist in their willingness to stand behind the open-reel format. Their efforts to build direct-to-consumer sales are calculated to reverse the economic forces that have thus far prevailed. And they're putting up the money for distribution of a broad range of titles so that individual tastes can be satisfied. A significant portion of Ampex and Columbia open-reel recordings are sold through the mail. This puts the companies in touch with a reasonably large market, and eliminates the apathetic middleman. A similar approach is being taken by Magtec.

Although a sizable percentage of the premium open-reel recorders sold appear to be going to rock enthusiasts (including the musicians themselves), Barclay-Crocker (the only mail-order house we know of that offers *only* open reels) finds surprising strength in the classics market. It says that during the first three months of 1973, 79 per cent of its sales were classical, 38 per cent being opera, whose length seems so suitable to being reproduced via open-reel format. These are startlingly high figures by comparison to those in other recorded media.

The Ampex listing of about 1,600 open-reel selections is heavy on the side of classical titles. Nearly 1,000 open-reel titles are available from Magtec, most of them rock and middle-of-the road. Furthermore, the companies are promoting mail-order business through special offers in their ads and catalogues. Magtec issues discount coupons to recorder manufacturers for use as an added inducement to equipment buyers. Thus, the recorder customer receives, along with his new hardware, the privilege of purchasing a number of recordings at a special rate.

Another effort to spur interest in open-reel recordings is Ampex's own budget line of tape albums competitively priced with stereo discs. The

company recently released more than a dozen classical titles, featuring lesser-known European orchestras, on the 7½-ips format, and priced at \$5.95—\$1.50 to \$2.00 less than its previous open-reel classical albums.

Certainly these efforts promise to broaden the choice for those who prefer their music on open-reel tape. Yet many selections available from the commercial duplicators can nonetheless be acquired by off-the-air or off-disc recording at home. And it's not just a question of cost; the producers of open-reel recordings *have* neglected product quality during the last few years. But while condemning them for this oversight, one should also recognize that purveyors of recorded music are in a risky business. The manufacturer of recordings is a wild-catter who relies on guesswork to select the performances that will be duplicated and offered to the marketplace in large quantity. Each wrong guess represents a substantial loss; unsold albums aren't worth the tape they're recorded on.

Meanwhile, artists' royalties, licensing fees, and sales commissions devour most of the money paid for a disc or tape. And if the tape processors had to play it close to the bone in the mid-Sixties, imagine the consequences of tape bootlegging, which hijacked perhaps as much as one third of the business from legitimate producers in the late Sixties and very early Seventies! If tape producers have been cutting back some expenditures used to insure consistent open-reel quality, they were merely trimming a clearly unpromising part of the business just to finance continued survival. But now a stronger economy and more stringent legal protection against bootlegging have brightened the picture. So we come full circle: These producers willing to devote valuable resources to the revitalization of the open-reel format have indeed been paying more attention to product quality.

There's little doubt, whatever the future of open reels, that a few of the companies always will offer at least minimal selections on the format, if only as a prestige service. But if open reel truly experiences a revival, its story of success will be an ironic tale in an age when business has been so severely criticized for ignoring the consumer.

There are, in fact, a handful of companies taking considerable risks, against economic odds, to satisfy the needs of music buyers with open-reel equipment—hardly an easy bunch to please. The next move would appear to be up to the music buyers themselves. While sales of the new open-reel products so far seem encouraging, it will be the ability of these tapes to continue selling that will determine the quality and quantity we can expect in the future. ●

A black and white photograph of a hand reaching for a cassette tape on a shelf. The hand is wearing a watch. The shelf is filled with many other cassette tapes. The background is dark, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting the hand and the tape. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**Cassettes  
and  
Cartridges -**

**Should You  
Have  
One or  
Both?**

by Bryan Stanton

THE COEXISTENCE of cartridges and cassettes in this polarized world seems to raise the question: Which one will "win"? Sound buffs obviously are rooting for the cassette. It is far easier to use in recording, and what with Dolby B noise-reduction and improved tape formulations (to say nothing of its mechanics, which are far less demanding on the tape and drive system), it has overcome its dictation-equipment origins and now rivals the stereo disc in sound quality. The eight-track cartridge is basically clumsy, can't be rewound (or even fast-forwarded in much equipment), introduces three (rather than the cassette's one) breaks into the stereo program, and seems to defy the kind of wholesale upgrading that the cassette has undergone. But the cartridge has charms of its own—particularly in an automobile, where it's easier to slip into the player slot without taking your mind off the road.

The problem that plagues the consumer and helps to sharpen his sense of a presumed competition between the two convenience formats is that he would like the best of both worlds in whichever format he invests in: the technical advantages of the cassette, the cartridge's ready availability in automobile equipment and for quadraphonics, and the combined catalogues of recorded music in both. That is, he would like the recordings he makes at home to sound as good as discs but be playable in his automobile, and he would like to have the choice—even though he may not exercise it—of everything from pops (of which a greater variety can be bought in cartridge form) to opera (in which the cassette does far better).

Cassette equipment has been announced for automobiles, yet the promise remains largely unfulfilled judging by dealers' shelves and mail-order catalogues. Why? Wouldn't the substitution of the cassette for the cartridge in the automobile remove the last barrier to single-system convenience tapes? Or does the quadraphonic cartridge really have so much appeal—and the cassette so little chance of successful adaptation to quadraphonics—that the presumed pre-eminence of the cassette is prevented from asserting itself?

The answers to these and related questions are to be found not in talking to engineers (who have some valid ideas on why one might be better than the other), but to marketing executives (who know what sells, if not necessarily why). Convenience tape formats are essentially unlike the open reel, which today is virtually the private preserve of the

audiophile where home use is concerned and which therefore caters to his needs. The introduction of both stereo cartridges and stereo cassettes was intended from the first as a way of making tape palatable to a much wider market, and it is that wider market that now largely dictates the course that the convenience formats will take.

### The Tyranny of Numbers

While cassette equipment has a substantial share of the audio market, cartridge players are selling in the millions. Both are solidly entrenched in their respective application areas: the cartridge in the car, the boat, the mobile home, even the budget-priced compact system for the nonmobile home; the cassette in the better home equipment or in equipment for the customer who has a prime interest in recording (as opposed to one who sees recording simply as a means of providing fodder for his cartridge playback equipment). The movement of one format into the domain of the other is more a matter of expansion of the total tape market than of the triumph of either segment of it.

For example there does seem to be some growth in automobile cassette equipment at the moment. But 88 per cent of automobile installations still are for cartridges, and the remainder appear to be largely the result of cassette users who insist on bringing their favorite medium with them when they travel. These installations represent a growth for cassettes but not a loss of cartridges. And if more and more recordings are made available on both (rather than just cartridges), the only conclusion to be drawn is that tape duplicators now find that cassettes sell better than they once did.

Again, don't equate the espousal of the cassette by the audio industry with the cassette's over-all rising popularity. The audio industry is, after all, comparatively small. The most optimistic sales forecasters for the component high fidelity industry this year—excluding tape equipment—are expecting a volume of approximately \$700 million. This is peanuts compared to the billions in gross income expected by the entire home entertainment industry. Just about every component manufacturer is small change alongside the RCAs, Admirals, and Zeniths. Most of these mammoth companies today

*As the editor of High Fidelity News, Bryan Stanton writes extensively on audio topics.*

# Cassettes and Cartridges

offer some kind of cartridge equipment and often cassette equipment as well. Mighty few offer anything that can, even with charity, be called component stereo; and though one or two have pictures of open-reel units in their brochures, the actual product is often as elusive as the unicorn.

One reason the "big" market remains content with the cartridge for automobile use is that it will play continuously in units that sell for as little as \$50 in brand-name products, or less among private-label or off-brand offerings. So far the cheapest car cassette player with automatic reverse, to achieve similarly continuous play, costs approximately \$100.

Another reason continues to be the available catalogue of recorded music. Ampex Stereo Tapes, perhaps the largest single factor in the tape-duplication field, says that the eight-track cartridge outsells the cassette five to one. General Recorded Tape, another major in the field, says that fully 80 per cent of its recorded tape sales are in cartridges, 18 per cent in cassettes.

A GRT executive explains that this split is fairly uniform from one music category to another, with two exceptions: "Bubble gum" music—so named for its heavy preteen following (Bobby Sherman, David Cassidy, *et al.*)—is most popular in cassette form and so are the classics. These exceptions should surprise nobody. The first is explained by the large number of battery-powered cassette players, recorders, and radio/recorders that are almost as much a part of the preteen scene as acne remedies and dirty sneakers; the second appears to be the natural concomitant of the long-lived love affair between classical music and quality sound reproduction—of which the cassette today is so much a part.

However, these figures can be misconstrued—indeed it's possible that they have been by mass-market equipment manufacturers. Since cartridge equipment had a head start on its cassette counterparts and has continued to sell in greater numbers in all categories except battery portables and home components over the intervening years, there are far more cartridge units out there waiting to be fed. Tape sales, therefore, represent *past* popularity of the two formats more than present predilections where new equipment purchases are being considered. To the equipment manufacturer interested in the largest possible sales volume, the overwhelming pre-eminence of the cartridge may inhibit what could otherwise be a profitable pursuit of the cassette market.

Take RCA—which admittedly has made a very poor showing in cassette duplication. Reportedly its tape sales in this area run to some \$1 million a year, while it sells \$50 million in cartridges. While admitting that "other companies put more push be-

hind the cassette and perhaps had more success." one RCA spokesman shrugs the matter off with the statement, "The cassette never really established itself." In the face of such an attitude, RCA can't be taken as a likely manufacturer—or booster—of cassette equipment.

## Enter Quadraphonics

It's still too early to tell what quadraphonics will mean to the mass market. Certainly in terms of the numbers game on which that market is based it's hardly more than a cipher so far. But buyers and manufacturers alike are aware that discrete four-channel cartridges already are a reality, while at this writing cassettes have yet to offer more than a series of "capability demonstrations."

There is some degree of stereo/quadraphonic compatibility in Q-8 playback equipment, most of which will switch automatically between modes depending on which type of cartridge is inserted into the transport slot. A number of units will record in two channels, play in either two or four. A few are stereo/quadraphonic in either recording or playback. But quadraphonic cartridges will not reproduce properly on stereo-only players: You have the choice of hearing *either* the front two channels or the back two in any recording.

This awkwardness could be solved if the quadraphonic program were matrix-encoded down to two channels (as it is for SQ and QS discs) of course. This approach is one that has been tried in efforts to produce a quadraphonic cassette, but it has two strikes against it. First, it no longer represents discrete quadraphonics—and discrete reproduction has been touted as a signal virtue of taped quadraphonics as opposed to the bulk of presently available discs. Second, it puts a premium on phase coherence between channels of the tape format, and therefore on exact azimuth alignment of the playback head—something hard to guarantee in low-cost equipment in general and in the movable-head configurations necessary to change cartridge tracks in particular.

Two manufacturers do appear to be on the brink of offering quadraphonic cassette equipment, however. Astrocom already has begun manufacturing units that, like their open-reel counterparts, use the entire tape width to hold the four channels—in one direction, of course; the catch here is that so far no tape duplicators have expressed any interest in making quadraphonic cassettes for that head configuration. JVC is said to be readying a design that splits the present stereo cassette track widths in half, so that quadraphonic recordings can be put onto the cassette in both directions, just like stereo recordings. Until recently tape duplicators have ex-

pressed serious reservations about maintaining the necessarily tight production tolerances for the JVC format (which has been the subject of capability demonstrations by a number of other companies as well), but JVC spokesmen now claim the production problems have been solved.

### **The Cartridge and the Recordist**

In spite of the mechanical annoyances of recording on cartridges (only careful timing will tell you when the end of a "program" is coming up and the head will shift to the next), cartridge recorders suddenly are commanding much more attention than they have in the past. Home recorders have been around almost as long as cartridges, but until recently most either were of poor quality or—at least by contrast to the \$25-to-\$100 price category in which most players fall—seemed excessively expensive to the cartridge user. Last year, however, with only a handful of new recorders being offered, the idea started to catch on. Now just about every cartridge equipment manufacturer has at least one or two models that will record, and more are expected—with improvements.

The rapidly rising number of eight-track blanks sold documents this new interest. Among the features that are making the difference and should therefore become increasingly common in future models are the fast-forward control, the elapsed-time indicator, the automatic end-of-track ejector (to prevent re-recording over the beginning of your music when the track sequence has come full cycle on the endless loop), some sort of pause control, and a system that will cue up the loop automatically at the foil strip, so that you can begin your recording "from the top" without having to search for it. Some of these features already are fairly standard on the premium units.

### **What's Next?**

For sheer sound quality—whether from commercial recordings or home tapes—the cassette looks as though it will remain the leader in the predictable future. An important factor is Dolby processing. All of Columbia's recorded cassettes and many of Ampex's now are Dolby-B processed, and more cassette equipment with the Dolby circuit built in appears all the time. The rate of introduction should increase, if anything, as IC chips for the Dolby circuit become available. (It's been "any day now" for some months, but the ICs may actually be available by the time you read this.) Craig has a Dolby cassette deck for the automobile; Teac plans to have one next fall.

The concept of Dolby noise reduction in a car is open to debate, however. There are those who feel that the normal ambient noise in a moving vehicle is enough to mask tape noise: that an eight-track cartridge will sound "noiseless" (and even "flutterless") until you take it into the quiet of your living room. RCA has found that it could record a dynamic range of only 18 dB if the music was to remain audible throughout in a moving car; increase the loud-to-soft spread and passengers complained that they couldn't hear the quiet passages. Since even very inexpensive equipment can easily produce a dynamic range (that is, a signal-to-noise ratio) of 30 dB or better, what's the point of adding Dolby circuitry (at additional expense) to squeeze out 10 dB more? (One company exec, who asked, understandably, not to be identified, confessed that his firm is thinking of putting out a Dolby unit for the car, even though the idea is "silly," in order to catch the unknowledgeable if conspicuous consumer who comes into a store asking for "the best.")

Whether to accommodate the driver who likes music while he's parked, or simply to offer the competitive edge of a "prestige" product, manufacturers will be offering Dolby B in automotive cassette decks in the future, however. And perhaps in cartridge equipment. Persistent rumors, persistently denied, have it that Ampex has been experimenting in this area. Craig has indicated that it would like to follow its Dolby cassette unit with one for cartridges. And this magazine's readers regularly write to inquire about Dolby home cartridge equipment. So there are some whiffs of smoke, if no fire yet in sight.

Dolby or no, noise reduction is being achieved in both formats (though not by anything like Dolby's 10 dB) through the use of new low-noise tapes. Though by far the greatest energy has been expended in developing formulations expressly for cassettes, these efforts have produced byproducts for the cartridge, and recently the cartridge itself is being given an extra measure of special attention by tape manufacturers. All this work—plus improvements in head design for both duplication and home equipment—adds up to an across-the-board improvement in sonic quality from the convenience formats.

What all this does *not* add up to, however, is a clear suggestion that one format will take the market away from the other (or which might be the winner). While the inroads that both have made on the open reel are both fairly steady and almost predictable, the inroads of the cassette on the cartridge (as predicted a few years back by cassette proponents) appear to be largely illusory. Just as tapes and discs have every right to expect coexistence over the predictable future, so cassettes and cartridges both seem to have their natural niches. ●

A black and white photograph of a hand holding a CD case in a library aisle. The hand is wearing a metal watch and a patterned sleeve. The CD case is titled 'STOKOWSKI'S GREATEST HITS' and features a portrait of a man. The background shows rows of bookshelves filled with books and CD cases. The text 'Springboards to a Basic Tape' is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters on the right side of the image.

# Springboards to a Basic Tape

## Classical Library

by R. D. Darrell

THE RECORDED-TAPE BUSINESS has managed, in only a couple of decades, to grow and develop—never as fantastically as some proponents extravagantly predicted, but still impressively enough to account for around a third of the total U.S. “record”-industry sales today. And that proportion seems certain to rise to a full half before long. Recorded tapes clearly exert powerful appeals and promise rich rewards.

To recognize this is not to claim that tapes will eventually supersede discs, or that they are superior to discs in all, or even most, respects. An examination of the two media reveals not only highly distinctive differences but basic similarities.

It's partly because recorded tape is the newer, faster-growing medium that it has been more flexible in adapting itself to meet the diverse needs of its users—even when these varied so widely that three incompatible formats became necessary—not out of designers' perversity or manufacturers' greed, but in order to meet specific consumer demands. The original open-reel format remains unsurpassed not only for serious recording purposes involving considerable editing but for playing back lengthy works with a minimum of distracting side-break interruptions, and for optimal technical quality (by commercial production standards, at least). The endless-loop 8-track cartridge was developed primarily for use in automobiles, where a minimum of driver distraction is a prerequisite. This format remains essentially unchallenged in this area due to the fillip given it by Q-8. The cassette, like the cartridge, was designed to avoid all need for touching the tape while achieving the most favorable ratio of playing time vs. size and weight, with particular emphasis on suitability for portable playback equipment.

Don't expect perfection from tapes, however. You can't get really good sound out of tiny portable or automobile speakers; and you should also remember that only the best players enable a cassette tape (only  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. wide and moving at only  $1\frac{1}{8}$  ips) to

offer any real competition to discs and  $7\frac{1}{2}$ -ips reels. Remember too that 8-track cartridges, while they can be less noisy than un-Dolbyized cassettes, are not free of tape hiss, occasional adjacent-channel spill-overs, and above all the “breaks” involved in program transitions, all of which may be tolerable in carborne listening, but are intolerable in the quiet of one's living room. (It's for such reasons—especially the arbitrary breaks in classical music movements and the mechanical problems, including the lack of a rewind feature—that I can't recommend the endless-loop format for use anywhere except in its natural mobile habitat.) Audiophiles too cannot expect even the best commercially produced (by high-speed copying)  $7\frac{1}{2}$ -ips reel tapes to meet the topmost technical qualities of which directly recorded, or same-speed copied, tapes are capable. And brace yourself, just as you do with discs, to encounter not only performances and master recordings open to adverse criticism but also occasional processing defects—some similar to disc flaws, some exclusive to defective tapes.

It's my experience that the neophyte high-fidelity buff gets started most easily and effectively by greedily grabbing—initially—as *much* (in both programmatic range and quantity) as he can afford. That usually means concentrating at first on manufacturers' and series “samplers,” on anthology and reissue programs of all types, and elsewhere on budget-price releases and double-length programs at a cost less than twice the normal single-program list price. Next, I suggest examples of music, performers, or engineering techniques in current vogue: headline-makers, best-sellers, symphonic scorings of show and film hits—whatever's currently of special interest either to the public at large or to your circle of friends in particular. Then, with at least the rough nucleus of a collection chosen mainly under outside (price and popularity) in-

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*R. D. Darrell, HF's “Tape Deck” columnist since 1956, was one of the first discophiles to be interested in tape as a separate medium.*

fluences, you can respond more confidently to your own personal instincts, indulging your own taste-idiosyncrasies at will, but always favoring those composers and performers for whom you feel the strongest affinities. Then, of course, you'll no longer need specific "starter" suggestions, like those which follow, from me or anyone else.

### Cassette-Collection Starters

First, perhaps, two London Phase-4 Samplers (M 66607 and 66605) and a couple of Ampex's new budget series, say, the pair of C.P.E. Bach concertos and a batch of trumpet concertos (56006\* and 56013\*). Then some double-play releases: say, the Sir John Barbiroli "Close-Up" (Angel 4X2S 3750), Bernstein's Aaron Copland program (Columbia MGT 30071\*), the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 (Richter) and Violin Concerto (Ferras) (DG 3581 006), "Stokowski's Greatest Hits" and "The Lord's Prayer and Other Songs of Faith and Inspiration" (RCA RK 5072 and 5074), "The Best" of Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Stokowski (Vanguard 5701/2 through 5707/8). Classical selections given new mass-public fame via filmscores are featured in "Great Motion Picture Themes" (Angel 4XS 36813), selections from *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Columbia 16 11 0090), *Death in Venice* Mahler selections (DG 3300 113), and "Theme from *Sunday Bloody Sunday* and Other Great Mozart at the Movies" (RCA RK 1226). A special pitch to youngsters is made in "Joy: Great Composers' Hits for the 70's" (Columbia MT 31349\*), "Joy: Great Classics That Inspired the Great Pop and Rock Hits of the 60's and 70's" (RCA RK 1271), and the whole London Orphic Egg "Musical Head" series (M 56900, etc.). And for timid elders grateful for chaperoned tours through the standard repertory there are innumerable "Greatest Hits," "Best," "World's Favorites," etc. series (especially from Columbia and RCA) that balance the merit of "straight" performances by name artists against demerits for a chicken-in-parts butchering of the masterpieces excerpted. The best purists can say of them is to hope that *perhaps* such bite-size appetizers may tickle unformed tastes into craving more substantial nourishment.

### Cartridge-Collection Starters

8-track cartridge equivalents are available for most of the cassettes cited above (but not for Columbia's Bernstein/Copland and Deutsche Grammophon's Tchaikovsky concertos). While exclusive to the endless-loop format, the budget-priced RCA Victrola series is especially notable for its historical

\* indicates Dolbyized tape.

treasures featuring Toscanini (V8S 1009, 1021, 1023), Reiner (V8S 1007), etc. Apart from these, the most delightful musical traveling companions (for me, at least) are, on one hand, ultrafamiliar works for sing-alonging, hum-alonging, or whistle-alonging, and on the other, baroque-era masterpieces. You might start with the Gilbert & Sullivan spectacular (London Phase-4 M 95010) and Fritz Wunderlich's Lehár, etc. program (Capitol 8XP 8688), then go on to the strictly instrumental Pennario "Favorite Piano Classics" (Angel 8XS 36049), Ormandy's Tchaikovsky waltzes (Columbia 18 11 0078), the Osipov Balalaika Ensemble (Melodiya/Angel 8XS 40120 and Mercury MC8 90310), the Fennell/Paray "Heart of the March" (Mercury MCT 8 96000), Rubinstein's Chopin waltzes (RCA R8S 1071), and the Scots Guards' bagpipes-and-band "Amazing Grace" program (RCA P8S 2008). Your first baroque venture might well be Menuhin's Handel *Water Music* (Angel 8XS 36173). If you're also equipped for car or home quadraphony, your "must" first choice is the Vanguard "Surround Sound" sampler (L 71); to be followed by, say, Columbia's all-provocative trio of "Switched-On Bach," the Bernstein *Mass*, and Newman's Bach *Brandenburg Concertos* (MAQ 31018, QMA 31008, and QMA 31398), and RCA's sonic-show-piece trio of "The Fantastic Philadelphians," Vols. 1 and 2, and the Rubinstein/Ormandy Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2 (ART1 0002, 0017, and 0031).

### Open-Reel Collection Starters

There are reel equivalents of the London Phase-4 samplers, Ampex budget-series releases (the latter's open reels as well as cassettes are Dolbyized), and some but by no means all the other cassette and cartridge suggestions above. But unique to open reels are Ampex's extraordinary super-sampler series of three-hour, 3¾-ips "Astrotereo" programs. They're expensive (\$23.95 list) and demand up-to-date playback equipment (the lack of which in the past has given 3¾-ips tapings an undeserved bad name), but they provide an immense variety of music, performers, and engineering techniques as well as cross sections of the represented recording companies' catalogues: London's (CW 238), Vanguard's (CW 232, 228, etc.), Decca's (CW 231, 221, etc.) and Mercury/Philips' (CW 235, 230, etc.).

Reel audiophiles always will have a special weakness for stereo spectaculars, both to explore sonic frequency- and dynamic-range limits and to "demonstrate" the powers of reels (and their own home systems). Most of these are released in other formats too, but they're most likely to sound their best via 7½-ips tapes. One of these, the latest



# Which Tape Format- If Any?

There are a number of considerations listeners should take into account before making a choice of tape medium or format, particularly those who are mainly interested in classical music.

## Forget Tape and Stick to Disc:

If strict economy is a primary consideration—practically all discs cost less than their tape equivalents, more are budget-priced, more are remaindered at bargain discounts.

If you already have a large disc library and find it quite satisfactory.

If your tastes run to very old or very new music, chamber and solo recital programs well off the beaten repertory paths.

If you particularly need or prize the ability to pick out individual pieces or passages easily in a multi-selection program.

If tape hiss bothers you more than disc surface noise.

## Seriously Consider Starting a Tape Collection:

If you have suddenly acquired (by gift, etc.) appropriate stereo tape-playback equipment.

If you discover tape-swapping (with friends) or borrowing possibilities (from local libraries).

If you're worried about the durability of your frequently played discs.

If you're especially interested in lengthy works which you want to hear with minimal interruption. (Here open reels are the answer.)

If you want long-running background music that demands a minimum of attention ("Astrostereo" reels and 8-track cartridges) but do not want the distraction of record-changing pauses.

If you want music wherever you go (cartridges or cassettes).

If you want to try your hand at recording (cassettes or open reels).

If tape hiss bothers you less than disc surface noise, or if you want to capitalize on Dolby B to reduce tape hiss markedly (in Dolbyized cassettes) or practically completely (in Dolbyized reels).

If you want fully discrete (four independent channels) quadraphony (Q-8 cartridges now, Q reels coming).

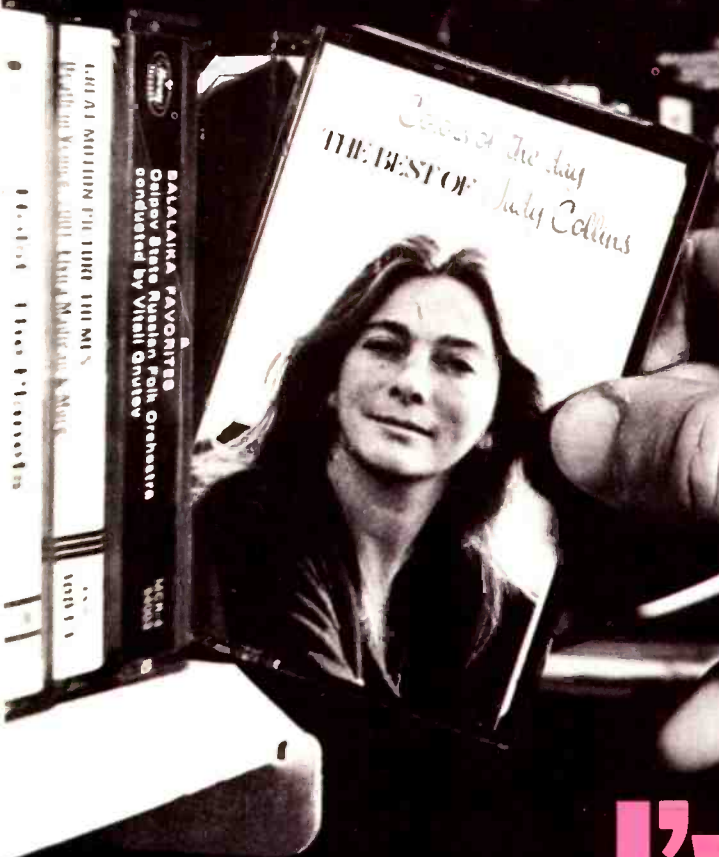
If you are fed up with the problem of tracking warped discs.

D'Oyly-Carte G & S *H.M.S. Pinafore* (London Phase-4 K 475066\*), also serves to introduce Ampex's fast-growing Dolbyized reel series while two others, the memorable Munch Saint-Saëns "Organ" Symphony No. 3 and Ormandy's recent Glière *Ilya Murometz* (RCA ERPA 2341 C and 3246 C), serve to introduce the new Magtec processing series. Other potent reel demos include: "Royal Fanfares at Versailles" and Steinberg's Holst *Planets* (DG L 9431 and L 3102); Munch's Offenbach *Gaité Parisienne* (London Phase-4 L 75011); and Haitink's Kodály *Háry János Suite* (Philips L 5015).

There are so many easily found double- and multiple-play reels, especially of big, and long, masterpieces, that you're unlikely to need any help in making your own choices. The same is also true of complete operas (the repertory where open reel is omnipotent), of course, but here I can't resist calling special attention to Richard Strauss's spellbinding *Der Rosenkavalier* in its most bewitching recorded version by Solti (London 1 90165).

If you've reached this big-work/big-price level (the three-reel *Rosenkavalier* set lists at \$29.95), it's highly doubtful that you need any further starter-collection help. For by this time you've surely become an avid reader of record (disc and tape) reviews and catalogues. If not, it's high time to begin. For the in-print tape repertory, all three formats are covered—if sometimes skimpily—in the *Harrison Tape Catalog* (bimonthly, \$4.50 a year from 143 West 20th St., New York City 10011) and the *Stereo Tape Catalog* of the various labels Ampex represents (50¢ yearly from P.O. Box 178, Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007). The indispensable *Schwann-1 Record & Tape Guide* (monthly, 85¢ a copy from dealers, or write for information to 137 Newbury St., Boston, Mass. 02116) includes only cassette, 8-track cartridge, and Q-8 cartridge entries along with their disc equivalents; while the open-reel repertory is featured exclusively in the quite detailed catalogue (\$1.00) with its bimonthly supplements issued by the dealers Barclay-Crocker, 11 Stone St., New York City 10004. ●

# Pop Tapes



*Best of the Day*  
THE BEST OF *Julie Collins*



BALATAKA FAVORITES  
Carpenter State Russian Folk Orchestra  
conducted by Vitali Goussiev

# I've Tried

by Mike Jahn

THE POP-MUSIC tape market, though a huge one, does not yet have the ear of the music industry to the same extent as do buyers of discs. Pop music still is made with the disc in mind, and producers apparently feel justified in doing anything they want to the music in order to cram it onto a cassette or 8-track cartridge. It's as if they were saying, "Well, the kids are going to listen to it on the way to McDonald's anyway, so why worry about programming and fidelity." Yet cartridge and cassette machines have become good enough to be legitimate components of a complete high fidelity system. How long will it be before manufacturers realize this and acknowledge that they are not only record companies, but tape companies as well? Who knows? All one can tell is that they haven't realized it yet.

In listening to the tape configurations of many noted pop albums, I was struck by several things. There is a maddening lack of consideration vis-à-vis programming, particularly on cartridges, where a three-minute song may be cut in half by the head-moving mechanism, or a shoddy song sequence may be hit upon in order to "solve" this problem. Cartridges also seem to present serious sonic problems to anyone listening on good-quality home equipment—usually an amount of static that accompanies any loud playing, especially in the bass range. This got so bad on some hard-rock cartridge tapes that they were at times almost unplayable. As R. D. Darrell points out in the preceding article, stereo cartridges are best restricted to use in your car, where ambient noise can mask much distortion. In fact, I would suggest to manufacturers that they include the sound of traffic in the background of all recorded cartridges, so that listeners at home don't get distracted by the lack of sonic quality. Yet quadraphonic cartridges present a different story. Recent developments are encouraging, and the prospects for the future are impressive. Even such early samples of Q-8 as I was able to find were thrilling. And with both cartridges and cassettes there is something childishly endearing about being able to carry your music with you, from home to car to wherever you are going, even if it is only to a local McDonald's.

The following twenty-plus-one pop recordings are those that struck me as being rather good on at least one, and sometimes more, of their tape versions. All are available in cartridge and cassette; a

few in open reel as well. They were picked to give the fledgling collector of pop tapes a guide to what is available of quality.

**JUDY COLLINS:** *Colors of the Day: The Best of Judy Collins.* Judy Collins, vocals and guitar; instrumental accompaniment. (*Someday Soon; Both Sides Now; Sons of;* nine more.) ELEKTRA: 8-track cartridge, ET 85030; cassette, TC 55030.

**JUDY COLLINS:** *In My Life.* Judy Collins, vocals and guitar; instrumental accompaniment. (*Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues; Pirate Jenny; Suzanne; La Colombe—The Dove; Marat/Sade;* six more.) ELEKTRA: 8-track cartridge, ET8 74027; cassette, TC5 74027.

Anthologies of "best hits" usually are not carefully programmed for song sequence, but strangely enough, "Colors of the Day" is one that has been put together intelligently. It's a bright little collection of Ms. Collins' best-known songs from the period since she dropped the old folk ballads; the song-to-song flow on the disc version is excellent. But as for the cartridge programming, few tunes are left unturned in the course of fitting what was originally designed for two twenty-minute sides onto four ten-minute programs. Oddly enough, there even is a slight amount of shifting on the cassette version, but of a less damaging nature.

"In My Life" is a pop recording classic. Judy Collins changes totally from traditional folk balladeer to contemporary art-song artist. Many of the songs are soft, flowing, and sensitive, but thankfully they don't appear in any overwhelmingly important sequence. This is fortunate since the order of the songs is thoroughly rearranged in the cartridge version. Only one tune is followed by the same selection as appears on the disc version (*Pirate Jenny* by *Suzanne*). This random shuffling prevents the songs from being interrupted by a sole-noid click, a pause, and program change, an occurrence that well could be disastrous in the case of Ms. Collins. The cassette has the same song sequence as the disc.

Of all the cartridges I sampled for this article, I found the sound quality was best on these two. Whereas in most cases the quality is better on cassette than on cartridge, here there is no readily noticeable difference. Judy Collins in the past five years has had a tremendous impact on the course of modern folk music, and on the course of pop music as well. These recordings are brilliant examples of the reasons why.

**ALICE COOPER:** *Billion Dollar Babies.* Alice Cooper, vocals, harmonica; Neal Smith, drums; Michael Bruce, guitar, keyboards; Dennis Dunaway, bass; Glen Buxton, guitar. (*Hello! Hurray!; Raped and Freezin'; Elected;* seven more.) WARNER BROS.: 8-track cartridge M8 2685; cassette M5 2685.

We must continue to assume that artists still make recordings primarily with the disc in mind. Tapes come later. The problems this causes show up mainly in the

*Mike Jahn's book, Rock, will be published by Quadrangle Book Division of the New York Times this fall.*

programming. "Billion Dollar Babies," for example, was carefully programmed as a disc. There is an opening song, *Hello! Hurray!*, and a finale, *I Love the Dead*, designed to coincide with the sequence of Alice Cooper's 1973 stage show. The cassette version duplicates the well-thought-out disc programming, and with at least tolerable sonic fidelity. But I cannot recommend the cartridge version even to Alice's most passionate fans. The total disruption of the programming ruins the recording. All the hard, up-tempo songs, for instance, end up on one of the four programs.

There are other problems with the cartridge. If most cartridges tend to distort when played on decent home equipment, "Billion Dollar Babies" is among the worst. The cartridge sounded like an old mono 45 played over a distant AM radio station—static and all.

**BOB DYLAN:** *Bringing It All Back Home*. Bob Dylan, vocals, guitar, and harmonica; instrumental accompaniment. (*Subterranean Homesick Blues*; *On the Road Again*; *Mr. Tambourine Man*; eight more.) COLUMBIA: 8-track cartridge, 18 10 0024; cassette, 16 10 0024.

**BOB DYLAN:** *Highway 61 Revisited*. Bob Dylan, vocals, guitar, and harmonica; instrumental accompaniment. (*Desolation Row*; *Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues*; *Like a Rolling Stone*; six more.) COLUMBIA: 8-track cartridge, 18 10 0064; cassette, 16 10 0372.

**BOB DYLAN:** *Blonde on Blonde*. Bob Dylan, vocals, guitar, and harmonica; instrumental accompaniment. (*Rainy Day Women #12 & #35*; *Memphis Blues Again*; *Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands*; eleven more.) COLUMBIA: 8-track cartridge, 18 20 0012; cassette, 16 20 0012.

These three recordings are Dylan's best. Appearing in the middle of the 1960s, they changed the course of popular music, perhaps forever. How difficult for them has been the transition to tape? Not hard at all. The se-



Bob Dylan—a love of chaos transferred to tape.

quence is not terribly important on any of them. Dylan at that period projected a love of chaos which perfectly suits him to cartridge programming. And the tendency of some cartridge material to distort makes little difference here, as all of these recordings sound like scratchy old records to begin with. The match between the eternal AM radio ambience that Dylan achieved in the studio and the capabilities of many pop cartridges is nearly a perfect one. The cassette sound is much the same. The programming is matched to the disc and not the cartridge, but the fidelity is about equal to that of the cartridge.

**THE WHO:** *Tommy*. Roger Daltry, vocals; Peter Townshend, guitar; John Entwistle, bass; Keith Moon, drums; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (*Pinball Wizard*; *Sensation*; *I'm Free*; twenty-one more.) DECCA: 8-track cartridge, 6 2500; cassette, 73 2500; open reel, ST74 2500.

The most ambitious undertaking in rock's twenty-some-odd-year history is treated surprisingly well by its cartridge version. The only fault is the misplacing of *Pinball Wizard*, which is taken out of sequence and dropped rather heavily-handedly into the early part of the rock opera, in front of *Cousin Kevin*. This oddity of programming is repeated on the cassette version. The open reel *Tommy* duplicates the original disc programming and is, of course, superior in fidelity to the other tape versions. One note on the cartridge version: It's a great relief to be able to hear the entire *Tommy* without having to change reels, flip a cassette, or juggle two discs. This factor alone makes the cartridge a good buy.

**THE DOORS:** *Weird Scenes Inside the Gold Mine*. Jim Morrison, vocals; Robbie Krieger, guitar; Ray Manzarek, keyboards; John Densmore, drums; instrumental accompaniment. (*Break on Through*; *The End*; *Riders on the Storm*; nineteen more.) ELEKTRA: 8-track two-cartridge set, T8 6001 A/B; two-cassette set, C2 6001 A/B.

If Decca can fit all of *Tommy*, originally two discs, onto one cartridge, why cannot Elektra do the same with this Doors anthology? It certainly would be more convenient. Yet this double package has its advantages. It is, for one thing, cheaper—Elektra's two cartridges being about a dollar less than Decca's one. And if one likes a particular song, there is less waiting time while the cartridge gets around to playing it. In terms of content, "Weird Scenes Inside the Gold Mine" is a gold mine for Doors aficionados, as it contains virtually all their best album tracks. These are not the hit singles, but the more lasting, often longer songs. On the cartridge version, however, *Riders on the Storm* and *Love Her Madly* wound up being sawed in half by the program-switching mechanism. And the cartridges have a most haphazard song sequence: sandwiching *Spanish Caravan* between *End of the Night* and *Ship of Fools* is at best sloppy planning. The two-cassette version of "Weird Scenes Inside the Gold Mine" generally is better, in sound quality and in programming.

**SANTANA:** *Abraxas*. Carlos Santana, vocals and guitar; Mike Carrabello, congas; Dave Brown, bass; Jose Areas, timbales, congas; Mike Shrieve, drums; Gregg Rolie, vocals and key-

boards. (*Singing Winds, Crying Beasts; Black Magic Woman; Oye Como Va*; six more.) COLUMBIA: quadrasonic cartridge, CAQ 30130; 8-track cartridge (stereo), CA 30130; cassette (stereo), CT 30130; open reel (stereo), CR 30130.

Santana's Latin-jazz-rock is loose and flowing in such a way that it's hard to misprogram it. Thus, the juggling of tunes that seems an inevitable part of cartridge programming matters little on this recording. The sound quality is better than most pop cartridges, and at times the four-channel mixing on the quadrasonic cartridge is brilliant. Santana's music is given to quad, and on the basis of this cartridge we can expect many good things from them in the future. Both the cassette and open-reel versions duplicate the original disc programming, and the sound quality on both is superior to that on the cartridge. The open reel is especially noise-and-distortion free. But Santana's music is so fine in quad that it's hard to think of anything but the Q-8 cartridge.

**SIMON & GARFUNKEL:** *Bridge Over Troubled Water*. Paul Simon, vocals, guitar and piano; Arthur Garfunkel, vocals. (*Bridge Over Troubled Water; Keep the Customer Satisfied; The Boxer*; eight more.) COLUMBIA: 8-track cartridge, 18 10 0750; cassette, 16 10 0750; open reel, HC 1212.

Simon & Garfunkel's classic recording would seem, on first glance, to require that the translation onto tape preserve the original sequence. Not so. The cartridge of the album changes the sequence entirely, and hurts it not a bit. There is a little more tape noise than I would like to hear. The cassette is a bit better in this regard, and as usual, preserves the sequence of songs found on the disc.

**PAUL SIMON:** Paul Simon, vocals and guitar; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (*Mother and Child Reunion; Everything Put Together Falls Apart; Duncan*; eight more.) COLUMBIA: quadrasonic cartridge, CAQ 30750; 8-track cartridge (stereo), CA 30750; cassette (stereo), CT 30750; open reel (stereo), CR 30750.

Potential purchasers of this excellent debut album by Simon without Garfunkel would be advised not to run out and purchase a quadrasonic cartridge machine just to hear this in wrap-around sound. The limited instrumentation and the soft-folk quality of this recording mitigate against spectacular quadrasonic effects. The open-reel version has the best sound, of course, followed by the cassette and the two cartridge configurations. The stereo cartridge does not follow the superb disc programming, whereas the other tape versions, including the Q-8 cartridge, do. Considering these factors, I would suggest the open reel for fidelity, the cassette for convenience.

**JEFFERSON AIRPLANE:** *Surrealistic Pillow*. Grace Slick, vocals and keyboards; Marty Balin, vocals; Jorma Kaukonen, guitar; Paul Kantner, guitar; Spencer Dryden, drums; Jack Casady, bass. (*Somebody to Love; Today; Comin' Back to Me*; eight more.) RCA: 8-track cartridge, P8S 1231 or P8S 5055; cassette, PK 1231.

Representing RCA's initial entry in the psychedelic rock market, this 1967 recording proved to be one of the most enduring. It came out at a time when song sequence was



Jefferson Airplane—a sequence disrupted but who cares?

of paramount importance, and it became a classic rock recording in its disc form. Yet the cartridge programming is done with consummate skill, and though the sequence is thoroughly disrupted, it doesn't detract. The sound quality is rather fuzzy, though, and this hurts on the softer tunes like *My Best Friend*. The cassette sounds better and, atypically, has the same programming as the cartridge.

**THE GRATEFUL DEAD:** *Workingman's Dead*. (*Uncle John's Band; Dire Wolf; Casey Jones*; five more.) WARNER BROS.: 8-track cartridge, M 81869; cassette, M 51869.

The recording that signaled the movement of the Grateful Dead from heavy psychedelic to light, easy countryish folk/rock works especially well on tape. The rearrangement of the tunes on the cartridge scarcely matters, but the halving of *Easy Wind* by the head-switching mechanism is disruptive. The cassette version has the same programming as the disc, and all the tunes are intact. However, those with neither manual dexterity nor patience will be turned off by Warner's plastic cassette box, which is trickier than a Chinese wire-puzzle and a good deal less useful.

**WAYLON JENNINGS:** *Lonesome, On'ry and Mean*. Waylon Jennings, vocals and guitar; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (*You Can Have Her; Pretend I Never Happened; Me and Bobby McGee; Goodtime Charlie's Got the Blues*; six more.) RCA: 8-track cartridge, P8S 2136; cassette, PK 2136.

Country-music albums are not exactly laid out like Grand Opera. You can mix the songs around like a bunch of marbles and it won't matter a great deal. With such possibilities for juggling, why then does the RCA cartridge have to break *Goodtime Charlie's Got the Blues*, a three-minute song, in the middle? This is sheer sloppiness, and enough of a flaw to make one favor the cassette. However, country music is driving music. Country music can make even an L.A. Freeway tieup seem like ninety miles an hour down Route 66. So perhaps the cartridge, flaw and all, is in order.



The Rolling Stones—one of the finest by the greatest?

**CAROLE KING:** *Tapestry*. Carole King, vocals and piano; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (*I Feel the Earth Move*; *You've Got A Friend*; *It's Too Late*; nine more.) ODE: 8-track cartridge, 8T 77009; cassette, CS 77009.

**CARLY SIMON:** *No Secrets*. Carly Simon, vocals and piano; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (*The Right Thing to Do*; *You're So Vain*; *His Friends Are More Than Fond of Robin*; seven more.) ELEKTRA: 8-track cartridge, ET 85049; cassette, TC 55049.

So many female pop singers are folksingers, with light, airy, and lyrical voices reminiscent of Joan Baez or Judy Collins. Achieving good fidelity with them is no great task. Judy Collins sounds quite nice no matter what the format—disc or tape—and, within limits, no matter how cheap the equipment. But there are girl singers who don't play guitars or sing like Baez or Collins or sing Anglo-Saxon ballads and such material. This is the case with Carole King and Carly Simon. They have voices with a trace of the earth in them, play piano, and write songs that mix jazz, rock, soul, and gospel. And they come across superbly on tape. In both cases, the sound of the cassette is a little more superb than the sound on the cartridge.

**CAT STEVENS:** *Tea for the Tillerman*. Cat Stevens, guitar and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (*Miles from Nowhere*; *Wild World*; *Tea for the Tillerman*; ten more.) A&M: 8-track cartridge, 8T 4280; cassette, CS 4280.

This, Cat Stevens' most famous recording, strikes me as being more cohesive the way it's programmed for cartridge than the way it is on disc. The cartridge programming is more lively and flowing, yet is accomplished so that no tunes are disrupted by the head-changing mechanism. The cartridge also enjoys a relatively high level of sound quality compared to many others I've heard. The cassette is even better, though it maintains the disc programming.

**THE ROLLING STONES:** *Let It Bleed*. Mick Jagger, vocals and harmonica; Keith Richards, guitar; Mick Taylor, guitar; Bill Wyman, bass; Charlie Watts, drums; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (*Gimmie Shelter*; *Let It Bleed*; *Live With Me*; six more.) ABKCO: 8-track cartridge, A8T 4215; cassette, ACT 4215.

The Rolling Stones may be, as some have claimed, the "world's greatest rock-and-roll band." Certainly "Let It Bleed" is their masterpiece, one of the finest rock recordings ever produced. Thankfully, it keeps all its majesty in the transformation to tape. The cartridge form in fact saved my sanity during a three-hour drive in a Pinto on New York highways, and when I played it on my home equipment, it sounded just as good. The only major fault is an awkward piece of editing wherein the program changes tracks, without a fade-out, while Jagger still has his mouth open. The programming on the cartridge is different from that on the disc, but as good. The cassette has slightly better fidelity, and one curious aspect: Side 1 of the cassette corresponds with Side 2 of the disc, and vice versa. Why? Who knows? It doesn't spoil the listening, but it is interesting.

**THE MOODY BLUES:** *In Search of the Lost Chord*. Justin Hayward, guitar; Mike Pinder, keyboards; John Lodge, bass; Ray Thomas, flute and vocals; Graeme Edge, drums. (*Ride My See Saw*; *Dr. Livingston I Presume*; *Voices In the Sky*; eight more.) DERAM: 8-track cartridge, M 77817; cassette, M 77617.

This most-famous Moody Blues album is a "concept" album. That is, it has a beginning, middle, and end. It's not quite as definite a story as *Tommy*, but it needs to have its order maintained. Thus, Deram must be congratulated for having done such a good job of transferring it to cartridge. The order is maintained, though at the expense of interrupting two songs with program changes. However, this does not seriously affect enjoyment of the cartridge. The fidelity of the cartridge is quite good: the cassette is, as cassettes tend to be, a mite better. However, the cassette shares the same curious circumstance found on "Let It Bleed": The sides of the cassette reverse the sides of the disc. Perhaps this is some incomprehensible British trait, like driving on the wrong side of the road.

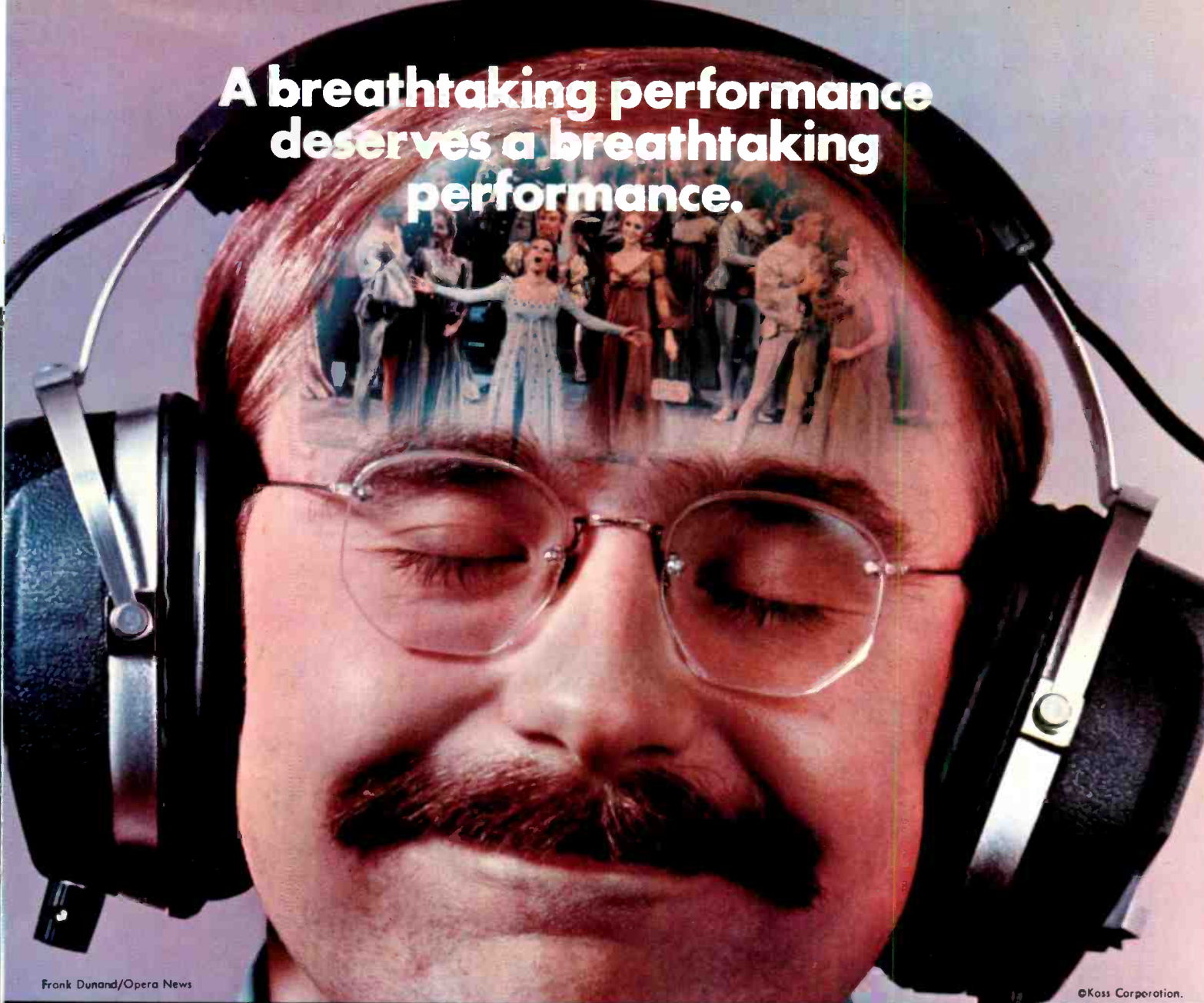
**CHUCK BERRY:** *Chuck Berry's Golden Decade, Vol. I*. Chuck Berry, vocals and guitar; instrumental accompaniment. (*Johnny B. Goode*; *Rock and Roll Music*; *Back in the U.S.A.*; twenty-one more.) CHESS: 8-track cartridge, 8033 1514; cassette, 5033 1514.

**CHUCK BERRY:** *Chuck Berry's Golden Decade, Vol. II*. Chuck Berry, vocals and guitar; instrumental accompaniment. (*Oh Carol*; *Let It Rock*; *Guitar Boogie*; twenty-one more.) CHESS: 8-track cartridge, 8033 60023; cassette, 5033 60023.

Pop music on cartridges, when played on decent equipment, often tends to sound like scratchy old records. One solution is to purchase a cartridge consisting entirely of songs which once were scratchy old records. These two collections sound perfect on the best and worst equipment. Chuck Berry, as much as any man the father of rock-and-roll, has included here all his significant songs, and a heady dose of the insignificant ones too, as on the discs. More of the insignificant ones are on Vol. II, so be wary.



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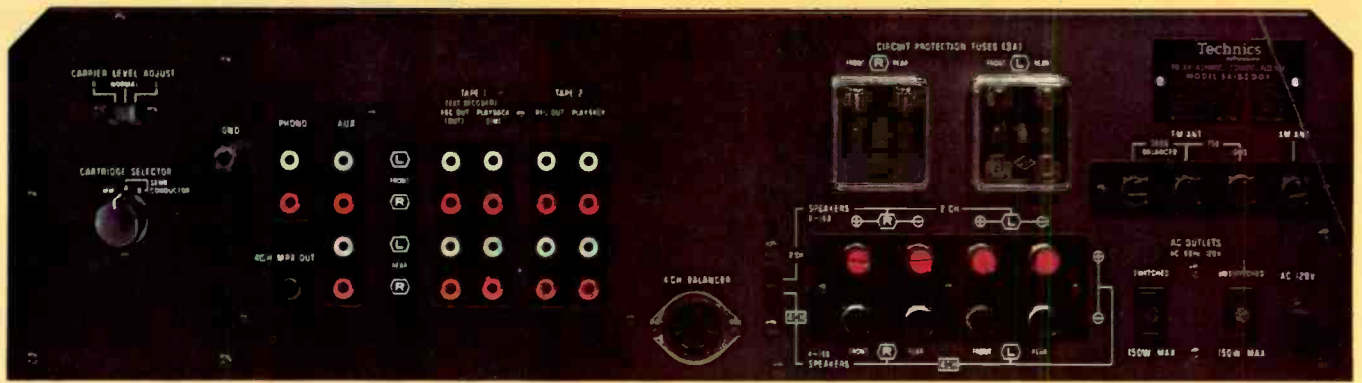
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## Bartók in the Round

by Robert C. Marsh

THE PRODUCT of six hours of recording sessions held in Manhattan Center midway last December. Boulez' Bartók-in-the-round is a sort of bet by Columbia that a really sensationally effective SQ record will sell itself and the four-channel disc system it represents. Reports from the hall indicated that the playbacks (from eight-channel, 30-ips tape) produced a striking effect. Those masters have been mixed down to a four-channel product employing the SQ matrix, and Columbia shows how it all went together in diagrams that spot twenty-six microphones around the circular recording formation and then relate each instrument to a band of the master tape.

The present disc is offered as a compatible stereo release and, indeed, sounds quite good "folded" down into a conventional two-channel display. But stereo handles the ambience of Manhattan Center differently than quadraphony, and the contrasts between the reverberation of that hall and the reverberation of my listening room, which are quite plain in a stereo playback, are far less apparent when four speakers are heard. There is, in other words, more of the hall in four-channel play-



back. There is also some change in balances. Naturally, stereo recordings made in a conventional orchestra-seating position produce different effects that some will prefer for stereo use.

As a stereo record, therefore, the Boulez must challenge ten other accounts of this music presently available, including one by the same orchestra under Leonard Bernstein, the historic Reiner/Chicago Symphony set, the Szell/Cleveland version (with its controversial text in the finale), and a dynamic account of the score by Solti with the London Symphony. The customer has ample room for choice.

Clearly the greatest advantage here (although the performance is fully competitive) is quadraphony, the circular deployment of a large orchestra with the listener finding himself in the center position occupied by the conductor. For some twenty-five years Leopold Stokowski has been speaking against the concept of "concert-hall realism" in records, arguing that the electronic reproduction of sound should be liberated from audience-performer relationships that reflect the architectural features of concert rooms built long before recording became a serious medium for musical communication.

One must face, therefore, the aesthetic question whether or not to accept a perspective on the orchestra from a stage position few would ever occupy in a live performance. It does not bother me in the least. Indeed, I enjoy it. I am convinced, moreover, that only by the imaginative use of four channels in recordings of this type is the potential of the new medium to be made clear to the public at large.

Obviously these recording formations must reflect the character of the work to be recorded. What is right for Bartók would not necessarily be appropriate for Mozart. Here, the music's textures are subtly emphasized, enhanced, and clarified by the manner in which Boulez deploys his forces, and the interweaving thematic lines gain much from the fact that they can be related to precise sources in the surrounding space. Immediately one becomes aware of the basic four-channel phenomenon, that the entire room is playing, and although there is a temptation to let volume levels reach concert intensities (one of the incidental expenses for this review was a new fuse for each of my four speaker lines), you can reduce the volume to lower than average settings and still preserve a degree of the presence that conventional stereo probably would not retain under the same conditions. Wide dynamic contrasts are possible, because even a quiet passage projects well in surround sound, while dividing a major orchestral crescendo among sources around the room permits a high concentration of sound to remain completely agreeable. The sense of compression and distortion are gone.

On the other hand, stereo playback offers fewer problems than four-channel reproduction. For a start, I think a record of this importance should have a balance band so the listener can make sure his right-to-left, front-to-back control settings are an approximation of what the producer intended. Columbia has offered this sort of thing before (the stereo test tones on Walter Carlos' "The Well Tempered Synthesizer" are a notable example) and I would have found such a guide useful. In fact, the effect of the recording can be changed quite substantially by altering these balances, and although each

listener is ultimately going to decide which settings he prefers, he ought to at least have some idea of what Boulez and producer Thomas Z. Shepard suggest.

Another factor that is going to change things is the acoustical character of the listening area. I play records in a larger-than-average living room with high ceilings and quite a bit of natural reverberation. The reflective surfaces around me produce quite a bit of acoustical crosstalk and, in fact, I never could find settings in which all the instruments spoke up precisely (and only) at the points indicated in the diagrams, except when only one or two orchestral voices were involved. In full passages the entire room came into action. This was not in the least unpleasant. Indeed it was quite extraordinary and gratifying, but it was a different effect from the one that the diagrams led me to anticipate.

It should be added that I was playing the disc through a Sony SQ matrix decoder (which has front-to-back logic), the sort of equipment most people are likely to have. A unit with more sophisticated logic circuitry would naturally have made a difference. For contrast I would have welcomed a discrete four-channel tape, where the need for dematrixing would not exist and room effects could be evaluated more precisely.

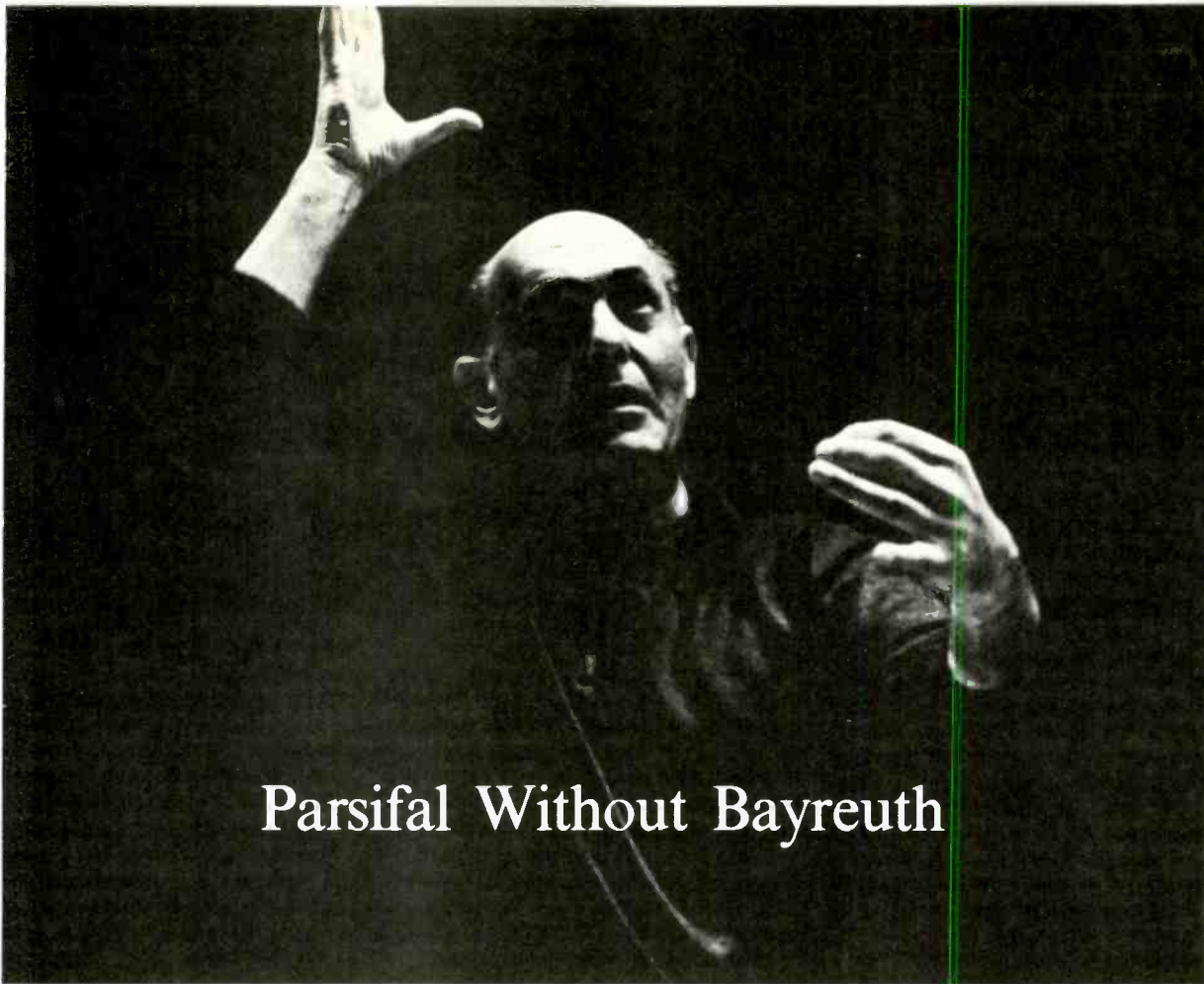
There is obvious gratification that Columbia would choose for a showpiece disc of this type a major work of music from thirty years ago rather than something like *Scheherazade*, and the decision is justified by the quality of the performance, which makes the score as thoroughly accessible and appealing as any of the *piroski* of the Slavic repertory.

Boulez plays Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* with the serenity and sense of inevitability that come from the steps of a mathematical proof. There is not the slightest trace of a Hungarianism anywhere, even in the *Intermezzo interrotto* where a few such accents generally turn up. I find this quite appropriate. Because Bartók wrote music that involves folk and nationalistic material it does not mean that these elements should be read into works cast in larger and more universal musical forms.

The playing of the orchestra is precise, well balanced in terms of the four speakers, and fully communicative while retaining the slightly cool, detached perspective that Boulez seems to bring to complex music. There is a refined, analytic quality to this performance, but this is not a limitation. The opening movement and the finale both generate a great deal of energy and excitement and build to rousing conclusions, and the playful second movement is no less witty for being so accurate in its realization. If the *Elegie* lacks the expressive underlinings other conductors feel obliged to bring to this music, this is in part a matter of taste, and Boulez' taste is never less than admirable.

The result, as I see it, is that Columbia appears to have succeeded in the task they set themselves. If any single recording of a serious musical work could combine in one package a basic demonstration disc, a showpiece for SQ techniques, and a substantial achievement in performance, this comes as close as possible to filling the bill.

**BARTÓK:** *Concerto for Orchestra*. New York Philharmonic, Pierre Boulez, cond. (Thomas Z. Shepard, prod.) COLUMBIA MQ 32132 (SQ-encoded disc), \$6.98. Tape: MAQ 32132 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.98.



## Parsifal Without Bayreuth

A strong cast under Solti offers the first complete studio recording.

by David Hamilton

AT THE TIME the last complete *Parsifal*—Boulez' Deutsche Grammophon set—was released, I remarked [HF, November 1971] on the prevalence of recordings made in the auditorium for which Wagner's "drama for the dedication of a theater" was specifically composed. Now London has given us the first complete studio recording, and it is an impressive achievement: working from scratch in Vienna's Sofiensaal, Solti has put together a performance such as we would be very lucky indeed to hear in an opera house these days, and the London production team has registered it in characteristically luminous sound—richer and solidier than the tone of the Philips set, but without the slightly fizzy translucence that comes through on all the Bayreuth sets, and which one is therefore justified in regarding as an integral part of the sound that Wagner intended. The virtues of the new set are many: a very strong cast, wonderfully firm choral singing, rich and smooth playing from the great orchestra, spacious, uncentric pacing—and yet the whole is not quite equal to the sum of these parts, not as constantly absorbing and ultimately overwhelming an experience as either of the Knappertsbusch recordings.

Right from the beginning, one can hear the care and skill that have gone into this. The Prelude opens, not too slowly, but very intensely, the irregular rhythm of the melody firmly shaped, its dynamic ebb and flow

eloquently etched. At the repetition by violins and soft trumpet, the aureole of arpeggios and gently pulsing chords is suavely woven, every note "there" but none so distinct as to distract from the total blend. In the "Faith" section, the brass tone is dark, rich, solemn—none of the vulgar blary tone that mars Toscanini's otherwise eloquent reading (Victrola VIC 1278), nor the uncertainty of rhythmic inflection that frequently afflicts the first big cadence in this section (e.g., Boulez). The sequential extensions of this material are phrased by the note rather than by the yard, avoiding Boulez' debilitating sing-song effect. The layered, organlike scoring of the "development" section is balanced and chorded with equal sensitivity, and the violins lead back to the final ascending phrases with great warmth. All in all, Solti achieves as fine a performance of this Prelude as one can reasonably ask, happily free from the audience noises and minor mishaps that obtrude in both Knappertsbusch versions (his 1962 Prelude is surprisingly urgent, by the way). Not that the absence of such noises strikes me as a deciding factor—Boulez' lickety-split recording of the opera (which apparently stems more from rehearsals than from actual performances) is much quieter than either of the Knappertsbusches, but it is to the latter versions that I have been most frequently drawn during the last year and a half.

Given such a set piece as the Prelude—a clear form, a

# Parsifal

directly graspable continuity—Solti is at his best, and hard to beat. The first Grail Scene is realized with similar authority; all the various elements of sonority are mustered and balanced to perfection. Middle- and far-distance choruses are perfectly placed in perspective, without loss of clarity, and the standards of ensemble and intonation inevitably surpass those of the live Bayreuth recordings, generally fine though the latter are.

But much of *Parsifal* doesn't work this way; Wagner makes less use, or less literal use, of the interlocking symmetries (usually A-B-A or A-A-B patterns, each element of which is itself constructed along similar lines) that are so prominent in the *Ring*; in his "old master" period he worked more freely, more instinctively, and the shapes—the points of repose and climax, the curves between—are less obvious. *Parsifal* is an opera one must live with, and experience often, to grasp profoundly. I don't know how often Solti has conducted it—surely not as often as Knappertsbusch, and the difference shows. He does not, as one might casually have predicted, try to whip it up in a furor of fire-breathing brass; this is, rather, a stately performance, its timings very close to the 1962 Knappertsbusch version. All the technical problems—of balance, ensemble, tonal quality—are handled with enormous authority, and yet for large stretches the performance seems almost neutral, except where commitment is provided by the singers.

That's an important "except," given these singers. Despite his age (he was born in 1908), Gottlob Frick sings a warm and authoritative Gurnemanz, the voice in superb condition, with firm tone at all levels, and a delivery of natural simplicity that is most sympathetic. As it happens, we have been fortunate in our recorded Gurnemanzes, and if Frick does not quite match Ludwig Weber's imposing gentleness (Richmond) or Hans Hotter's declamatory eloquence (Philips), he is still worthy of mention in that company. Where the weight of the action and musical motion lies with Gurnemanz, this recording is in good hands: The opening sequences of Act III, with Kundry and the mute Parsifal, are exceptionally affecting.

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau sang Amfortas at Bayreuth during the 1950s, and I still remember this as one of the most powerful operatic impersonations in my experience. It still seems so, if now in a different way. The cello-like legato of a Janssen or a Rehkemper is no longer his to command, nor did the voice ever have the metal, the sheer heft of George London's in 1951. But what the man can do with the words, the way he can make them concrete and compelling as they form musical phrases, is uncanny, and even the vocal shortcomings become part and parcel of the characterization, evoking in a very special way the agony and pathos of Amfortas.

Hans Hotter's brief appearance as Tituel is similarly eloquent. In past recordings, clarion bass voices (Van Mill, Talvela, Ridderbusch) have emerged from the old gentleman's bier, but never before did the sounds really tell us of his physical decay—yet there is no sacrifice of authority here, no vocal inadequacy. This was an imaginative stroke of casting, and it contributes palpably to the atmosphere of that first Grail Scene.

Christa Ludwig's Kundry also calls for superlatives:

The tone is lean and firmly focused; the verbal inflection is subtle, the rhythmic diction always alive and forward-moving. It's a lighter sound than either Martha Mödl (Richmond) or Irene Dalis (Philips) offers, a more intimate temptress. The top notes are not ideal; verbal definition declines at altitudes, and the ascent to high B has to be made with a whoopy portamento. Kundry is a complex, many-faceted figure, and if Mödl rose more compellingly to her demonic, driven side (that effortful portamento functioning expressively in this context), nobody has matched Ludwig in the lulling sensuousness of "*Ich sah' das Kind*" and the Seduction Scene.

Her evil genius, Klingsor, is well, if conventionally, voiced by Zoltan Kélémer; for some reason, this scene doesn't come to life here. His flowery minions are musically impeccable (to have Lucia Popp and Kiri Te Kanawa leading the two groups is luxurious casting indeed), but not as characterful as Knappertsbusch's 1962 group, particularly in the scherzando coda to the scene—perhaps Wieland Wagner's direction had something to do with that.

In coping with the Wagner tenor problem, London has once again turned to René Kollo: a fresh, handsome voice that may yet become a great one. He sings the music smoothly, but without the personal inflection and authority that experience will doubtless bring. In the first act, and in the play with the Flower Maidens, he is simple, natural, and just right; later on, his sins are of omission rather than commission—one simply mustn't expect the variety of delivery, the sensitivity to changing tensions that others manage in the duet with Kundry, or the plangent fervor that the final apostrophe demands. The signs for Kollo's future are still good—but his inexperience does leave a certain gap in the impact of this recording. (At times in Act II, I have a nagging suspicion that he and Ludwig are not in the same acoustic, perhaps not even in the same room, and this may contribute to the somewhat underinvolved effect he makes in this passage. Elsewhere, too, certain soloists don't always seem to be in the same kind of surroundings as everyone else—but the differences are certainly subtle, never distracting.)

A pretty strong cast, then—on balance, really stronger than the Philips group, which in its way is marginally less good than the 1951 Richmond aggregation (the 1970 DG cast cannot claim any enduring distinction, unfortunately). Best of all, most of these singers are complementary in their virtues to those on the Knappertsbusch recordings; one learns something about the characters, about the range of possible interpretations, from these differences. As one does, too, from various excerpts that other singers have recorded over the years—and since I've just worked over the *Parsifal* discography pretty thoroughly, let me mention a few things that seemed particularly impressive:

Gurnemanz: Weber (three excerpts, from 78s, on EMI/DaCapo C 177 00933/4), even smoother and gentler than in the Richmond set; Kipnis (Good Friday on Seraphim 60124), perhaps the ideal voice; and Alfred Jerger (part of Good Friday on Preiser LV 92), an eloquently phrased, very pathetic—in the best sense—account.



Amfortas: Rehkemper (Belcantodisc BC 240, deleted) gives a Lieder-singer's view, subtly phrased and colored, of the first monologue; also memorable is Herbert Janssen, in the pirate issue of excerpts from 1937 Convent Garden performances, conducted by Reiner.

Parsifal: Melchior remains incomparable, both in the Act II duet with Flagstad (RCA Red Seal LM 2763, a better dubbing than Victrola VIC 1681), despite the weak conducting, and in the final apostrophe (Victrola VIC 1500), which is tonally and verbally magisterial, with a heady exaltation that nobody else has quite managed in these pages.

Kundry: Flagstad (see above) is of course vocally superb, but rather a cold fish of a seductress; I am more intrigued by Astrid Varnay (two excerpts from this scene on EMI/DaCapo C 047 01373), with her firm, bright tone, exemplary verbal clarity and *intenzione*.

And then there are the recordings led by Karl Muck, who more or less owned *Parsifal* at Bayreuth for the first three decades of this century. My pleasure at Preiser's reissue of his Berlin Act III set is somewhat tempered by the omission of the Prelude, but I suppose there just wasn't room on the record; in any case, after the Prelude this set made a whopping cut to Parsifal's first line ("Heil mir, dass ich dich wieder finde"), so that at least no continuity is lost by beginning there. What we need now is a complementary record assembling Muck's other *Parsifal* material: the Prelude, the Transformation and Grail Scenes (minus the solo passages), the Flower Maidens' waltz, and that missing Act III Prelude. Perhaps EMI or Preiser will oblige.

On rehearing Muck's Act III after several years, I was surprised to find the first scene a bit restless, doubtless in part because of the unvaried, rather hectoring Gurnemanz of Hofmann. However, beginning with the Transformation this reading takes on an intensity that remains—despite the primitive sound—simply overwhelming. The Berlin chorus (trained by Hugo Rüdel, the Wilhelm Pitz of his day) projects its words with great force, the orchestral tone still comes through as something special (e.g., the silvery trumpet sound that Bostonians of sixty years ago still recall as a Muck trademark), and Bronsgeest is an Amfortas of the London (George, that is) stamp in power and eloquence. Pistor musters something close to Melchior's sense of ecstatic transport despite his obviously inferior resources, and Muck wraps it all up in the final pages, where the momentum never flags yet the playing stays calm and serene; the translucence of sound and texture here has not been obscured by the passage of forty-five years.

Mostly, what makes it so imposing is Muck's pacing: at every moment, the tempo is, so to speak, conscious of where it has come from and where it is heading. With Solti, the same scene is unflinchingly beautiful (and I hope that every reader will understand what a remarkable achievement that is), but the funeral chorus is less vehement, and Amfortas' prayer to his father becomes almost narcissistic, sacrificing headway for pathetic effect: By this point, we have lost the thread of the intensity (never as great as Muck's to begin with), and the build-up of Amfortas' final death wish has a long way to climb.

Then, lacking the further build-up of a truly masterful tenor monologue, the clinching meditation of the final pages simply does not have nearly as much tension to unravel, does not make such a powerful catharsis as with Muck (or Knappertsbusch).

It is, ultimately, this sense of the "long line" that I miss in Solti's reading (as, indeed, to much greater degree in Boulez'), and it is why the Knappertsbusch sets remain unsurpassed among the complete recordings, despite the numerous vocal, musical, and sonic virtues of the London production. Had we no other recording, this new one would be a great benefaction; it is still a source of pleasure and illumination, but I would not part with either the Richmond or the Philips recordings (for, respectively, their vocal and sonic qualities), let alone Muck's Act III.

The London libretto booklet cannot be classed, however, as a source of pleasure and illumination; it perpetuates an antique translation in pseudo-King James Version idiom (at that, it's better than the brief English paraphrases that Philips gives alongside the German text—I'm sorry to note that this dereliction endures even though this set is now available in silken-smooth imported pressings, much superior to the original domestic issue). And William Mann's interesting historical essay unfortunately commits some inaccuracies: e.g., Wagner was not still scoring Act I in November 1881 (he had started Act III); Lilli Lehmann did not have anything to do with the first performances, and certainly did not take a bow (Wagner had asked her to prepare the Flower Maiden ensemble, but she begged off, apparently because an old lover was to be in Bayreuth that summer); and so on. Finally, Mr. Mann has been sabotaged, for he refers to "an adjoining essay" by the German scholar Carl Dahlhaus—which isn't to be found in the booklet! The Preiser disc, in a soft sleeve, comes with full documentation, but no text—just a laudatory, somewhat mystical 1926 essay on Muck by Richard Specht (in German).

#### WAGNER: Parsifal.

Amfortas	Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (b)
Titirel	Hans Hotter (bs-b)
Gurnemanz	Gottlob Frick (bs)
Parsifal	Rene Kollo (t)
Klingsor	Zoltan Kélemen (b)
Kundry	Christa Ludwig (ms)
Knights	Robert Tear (t), Herbert Lackner (bs)
Alto Voice	Birgit Finnila (ms)
Squires	Roltraud Hansmann (s), Marga Schiml (s), Heinz Zednik (t), Ewald Aichberger (t)
Flower Maidens	Lucia Popp (s), Allison Hargan (s), Anne Howells (ms), Kiri Te Kanawa (s), Gillian Knight (ms), Margarita Lilowa (ms)

Vienna Choir Boys; Vienna State Opera Chorus; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. (Produced by Christopher Raeburn.) LONDON OSA 1510, \$29.90 (five discs).



#### WAGNER: Parsifal: Act III (abridged).

Parsifal	Gottfried Pistor (t)
Gurnemanz	Ludwig Hofmann (bs)
Amfortas	Cornelis Bronsgeest (b)
Berlin State Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Karl Muck, cond. PREISER LV 100, \$7.98 (mono; from HMV 78s, recorded October 1928).	

#### Comparisons—complete opera:

Knappertsbusch/Bayreuth Fest. (1951)	Rich. RS 65001
Knappertsbusch/Bayreuth Fest. (1962)	Phi. 835 220/4
Boulez/Bayreuth Fest. (1970)	DG 2713 004

by Henry Edwards

## The Problems of Playing Sir Noël

Five recent albums of "The Master's" witty confections demonstrate that no one performs Coward like Coward.

WITH THE FAILURE of the "musical romance" *Pacific 1860* in 1946, Noël Coward's critical reputation began to slump. Critics labeled him a relic. His work was called trivial, superficial, irrelevant. This criticism continued unabated until Laurence Olivier's National Theatre assembled an all-star cast for a revival of Coward's *Hay Fever* in 1964. *Hay Fever*, a powder puff of a comedy that had its first performance in 1925, was brilliantly received. Press and public were encouraged to re-evaluate Coward's work; his genius was officially recognized. "The Master"—as he was affectionately called—was saluted as one of the towering figures of the English-speaking theater.

As a playwright Coward had perfected the technique of creating characters who said one thing while thinking and meaning something different. He had taken the English stage's Victorian inheritance and created of it comedy that was simpler, more spontaneous, and less literary. His contribution as a playwright was prodigious, and his plays were superb entertainments. When played properly—and the playing of Noël Coward is a complicated, subtle art all its own—these comic soufflés still delight.

Ever since that fabled National Theatre production of *Hay Fever*, Noël Coward's stage works have been revived with increasing frequency. Special attention has also been paid to Coward's musical contributions. At this writing, two revues built around Coward songs are running successfully—*Oh Coward!* in New York and *Cowardy Custard* in London. These revues pay respectful tribute to the many enchantments that comprise the *Noël Coward Song Book*. That song book contains a score of standards: *I'll See You Again*, *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, *Someday I'll Find You*, *If Love Were All*, among others—ballads that are genuine perfection, comic songs that shimmer with wit.

Coward's songs are theater songs. No less than the plays, they demand to be "played" properly. That proper playing calls for a technique of the most extraordinary effortlessness. The performer of Noël Coward must transform himself into an individual for whom Coward's words might be his own. He must suggest a person for whom brilliance is an everyday way of life.

Not only was Coward a playwright and songwriter; he was also a performer—a singer/songwriter of the late Twenties, Thirties, Forties, and Fifties. When Coward sang Coward, the heavily stylized quality of the writing seemed like an extension of the Coward personality. He has created a total persona in much the same way that contemporary singer/songwriters like Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell have. Since there was only one Noël Coward, other performers are bound to have their problems. Those who try to imitate the "Master's" exquisitely projected nonchalance are bound to fail. Those who try to



bend the material to their particular styles also are bound to fail.

These recent recordings (including the original-cast albums of the two Coward revues) were all recorded or re-released before Coward's death. They are well-intentioned; they also illustrate the problems of playing Coward. These problems are even more dramatically demonstrated by comparing these discs with Coward's own recordings, primers of perfection. The exposure of these problems and the comparisons with Coward should point the way to superlative work in the future.

*Oh Coward!*, the first of the revues, can swiftly be dispensed with. It is just too heavy-handed for the job at hand. The Coward songs have been arranged by categories: travel, theater, love, etc. They are introduced by brief excerpts from Coward's writings. This format soon takes on the ghastly pall of a lecture-demonstration at a second-rate university. Rene Wiegert's arrangements—tinny and monotonous—do nothing to amplify the subtle Coward melodies and the songs inevitably be-

gin to wash each other out. In addition, the three stars of the evening—Barbara Cason, Roderick Cook, and Jamie Ross—struggle to imitate the smooth silkiness of a legitimate Coward performance and they project nothing but frustration as they go about their business. *Oh Coward!* is a deadly bore.

Those who have seen *Cowardy Custard* in London report that it is a delightful theatrical experience. The original-cast recording certainly has its high points, culminating in Patricia Routledge's giddy rendition of *I Went to a Marvelous Party*. The evening, also a collage of songs and prose, is staffed by a large company and a full orchestra. It is as elaborate as it is intelligent. This approach unfortunately does not work either, even though it is far superior to the ineptitude of *Oh Coward!* There is so much "acting" here that the listener finds himself shying away from the icy, determined professionalism of this performance. With maddening zeal, the *Cowardy Custard* company flies too high for its own good.

The two-disc "Bobby Short Is Mad About Noël Coward" outing is affectionate, enthusiastic, skillfully conceived, and skillfully executed. Short's throbbing vibrato is perfectly suited to Coward's ballads, and his performances of *If Love Were All* and *Someday I'll Find You* rank with the best. This king of the *boîtes* is cool enough to convey elegantly the sentiment of Coward without becoming maudlin.

Short takes Coward's other songs and converts them into typical Bobby Short. It is the inevitable approach for a singer famed for his own sophisticated, stylized approach. It proves that Coward can become Short but that Coward does suffer in the process. Nevertheless, Bobby Short's cabaret style interpretations are so perfect in so many places that this set deserves to be in the collection of every Coward aficionado.

In 1951, Coward himself returned to the cabarets after an absence of more than five years. His performance consisted of a set of his best-known numbers as well as an upbeat version of *Loch Lomond* and his devilish rewrite of Cole Porter's *Let's Do It*. He played four consecutive seasons at the Cafe de Paris while maintaining his overwhelmingly hectic playwriting, acting, and recording schedule. He then accepted an offer to bring his act to Wilbur Clark's Desert Inn in Las Vegas at a fee of \$40,000 per week. (Until that date only Liberace had been paid more.) Coward opened on June 7, 1955, played fifty-five performances, and found himself at age fifty-five the darling of the slot-machine set, one of the most unusual and successful acts Las Vegas had ever seen.

"The Noël Coward Album" presents "At Las Vegas," a live recording of this classic night-club performance, and "In New York," a successful follow-up to this successful live album two years later.

The predictability of "At Las Vegas" in no way diminishes its pleasures. The numbers are for the most part familiar, and include the hit of Coward's Cafe de Paris stands, that elegant little tune, *A Bar on the Piccolo Marina*, which told of a Mrs. Wentworth-Brewster to whom Life finally called.

Why did Las Vegas go wild about this artist and his estimable set of songs? Wasn't the material too British? Wasn't the performance too spare, devoid of the dancing girls and hokey comedians that Las Vegas has been reputed to love?

"At Las Vegas" confirms that a crisply played, perfectly consummated, completely realized performance is the one sure way to create something timeless. Coward playing Coward is environmental art, and Coward creates an environment that is notable and irresistible.

"In New York" once again allows Coward to etch another set of songs for posterity. This disc includes *Louisa*, a crafty expose of a starlet, and *Why Must the Show Go On?*, an acerbic comment about show business. Coward also reprises *What's Going to Happen to the Tois?*, a rewrite of a tune originally composed in 1927 that went on to become a highlight of Coward's *Together with Music*, a 1955 TV special in which he co-starred with Mary Martin. (And where is the album of that?)

On this disc, Peter Matz's arrangements attempt to recreate the cabaret feeling while still retaining some degree of modernity. Coward however works just a bit too strenuously and occasionally upsets the delicate balance that only he can conjure up. Nevertheless, "The Noël Coward Album" is essential because "At Las Vegas" does capture completely the "Master" performing at his peak, reading his lyrics as they must be read.

"Greatest Hits, Vol. 1" probably has been culled from the more than thirty ten-inch Plum label 78-rpm HMV records Coward cut between the years 1928 and 1951. The selections include the familiar *The Stately Homes of England*, *Nina*, and *Sail Away*, written in 1949 for *Ace of Clubs* and reprised as the title tune of Coward's 1961 Broadway musical, as well as numbers from lesser-known Coward stage works, revues like *Words and Music* and *Sigh No More*. This disc transcends its nostalgic connotations because it presents Coward at work and working well. Each of the numbers is sung to perfection, with Coward hitting notes one never realized his precise voice was capable of hitting. This set of performances definitively proves that creating the authentic aura of Coward stylishness can only be derived from the ability to sing the songs as if they were one's natural expression of oneself. Stanyan plans another volume of this material to be called "1899-1973." I hope that this disc will be carefully compiled and annotated because it has the potential to be one of the definitive remembrances.

With Coward's death there will be a rash of new Coward recordings. One hopes that these discs will not only be tributes but will also solve the problems of performing this inimitable body of work. This challenge is a call for genius; only genius will serve Noël Coward properly.

**OH COWARD!** Original cast recording. Barbara Cason, Roderick Cook, and Jamie Ross. Rene Wiegert, arr. and cond.; Brooks Arthur, prod. BELL 9001, \$7.98 (two discs). Tape: ● J89001, \$9.95; ●● J59001, \$9.95.

**COWARDY CUSTARD.** Original cast recording. John Burrows, cond.; Norman Newell, prod. RCA LSO 6010, \$6.98 (two discs).

**BOBBY SHORT IS MAD ABOUT NOËL COWARD.** Bobby Short, vocals and piano; strings and rhythm accompaniment. ATLANTIC SD 2-607, \$6.98 (two discs). Tape: ● TP 2-607, \$9.97; ●● CS 2-607, \$9.97.

**NOËL COWARD ALBUM:** At Las Vegas; In New York. Noël Coward, vocals; Carlton Hayes and His Orchestra (in "At Las Vegas"); Peter Matz, piano, arr., and (in "In New York") cond. COLUMBIA MG 30088, \$6.98 (two discs, mono; from Columbia ML 5063, 1955, and ML 5163, 1957).

**NOËL COWARD: Greatest Hits, Vol. 1.** Noël Coward, vocals; orchestral accompaniment. STANYAN SR 10025, \$5.98 (mono; recorded 1928-51).

# What Should a String Quartet Sound Like?

Recordings by the Flonzaley, Yale, Cleveland, Guarneri, and Borodin Quartets provide a variety of answers.

by Harris Goldsmith



The Flonzaley Quartet—violinists Adolfo Betti and Alfred Pochon, cellist Iwan d'Archambeau, and violist Nicholas Moldavan—offered pacesetting performances.

SHOULD A STRING QUARTET be a democratic forum with all four of its members speaking out? Or a lecture delivered by the first violin? Should lots of vibrato be used, or very little? Is orchestral sonority to be emulated or avoided? Are absolute matching of tone and phraseological unanimity required, or does each protagonist maintain his own precious individuality? And when other instrumentalists join the group, for piano quintets and the like, are they to integrate or do they stress the four-plus-one effect?

These questions are prompted by a bumper crop of chamber music from RCA and Angel. My own preference is for clarity with moderate autonomy—four equalized, though not necessarily identical, voices moving horizontally in precise, clear relationship to one another. The arrangement requires a certain degree of ego restraint; other art forms—the piano trio, for example—can withstand a looser structuring of individual rights.

Some of today's listeners regard the recently disbanded Budapest Quartet as relics from a bygone era; they will undoubtedly look upon the Flonzaley Quartet as antediluvian. In their day (from 1902 to 1929), the Flonzaleys enjoyed incredible celebrity. Their name, meaning "Little River," derives from the Swiss country estate of American banker Edward J. de Coppet, who organized the quartet for his own pleasure. Within a few years of their formation, the Flonzaleys were subsidizing their incomes by way of public concerts. Three original members—violinists Adolfo Betti and Alfred Pochon, cellist Iwan d'Archambeau—remained to the end. The original violist, Ugo Ara, left in 1917 to fight in World War I; he was replaced successively by Louis Bailly, who remained until 1924; Felicien d'Archambeau (brother of Iwan); and finally Nicholas Moldavan, who plays in all three of the performances included in this album. (Irving Kolodin, in his otherwise informative album essay, is incorrect in saying that Ara rejoined the group.) Though the Flonzaley Quartet was mostly comprised of players

from the Franco-Belgian school, their style is completely unlike that of the Pro Arte, a roughly contemporary group from the same lineage. The Pro Arte featured a rather frilly passivity; the Flonzaleys were men of drama and action. Their tempos are bracingly fast, their articulation decidedly high-powered—full of biting attack and impetus. Especially admirable is the boldness of the viola's line. All four players asserted themselves, but they functioned with magnificent give-and-take. To be sure, there is a certain amount of sliding and portamento (as could be expected from any string players of that era), but these devices are never misused in the Flonzaley's interpretations.

In the Schumann quintet, indeed, they are almost wholly absent. This could almost pass for a modern performance. I consider it the big prize of this set. One has the best of every world in this reading—the headlong thrust of the Serkin/Busch and Serkin/Budapest (Columbia M2S 734 or MS 7266) without their percussiveness; the studious solidity of the Schnabel/Pro Arte, Rubinstein/Paganini and Rubinstein/Guarneri (RCA LSC 6188) without their stodginess; the spiritual purity of the Curzon/Budapest (Odyssey 32 26 0019) without its prosy inhibition. The finished, poetic inspiration of Gabrielowitsch's pianism, the incredible precision and beautiful tone of the strings, the complete freshness and "rightness" of style make this the finest performance of this popular work I have ever heard. The restoration of the 1927 recording exceeds expectations and compares with those of a decade later: Each instrument sounds reasonably like itself, balance and detail are ideal, and there is even a modicum of presence.

The Brahms quintet, recorded in 1925 with Harold Bauer at the piano, is an example of electrical recording in its infancy. Be prepared for cramped, one-dimensional dynamics; a hooty, nasal cello; rather shrewish high violins; and an overlay of obtrusive surface noise. Be prepared too for an interpretation of remarkable,

eloquent intensity, despite certain period mannerisms that seem arbitrary today. In any case RCA should be commended for this reissue, and for making its feeble sonics entirely listenable. (But they fail to catch a drop in pitch between 78 sides just before the first-movement development section.) Harold Bauer fully deserved his dual reputation as a grand chamber-music player and a great Brahms stylist. His work, in contrast to Gabrilowitsch's urbane, patrician fluency, is craggy and robust. He and the Flonzaleys sweep through this demanding opus with magisterial warmth and directness. For all his compassionate humanity, Bauer has a granitelike firmness here with no trace of sentimentality. He alternates rhetorical, thunderous extroversion at the climaxes with supple, caressing, mellow sound in accompanimental passages. His way of meshing with the strings and yet dominating when necessary can serve as a paradigm for every ensemble musician. Bauer also has some decidedly interesting notions about phrasing: Note, for example, how he makes a distinction between written-out sixteenth notes and appoggiaturas in the main theme of the slow movement. Modern musicologists may well decide that no such differentiation should be made, but I rather like the result (it adds a bit of stress).

The *Lark* Quartet is beautifully done, but in keeping with the "Papa Haydn" precepts of the day. Some of it may strike contemporary listeners as a bit chaste and frivolous though the final *moto perpetuo* is a virtuoso tour de force by any yardstick. The sound of this previously unpublished 1928 recording (it was given numbers



Contributing to the flood of chamber music recordings are Artur Rubinstein and members of the Guarneri Quartet (top), the Borodin Quartet (immediately above), the Yale Quartet (top left) together with André Previn (not shown), and the Cleveland Quartet.

7650 and 7651 in the Victor catalogue, but never materialized) is very close, crisp, and a bit unresonant. It does not quite do justice to coloristic values that one suspects were part of the original performance.

The good news from RCA's classical director R. Peter Munves is that another Flonzaley resuscitation—a coupling of Schumann's A minor and Smetana's *Aus meinem Leben*—is in the works.

Even with so many excellent recordings of the Brahms quintet, the Bauer/Flonzaley version is a major addition to the catalogue. The Previn/Yale version is less competitive. The Yale Quartet's membership harks from all corners of the globe. They play with the technical brilliance and ultrasharp articulation typically associated with American style, but they add to these attributes a sort of quivering, crystalline lucidity ideal for Gallic composers. The foursome excels in works like the Debussy and Ravel string quartets (I hope that they will one day record their lustrous, inspired interpretations), but are classicists enough to be able to play late Beethoven brilliantly (witness their series on Vanguard's Cardinal label). If you are one of those people who find Brahms's rhetoric objectionable, you may well find the Yale/Previn F minor refreshing and unpretentious. I, however, am disappointed: The playing has a light, polished, off-hand quality that seems more appropriate for Mendelssohn or Saint-Saëns. Tempos tend toward nervous animation rather than massive deliberation. Inflections are altogether too light, and distinctions of rhythm tend to be slighted. Previn fails adequately to define his groups of dotted eighths and sixteenth notes (measure 81 *et seq.*; again at 241 *et seq.*) in the first movement, and the string players lose the pulse of the silent secondary downbeats in the presto non troppo coda of the finale. Musical details likewise go by the board: The stringendo at the end of the Andante is thrown away because these players apparently do not grasp its harmonic significance (compare this limp, frustrated rendering with the fiery climax of the Serkin/Budapest recording, Columbia MS 6631). Previn's dainty, lily-gilding subito pianos at bars 204 and 208 of the third-movement trio are, to my way of thinking, ludicrously irrelevant in such *Sturm und Drang* music. Nor are the precisely notated tempo modifications in the last movement convincingly heeded. The recording was made last summer in All Saints Church right outside of London. A church, like an airplane hangar, is no place to record chamber music. Skillful microphoning has alleviated the echo, but the late cello pizzicatos at the end of the third-movement trio suggest that the musicians had difficulty hearing one another. I also find the sound on the finished disc rather edgy—with too much piano and, intermittently, too much cello. Altogether, this seems to be a classic case of miscasting. Of the many excellent recorded performances of the Brahms quintet available, the Serkin/Budapest and Bauer/Flonzaley remain the exceptional ones.

RCA's publicity department strives to depict the Cleveland Quartet as heirs and successors to the Budapest. Whether by accident or design, however, these youthful players manage to sound more akin to the old Busch Quartet. Their style is earnest and forthright rather than graceful or virtuosic. They are, like the Busch, the kind of interpreters who evoke questions rather than pat answers. They play with a great deal of commitment and thrusting animation but give the impression that they will never have (and probably do not

want) the kind of mercurial, silky-toned grace and bejeweled refinement introduced by the Flonzaley and Budapest. But even on their own terms, these talented players have a few very basic problems to overcome. An imbalance of tone suggests that they are not ideally sensitized to each other. Generally, indeed rather consistently, the viola and cello play too loudly. This causes an opacity of texture that frequently obscures the musical argument. The mismatch is a matter of style as well as mere dynamics: I get the impression that the two lower voices are extroverts who phrase with impulsive vigor and strive for "gut" reaction (note the violist's rather indulgent slide at bar 109 of the B flat Quartet's third movement), while the first violinist is a dreamer, a more retiring sort who contemplates his phrases rather than comes to grips with them. Toscanini used to say that a good performance should be like reading the score. It was his credo—and mine too—that anything on the printed page should be apparent in the re-created sound. One has only to follow the Cleveland's performances with the score to see how much they deviate from that ideal. Not only do many imitations and structural significances fail to emerge, obvious leading lines are often buried under meaningless chug-chug accompaniments. I also find that the Clevelanders fail to grasp the necessary relationship between dramatic passages and lyrical ones. With the lack of perspective so prevalent among today's young musicians, they do not know when to stress the dichotomy and when to minimize it. Often, as in the first movement of the B flat Quartet, they begin with spirit but fail to maintain impetus. Ruminative second groups tend to go slack, and Brahms's typical metrical innovations—which *must* be effected within a firmly delineated basic pulse—often suffer from one kind of rhythmic dislocation or another. And do these players really think there is an overriding need for effects like their ritard at bar 20 of the C minor's finale? I expect the Clevelanders to settle down eventually, but now their playing progresses in fits and starts. The Budapest performances of the Brahms quartets on Columbia (M2S 734) are firmer, better-integrated, less-ephemeral readings. The recent Quartetto Italiano versions (Philips 6703 029) are even more polished and precise, but a shade disinvolved. Both are preferable to the Cleveland set.

Dvořák's String Quartet in C, Op. 61, and Piano Quartet in E flat, Op. 87, are not heard with the frequency of his piano quintet, *Dumky* Trio, and *American* Quartet. The reason for this neglect mystifies me. Op. 61, bursting with inventiveness, singable melodies, coiled rhythmic energy, and unusual harmonic touches, is one of the finest examples of his genius. The piano quartet, also a mature work, is tinged with Slavic fervor and autumnal melancholy. The premature demise of the older RCA disc of Op. 61 by the Juilliard saddened me. The new Guarneri version is just as clear and thrusting as its predecessor and as faithful to the composer's markings, and boasts even greater nuance and refinement. The Guarneri's interpretation, while exquisitely matched in tone and homogeneous in accent, is happily free of the syrupy inflections and fussinesses of tempo and accent that have marred some of their previous performances. The Juilliard version coupled the Op. 61 with Wolf's *Italian Serenade*. Here the left-over vinyl is given over to the Op. 74 Terzetto—a charming work composed by Dvořák (an ex-professional violist) for performance with two amateur fiddler friends. Messrs. Steinhardt, Dalley, and

Tree have played musical chairs here: Steinhardt replaces Tree as violist while Tree replaces Dalley as second violin. Mr. Dalley, needless to say, enjoys his temporary fling playing first. RCA's reproduction is suitably mellow and intimate, more delicate in the Op. 74 Terzetto than the overamplified sound of Supraphon's sturdier account by members of the Vlach Quartet.

Rubinstein, eighty-seven years young, learned Dvořák's Piano Quartet, Op. 87 especially for this recording. The performance—full of supercharged virility and exuberant freshness—is clearly a case of love at first sight! His enthusiasm communicates to the string players, who respond with molten, driving energy. Grand inflection of detail, allied to broader than usual tempos, enhances the vigor. This is the best of the Rubinstein/Guarneri collaborations to date—truly the performance of a lifetime. RCA's engineers have captured it with glowing sound and the pressing is exceptionally quiet.

Finally, a very different tradition of quartet playing is represented in Melodiya/Angel's excellent new version of Tchaikovsky's Op. 11 by the Soviet Union's Borodin Quartet, a distinguished veteran group. Their interpretation is superior to any except the long-deleted Hollywood Quartet on a Capitol mono disc. In contrast to that American group, which (like the Yale) favored terrific bite, X-ray clarity, and cameolike proportion, the Soviet players project a big, pulsating, altogether Slavic sonority that tends to blend but maintains sufficient clarity when required. There is tremendous sweep and virtuosity here, and, as per "tradition," the two *piu mosso*s in the first movement are very "mosso" indeed while the *allegro vivace* coda to the last is transformed into a scin-

tillating prestissimo Borodin Quartet's *se* brato" (without vibra noteworthy fe most bagpipelike coloristic use of achieves a hushed, in muted, dead in Unlike all but the Drol the Andante in diomatic reading (DG)s that is quite can ensemble observes the those sour-toned, un the Borodin included—fided, the Borodin ment.) The Melodiya disc, the Borodin lished quartet Tchaikovsky's repeat. (No one— please archivists more than the last move— truth, the work is not a veearly unpub-

**B** BRAHMS: Quintet for Piano and Strings, Op. 34. SCHUMANN: Quintet for Piano and Strings, Op. 44. HAYDN: Quartet for Strings, No. 4 (*Lark*). Harold Bauer

**H** Quartet. RCA Red Seal Vocalion, mono; recorded 1925-28).

**BRAHMS:** Quintet for Piano and Strings, André Previn, piano; Yale Quartet.

**B** BRAHMS: Quartets for Strings, No. 1, No. 2, in A minor, Op. 67. Cleveland Quartet, RCA Red Seal Vocalion, stereo; recorded 1970-71, \$6.98 (two discs).

**DVOŘÁK:** Quartet for Strings, in C, Op. 61. Violins and Viola, in C, Op. 74. Guarneri Quartet, RCA Red Seal ARL1-0082, \$5.98.

**DVOŘÁK:** Quartet for Piano and Strings, Arthur Schnitger, piano; Guarneri Quartet, RCA Red Seal LSC 3340, \$5.98.

**TCHAIKOVSKY:** Quartets for Strings: No. 1, in D, Op. 15. No. 2, in E-flat. Borodin Quartet. Melodiya/Angel SR 40222, \$5.98.

by Peter C. Newman

## Stan Kenton—Home at Last

Does the veteran bandleader's "reincarnation" presage jazz's future?



THE LEGEND of jazz is death. Death by drowning, sometimes in alcohol, sometimes in drugs, but more often in the existential demands of creating new sounds out of used-up ideas. Jazz breeds such brief lives that only a few talents survive first maturity, their resonance siphoned off by fresher disciples while they descend into silence, or worse, die on their feet thumping out swizzle-stick music on cocktail bar circuits. To transform jazz into a classic art demands what New York music critic Albert Goldman calls "the emotional depth, technical assurance, and vast experience of a man with a million miles on his meter."

Jazz these days is in a period of minor renaissance and one of its major sources is the revived creativity of Stan Kenton, the pianist/leader who has influenced and haunted contemporary American music since his first band opened the 1941 season at the Rendezvous Ballroom in Balboa Beach, California. His current reincarnation marks a curious turn in the long lifetime of a man who has more than paid his dues, but until recently was being dismissed as a prebop phenomenon, never quite in tune with the rhythms of his time. He has moved through

... ghost, a half-forgotten, defying not only the inexorable erosion of the recorded on February 23, 1973, on the occasion of his thirty-two years of traveling abroad, he has returned with, of all things, a young and airy and free. The flash, insidious thrust of the Kenton sound has survived; it has conquered two decades of death to become classic. There is the brass section, loud and true, blowing as if they were suspended ten feet above the rest of the band, counterpointed by the lyricism of the saxophones, pulling from the path, modulating the mood. The broad, vibrant phrasing, the staccato phrasing, the showers of opening notes engulf the listener with a sense of shared freshness which is exactly what great jazz—and Stan Kenton's music—is all about.

But there's a difference. The biblical cadence once so characteristic of Kenton is missing. Gone is the syrupy commercialism of his muddled middle years when Kenton was sounding pointlessly fussy and decorative in a desperate attempt to keep from becoming an anachronism in a musical time he helped to create. No more compromises; no overblown sound tracks from *Hair*; no albums with Tex Ritter.

Instead, Kenton has returned to his roots, to depend on the intuition of the moment which night after night is all the jazz artist can really trust. On this and five other double albums recorded with virtually the same orchestra, Kenton manages to re-create that indefinable magic that makes the band sound as if it had been created especially to fulfill this particular one-night stand. That's artistry of a rare calibre. All the abstracts of his craft—timing, harmony, phrasing—have fallen into place so that the music Kenton is now playing at peeling dance halls, university auditoriums, and shopping center plazas across North America and Europe can claim that essential art of surprise absent from some of his past congregations.

The Kenton band started as a hybrid offshoot from the rhythm machine put together by Jimmie Lunceford in the late Thirties, while Kenton's own piano style descended straight from Earl Hines. His charts quickly, perhaps too quickly, introduced harmonic values alien to jazz, as Kenton moved toward the polytonal inventions of Bartók and Stravinsky, the Afro-Cuban rhythms of Johnny Richards, and the intricate harmonies of the French modernist, Darius Milhaud, courtesy of Pete Rugolo. Then came the forty-piece Innovations orchestra which took two hours to unload out of five buses and mercifully collapsed under its own weight.

In September of 1970, after twenty-seven years with Capitol Records, Kenton left to establish his own Creative World label which has since issued sixty-five albums. His new works have been drawn mostly from three arrangers: Willie Maiden, the band's baritone saxophonist whose writing gives new definitions to big-band jazz as a hot, get-it-off music; Ken Hanna, who sustains a

trampolinelike tension with his brooding and beautiful reflections; and Hank Levy, the former Don Ellis arranger. By using time signature changes based on the goading, mystical punctuations of Far Eastern, especially Indian, music, Levy's scores achieve a sense of dramatic imbalance that keeps listeners and musicians constantly on the edge of about-to-be-fulfilled expectations. Three examples of Levy's experiments are featured on this album. In *Ambivalence*, Chris Galuman's flute dances above the loose clusters of sound (played in 5/4 time) until the band switches into a 20/16 tempo cascading behind the chant of John Park's alto. In *Blues, Between & Betwixt* Levy extends the blues form into alternating 7/4 and 7/8 time with Peter Erskine's drums propelling the band along its predetermined flight plan, while Richard Torres blows a *macho* salute on his tenor. *Of Space and Time* (written in 5/4 time) is the album's most exciting track, with each of the orchestra's sections fanning in and out in a kind of inexorable succession of salutes to the proposition that with enough talent and commitment jazz composition, however intricate, can produce an ensemble sound that just plain swings. The Bill Holman arrangement of *Daily Dance* turns out to be an emotionally draining hailstorm of sound which provides an object lesson in the arts of collective improvisation. What Kenton has always demanded of his musicians is that they broaden the harmonic, rhythmic, and structural boundaries of the band's charts, so that they follow not only the letter but the *spirit* of the composer's intent. This is more difficult than it sounds because the more conventional styles of jazz require only that a composition trigger a musician's own ruminations.

What's really impressive and unusual about this particular Kenton band is that despite (or could it be because of) their leader's high expectations, it's a relaxed group of musicians, and they sound like it: nineteen kindred spirits out to convince their audiences and themselves that in big-band jazz the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. The happy mood is infectious. (Kenton opened one recent concert, recorded on the Phase-4 London label, by excusing his informality: "We usually come on stage and the band blows about ten fanfares before I come on; then I'm wheeled on in a chariot; sometimes I use a bicycle. . . ."—then broke up as he gave the downbeat for the opening number.)

Unlike some past Kenton ensembles, which evoked the sterile perfection of musicians reading their arrangements off punched IBM cards, this one sounds as if the charts were pages torn out of a late Dostoevski novel. The pillows of sound and the swirl of tonal colors combine into a kind of deep-mouthed empathy—not so much a remembrance of sounds past as a revelation of jazz's future. (The LP was mastered directly from the original 2-track 1/4" 3M 207 master tape, with no limiting, no echo added, no high-pass [bass] cutoff used and only minor equalization added. Unlike other new Kenton releases, this album is not available in quadraphonic [SQ] sound but recording quality is superb throughout.)

Late in his middle age, Stan Kenton has come home at last, plying his craft with dignity and humor, a man and a musician firmly in command of his worth.

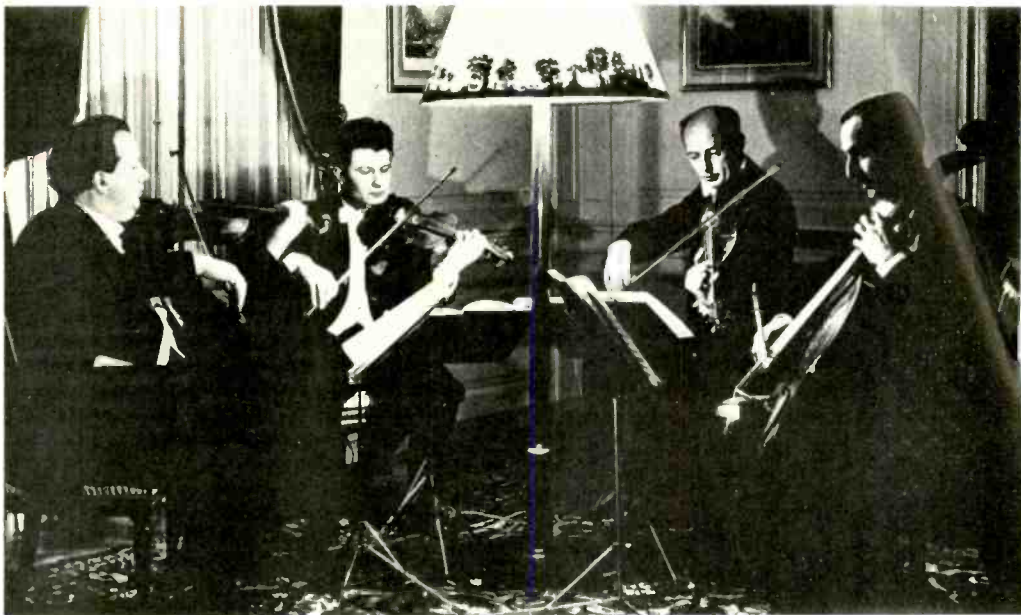
**STAN KENTON:** *Birthday in Britain. Daily Dance; Of Space and Time; Ambivalence; Blues, Between & Betwixt*; four more. (\$5.50; available from The Creative World of Stan Kenton, P.O. Box 35216, Los Angeles, Calif. 90035.)



# classical

reviewed by

ROYAL S. BROWN  
 ABRAM CHIPMAN  
 R. D. DARRELL  
 PETER G. DAVIS  
 SHIRLEY FLEMING  
 ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN  
 KENNETH FURIE  
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 H. C. ROBBINS LANDON  
 JOHN ROCKWELL  
 SUSAN THIEMANN SOMMER



The Végh Quartet—personal, subjective, and on the whole successful Bartók.

**BARTÓK:** Concerto for Orchestra. For a feature review of a recording of this work, see page 65.

**B** **BARTÓK:** Quartets for Strings (complete). Végh Quartet. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1501/3, \$8.97 (three discs; Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Comparison: Juilliard Quartet Col. D3S 717

Bartók's six string quartets form one of the most significant bodies of work in the entire literature for this medium, and they constitute a major challenge for any performing ensemble. On the whole, the Végh Quartet meets this challenge successfully. What is perhaps most interesting about their readings is that they offer real alternatives to what is presently available (although they do resemble the deleted DG version, by their fellow countrymen, the Hungarian Quartet). They bring a more personal and subjective approach to this music than we are generally accustomed to in the United States, and the results are frequently of considerable musical interest. At their best, as in the Fifth and Sixth Quartets, they turn in performances that stand up quite well with the best of the current competition. Unfortunately, they are unable to maintain this standard throughout. It is not that the other performances aren't good—they are, and in all the quartets there are many striking moments—it

is just that there are enough bothersome lapses in matters of detail to compromise the over-all quality of the set. For example, the first thing one hears—the opening of the First Quartet—is marred by the exaggerated portamento in the violins (particularly the first violin) on the falling sixth figure, an articulation that inexplicably is not matched when the viola and cello answer with the same figure in the eighth measure. There is also a thin, scratchy sound in the first violin in the pianissimo opening of the Third Quartet, as well as ensemble problems in the quintuplet figure heard just after rehearsal number 4 in the same work. Or perhaps most clearly indicative of the lack of concern for details is the open G struck inadvertently on the fourth beat of the second movement of the Second Quartet—thus, in a spot that easily could have been corrected, a note not indicated in Bartók's score is allowed to stand in the final pressing.

These are minor matters, perhaps, but I mention them as specific examples of what I find to be a general failing in all but the best of these readings: a lack of attention to all of those small matters that go together to make up a great performance. The set clearly falls below the quality of what I feel is the best of the current recordings, that by the Juilliard Quartet. Even at their best, as in the Fourth Quartet, the Végh falls short of the New York group. Compare, for example, the all-pizzicato fourth movement, where the Juilliard, taking a somewhat slower tempo than the Végh (i.e., exactly the quarter equals 142 indicated by Bartók!) give a much cleaner, more precise account of the pitches. (Tempo comparisons, by the way, are interesting here: The Juilliard, who are frequently criticized for their whirlwind tempos, play these works somewhat slower on average than do the Végh.)

I have written before that I consider the Juilliard's performances among the very best we have on record of any twentieth-century music, so my comparisons should be read in this light. Considered on its own terms, the Végh has much to offer, and their set is particularly valuable for presenting us with a very different conception of this music. The sound

is quite good (except that my copy of the Sixth Quartet has very noticeable pre-echo), and there is an interesting, somewhat technical introduction to the music by Mark Gantt (although I am at a complete loss to locate the I-V-IV-I progression—does he mean I-IV-V-I?—he rather glibly refers to in the Fourth Quartet).  
 R. P. M.

**B** **BEETHOVEN:** Concertos for Piano and Orchestra. Friedrich Gulda, piano; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Horst Stein, cond. STEREO TREASURY STS 15203/6, \$11.92 (four discs).

No. 1, in C, Op. 15; No. 2, in B flat, Op. 19; No. 3, in C minor, Op. 37; No. 4, in G, Op. 58; No. 5, in E flat, Op. 73 (Emperor).

Comparison: Fleisher/Szell/Cleve Orch. Col. M4X 30052

Backhaus' full-priced set of the five Beethoven piano concertos has been a mainstay of the London catalogue for ten years; a new one is on the way with Ashkenazy, Solti, and the Chicago Symphony. Thus the Gulda/Stein set (available in Europe for more than a year) is offered with little fanfare at an economy price.

On the whole, the box is good value; unfortunately for London, Columbia offers the classic Fleisher/Szell set at the same price. Fleisher gives us Beethoven in the Schnabel tradition, with close microphone placement and Szell's taut, beautifully sensitized orchestral backing. London has recorded Gulda more distantly. Often his piano seems much as you would hear it in the concert hall—slightly

## Explanation of symbols

Classical:

**B** Budget  
**H** Historical  
**R** Reissue

Recorded tape:

●● Open Reel  
 ● 8-Track Cartridge  
 ●● Cassette

backward, enmeshed as part of the orchestra rather than looming ahead of it as an equal (or superior) force. There is also greater ambience in the orchestral sound than one finds in the razor-sharp Columbia sonics. Still, there is plenty of detail and adequate heft in the orchestra *tutti*. London's spaciousness also gives the desirable feeling of a fortissimo in its true, unmonitored relation to a mere forte, and allows pianissimos to make their full magical effect. These are, in fact, excellent records from an engineering standpoint. I am less happy about London's awkward distribution of the music in automatic sequence. I much prefer Columbia's layout: Nos. 2 and 4 back to back, the others two sides each, all in manual sequence.

Gulda's performances are clean-cut and bright-eyed. A fleet technician with bracing rhythm and admirable directness, he avoids pretentious mannerisms and pays the greatest heed to the composer's markings. Controversial pedal indications are scrupulously observed; cadenzas are always the composer's own, played without any lily-gilding Busonifications (cf. Rubinstein). While it is doubtful that these performances are going to be made available individually, prospective purchasers who favor one concerto above the others are entitled to know a little about how each work is played:

Concerto No. 1. Moderate tempo for the first movement similar to Kempff, Schnabel, Fleisher. Good orchestral playing with hearty rhythm and well-defined, clucking woodwinds. Gulda's approach—objective for the most part—has moments of surprising flexibility (e.g., the return of the second theme in the recapitulation). He plays the third and longest of the three Beethoven cadenzas, giving it with great latitude of tempo befitting its improvisatory character. The Largo is on the fast side but long-breathed and reposeful. Beautiful, crystalline, singing tone and comparably nuanced orchestral playing. Fine collaboration between the soloist and conductor. The Rondo is done in impetuous, *opera-buffa* style—similar to Dorfmann/Toscanini (RCA Victorla VIC 1521), but a bit more moderate in tempo, more carefully phrased. At the very end a lone violinist makes a premature entrance in the pianist's final cadenzetta; strange that no one caught it!

Concerto No. 2. Alert tempo, crisp rhythm, fine separation of instrumental lines. The dexterity and cultivation of the playing is a joy. The slow movement is done with sympathetic breadth and line, and the misty atmosphere of the *con gran' espressione* at the end is beautifully realized. The Rondo is surprisingly deliberate—by no means slow, but rather less precipitate than I would have expected from Gulda. He makes it wistful and even graceful, but never merely facile. Gulda has the proper heady brio and character for early Beethoven, who was equally capable of uncouthness and extreme courtliness.

Concerto No. 3. Less immediately winning than Nos. 1 and 2. The orchestra sounds rather large, and its forthright playing is marred by instances of loose chording. Gulda is guilty of a few bumptious turns and sounds rather bleak and percussive. The Largo, which follows the reasonably brisk first movement, is on the fast side but well shaped, contrapuntally aware, and quite poetic. The dialogue of bassoons and flutes in its central portion is excellently clarified. The Rondo is fast and vigorous—very much a young man's perform-

ance. The timpani are superbly recorded, helping the codas of the first and last movements.

Concerto No. 4. A broad, conventional performance, even a shade turgid at times. Detail is less good than in Nos. 1–3: One has difficulty hearing the narrative of swirling strings and chattering woodwinds against the piano's figurations in the first movement's development section, and the oboe/bassoon answer to the piano's question at the end of the same movement is definitely slighted by the balance. The second movement is so expansive that it becomes bothersome: The four measures before letter M (Kalmus score) are a virtual Alphonse and Gaston act, with the pizzicatos waiting for Gulda and Gulda waiting for the pizzicatos. A spirited Rondo comes too late to save the slightly slack and featureless performance. As in No. 3, the distant piano militates against Gulda: In places he sounds brittle and icy rather than ample. The more familiar, later "Cadenza No. 1" is played in the first movement.

Concerto No. 5. Some amends have been made in the mike placement and Gulda's tone has somewhat more weight than in the other concertos. Yet he could sound warmer. His second-movement entrance is curiously cautious and static; the subsequent long sequences of trills are unpleasantly icy and brittle. Also on the debit side is some slightly smeary passagework in the Rondo. Otherwise, this is a steady, orthodox *Emperor*, solidly—a bit stolidly—supported by the reliable orchestra and conductor. The timpani rhythm at the end of the finale is excellent, but other details in the strings and winds get buried in the generalized heft.

These are unquestionably fine performances (though Gulda sounds more at home in early than in middle Beethoven): Among the complete sets, only Fleisher's, Kempff's (DG), and perhaps Arrau's (Philips) seem to me clearly superior. But even apart from price I continue to prefer the greater weight and eloquence of the Fleisher/Szell set. H.G.

**BRAMHS:** Quartets for Strings; Quintet for Piano and Strings. For a feature review of recordings of these works, see page 72.

**BRAMHS:** Songs. Elly Ameling, soprano; Norman Shetler, piano. BASF KHB 21021, \$5.98. Wenn du nur zuweilen lächelst; Es träumte mir; Ach, wende diesen Blick; Unbewegte, laue Luft; Es steht ein Lind' in jenem Tal; Das Mädchen spricht; Mädchenlied; Vergebliches Ständchen; Och, Mod'r, ich will en Ding han!; Ständchen; Am Sonntag Morgen; Da unten im Tale; Schwesterlein; In stiller Nacht; Feinsliebchen, du sollst mir nicht barfuss geh'n; Während des Regens; O kühler Wald; Von ewiger Liebe.

Though many of his individual songs are very beautiful, Brahms is not—at any rate, for me—one of the great masters of the Lied. For one thing, there is the problem, often remarked upon, of his indifference to verbal subtleties. Brahms's concentration on mood rather than on psychological detail lends to many of the songs a curious emotional coolness, largely because we sense that the lyricist has a life of its own and is only in a generalized way dependent upon the poetic text. In addition, Brahms's range seems unduly narrow. Even when the musical material is handled with great sophistication and inventiveness the enormous influence of German folksong upon his Lieder writing tends to restrict his reach to



Elly Ameling

Creating a whole world in a tiny space.

the domestic, the bourgeois, and the stolid. Whereas a great number of Brahms's songs are pleasant, especially in their treatment of musical ideas, few, I find, are very interesting. A whole recital of his songs can be something of a trial unless they are handled with delicacy and variety. Luckily, Elly Ameling infuses all this material with the fineness of her sensibility and the results are very engaging. Ameling has a small, well-placed voice—even in scale, silvery in timbre, very occasionally a little breathy and hollow. As the subtly knit opening phrases of *Da unten im Tale* reveal, her command of legato is exemplary. Though the coloristic range of the voice is limited, Ameling knows how to modulate her effects with such precision that she can create a whole world in a tiny space. Ameling's gift for fine discriminations is especially important in Brahms, where so many songs are strophic. In *Da unten im Tale*, in *Schwesterlein*, in *Feinsliebchen, du sollst mir nicht barfuss geh'n* she brings the tiny dramas to life by the delicacy of her shading and the sensitiveness of her rhythm. The various personages in these songs are limned with great vividness, yet with the lightest possible touch. In the familiar *Vergebliches Ständchen*, the impatient serenader out in the cold and the amused yet firm girl at the window are differentiated by color, weight, rhythmic emphasis. A downward portamento on "eisig" in the phrase "so eisig der Wind" (so icy the wind) brings the unfortunate, shivering boy to life; a rhythmic hesitation, then a ritardando at "geh' Heim zu Bett, zur Ruh'!" (go home to bed and get some rest!) creates perfectly the girl's playful solicitude. After so many years of subjection to Schwarzkopf's archness and disingenuousness there is something immensely refreshing in the straightforwardness, the emotional directness of Ameling's manner. For, though she can inflect and subtilize, she never forgets to sing, rather than merely act out her meaning. In this respect she hearkens back to Elisabeth Schumann, though she has not quite the older singer's bewitching sense of humor.

It is a pity that Ameling has not been as well served by the engineer as by her fine accom-

panist. The sound on this disc is extremely strident and even with a steep treble cut remains uncomfortable. Moreover the pressing is noisy, and on my review copy the surface was scratchy. BASF provides German texts but no translation. D.S.H.

**DAVIES:** *Missa Super L'Homme Armé*; *From Stone to Thorn*; *Hymnos*; *Ante-christ*. Vanessa Redgrave, speaker (in *Missa*); Mary Thomas, soprano (in *From Stone*); Alan Hacker, clarinet, and Stephen Pruslin, piano (in *Hymnos*); *The Fires of London*, Peter Maxwell Davies, cond. OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 2, \$5.98.

The musical territory that Peter Maxwell Davies has been exploring in recent years (especially since the completion of his opera *Taverner*, performed last summer at Covent Garden) is an unusual and striking one, combining elements of medieval and Renaissance polyphonic techniques, contemporary devices, popular music of the Victorian and more recent eras, mordant parody, and a special brand of hard-edged instrumental and vocal virtuosity. Two important works from 1969, the *Eight Songs for a Mad King* and *Vesalii Icones*, have been recorded in England, on the Unicorn label, but arrangements for their American release have not yet been made. In the meantime, the present disc brings us three recent works, and a remake of the already-once-recorded *Ante-christ*, which all partake of Davies' special vision.

One aspect of that vision suggests the distortions of a fun-house mirror, but the purpose is deadly serious. *Ante-christ* starts with a thirteenth-century motet, *Deo confitemini/ Domino* (readily accessible in the Apel-Davison *Historical Anthology of Music*), whose regular trochaic phrases are salted with dissonance, since the two parts the medieval craftsman added to his pre-existing chant tenor are each consonant with that tenor but not always with each other. In Davies' instrumental setting, the originally close lines are spaced out over several octaves (piccolo, cello in high register, and bass clarinet), the violin adds a

doubling (and further dissonance), handbells bang out the opening notes of each tenor phrase, and cross-rhythms from the percussion set up still further disturbances. The jangly, frenetic outcome speaks, not of cloistered chanting monks, but of another kind of Middle Ages—the Black Death, the Albigensian Crusade, violence and brutality. And the succeeding variations, intermingling medieval and modern compositional techniques, subject the motet's guts to a rigorous, hermetic recycling, pulling to the surface a sound-image aggressively facing in two directions at once.

Another 1967 piece, the *Hymnos* for clarinet and piano, exploits the dazzling virtuosity of its dedicatees, Alan Hacker and Stephen Pruslin, two members of *The Fires of London*, a performing group that Davies directs. Imagine something in the vein of Messiaen's bird-call music, but—and this is an important but—utterly devoid of the indulgence, the wallowing in sheer sound, lush harmony, and figurational efflorescence that characterizes the Frenchman's music. Davies conjures up a wide variety of moods, from astringently elegiac to fiercely shrill, including, just before the quiet coda, an amazing passage where the clarinet reaches all over its range while the pianist repeats and holds chords in both hands and strikes clusters with forearm, palm, and spare fingers! This is compelling, precisely imagined music.

*From Stone to Thorn*, a 1971 score for mezzo-soprano, bass clarinet, harpsichord, guitar, and percussion, is a setting of a poem by George Mackay Brown; its fourteen lines draw parallels between the Stations of the Cross and the agricultural cycle (*Vesalii Icones*, a textless work for dance, solo cello, and ensemble, also used the Stations, superimposing on them the gestures and body positions of the famous Vesalius anatomical engravings). An intricate work, it is more subdued than, say, the earlier *Revelation and Fall*, with the vocal protagonist more of an observer than an agonized participant. The subtle colors of plucked strings, struck metal, and vibrating metal shimmer around the sustained legato lines of voice and bass clarinet.

*Missa Super L'Homme Armé* returns to the

transformational aesthetic of *Ante-christ*, but in a more extended and allusive framework: An anonymous, incomplete fifteenth-century Mass based on the famous tune is the raw material from which various digressions of style are made, including frantic fox-trots, a medieval dance, and a Victorian hymn (prerecorded on a 78-rpm disc, complete with scratch; earlier, another organ version, similarly prerecorded, encounters a stuck groove, which the winds imitate, inciting a percussion protest that sets off one of those fox-trots). All this is interspersed with spoken texts from Luke xxii, dealing with the betrayal of Christ, Peter's denial, and the Last Supper. Vanessa Redgrave's reading of these, in a richly rolled, delicately lisping Latin, is splendidly portentous, and she looks stunning in her ecclesiastical robes as photographed in full color on the jacket (a double-fold affair, by the way, with texts, translations, and notes by the composer). This is the most fascinating of the four works on the record, a theatrical tour de force that leaps vividly off the record.

All the performances are splendid, and obviously quite authoritative. The recorded sound is crystalline, open at the climaxes, and glitteringly true in rendering all the delicate percussion sounds. There isn't much to choose between this version of *Ante-christ* and the earlier one on Mainstream 5001 by almost identical personnel—but don't let the duplication stop you from investigating the other works. I hope we may soon have some of Davies' orchestral music on disc, and of course the two Unicorn recordings as well: he is a composer who seems always to have something new and important to say. D.H.

**DVOŘÁK:** *Quartet for Strings*, Op. 61; *Terzetto*; *Quartet for Piano and Strings*. For a feature review of recordings of these works, see page 72.

**GLAZUNOV:** *Scènes de ballet*, Op. 52; *Poème lyrique*, in D flat, Op. 12; *Cortège solennel*, in G. Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. Melodiya/Angel SR 40225, \$5.98.

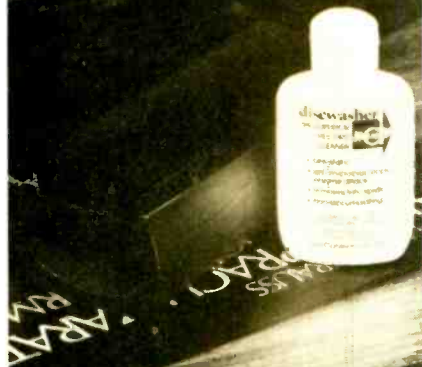
In this country the Romantic Revival may not have got around to Glazunov yet, but Soviet musicians who disdained him for a good many years as the epitome of the bourgeois composer now are enthusiastically busy rehabilitating him. Various Melodiya conductors have led the way: Khaikin with a complete version of Glazunov's best-known ballet, *The Seasons*, Op. 67 (SR 40088, 1969); Svetlanov and Gauk in a batch of less familiar works led by the rousing *Finnish Fantasy*, Op. 88 (SR 40119, 1970); Svetlanov again with the fine *Raymonda* Ballet, Op. 57 (SR 40172, which I reviewed here in December 1971). Now Rozhdestvensky gets into the act with a dazzlingly glittering recorded performance of the once popular eight-part *Scènes de ballet* Suite, which reveals an excitingly theatrical vitality in this music that is sure to confound all those who have previously credited it with no more than some faded lavender-and-old-lace period (1894) charm.

The companion works, oversee, are more novel: indeed, record firsts to the best of my knowledge. The tenderly wistful *Poème lyrique* was composed around 1883-4 when the



Peter Maxwell Davies—something new and important to say.

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precocious Glazunov was still in his late teens; the more distinctively "Russian" and not at all lugubrious short professional piece is dated (in Melodiya's labeling) 1907—leaving me uncertain whether this is a revision of the *Cortège solennel*, Op. 50, of 1894, or an entirely different work. Another mild puzzle here is why Melodiya should have assigned each of the three works to a different producer/engineer, especially since the B-side Messrs. Tolstopoyatov and Grosman seem merely professionally competent—at least in comparison with A-side Valery Spassky's technological brilliance.

R.D.D.

**B**

## HANDEL: Rodelinda.

Rodelinda  
Bertrario  
Grmoaldo  
Eduige  
Unulfo  
Garibaldo

Teresa Stich-Randall (s)  
Maureen Forrester (a)  
Alexander Young (t)  
Hilde Rössl-Majdan (ms)  
Helen Watts (a)  
John Boyden (bs)

**R**

Martin Isepp, harpsichord; Vienna Radio Orchestra, Brian Priestman, cond. WESTMINSTER GOLD WGSO 8205-3, \$8.94 (three discs; from Westminster WST 320, 1964).

**B**

HANDEL: Saul. Jennifer Vyvan and Laurence Dutoit, sopranos; Margareta Sjostedt, mezzo; Helen Watts, alto; Herbert Handt and Erling Thorborg, tenors; Peter Wimberger, bass; Copenhagen Boys' Choir; Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Mogens Wöldike, cond. BACH GUILD HM 24/26 SD, \$8.94 (three discs; from Vanguard BGS 5054/56, 1963).

**R**

This reissue of the nine-year-old recording of *Rodelinda* is not an antique for the collector: it is an enjoyable presentation of a great score that has lain on the library shelves for generations. Among the first full-scale recordings of a Handelian opera, it was the beneficiary of the Handel revival that gathered momentum with the bicentennial celebrations in 1959. At that time many musicians were still under the impression that a subdued, almost "churchly" solemnity is in order in all baroque vocal works, and recitatives especially were usually unctuous and comatose.

But there is nothing somnolent about Brian Priestman's conducting: he knows that *Rodelinda* is an Italian opera, not a collection of anthems. The tempos are bracing and there is life wherever Priestman can infuse it; but not all the singers respond to his efforts. Alexander Young is excellent; he sings as a tenor in an opera should, with a full, rounded voice that has a nice heroic tinge; he is not inhibited; and he readily goes along with the conductor. John Boyden's bass voice is perhaps not so flexible as Young's, but he too does well and catches the spirit of the opera. Of the women, Hilde Rössl-Majdan does bravely, if dealing a bit cautiously with the florituras; she may be a little prosaic but innocent enough to escape any sort of affectation.

We do not have to praise Helen Watts: she is a great artist, at home in any style. Not so the other two ladies, both of them superbly trained artists but with definite—and contrasting—ideas and qualities. Teresa Stich-Randall is a mannered singer, always on the verge of shedding tears. All her texts could begin with "*Ohimè!*" or "*O Dio, per pietà!*"; she has only one mood, one delivery—that of eternal languor. Because of her ultrarefined approach to every sentence, the voice often gets glassy, the

resonance setting in only after the interval is safely registered. And that finely trained voice is cold. Maureen Forrester is of course a singer in a class by herself, but her rich, fruity, and absolutely true alto, which is used here in substitution for that of an alto castrato, is so feminine—even matronly—that all dramatic illusion is lost. She is quite out of place in this role. Baroque opera will not be successfully resuscitated until we recognize the imperative demands of the living theater, where men's roles are sung by men. It is really disconcerting when this quintessentially feminine Bertrario asks about the well being of "my wife." While these grave dramaturgical and musical problems are being resolved, let us simply rejoice in Forrester's masterful singing and be grateful for this recording of a score brimming with fine music.

Finally a word about the pamphlet, which also contains the libretto and an English translation. Westminster could have used the intervening years to update the notes. Recordings usually give full credit down to the last flunkie whose sole line is "dinner is served"; why then the unprofessional anonymity of the notes? They are full of the most elementary mistakes and are totally useless.

The other reissue is Handel's *Saul*, one of the great English music dramas, otherwise known as oratorios. In these dramatic works Handel was relieved of the conventions of the Italian *opera seria* and could freely apply his awesome power. The dramatic oratorios (as opposed to the anthem oratorios like *Messiah* or *Israel in Egypt*) are really stage works, but as with other operas a good theater conductor can make their impact felt in a recording. Unfortunately, Mogens Wöldike is too placid and square-cut a musician to achieve this, and he is saddled with a boys' chorus and with women singing men's parts.

Now I hasten to say that the boys are extremely well trained and coached, invariably dead center on pitch, and they sing nicely, but their voices cannot soar, and inevitably they can neither understand nor express what they are singing. The tremendous chorus, "Envy, eldest born of hell," begins with the deep somber voices of the men; then the menacing motif vaults up to the angelic children's chorus and all the sting is gone. Add to this Wöldike's tame rhythm and undramatic pace and you get a Sunday-school hymn. (Compare this chorus to the one in the deleted Urania UR 240 to see what happens when an alert conductor directs a chorus with female trebles that can really get off the ground. This recording is a mono much older than the Vanguard stereo but quite superior to it in almost every aspect. Regrettably, it is even more heavily cut than Wöldike's version.) In Handel's time the church choirs, the only trained choral forces available for his oratorio performances, would not admit women, so he had no choice but to use the boys. There is a long and distinguished tradition in England, still very much alive, of such choirs, and they sound very attractive in Elizabethan church music—or Victorian anthems—but in dramatic music they cannot hold a candle to a mixed choir. The religious and sociocultural taboos having been long since abandoned, we should not deprive these highly dramatic—often violent—choral frescoes of their essential power.

In general the performance is drab, lacking in vigor and tension, even though some of the

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singers are excellent. Very objectionable are the severe cuts, especially the truncated arias which lose their symmetry. I am afraid that in the face of the admirable new recordings of such oratorios by Somary, Davis, Mackerras, Richter, and others, this *Saul* is a stopgap at best; we need a new recording to do justice to the Handelian music drama. P.H.L.

**HANDEL:** *Water Music*. Collegium Aureum. BASF HB 20341, \$5.98.

**HANDEL:** *Overtures*. English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard, cond. PHILIPS 6599 053, \$6.98.

Lotario; Esther; Admeto; Alcina; Orlando; Poro; Partenope; Ottone.

These two recordings are examples of two extremes in today's performance practice of baroque music. One goes by the book without regard to other circumstances; the other throws away the book and substitutes its own code. Though the BASF disc (recorded by the German company Harmonia Mundi) was produced in this country, everything is printed in German. Well, not everything, because they did not bother with notes in any language to explain how this *Wassermusik* by "Georg Friedrich Händel"—grand outdoor music—turned into intimate chamber music. Since the book says that baroque orchestras were small, the Collegium Aureum ensemble is small, though the original performance used a bargeful of musicians. The playing is nice, the "authentic instruments" are in tune, the solo oboe excellent; still the essential flavor is largely missing in this subdued rendition. The volume must be boosted to overcome the distant sound.

Raymond Leppard is always interesting and enjoyable, often plausible, but seldom convincing. His music-making is first-class; there is rhythm, color, and élan, but he is not above doctoring the scores he conducts to suit his tastes rather than the composer's. While this lively performance of a batch of fine overtures suits Handel, one must remember that he is nowhere in need of assistance from any quarter. Well, this time there is little that seriously disturbs the style: the dynamics are a bit too varied, though the pianos are delectable, and the double-dotting is a bit overdone. When Leppard does not try for effect we may forgive him his sins, because the playing is attractive—listen to the infinite charm of the last portion of the overture to *Alcina*. But why should not such a cultivated and well-equipped musician respect the composers he is interpreting?

P.H.L.

**HAYDN:** *Concertos for Violin and Orchestra*: in C, H.VIIa:1; in G, H.VIIa:4. Bohuslav Matoušek, violin; Prague Chamber Orchestra, Libor Hlaváček, cond. SUPRAPHON 1 10 1175, \$6.98.

Comparison—Concerto in C: Menuhin/Bath Fest.

Ang. S 36190

Haydn composed four violin concertos, of which one in D is lost. The one in C was written for his concertmaster, Luigi Tomasini, probably in the early 1760s. The one in G survives at present in one single manuscript, dated 1777, in the library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna. The Concerto in C has always been the most popular, perhaps



Raymond Leppard  
Does Handel need doctoring?

because of its ravishingly beautiful slow movement.

The new Supraphon record is a first-rate production in every respect. The young violinist (he was born in 1950) has an impeccable technique and displays great sense of style throughout both works. His performances of both slow movements are especially lovely. The orchestra plays superbly and there is an imaginative harpsichord continuo player who adds an attractive countermelody in the middle section of the slow movement in the C major work. If a small objection might be made, it concerns the rather overelaborate cadenzas, apparently by the violinist: this applies especially to the first movement of the C major. The cadenza to the slow movement of the G major, on the other hand, is a model of taste and brevity.

There have been several fine recordings of the C major (particularly a Columbia mono version with Stern), but the only current competing version of either work is Menuhin's C major, backed by the Mozart *Sinfonia concertante*—unfortunately not one of that artist's outstanding releases. For both repertory and performances, then, this Supraphon release may be thoroughly recommended. Miniature scores of both works are published by Eulenburg. H.C.R.L.

**B HAYDN:** *The Last Sixteen Trios for Piano and Strings*. Huguette Dreyfus, fortepiano; Eduard Melkus, violin; Elisabeth Vogt, cello. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1522/5, \$11.96 (four discs) (Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

No. 27, in A flat, H.XV:14; No. 31, in G, H.XV:32; No. 32, in A flat, H.XV:18; No. 33, in G minor, H.XV:19; No. 34, in B flat, H.XV:20; No. 35, in C, H.XV:21; No. 36, in E flat, H.XV:22; No. 37, in D minor, H.XV:23; No. 38, in D, H.XV:24; No. 39, in G, H.XV:25; No. 40, in F sharp minor, H.XV:26; No. 41, in E flat minor, H.XV:31; No. 42, in E flat, H.XV:30; No. 43, in C, H.XV:27; No. 44, in E, H.XV:28; No. 45, in E flat, H.XV:29.

Of the many composers who have specially benefited from the long-playing record, surely Haydn and Wagner must stand supreme. We

have the whole of the *Ring* in four versions (including the monumental Furtwängler version) with a fifth on the way, all of Haydn's symphonies, quartets, and piano sonatas, and now the last sixteen piano trios. Commercial ensembles are simply not going to insert sixteen Haydn trios into their repertoire, even such magnificent late-period trios as these. So we have to thank the age of LP for giving us these great works, many here recorded for the first time.

The undertaking was obviously inspired by the recent publication of these works in the first collected, critical edition of Haydn's piano trios being issued by Doblinger in Vienna, and these recordings are based on that edition and use the new chronological numbering. Haydn composed these trios in or for London in the 1790s. The latest set was published in London in 1797. There are famous works among them, such as the Trio with the *Gypsy Rondo*, which Haydn entitled, on the authentic first edition published in London, "in the Gypsies' style." It is one of the earliest works in which Hungarian (Gypsy) music was written down; in the 1780s Haydn had written the finale of the D major Piano Concerto in the Hungarian style (*all'Ongarese*), and in several of his other works we find authentic evidence of his interest in Balkan folk music.

But apart from this famous G major Trio, this set contains work after work in Haydn's most profound and imaginative style. Listeners are recommended to start, perhaps, with the Trio in F sharp minor, the slow movement of which uses the Adagio from Symphony No. 102; it is perhaps the greatest slow movement Haydn ever wrote, of a dusky intensity and ambivalent emotion that is thrilling. One of my own favorites is the brilliant C major (No. 43); and one of the greatest is certainly the majestic E flat (No. 42), which Haydn composed for Breitkopf & Härtel, the great Leipzig music publishers.

Mlle. Dreyfus is well known in France as a harpsichord player; here, she plays an eighteenth-century (or more exactly, an early-nineteenth-century) piano that has an extraordinary built-in percussion section, activated by means of a pedal. A miniature drum, cymbals, and a bell are set in motion as so-called "Turkish" music, such as Haydn used (in the large size) for the second movement of the *Military Symphony*. In this recording, the percussion section is used charmingly in the *Gypsy Rondo* and also in a work in A major that ends with a kind of Hungarian finale. Mlle. Dreyfus was wise to use this percussion section sparingly, for otherwise it would be intolerable. It is an amusing trick if used as tastefully as Mlle. Dreyfus does. (The piano is owned by Paul Badura-Skoda, who lent it for this recording.) Her two collaborators are Austrians, and Herr Melkus is well known in Vienna for his performance of old music on original violins of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The sound of these records is entrancing, but in all fairness it must be said that (1) there are better keyboard instruments for this purpose—e.g., one of the fine Longman & Broderip pianos, and (2) the performances are not always inspired. They vary considerably and they never reach the refined approach of the Beaux Arts Trio, who are now recording the Haydn trios on modern instruments. (I reviewed the second record in this superb series

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in June 1973.) But several of the trios are now available only on the Musical Heritage records, and the price is attractive. The recorded sound is very clear and the balance good. There are useful notes by Harry Halbreich. The original records were issued a couple of years ago by Valois in France (they were prohibitively expensive). H.C.R.L.

**HAYDN:** Quartet for Strings, Op. 64, No. 4. For a feature review of a recording of this work, see page 72.

**HENZE:** Concerto for Piano and Orchestra,

No. 2. Christoph Eschenbach, piano; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Hans Werner Henze, cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 056, \$6.98.

Hans Werner Henze's Second Piano Concerto is a substantial and important addition to the repertory of large-scale piano concertos. His First Piano Concerto, composed back in 1950, was a vigorous, fairly short work; Henze was artistic director of the Wiesbaden Ballet at the time, and the concerto is cast as an "entrée, pas de deux, and coda." The Second was written for Christoph Eschenbach and commissioned for the opening of the Richard Kasselowsky Kunsthaus in Bielefeld in September 1968; on

the eve of that opening, Henze published in the *Bielefelder Presse* the declaration of dedication to World Revolution that raised such a storm in Germany. The Second Piano Concerto is the largest piece in that group of concertos—others are the Double Concerto (oboe and harp) for the Holligers, and the Double Bass Concerto for Gary Karr—that filled the years between Henze's last grand opera, *The Bassarids*, and his return to the "musical stage" with *El Cimarrón*, *Natascha Ungeheuer*, and the new "vaudeville" *La Cubana* for NET.

The composer seems to have withdrawn the hints of a "program" which were given at the earlier performances of the work; they do not appear in the printed score or on the record sleeve. But originally the Second Concerto, dedicated to Eschenbach as "my angel with three wings" (the third wing—or *Flügel*—being a pun on the German word for grand piano), was subtitled a "Psychodrama." It is in three movements, played without pauses between them. The first is lyrical, based on a long, limpid span for the solo piano, a free-leaping line that ranges through two octaves. Its first three notes form an identifying symbol for the recurrent transformations of the theme throughout the work. The concerto can be analyzed formally; it is strongly built, and as Henze once said, "In my world, the old forms strive to regain new significance." At the same time it is an emotional progression. Toward the end of the first movement comes the first *sul ponticello* hint of a "detumescent" motif, which then punctuates the sections of the scherzo (whatever the "matter" of the composition, sexual imagery seems apt in describing it). The central movement is in fact longer and carries more weight than the term "scherzo" might suggest: It is a Mephistophelean dance, a Wild Hunt after elusive and teasing wills-o'-the-wisp. Even when the sad descending motif begins, a new surge of rising excitement may begin to stir, so that the chase starts again. Or else the subsidence may be enveloped in a mounting wave of melancholy. The final, fiercest "orgasm" is abruptly cut short, and soft mysterious music—stopped horns pressing on three adjacent semitones, a haze of adjacent harmonics from divided lower strings, a plangent oboe—announces the finale in what sounds unmistakably like "program music."

The "program" is a Shakespeare sonnet: "The expense of spirit in a waste of shame is lust in action. . . . None knows well to shun the heaven that leads men to this hell." Henze has "set" the sonnet for soloist and orchestra as a kind of dream of sadness, ferocity, eagerness, disillusion. It is a bold, complex movement in contrasting tempos, catching reflections from what has gone before, reviewing experience as if the orchestra were the events and the soloist an observer, who strives at times to stand aside, and reflect, and order, and comment on them, but constantly becomes caught up again in their frenzy. "Savage, extreme, rude, cruel. . . . A bliss in proof. . . this hell." Henze uses a fairly large orchestra with triple woodwinds. The climaxes are very fierce. There is almost none of the soft, self-consciously and self-indulgently "beautiful" web-weaving of the earlier, more luxuriant compositions. The textures are often intricate, but always very precise. Much of the piano writing is in two or three parts. Eschenbach gives a magnificent performance, both technically and emotionally. To the cantilenas of the first movement he brings a crystalline "defining" quality that



She is clearly entitled to high marks in *bel canto*, wrote Irving Kolodin (*Saturday Review*). But her performance in *Don Carlo* "may be better described in terms of a new vocal category, *bel aria*, or 'beautiful air.'"

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## Fuller's Riveting Rameau by Clifford F. Gilmore

The joint efforts of Nonesuch Records, Albert Fuller, and Jean-Philippe Rameau have combined here to produce the most entertaining and exciting harpsichord record to come along in years. It's difficult to understand why Rameau's vividly colorful keyboard works have not achieved more popularity than they have; the range of *affects* or characterizations is incredibly broad, ranging from the rollicking barnyard sounds of *La Poule* (*The Hen*) to the expressive sublimity of *L'Entretien des Muses* (*Conversation of the Muses*), from the stunning harmonic audacity of *L'Enharmonique* to the glittering cascades of virtuosic passage work in *Les Cyclopes*. There's no mere baroque noodling to be found here at all; rather each work glows in its own vivid and unique colors.

At the very least, half the praise for this stunning recital must go to Albert Fuller, whose dynamic and electrifying performances keep the listener riveted to the edge of his chair. It would sound pedantic to attribute Fuller's success here entirely to his mastery of the stylistic details of Rameau's music. The

stylistic mastery is there, to be sure, but there is also a degree of exuberance and supercharged excitement rarely encountered in the concert hall or on records.

Fuller's harpsichord is a modern double-keyboard instrument built by William Dowd, inspired by the eighteenth-century French builder Pascal Taskin. It has two eight-foot registers and one four-foot. Rameau's harmonic style virtually dictates equal-temperament tuning, though the pitch is approximately a half tone lower than the twentieth-century standard. It has an aggressive rather than gentle sound, which may be attributed to the Delrin plectra, the recording acoustic, or both. In any case, this is a record that cannot be used for "pleasant" background music: It will command your undivided attention on every hearing.

**B RAMEAU:** Pièces de Clavecin. Albert Fuller, harpsichord (built by William Dowd). NONESUCH H 71278, \$2.98.

La Dauphine; Two Menuets; L'Entretien des Muses; La Poule; L'Enharmonique; Les Cyclopes; Suite in E minor.

must be just what Henze intended; then from these emotions grow the demonic episodes of the later movements, the passions and sudden pangs and soft melancholy musings. The LPO, which gave the London premiere of the concerto around the time of the recording, is at its best. The recording is superb—large, clear, and well-balanced. Altogether, a most impressive achievement. A.P.

**KIRCHNER:** Sonata Concertante for Violin and Piano. **ROREM:** Day Music for Violin and Piano. Jaime Laredo, violin; Ruth Laredo, piano. DESTO DC 7151, \$5.98.

With this release, Desto offers one of the most important and best-executed recordings of recent American music to show up for some time. The 1952 Sonata Concertante by Leon Kirchner, once recorded on Epic by violinist Eudice Shapiro with the composer at the piano, represents a particularly valuable reappearance.

As with almost every composition Kirchner has written, the Sonata Concertante is marked by an intense, rather gloomy lyricism that owes much of its character and effect to the composer's ability—also characteristic of composers such as Berg and Roger Sessions (Kirchner's teacher)—to balance strongly dissonant and frequently atonal harmonic constructions with simpler harmonies and melodic lines that maintain a loose contact with tonality. For all of the sonata's complex chordal patterns, for instance, the work is punctuated by the harmonic motive of open sixths (frequently minor), an oft-used device

in Kirchner's earlier music, which can be heard at the very outset in the solo violin.

In addition to the rich harmonic idiom, Kirchner throughout the work constantly shifts mood, texture, and rhythm. The first two pages of the sonata, for example, move from the andante maestoso of the introduction to an allegro and then to a scherzolike presto, the latter suddenly giving way to a haunting, beautiful theme from the violin over a slow, two-note chromatic ostinato in the piano (here Ravel comes to mind somewhat, as in the second movement of the Kirchner piano sonata, which I am told is an homage to Ravel). Even passages marked by the strong, often syncopated marcato rhythms rarely last for more than a few measures. Yet so strong is their momentum that the effect carries over into the ensuing measures, giving the work as a whole a strong sense of both unity and variety. One is also struck by Kirchner's ability to blend the sonorities of the violin and piano in spite of the independence of the two instruments in many ensemble passages (both are given cadenzas toward the end of this one-movement work's first major section).

The *Roem Day Music*, composed in 1971, is made up of eight short and decidedly static sections whose precious titles ("Wedges and Doubles," "A Game of Chess Four Centuries Ago," etc.) should not discourage the listener (nor should *Roem's* even more pretentious comments to accompany these titles). For *Day Music* offers a fascinating and sometimes dazzling display of instrumental gymnastics in which the rhythmic and coloristic effects are striking in their immediacy. Generally written in an unsystematically dissonant and some-

what uncharacteristically harsh style, *Day Music* nonetheless offers at least one section, entitled "Pearls," whose lilting 6/8 flow and bittersweet polytonality quickly signals the author of this work as the same composer of the simple, ingratiating art songs that represent one of this country's most important contributions to that genre.

It would be almost impossible to imagine better performances or better sound. Jaime Laredo has the kind of full-bodied tone that must be the dream of any composer who has ever written a violin melody. Yet he never indulges in the kind of pseudo-romantic excesses that such a tone is apt to elicit, and one finds a perfect sense of proportion in his approach, whether in the more lyrical sections or in the sometimes extremely difficult passage-work both composers have inflicted on their soloists. His flawless and sonorous execution of the many sustained double-stops in the Kirchner sonata deserves particular acclaim. As for Ruth Laredo, I was skeptical that any pianist could quite match Kirchner's own rather brittle but scintillating performance on the Epic version of the Sonata Concertante. But Mrs. Laredo, whose praises I have already sung for her Scriabin recordings, performs with perfect clarity the virtuosic piano parts for both of these works. The Laredos' sense of timing, tonal balance, and rhythmic interplay—whether in the simultaneous intricacies of the Kirchner work or the often more antiphonal scoring of the *Roem*—could not be more gratifying. All of this—combined with Desto's near-perfect miking and reproduction of the two instruments (particularly the violin)—makes for an outstanding release. R.S.B.

**LISZT:** Complete Concert Paraphrases on Operas by Verdi. Claudio Arrau, piano. PHILIPS 6500 368, \$6.98.

Aida; Danza sacra e duetto finale; Don Carlo; Coro di festa e marcia funebre; Ernani; Salve Maria de Jerusalem (I Lombardi); Rigoletto; Réminiscences de Boccanegra; Miserere du Trovatore.

This disc contains the complete concert paraphrases on Verdi operas that Liszt improvised and then committed to paper (there exists also a paraphrase on one of Verdi's non-operatic works—the Agnus Dei of the *Manzoni Requiem*). In the days before radio and recording, Liszt's piano reworkings were one of the few viable ways of getting to hear this music; if the Met's prices get higher, perhaps these scrappy works will again be used for that purpose! These specimens range in time and style from the garish *I Lombardi* of 1848 (the year of Liszt's retirement from active concert work) to the *Réminiscences de Boccanegra* of 1882 (which has many of the leanings toward impressionism and Bartókian dissonance also found in his "pure" music of that period). The *Ernani* paraphrase was written in 1849, but Arrau plays it here in Liszt's 1859 reworking. The famous *Rigoletto* paraphrase and that from *Il Trovatore* similarly date from 1859, and anyone who knows his operatic ABCs will automatically place the *Aida* after 1869—the date of that opera's premiere at Cairo (Liszt paraphrased it a decade later).

Arrau has the magnificent orchestral tone and brilliant technique to do justice to the most virtuosic, splashy episodes, but instead chooses to concentrate on musical values. Thus it is possible to find his account of the familiar *Rigoletto* a bit angular and restrained.

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—*Stereo Review*, April '73

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In the more atypical later pieces, the pianist's warm, reflective style and ravishing sonority (not to mention his ruminative wisdom) are decidedly apropos.

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**MESSIAEN: La Nativité du Seigneur.** Ferdinand Klinda, organ (Organ of the St. Nicholas Church, Prague) EVEREST 3330, \$4.98.

Comparisons:  
Preston  
Krigbaum

Argo 5447  
Lyr 7225

Messiaen's organ music is an important part of his total output, and it's no exaggeration to say that it is also the most significant music for that instrument of the twentieth century. Still, works like *La Nativité* present formalistic and stylistic problems to many listeners today, nearly four decades after it appeared in 1936. Fortunately, Messiaen has often accompanied his works with lengthy explanations and directions, and has even given us a textbook, *The Technique of My Musical Language*, which sets forth his intentions quite clearly. His introduction to *La Nativité* specifies that it must be regarded from a triple point of view: theological, instrumental, and musical. He then explains in some detail the religious meaning, his reasons for his special demands on the organ, and in greatest detail his musical or compositional techniques. These consist particularly of his use of scales or modes of limited transposition, his principle of the added rhythmic value, pedal points, expanded ornaments, gradual augmentation of intervals, and others. In a sense, *La Nativité* represents a perfect consummation of his musical ideals, and with good reason it has become one of his most popular works.

Messiaen's instrumental ideas are strongly influenced by the organ at the Church of La Trinité in Paris, where he was organist for many years. In the centuries-old French tradition, he carefully specifies the exact registrations for each piece in terms of that instrument, and the novel timbres he envisions are essential to the music. They are effects that are, of course, impossible to duplicate on any but a French organ, and Klinda, on his eighteenth-century Czech instrument, is no more successful than Simon Preston, on the monstrous organ of Westminster Abbey, in providing what Messiaen asks for. Krigbaum's Lyricord version is played on the huge orchestral Skinner Organ in Woolsey Hall at Yale, which is even farther from ideal. To hear the sounds Messiaen wanted, it's necessary to try to find his own recording on the French Ducretet-Thomson label played on the organ at La Trinité: but that old mono record doesn't sound very good, and frankly Messiaen didn't play very well.

Practically speaking, the choice is between Klinda and Simon Preston, who both play superbly—we'll just have to wait for a well-played version from France. Preston's Argo record is more expensive, and for the extra money you get a superbly clean and clear recording of a huge, multicolored, totally unsubtle organ, flawlessly played. Everest's lower price entitles you to a sometimes harsh recording of a basically better (but not really distinguished) organ, also sensitively played.

*La Nativité du Seigneur* is one of those seminal works with which anyone interested in twentieth century music should be familiar:

either of these records would serve that purpose well. C.F.G.

**MONTEVERDI: Madrigals.** Kenneth Bowman, tenor; instrumentalists; Heinrich Schütz Choir, Roger Norrington, cond. ARGO ZRG 698, \$5.98.

Book V: *Questi vaghi*. Book VIII: *Hor che'l ciel e la terra; Moveve al mio bel suon; Altri canti di Marte; Ardo avvampo. Selva morale e spirituale: O ciechi ciechi.*

The title of this generally admirable disc is somewhat misleading. Those for whom the word "madrigals" conjures up a picture of five or six people decorously sitting around a table singing from part books will be surprised by the sweeping choral frescoes, the dazzling virtuosic writing, and the obvious dance accompaniments in these six works. Part of this confusion in nomenclature stems from Monteverdi's original publishers, who collected and published his later works, no matter what they were, under the general title of "madrigals." This tied them into a series with his earlier books of genuine madrigals, and anyway what else could you call these odd pieces that belonged to no commonly recognized genre? Actually the works Vincenti gathered up into the Eighth Book of Monteverdi's madrigals were for the most part court entertainments, commissions that the composer had filled over a period of twenty years for various noble patrons. Four of the six works on the Argo disc are taken from this famous collection, and the other two—*Questi vaghi*, a nine-voice extravaganza that concludes the composer's Fifth Book, and *O ciechi ciechi* from the late *Selva morale*—are very much in the same line.

*Hor che'l ciel e la terra*, a monumental choral setting of Petrarch's sonnet contrasting a peaceful nightscape with the poet's internal anguish, is truly a masterpiece. More than one critic has remarked on the resemblance between Monteverdi's colorful palette and the techniques of the nineteenth-century tone poem. The remaining works are less successful in their entirety, but being by a composer of Monteverdi's caliber they have their share of moments of power and charm. The *ballo* entertainment *Moveve al mio bel suon*, for example, alternates gracefully attractive dances with a rather pompous tenor declaiming the praises of the Hapsburg emperor Ferdinand III. The empty rhetoric of this panegyric gives tenor Kenneth Bowman an opportunity to show off a versatile and flexible voice well matched to the virtuoso demands made upon it, but like so much occasional music the piece as a whole no longer can claim our full attention.

*Altri canti di Marte* and *Ardo avvampo* abound in the choral word-painting dear to Monteverdi's heart at this time. Images of war and battle intrigued the composer and called forth some of his most effective devices. *O ciechi ciechi* is new to disc, and to me as well. It comes from a quasi-sacred collection of moral or "spiritual madrigals"; although I have no historical evidence, I strongly suspect that the pious images of the text were originally praises for yet another of the composer's worldly patrons. The musical setting, for example, does not really fit the text either grammatically or imagewise, a fault almost unthinkable in late Monteverdi. *Questi vaghi*, an early venture into large-scale choral composition, ambitious yet unpretentious, succeeds in charming the listener without taxing his mind or emotions.

Works like these, which call for large forces to make their effects, often contrasting solo declamation and instrumental ritornellos with broad sweeping gestures demanding a generous body of sound, are ideally suited to choral performance. The appropriately named Heinrich Schütz Choir (the disc illustrates how much Schütz owed to his teacher) sounds very fine, especially in the two best pieces, *Hor che'l ciel* and *Ardo avvampo*, which are more demanding in both nuance and over-all conception. The soloists who appear briefly are all satisfactory, while the solo instrumentalists strive, sometimes successfully, not to be overshadowed by the larger vocal forces. S.T.S.

**MOZART: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 11, in F, K. 413; No. 12, in A, K. 414.** Rudolf Serkin, piano; Marlboro Festival Orchestra, Alexander Schneider, cond. COLUMBIA M 31728, \$5.98.

After Mozart settled in Vienna in 1781, he composed three new piano concertos, K. 413-5, which he issued in manuscript copies of the parts (rather than the scores, as was later the custom) by subscription in 1783. Recently I found a set of these subscription mss. in the Augustinian Monastery of Schlägl, Upper Austria. Textually they are interesting and clear up some problems that will be in part mentioned below. With these works, Mozart thought to win friends among amateur and professional alike. "There are passages here and there from which the connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction, but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned cannot fail to be pleased, though without knowing why."

Posterity has been very generous to K. 414, one of Mozart's most popular piano concertos. It has been less than kind to its flanking companions, K. 413 and 415. K. 415 is a huge work with a grand orchestra, giving the lie to Mozart's rather naive sales pitch that the piano concertos could be performed without any wind instruments. (He thought the sales would be greater; they were not.) Wanda Landowska introduced both K. 413 and 415 to New York audiences at Philharmonic concerts conducted by Artur Rodzinski during World War II; but even her winning enthusiasm and the inspired performances did not launch the works as we then hoped they would.

It is difficult to see why K. 413 is not popular. It has all the sophistication, charm, and beauty of many another popular Mozart work. The last movement, a *Tempo di menuetto*, is based on Johann Christian Bach's movements of this kind—e.g., the finale of the E flat Symphony, Op. 9, No. 2; and, like its model, it is most winning music. K. 414 has been available in many recorded versions, including a delightful one with Benjamin Britten as soloist and conductor (alas, deleted) and also an earlier Serkin/Schneider version—at least I suppose it is an earlier version (backed by Concerto No. 9, in E flat, K. 271, on Columbia ML 5209). K. 413, on the other hand, has very few recordings in the catalogue—and none to match this one. (Geza Anda, the delicatessen-handler of Mozart piano concertos, is at his hammy worst on the DG record of K. 413 and 415.)

Both performances are distinctly "studied," and some people may prefer a more open, off-the-cuff approach such as Britten gave K. 414.

Serkin is at great pains to scale down the huge grand piano to the tone he thinks a Mozartean *Hammerklavier* would have. He does this with his usual great taste, but one often has the distinct impression of "holding back," of putting the brakes on a race horse. To a certain extent the same is true of Schneider, whose opening tutti in K. 414 is fastidious in the extreme: he is more relaxed in the orchestral passages of K. 413's opening movement. The recorded sound is very clear but I found it occasionally almost too dry and unreverberant, especially in the first movement of K. 413. (This dry sound may have encouraged Schneider to take very quick tempos for the flanking movements in K. 413.)

Both pianist and conductor pay great attention to what the scores say—in itself is a step in the right direction, after the supreme arrogance of a Beecham, who considered he could improve the orchestration of a Haydn or a Mozart with Edwardian globs of treacly orchestral doublings. Here we get what Mozart wrote, with a small orchestra. Serkin does not play basso continuo as the score indicates, but in avoiding this he has the furious support of such an expert as Charles Rosen, who considers Mozart's continuo a concession to local customs. In the Eulenburg miniature score of K. 413, the horns in the slow movement are marked in B flat *basso*; in this recording they are played in B flat *alto*, in other words in high B flat. I consider the Eulenburg version—edited by a third-rate musicologist who shall be nameless—to be an arbitrary change. The Schlägl ms., mentioned above, has horns in high B flat (*alto*), and there is much evidence in other Mozart piano concertos of the period



Serkin and Schneider  
Paying attention to Mozart.

that suggests *alto* rather than *basso*. (The autograph of K. 413 has disappeared.) The Schlägl ms. also suggests that some of the trills in the second movement of K. 413 ought to be turns, and indeed the trills look to me to be misprints that crept into the first edition of the work, published by Artaria of Vienna, notorious for their dreadful printing mistakes. Actually, even without the evidence of Schlägl, Serkin ought to have caught some of these wrong trills: After Serkin's very tasteful *Eingang*

(short cadenza) before the recapitulation (bar 35 of the slow movement), the main theme is played with a trill. But there are turns both in the initial statement in the exposition and the next time it comes in during the recapitulation (bar 36). This is following the actual notes too closely. (And it does make a difference.)

The jacket notes, by Jean K. Wolf, are very good. Dare we hope that the general level of jacket notes is improving these days? On the other hand, the cover is a joke. It purports to be "MOZART/ in his ninth year/ [signed:] Condak '72." In fact it is a very distorted reproduction of an oil painting showing the young Count Firmian at the keyboard. If CBS does not know the difference between Count Firmian and Mozart, they could have a look at Otto Erich Deutsch's standard work on the subject, which was published in 1956.

H.C.R.L.

**MOZART: Idomeneo.**

Idomeneo	Nicolai Gedda (t)
Idamante	Adolf Dallapozza (t)
Elettra	Edda Moser (s)
Ilia	Anneliese Rothenberger (s)
Arbace	Peter Schreier (t)
High Priest	Eberhard Büchner (t)
Voice of the Oracle	Theo Adam (bs)
Priest	Gunther Leib (b)

Walter Olbertz, harpsichord; Leipzig Radio Chorus; Dresden State Orchestra, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, cond. EMI ODEON 1C 191 29271/4, \$27.92 (four discs).

*Comparisons:*  
Pritchard/Glyndebourne Fest. Sera. SIC 6070  
Davs/BBC Sym. Phil. 839 758/60

*Idomeneo* first came to the attention of a sur-



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prised modern audience in 1951. I say "surprised" because the public was not prepared for a great opera antedating *Figaro*. This remarkable revival in Glyndebourne was conducted by Fritz Busch; after his death the following year, John Pritchard took charge, and he is the conductor of the 1956 EMI recording, which, with its star cast, has acquired a legendary reputation. Fourteen years later Colin Davis addressed himself to this great, rich, and somber score in an attractively vivid performance for Philips (which I reviewed in March 1970). The pace now quickens. After only three years Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt comes along with a third recording, which unlike Davis' takes cognizance of the changes Mozart

made in the score for a projected performance in Vienna.

The gestation of *Idomeneo* can be followed through the correspondence between father and son. Wolfgang went to Munich with the opera barely sketched out, while Leopold stayed in Salzburg to prod the hapless librettist to finish the book and carry out the composer's urgent wishes for changes. As was customary in those days, the composer finished the score on the spot, discussing details with the singers, the opera director, the *regisseur*, and the scene designer; even the Elector dropped in on some of the rehearsals to make some ducal remarks. Mozart's theatrical sense at the age of twenty-four was astonishingly de-

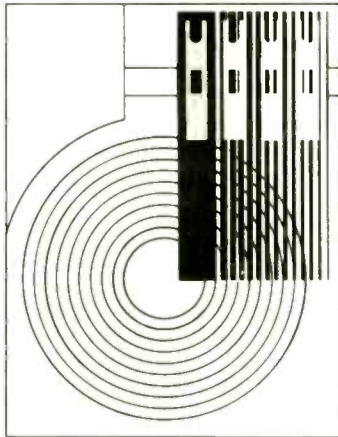
veloped, and Leopold's answers also reveal considerable knowledge of the musical stage. Schmidt-Isserstedt, a trained musicologist besides being a good and experienced opera conductor, has by studying these letters been able to offer a more complete score than his two predecessors.

The most important revision concerns the castrato part, which Mozart rearranged for tenor. This substitution was respected by the two earlier recordings also, but Davis merely had his tenor sing the original part an octave lower. Schmidt-Isserstedt's version is both amended and extended. Mozart, among other changes, recomposed Idomeneo's great aria, "*Fuor del mar*." Now we must bear in mind that the Viennese version came six years after the Munich premiere, and since six years in Mozart's life represents immense gains in musical and dramatic insight, this aria is far superior to the first. Mozart tightened the piece and removed the superficial coloratura fretwork (which the public expected from a castrato). He similarly reworked the ardent duet between Iliia and Idamante. Schmidt-Isserstedt uses the revisions of both and restores Arbace's part, which was almost entirely excised by both Pritchard and Davis. One cannot really blame them, though; Arbace is terribly long-winded, and Mozart himself was worried about the length of the third act. Still, it is good to hear the opera as it was originally conceived by its creator. All this, resulting in a four-disc release versus the three discs of the earlier releases, unquestionably makes the new recording uniquely valuable.

Schmidt-Isserstedt conducts a good performance; his concept and style are sound; the balances (where not hurt by the engineering) are fine; and while his allegros are a shade slower than Davis', the tempos are prevailingly correct. It is the temperamental difference between these two able conductors that tips the scale in favor of Davis. He has more élan, is crisper, and has vehemence when needed; the great accompanied recitatives, the ensembles, and the choral pieces are more exciting under his baton. But I am speaking of nuances, not of major advantages.

As to the singers, they more or less balance one another. Schmidt-Isserstedt's Idomeneo, Nicolai Gedda, is better than Davis' George Shirley; on the other hand, Ryland Davies (the Philips Idamante), though a Welshman, has a more Mediterranean quality to his voice than Adolf Dallapozza (Odeon). The two Iliias, Anneliese Rothenberger and Margherita Rinaldi, are both very good, but as Elettra the German Edda Moser (Odeon) is definitely outclassed by the English Pauline Tinsley (Philips), who is the steadier and more sophisticated singer. There is considerable difference, though, in the engineering. While the Philips sound is not the optimum, it is still very good, and superior to the Odeon. The latter is a bit tubby, there is some reverberation too, and the microphone placing is variable: they should have watched Edda Moser's high tones more carefully. So much for the two "modern" recordings, but what about the revered "classic," the Glyndebourne antique?

An old recording usually fares badly when compared to a recent stereo version, and no amount of electronic face-lifting can conceal the inadequacies of the older engineering techniques. Many phonograph fans approach these old issues with cultic reverence, but it is idle to speak of "marvelous concepts" and the



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WITH A HISTORY OF INVESTIGATION BY  
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UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
IN TWO VOLUMES  
VOLUME I  
NEW YORK  
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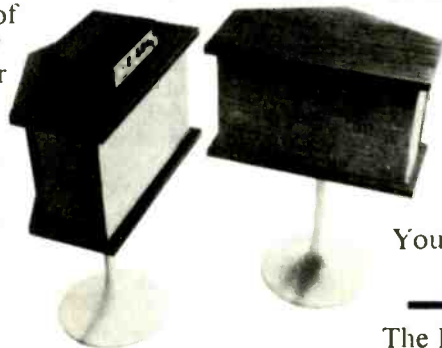
Indeed, some of the principles of moving the air do have advantages over others in terms of size, weight, efficiency, and cost. **But there is absolutely no advantage of any particular method of moving the air in terms of the potential quality of the sound that can be produced.**

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#### References

1. The Theory of Sound, Vol. 1. By J.W.S. Rayleigh, 1877.
2. The results are documented in the Audio Engineering Society Paper, ON THE DESIGN, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION OF LOUSPEAKERS, by Dr. A. G. Bose. Copies are available from the Bose Corporation for fifty cents.

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The late Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt  
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like if the thing sounds wretched, no matter which demigod is playing or conducting. The old Pritchard recording, made available in stereo for the first time in the 1971 Seraphim reissue, offers a curious mixture. The orchestra is prevalently grey in color, and the balance between "stage" and "pit" is not nearly as good as in the more recent recordings. The choral sound, except in the quiet passages, is pretty bad, at times verging on bedlam.

But the solo singing comes through gloriously, and here both modern recordings must take a back seat. Sena Jurinac (Ilia) and Lucille Udovick (Elettra) are vastly superior to the women in both other releases. Jurinac can float an exquisite piano at any rung of the tonal ladder, and her high tones are ringing without a trace of effort or edginess. Udovick has the fierce temperament needed for Elettra's part, but angry or in despair, singing with a full throat or whispering plaintively, she keeps her fine voice always under control. Both of them take the *fioriture* in stride, with never a slurred passage or an insecure tone. Leopold Simoneau, he of the suave bel canto, is also superior to the two other Idamantes, though Ryland Davies comes close to his performance. Only Gedda strikes me as being even more euphonious than Richard Lewis, though the latter sings, as always, with intelligence and good style.

Pritchard is a good conductor but not Davis' equal. Everything goes well, especially in the many slow numbers, but when the excitement mounts, Pritchard does not master the other two conductors' controlled dramatic pace: he becomes a bit nervous and impatient, the dotted sixteenths are sharpened to thirty-seconds, and the dynamic contrasts are a little over-emphasized. The instrumental pieces, notably the two marches, are too fast and clipped, and the mandatory repeats are omitted. There are, however, much graver shortcomings in this beautifully sung recording.

Surprisingly enough, Pritchard, unlike Davis, uses the Viennese version, but he distorts it by senseless abbreviations. The cuts are numerous throughout the performance and they are often wanton; following the recording with score in hand is a frantic scramble to

catch up with the conductor. He (or whoever did the "editing") snips away a couple of measures here, sixteen there, and in other places he tears them out by the fistful. It is unpardonable to abbreviate Elettra's great aria in the third act, or Idomeno's final one. It is perfectly true that this opera is far too long, that some of the arias are extended concert pieces complete with 6/4 chord, fermata, and invitation for a cadenza (unfortunately accepted—and ineptly executed—by the singers); a staged performance such as Glyndebourne's must be abbreviated. But this cannot be done in such a haphazard way. A further annoying feature concerns the continuo in the recitatives: The cello is unduly prominent. This is not a baroque work where the continuo takes an active—and inventive—part; the cellist's sole duty is to provide a *discreet* support for the singers. The Glyndebourne cellist virtually dominates them with his soulful, almost concertante "accompaniment."

In sum, a devoted Mozartean will have to possess all three recordings: Pritchard's for great singing, Schmidt-Isserstedt's for completeness, and Davis' for the most spirited all-round performance. P.H.L.

**MOZART: La finta giardiniera (sung in German).**

Podesta	Gerhard Unger (t)
Sandrina	Helen Donath (s)
Bellfiore	Werner Hollweg (t)
Arminda	Jessye Norman (s)
Ramiro	Tatiana Troyanos (ms)
Serpette	Ileana Cotrubas (s)
Nardo	Hermann Prey (b)

North German Radio Orchestra and Chorus; Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, cond. (Erik Smith, prod.) PHILIPS 6703 039, \$20.94 (three discs).

We are accustomed to regard Mozart the great music dramatist as having been born with *Figaro*, though many operas preceded that incomparable masterpiece, and we know that Mozart could match—and outmatch—seasoned composers while still in his teens. The opera recorded here was composed when Mozart was about nineteen: it is not a trifle like *La finta semplice*, his first *opera buffa*, but a full-fledged work with twenty-three (!) arias and all the other accoutrements of a major theater piece. Yet *La finta giardiniera* is less known than *Bastien und Bastienne*, a much earlier work—more precisely, if known at all, it is as *Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe*, a German *Singspiel*. Written for Munich in 1775, within a few years it was translated into German: the secco recitatives were jettisoned, and in *Singspiel* fashion replaced by spoken dialogues. It is in this form that the opera is recorded here. Both Mozart and his father had a hand in the conversion, and the German version was sanctioned by them. After listening to *Giardiniera-Gärtnerin* one still wonders how the miracle of *Figaro* came to pass, for I cannot agree with Erik Smith, producer of this recording and its annotator, that with this work we have the missing link, in some aspects comparable to *Figaro*.

In the first place, Mozart's literary judgment was still juvenile: five years later he would not have accepted such a wretched book. This libretto belongs to the group that descended from Richardson's *Pamela*, highly popular all over Europe. Goldoni transformed the novel into an opera libretto for Piccini, whose *La buona figliuola maritata*

(1760) became the most popular opera in the eighteenth century. The version Mozart used, one of the innumerable imitations engendered by the success of Piccini's opera, was set by Anfossi, a good routine composer, one year before Mozart; it is not, however, Goldoni's elegant piece but a grab-bag text full of inconsistencies. Some hold the opinion that it was the work of Calzabigi, but that is patently impossible. The *Singspiel* version further complicates matters because it does not fit the subject and situations, and though the translation is very good, Mozart's music so closely follows the prevailing Italian opera idiom and all its clichés that good German enunciation is difficult. In the higher vocal registers, the absence of the open vowels that characterize Italian makes the singers slur, and for stretches no word is intelligible. This discrepancy is especially evident in contrast to the few accompanied recitatives Mozart added to the German version and thus composed on original German texts.

The anonymous librettist used every archaic prop in the opera repertory: mad scenes (then considered funny), sleep scenes (when he could not solve a situation), exit arias, and so forth. The very fact that the opera has twenty-three arias and few ensembles shows an antiquated baroque blueprint, as does the castrato part, which in this recording is given to a mezzo. Finally, the real buffo part, that of the Podestà, which cries out for the customary basso buffo, Mozart gave to a tenor. Not only is the wondrous blend of *seria* and *buffa* that begins with *Figaro* missing here, but Mozart is guilty of the virtually unmanageable combination of long stretches of tragic pathos relieved by unmotivated *buffo* scenes, and vice versa. The arias are too numerous, isolated, and much too long (even the old baroque simile aria about the turtle dove is back), and are preceded by long and meaty ritornels that disrupt what little dramatic continuity there is. But above all, what is still missing—understandably, considering the composer's age—is psychological penetration of the dramatis personae. Mozart composes fine arias, but they do not add up to rounded character depictions; most of them could be readily exchanged by the protagonists.

So we have a long opera that falls to pieces—but many of these pieces are highly attractive. If we forget about the *Singspiel* and the silly dialogues, and just savor the music, the recording will prove to be rewarding. Mozart knew and followed Anfossi's score (as Beethoven did Gaveaux's *Léonore-Fidelio*) and there are also echoes of Piccini and Gluck, but a good deal of this music is inimitably Mozartean, bright but also sad, though there is nothing that prepares us—or for that matter Mozart—for the second finale, which remains a remarkable piece even in the company of the greater ones that came afterwards. The melodies are suave, the harmonic idiom often bold, and the orchestra, always busily engaged, is nimble, scintillating, and expressive.

Philips put a very good cast at the disposal of conductor Schmidt-Isserstedt, and the engineering is first-class. Helen Donath is an appealing Sandrina, though her high notes are at times a bit pushed; Jessye Norman has a fresh soprano which is on the dot in all ranges; Ileana Cotrubas, the third soprano, does well with her pleasant voice, only in the fast *parlandos* does she get a little out of breath. This *should* account for all the female cast members—but we must add to their number Ta-



tiana Troyanos, who takes on the role of the erstwhile castrato, Ramiro; she has the most substantial voice in the cast. Of the two tenors Gerhard Unger is adequate though not a bit funny as the old Podestà, but this is partly Mozart's fault. Werner Hollweg, who uses his nice lyric voice intelligently, and Hermann Prey, whose baritone does not need praise, complete the fine ensemble of singers.

Despite the fine cast, some of the performance is frankly a little dull: this is one of the rare cases where the orchestra gets its due and the singers are somewhat in the background. Schmidt-Isserstedt is an able craftsman and a good musician, but a little too cautious; there are, however, some extenuating circumstances. The German *Singspiel* text brings with it a "transposed" mood that demands a more *gemütlich* tempo in the fast *buffo* numbers, and the pointed staccato singing so typical of the Italian comic opera does not suit the German language. Everything is tasteful and the conductor keeps the dynamic range at the level of a chamber opera, but the toning down of the singers can go too far, and half of the spoken dialogue is not fully audible (not necessarily a loss). The orchestra is very good and enjoyable at all times. The handsome pamphlet presents the complete libretto in German, French, and English, though the side breaks on the records do not agree with the printed indications. P.H.L.

**MUSSORGSKY:** Songs, Benjamin Luxon, baritone; David Willison, piano. ARGO ZRG 708, \$5.98.

Songs and Dances of Death; Sunless; Where are you, little star?; The Classicist; The Song of the Flea.

Comparison—Songs and Dances

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Benjamin Luxon is one of England's most interesting young singers, a gifted baritone whose burgeoning career has so far been built on challenging assignments: Monteverdi's *Ulisse* at Glyndebourne, the Jester in Peter Maxwell Davies' *Taverner* at Covent Garden, Tarquinius in Britten's *Rape of Lucretia* at Aldeburgh, and the title role in the same composer's *Owen Wingrave* on BBC television. Everything Luxon does is marked by intelligence, energy, and intense involvement. His operatic characterizations have great dramatic impact. But the very gifts that work so well in the theater are much less effective in recital, where our scrutiny of the performer is closer, more intimate and analytical. Luxon goes at this astonishing music of Mussorgsky's with a laudable desire to make every piece as distinct and as vivid as possible: in the *Songs and Dances of Death* the four widely different guises of mortality, the various settings, the range of characters caught up in these situations; in *Sunless* the several moods of despair; the resignation of *Where are you, little star?*; the satire on musical conservatism of *The Classicist*; the wry humor of *The Song of the Flea*. Luxon rightly views these works not simply as music but as music drama. The trouble with his approach, however, is that the music tends to get sacrificed to the drama. Luxon is so busy acting that he often forgets to sing. In the *Songs and Dances*, the end of *Trepak* (with its ironic vision of spring) elicits some odd quasi-parlando, and the bestial turmoil of *Field-Marshal Death* (with its horrifying climax of Death's universal triumph) degenerates at times into toneless rant. More and more it seems to me that the only satisfactory

way of projecting drama in the art song is through the music. The sort of psychological insight that manifests itself at the expense of the music pertains more to dramatic recitation than to Lieder singing. Ultimately, I suppose, a singer's interpretive means are dependent upon his vocal technique, and though Luxon has a serviceable baritone he is at this point in his career still wanting in polish and craft. He understands perfectly the interpretive demands of *Where are you, little star?* and treats it meditatively, attempting a tone of weary resignation. Yet he cannot bring the song off effectively for the simple reason that his mezza voce is inadequately supported. Similarly, he sees what *The Classicist* is all about, but is not

able to manage the pastiche of eighteenth-century vocal style (including a trill) with smoothness and elegance, the consequence being that the satire collapses. Perhaps in time Luxon's Lieder singing will match his operatic efforts in effectiveness. But he will have to learn that the broad dramatic effects to which he is partial work better in the theater than on the concert platform. Meanwhile Irina Arkhipova is a better bet for the *Songs and Dances of Death*. We still need first-class recordings of the other songs, however. David Willison is a good accompanist, though the recording makes him sound too reticent. Surfaces, as usual with Argo, are exemplary. Cyrillic texts, translations. D.S.H.



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**OFFENBACH:** *Le Papillon*. London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngue, cond. (Michael Woolcock, prod.) LONDON CS 6812, \$5.98.

Offenbach's immense, enduring popularity is based on but a tiny fraction of his total output. *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, in many ways untypical of his ebullient genius, remains the sole work by him to be seen regularly on the stage in this country. Of the rest, only the overture to *Orphée aux Enfers* is really familiar, though several numbers from his operettas have achieved wide currency in the form of an orchestral suite arranged by Manuel Rosenthal for Leonide Massine's ballet *Gaité parisienne* (1938). Offenbach's tunefulness invites this sort of cannibalism. Mikhail Fokine's *Blue-*

*bird* (1941) and David Lichine's *Helen of Troy* (1942) are further examples of the same kind of musical exploitation. *Le Papillon*, however, is the real thing, Offenbach's single full-length ballet and the work that finally effected his admission into the Paris Opéra—a decided rise in status from the Bouffes-Parisiens, where his music was usually heard.

Listening to *Le Papillon* makes one regret its lack of issue. Despite the ballet's enthusiastic reception there were no Offenbach successors. By 1860, when *Le Papillon* was first produced, the art of ballet was in decline. The young Emma Livry, for whom the title role was devised by Marie Taglioni (the great ballerina of the previous generation), promised to reawaken the public's interest, but in 1862 her

skirts caught fire on stage and she died shortly after. *Le Papillon* was never revived. Offenbach henceforth concentrated on operetta alone. Though ballet in France subsequently enlisted the services of Delibes for *La Source* (1866), *Coppélia* (1870), and *Sylvia* (1876), and also of Lalo for *Namouna* (1882), the art languished there until 1909, when the Diaghilev company arrived from Russia to bring it back to life.

Offenbach's score is wonderfully engaging. Three quarters of the tunes are among his most charming and varied inventions. There is a constant stream of vivacious numbers, especially marches and waltzes. There is a languorous *lezghinka* and a vigorous mazurka. One piece, the *Valse des rayons*, arranged for muted violins, will be familiar to most listeners. It was put to use in 1908 at the Moulin Rouge for an Apache Dance and since then has become a staple vaudeville tune. Richard Bonyngue conducts nineteenth-century ballet music with complete authority. He springs the rhythms with exactly the right sort of flourish, and he handles the lyric portions of the score with commendable flow. The London Symphony plays extremely well. There is some especially fine violin playing from concertmaster John Geordiadis in the *pas de deux* at the end of Act II. The recording is good, though ideally I like more spaciousness than London provides. Good notes. D.S.H.

**OFFENBACH:** Overtures to *Orphée aux Enfers*; *La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein*; *La belle Hélène*; *Barbe-bleue*; *La Vie parisienne*. City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Louis Fremaux, cond. KLAVER KS 517, \$5.98.

It's curious that Offenbach's delightful overtures have—with the exception of *Orphée aux Enfers*—received so little attention on disc. In 1961 Scherchen recorded these same five overtures along with that to *Monsieur et Madame Denis*; that Westminster disc (later Music Guild, now deleted) served for a decade. Though offered at full price and short on playing time (some thirty-six minutes), the new disc—an English Columbia recording—is welcome. Fremaux paces the music briskly but without any feeling of undue haste. The orchestra plays well (far more precise than the Vienna State Opera Orchestra under Scherchen), and despite distant miking the sound is superb—beautifully balanced, with unusually wide dynamic range. If only Angel did as well with its EMI recordings! K.F.

**PENDERECKI:** "A Portrait." Various performers. CANDIDE CE 81071, \$3.98.

Emanationen for Two String Orchestras (Radio Luxemburg Orchestra, Alois Springer, cond.). Minutatures for Violin and Piano (Gabriel Banat, violin; Iliana Vered, piano). Quartet for Strings (Kohon Quartet). Stabat Mater; Miserere (Schola Cantorum Stuttgart, Cytus Gottwald, cond.). Sonata for Cello and Orchestra (Thomas Blees, cello; Radio Luxemburg Orchestra, Alois Springer, cond.).

Modern composers are not supposed to be popular, but Krzysztof Penderecki is, and for a very good reason: He explores the modern idiom largely in terms of its two most readily accessible elements, virtuoso display and tone color. Each of the eight pieces here exploits color to the utmost; each is also a showpiece of



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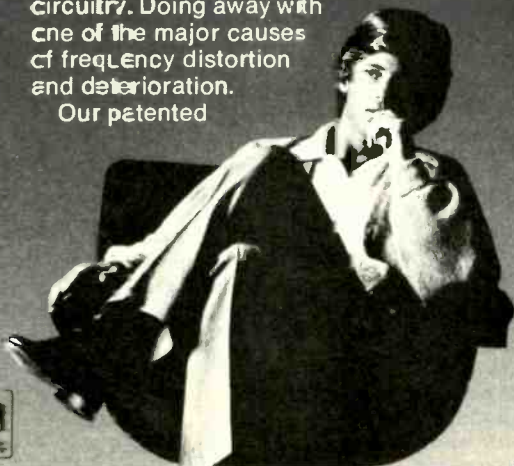
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the most brilliant variety. The whole production is immensely exhilarating the first time through; if, like me, you suspect that modern music that goes down so well the first time is likely to wear thin by the third, you won't play this record too often.

It begins with a piece for two string orchestras called *Emanations*, and after you are absolutely certain that nobody on earth could think up more fantastic, unprecedented, entertaining, delightful, and dramatic devices of color for strings than those contained therein, you go on to a string quartet in one short movement which has even more and to a sonata for cello and orchestra which has the most. That cello piece has got to be the end; the soloist does everything imaginable to the instrument except break it over the conductor's head. The *Miniatures* for violin and piano seem almost conventional by contrast with the pieces just mentioned, but the first is called "Ocarina," the second "Miniature String Bass," and the third "Violin"; string color strikes again.

Finally, there are two beautiful choral pieces here—a *Stabat Mater* and a *Miserere*, both fragments from Penderecki's famous *St. Luke Passion*. Color predominates here too, of course, but choral color in its richest, most mystical dimensions.

The superb performances match the complexities of the music. A.F.

**PUCCINI: Operatic Arias.** Leontyne Price, soprano. New Philharmonia Orchestra, Edward Downes, cond. RCA RED SEAL LSC 3337, \$5.98.

La Bohème: Si, mi chiamano Mimi; Donde lieta usci; Quando m'en vo. Edgar: Addio, mio dolce amor. La Rondine: Ore dolci e divine. Tosca: Vissi d'arte. Manon Lescaut: In quelle trine morbide. Sola, perduta, abbandonata. Le Villi: Se come vol piccina io fossi. Madama Butterfly: Un bel di. La Fanciulla del West: Laggiù nel Soledad.

The mixture of familiar and unfamiliar here makes for an interesting program. Magda's aria from *La Rondine* and Minnie's arietta from *La Fanciulla del West* have hardly been done to death, and the seldom-performed arias from *Le Villi* and *Edgar* are very welcome.

As a singer Leontyne Price is warm and communicative. She does not command the versatility of manner called for by a recital that stretches from the pathos of Mimi to the grand passion of Tosca, the pastoral simplicity of Anna (*Le Villi*), the despair of Manon Lescaut, or the swagger of Musetta. On the other hand, it is hard to think of a soprano who does. Or of one who commands so clean a line and so aristocratic a manner. Price, it seems, is better at grandeur than ingenuousness. Mimi would appear to lie beyond her effective psychological range. "Mi chiamano Mimi" is too weighty. The portamentos are exaggerated and heavy-handed, and the music is encumbered by an inappropriately turgid mood. Similarly, "In quelle trine morbide" lacks flow and directness of address. "Ore dolci e divine" too needs more abandonment, more lilt.

The successes here are Fidelma's passionate outburst in *Edgar*; "Un bel di"; "Vissi d'arte"; and "Laggiù nel Soledad." The glory of Price's singing is her top register. The B flats in "Addio, mio dolce amor" are resplendent. So is the high C that caps Minnie's aria. All through this recital Price sings above the staff with a freedom and a radiance that precious few

other sopranos today could match. The middle of the voice is less secure, in particular the lower middle register, which is relatively insubstantial and colorless. Unfortunately a lot of Puccini's music falls into this range, and the result is that the shape of each aria tends to become distorted. In other words, the soaring climaxes overshadow the rest of the music to a damaging degree. But there is no denying the beauty of those climaxes—though in truth the notes are often slightly sharp—and for many people that will be enough.

Edward Downes provides skilled, sometimes sluggish accompaniments. Texts and translations. D.S.H.

**ROREM: Day Music for Violin and Piano—**See Kirchner: Sonata Concertante.

**SCARLATTI, A.:** Cantatas. Neva Pilgrim, soprano; Louis Bagger, harpsichord; Barbara Mueser, viola da gamba. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1479, \$2.99 (Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

An date, o miei sospiri (two settings); Del faretrato nume; La pazza, ovvero La stravaganza.

Alessandro Scarlatti's cantatas serve the same function in vocal recitals that Busoni's Bach transcriptions used to do for pianists: as warming-up pieces for more important business to come. Yet more than a century of music rests on their marvelous melodies. The Italian solo cantata (not to be confused with the German baroque cantata) was not only the representative form of vocal chamber music but also the proving ground for all dramatic composition. The wealth of this literature is fantastic, and though ninety-nine per cent is unknown and unpublished, what little we do know of Italian cantatas in general and of Scarlatti's six hundred-odd in particular, explains their pervasive influence. Here is the arching, sculptured, subtle, tenderly erotic, and insinuating melody that conquered the whole world. Scarlatti is a bold composer; his chromaticism and enharmonic modulations are still startling, and his madrigalisms (text illustrations by music) ever charming.

It is certainly good to have recordings of these cantatas from around 1700, but the performance only partly responds to the challenge of this music. Neva Pilgrim does not "interpret," she just sings—not badly, but without varying the color of her voice and with an evenness of pace and expression that soon creates a feeling of monotony. While she is not unduly upset by the tricky chromaticism, neither does she integrate the evanescent tones with the rest. Word repetition in baroque music is not a haphazard affair; it is the "affect"-carrying words that are usually repeated and they call for sensitive emphasis. Also, the recitatives are somewhat lacking in freedom of delivery; they are too much in tempo. The microphones should have been reversed: the harpsichord is a little too much in the foreground, while the singer is a bit distant. Otherwise, the continuo is excellent. We must, as usual, protest the absence of texts, especially needed when the singer's enunciation is indistinct. P.H.L.

**SCARLATTI, D.:** Sonatas (23). Anthony di



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Bonaventura, piano. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2044, \$11.96 (two discs).

In E flat, L. 17 (K. 371); in B minor, L. 33 (K. 87); in A, L. 41 (K. 268); in C, L. 104 (K. 159); in D, L. 109 (K. 436); in D minor, L. 266 (K. 517); in D, L. 369 (K. 145); in D minor, L. 370 (K. 10); in E, L. 373 (K. 28); in E minor, L. 380 (K. 203); in F, L. 384 (K. 17); in F, L. 385 (K. 445); in G, L. 388 (K. 2); in A, L. 395 (K. 533); in D minor, L. 413 (K. 9); in D minor, L. 420 (K. 444); in D minor, L. 422 (K. 141); in F, L. 433 (K. 446); in D minor, L. 462 (K. 417); in D, L. 463 (K. 430); in F, L. 479 (K. 6); in G, L. 486 (K. 13); in G, L. 487 (K. 125).

Scarlatti undoubtedly needs no introduction, but for those who would like to get to know his work better I can think of no better means than this set containing twenty-three of his keyboard sonatas. Anthony di Bonaventura plays these works, many of which are among those less commonly heard, with a strong sense of style and a sure technical grasp. One also gets an excellent picture of the remarkable variety of Scarlatti's keyboard music from this collection: It can be elegant (K. 430), rhythmically propulsive (K. 463), whimsical (K. 6), gently lyrical (K. 87), or contrapuntally complex (K. 417). In each case, Di Bonaventura seems to project just the right quality. His playing is relaxed and unforced, yet he never simply skims over the notes, as is so frequently—and unfortunately—the case in this literature. He has a very clear idea of how these pieces should be shaped, and the result is always buoyant, lively, and, most important, musically convincing.

For those who prefer their Scarlatti on the harpsichord, I would suggest the excellent Kirkpatrick disc on Archive (2533 072). But I find that these works transfer beautifully to the more modern instrument, a view to which the present disc lends impressive support. The set is handsomely recorded—the piano sound is quite resonant, but not distractingly so—and attractively packaged, with informative liner notes by Martin Bookspan and thematic index to the sonatas included. R.P.M.

**SCHUMANN:** Quintet for Piano and Strings. For a feature review of a recording of this work, see page 72.

**SCHUMANN:** Symphonies: No. 3, in E flat, Op. 97 (*Rhenish*); in G minor (*Zwickau*). New Philharmonia Orchestra, Elisha Inbal, cond. PHILIPS 6500 298, \$6.98.

Comparisons—Op. 97  
 Karajan/Berlin Phil. DG 2709 036  
 Kubelik/Berlin Phil. DG 138 908  
 Szell/Cleveland Orch. Odys. Y330844  
 Toscanini/NBC Sym. Vict. 1337

This release completes Philips' integral recording of the four Schumann symphonies. Its chief attractions are superb, richly resonant sound, and the first recording of an early fragment composed in 1832. Actually the title *Zwickau* is a misnomer; while Schumann finished the second movement there and the third at Schneeberg, the first movement of this student symphony (the only section known to be preserved) was actually set to paper in Leipzig (it was begun three years earlier in Heidelberg). The work is primarily of curio value—as Friedrich Wieck, Schumann's future father-in-law, noted, "the invention and working out of the material are good, but it is too thinly orchestrated." One finds little evidence of the doubling and blending that characterize the typical Schumann orchestral sound as we know it (and as many wrongly disparage it). Instead, one discovers a rather

scraggly type of instrumental writing familiar from Chopin's concertos and the like. Schumann, orchestrally speaking, was a late bloomer: This product of his twenty-first year is pretty unimpressive when you realize that Mendelssohn was only seventeen when he wrote his *Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*. Still it is valuable to have a recording readily available.

Unfortunately, this *Rhenish Symphony* cannot meet its extremely high-level competition. Inbal sets broad, entirely reasonable tempos, gets warm-hued, reliable playing from the New Philharmonia, and obviously feels comfortable with the idiom. What this version lacks is a sense of flow, the energy and surge, the tensile grace, and the fiery passion to be found in varying degrees in the readings of Karajan, Szell, Toscanini, and Kubelik. To put it bluntly, some of Inbal's leadership here is four-square and even downright lumpy. To be sure, one could do worse (the stodgy Klemperer record, for example) but one can also do a lot better. My preference is for Karajan or Toscanini, closely followed by Szell. (Kubelik, though distinguished, is a bit too rhetorical and episodic for my taste). H.G.

**SHOSTAKOVICH:** Symphonies: No. 1, Op. 10; No. 9, Op. 70. New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond. COLUMBIA M 31307, \$5.98.

**SHOSTAKOVICH:** Symphonies: No. 1, Op. 10; No. 9, Op. 70. Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Walter Weller, cond. (John Mordler, prod.) LONDON CS 6787, \$5.98.

In a talk he gave on TV concerning Shostakovich's Ninth, Leonard Bernstein stressed the humor in the symphony: as liner notes, Bernstein's ideas, whether you agree with them or not (and I don't) would have been infinitely more welcome than the we've-heard-it-all-before asinities used on the Columbia release (Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, for instance, comes no closer to being a work of socialist realism, just because it is somewhat conservative and was written in Russia, than, say, William Schuman's Fifth Symphony).

Interestingly enough, of the two interpretations to be considered here, it is Weller's that brings out by far the work's full humor, Bernstein, on the other hand, approaches the piece as Shostakovich's "classical symphony," and while coming up with one of the best versions available he remains miles away from the wit and gaiety achieved by Weller, formerly concertmaster of the Vienna Philharmonic and later the head of the excellent Weller Quartet (whose performances greatly impressed Shostakovich). To begin with, Weller does things with tempos that you won't hear on any other disc. Besides his brisk pacing of the first movement, as opposed to Bernstein's more deliberate tempo, Weller is the only conductor I have ever heard to take the third movement at a true presto, resulting in a mercurial and exhilarating brilliance that carries through the entire movement, including the incongruously Spanish-sounding trio section, an apparent carry-over from the trio of the Eighth Symphony's third movement. On the other hand, Weller slows down the "grande finale" recapitulation in the last movement (after an accelerando not indicated in my score) to a march tempo, creating an infectious parade atmosphere complemented by

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Dmitri Shostakovich—  
mining the hidden  
humor in his First  
and Ninth Symphonies

the burlesque overtones of Shostakovich's nose-thumbing dissonances and orchestration, which Weller stresses for all they are worth.

But the wit and effect of Shostakovich's Ninth depend on a good deal more than pacing. Shostakovich takes advantage of the shortened time and space of his symphony's neoclassical forms to throw the listener constantly off balance, whether by adding an extra beat in the oboe theme at the beginning, or by frequent shifts in instrumentation. Adding to the brightness, furthermore, is Shostakovich's insistent use of high woodwinds—the piccolo plays an essential role in this work, not only in the more traditional scurrying passage-work but also in the mournful solo at the end of the second movement (the composer again used the piccolo as a lyrical instrument at the end of the Tenth Symphony's first movement). Shostakovich also takes advantage of a five-movement form (also used somewhat differently in the Eighth Symphony) to provide dramatic alternation. After the buoyant first movement, for example, he offers a quiet, lugubrious second movement in which a simple, extended melody developed mainly in the woodwinds gives way to an almost morbid string motive—one of the strangest in all of Shostakovich's music—consisting of parallel minor triads rising in a chromatic scale. Bernstein has said that this movement is "funny" because it "doesn't belong" in the symphony. But it seems to me that Shostakovich did not intend the movement to add to the symphony's humor but rather to provide tragic relief, just as he provides comic relief in his heavier works, within the symphony's generally comic ambience.

In handling these other elements, Bernstein makes up for his straightforward tempos (which resemble what one finds on the other current recordings) by incisively stressing the symphony's jagged edges, particularly in the instrumentation (and I rather suspect Bernstein pared his orchestra down to Haydn-esque proportions). Weller tends to put the symphony in the context of Shostakovich's larger-scale works, greatly enhancing the drama and only occasionally burying a detail one would like to hear. Some of the differences between the Bernstein and the Weller versions may, of course, be due to the recorded sound. The London disc offers an up-close but sufficiently reverberant realism in which the over-all orchestral sound is brilliantly reproduced. The Columbia recording—also excellent sonically—is marked by more extreme stereo sepa-

ration and by better but less rich definition of the individual instruments.

The Ninth Symphony's humor is both that of a man able to smile again after the tragedy of World War II and that of a composer no doubt deliberately trying to avoid invidious comparisons with another Ninth Symphony. If the First Symphony also offers humor, it is of a more destructive and ambivalent variety. One should not forget that at the time this symphony was composed (1924-25) the Russians were still imbued with the spirit of the recent revolution, and this spirit pervaded every area of Russian life, including music. At the same time, Shostakovich was finishing his degree at the Leningrad Conservatory and thus very much steeped in basic musical tradition. It should not be surprising, then, that the First Symphony contains, within its neoclassical and almost chamber-symphony confines, both strongly romantic themes, such as the opening melody of the third movement or the second theme of the fourth, alternating with the modernistic chromatic lines of the first movement's march theme or the last movement's allegro *molto* motive. And in the midst of everything, Shostakovich leads a tongue-in-cheek assault on both romantic and classical traditions in the scherzo's second movement.

As with his rendition of the Ninth, Weller concentrates in the First on a balanced, full orchestral sound used to its full dramatic effect, and again he is perfectly seconded by London's incredibly good sonics—the brasses glow, the strings vibrate, and the bass drum will thump you right out of your chair. Weller does prove a bit headstrong in places, particularly in his overly quick pacing of the first movement's waltz theme; and he is not helped any by a bassoon with a saxophone tone or by an oboe occasionally playing painfully flat at the beginning of the third movement. But his over-all conception of the work enormously impresses in its unflinching and yet unhistoric dynamism. Bernstein is again much subtler, although his brilliant second movement is every bit the match of Weller's. In the third movement (also marked by a slightly flat oboe), Bernstein stretches out the melodic lines in slower than slow tempos and quiets the accompanying instruments to an almost mystical hush, thereby giving the music an exceedingly moody and not altogether appropriate static quality. And on this side of the disc, done by a different producer, one finds none of the highlighted instrumental sound that represents one of the strong points of Bernstein's Ninth. The piano, an essential in-

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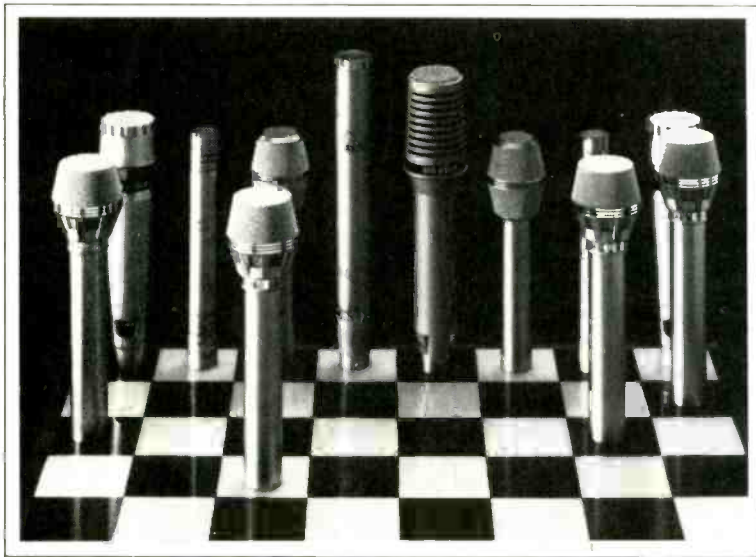
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strument in the second and fourth movements, is all but buried in Bernstein's rendition, while in Weller's the piano stands out as it should.

In spite of a few flaws and the existence of several other good versions of these symphonies—particularly Aranovich's First (Melodiya/Angel SR 40192) and Horvat's First and Ninth (Turnabout TV-S 34223)—the Weller release now stands as one of the best Shostakovich discs available. **R.S.B.**

**SIBELIUS: Orchestral Works.** Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Horst Stein, cond. LONDON CS 6745, \$5.98.

Finlandia, Op. 26; Night Ride and Sunrise, Op. 55; Pohjola's Daughter, Op. 49; En Saga, Op. 9.

**SIBELIUS: Orchestral Works.** Hallé Orchestra, Sir John Barbirolli, cond.

**SERAPHIM S 60208, \$2.98** (from Capitol SP 8669, 1968).

Finlandia, Op. 26; Karelia Suite, Op. 11; Pohjola's Daughter, Op. 49; Valse triste, Op. 44; Legends, Op. 22; The Return of Lemminkäinen.

Comparisons—various couplings:

Dorati/London Sym.

EMI Odeon ASD 2486

Gould/Orch.

RCA 2666

Horst Stein, who has made his mark (pun probably intended) from leading Wagner in the pit, shows himself a sympathetic Sibelian. Indeed the combination will surprise no one aware of the similarities between these two composers of epochally dramatic inclination. These are free-wheeling readings of great thrust, drive, and a "big line"—the very qualities needed to show off to best advantage that strangely discombobulated embarrassment of a tone poem *Night Ride and Sunrise*. The Suisse Romande orchestra, though, is not ideal for an assignment that frankly cries out for the lung power of Concertgebouw brass, the pastoral charm of British woodwinds, and strings that are always securely controlled and solid in tone. The engineers have fortunately done everything in their power to minimize this miscasting; the sound is at once biting and smooth.

There's no dearth of exquisite English wind playing in Barbirolli's program. Though the Hallé fiddles have their scrappiness around the edges too, the brasses snarl effectively, and Sir John's conceptions are loving, leisurely, and more steady at the helm than Stein's. Basically the recording is of contemporary quality, if less full than London's. (Seraphim's notes remind us that Barbirolli recorded all seven Sibelius symphonies. Is it too much to hope that Angel will finally make Nos. 3-7 available to American buyers?)

Both discs offer *Finlandia* and *Pohjola's Daughter*. Stein gives *Finlandia* the "gung ho" treatment. Barbirolli the staid and oratorical one. Take your pick. *Pohjola's Daughter*—one of those pieces that can work in almost any kind of performance—is done by Barbirolli with affectionate lyricism, by Stein with a brusque excitement that occasionally gets out of hand (the faster-when-louder syndrome).

In the rest of Sir John's miscellany, I find the *Valse triste* leisurely and square, the *Return of Lemminkäinen* ample in dash and fire (though I much prefer it in place as the last of the *Four Legends*). In the *Karelia Suite*, Barbirolli does the swaggering Intermezzo and Alla marcia and the gorgeous Ballade as well as anyone in Schwann, but I wish somebody would preface a recording of the suite with the obscure Op. 10 *Karelia Overture*. If Sir John's

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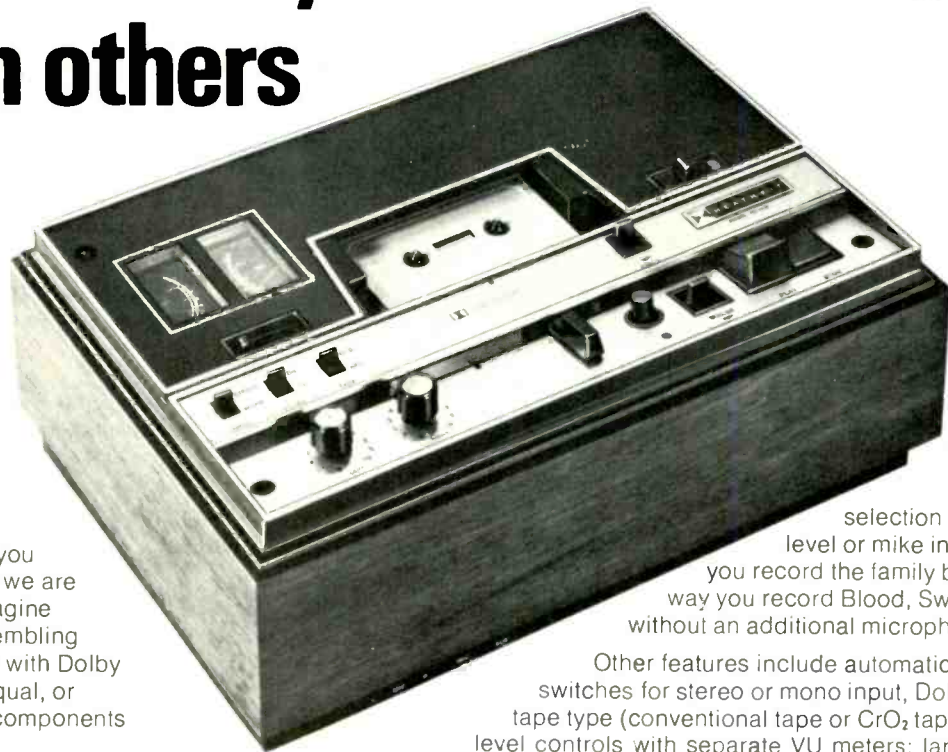
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Sibelius is not to your taste. Morton Gould's RCA program (identical save for *The Swan of Tuonela* in lieu of *Karelia*) has plenty of temperament to balance its posh sonics.

The rest of the London disc includes the welcome coherence of Stein's *Night Ride and Sunrise*, and the *galant*, haughtily towering *En Saga*, a fully mature masterwork that misleadingly kept its youthful opus number from prerevision days. This thrilling score receives a finely detailed recording on the new issue, though the imported Dorati disc provides even more discipline, tautness, and expressive shaping. Dorati also does a decent *Night Ride*, as well as the relatively rare *Oceanides* and *Luonnotar*.

Ultimately a serious attempt to preserve the nonsymphonic Sibelius orchestral legacy must go beyond these overlapping stopgaps. Boulton once had a two-disc Vanguard mono album of the tone poems, but there is room for an up-to-date recording (comparable to the Haitink/Philips set of Liszt tone poems) with even better performances and including the funeral march *In Memoriam*, the numerous suites of incidental music, and still other shorter pieces.

A.C.

**STRAVINSKY:** The Firebird. Orchestre de Paris, Seiji Ozawa, cond. ANGEL S 36910, \$5.98.

Comparisons:  
Ansermet / New Philharmonia  
Stravinsky / Columbia Sym. Lon. FBD-S-1  
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**STRAVINSKY:** Petrushka (1911 version). London Symphony Orchestra, Charles Mackerras, cond. VANGUARD VSD 71177, \$5.98. Quadraphonic: VSO 30021 (SQ-encoded disc), \$6.98.

Comparison—1911 version:  
Boulez / N.Y. Phil. Col. M 31076

To grasp the full extent of Stravinsky's development as a composer between *Firebird* (1910) and *Petrushka* (1911), one really must hear the former score in its complete form, with all the *ballet d'action* elements as well as the set numbers familiar from the 1919 suite. This pantomime music is skillfully made (and indeed contains some very striking material, associated with Kaschey, that in itself is as original as anything in the score)—but the increased command of continuity in Stravinsky's second ballet, the tighter integration of gestural and musical components, is the major advance, as important as the shedding of Rimskian, Tchaikovskian, and even Wagnerian stylistic influences. Not that there isn't pantomime music in *Petrushka*; but it is much less rigidly distinguished in motion and texture from the dance numbers—and the latter, in turn, are less formal and regular than those in *Firebird*.

But this historical argument is hardly the only—or even the primary—reason for preferring the complete score in records. As I've mentioned, there is good music omitted from the 1919 suite: not only the slithery lushness of the Firebird's supplication and the Mendelssohnian scherzo for the Princesses (both of these included in the 1911 and 1945 suites, recorded by Boulez and Stravinsky respectively on Columbia MS 7206 and MS 7011), but the amazing Magic Carillon episode—a tour de force of orchestration—and the material leading up to the Infernal Dance. Prince Ivan, with his Tchaikovskian folksong motive, is undercharacterized in the ballet to begin with, but at least he is manifest, whereas the

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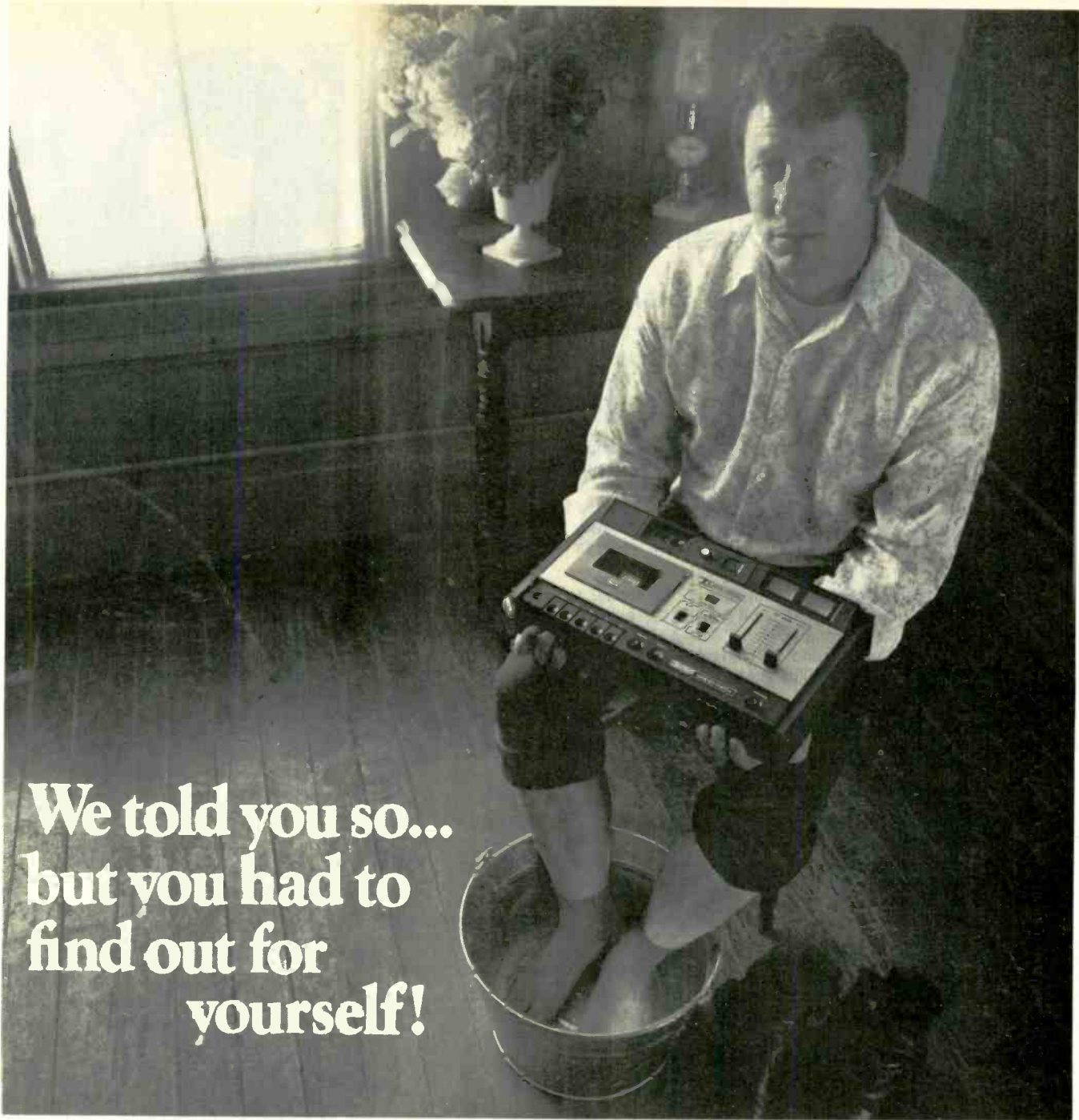


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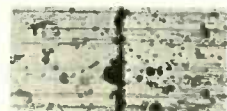
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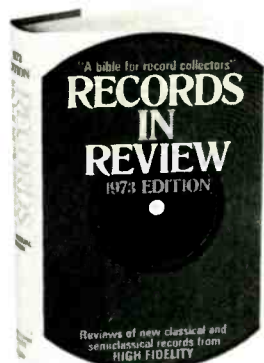
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Seiji Ozawa  
Fleshing out *The Firebird*.

suite omits him entirely as a musical personality. The shape of the score, with its artful chromatic-diatonic antinomy, is so much more vivid in the full version that I strongly urge it upon all to whom it is not yet known.

There is a fair range of choice now among recordings of the entire score. The new Ozawa is a competent job, neither as polished as Ansermet's last version (but a good deal livelier!) nor as vividly articulated as Stravinsky's 1961 Hollywood recording. The latter performance is perhaps historically problematic, for the composer incorporates some of his later thoughts about the music (as in the detached notes of the brass when they take up the Finale theme); nevertheless, despite a skimpy string section and various imprecisions, it remains the most absorbing, rhythmically alive, and coloristically vivid reading of the lot—recorded in a dry, forward perspective that is less natural than the warm, spacious London sound, but much clearer in detail than the more distant pickup of the new Angel. (Incidentally, as on the recent Melodiya disc of the 1919 suite, Angel's annotations persist in referring to a nonexistent 1916 redaction.)

Mackerras' energetic and theatrical performance of *Petrushka* has the misfortune to appear within a year of Boulez' brilliant Philharmonic version, which it doesn't really match in virtuosity or transparency. I like the spontaneity here, and the final episode is enormously dramatic—obviously the work of a gifted theatrical conductor. This is not a routine performance—but I must in all conscience observe that the Boulez is superior in numerous details, with telling cumulative effect. Early on, in the organ-grinder episode, the little flute decorations are just that much more precise and pointed, the music-box tune (on the bells) that much clearer, and the re-entry of the strings preparing for the next tutti that much more audible and insistent. I wish Columbia's sound were as good as the Philharmonic's playing: The bass is corpulent, and the xylophone distorts badly at the start of the final pantomime. Vanguard solves these problems, but has its share of unreal balances (the return of the Merchant's tune in the last scene is submerged in the background textures, although it was all right the first time round). At a budget price, this would be a real winner.

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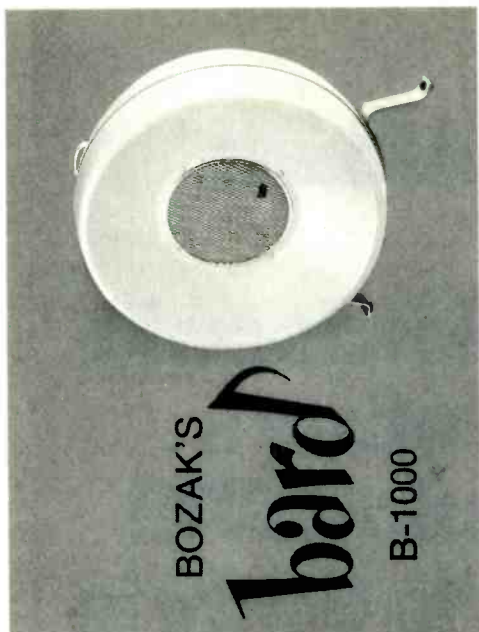
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but in the full-price range it faces really exceptional competition. D.H.

**TCHAIKOVSKY:** Quartets for Strings. For a feature review of recordings of these works, see page 72.

**TCHAIKOVSKY:** Symphony No. 4, in F minor, Op. 36. London Symphony Orchestra, Zdenek Kosler, cond. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2047, \$5.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

Comparison:  
Stokowski/American Sym. Van. VSO 30001

Any seasoned symphony orchestra can, with minimal direction, offer a conservative standard reading of music as popular as this, and Kosler calls for little more. The standard of performance is quite high, especially in the final three movements, but in the long opening Andante sostenuto there are moments when the line of the work is perilously close to going slack. Missing too are the innovations and insights other conductors bring to this music—for example Stokowski, who may approach eccentricity in some of his departures, but generally conveys a sense of justification for his interpretive ideas even when they are far from the norm.

As a stereo record (it is fully compatible in that role), this is therefore not a very formidable contender against the best of the dozen or so other versions in the catalogue. The attraction has to be quadraphony, and the availability of the Stokowski performance in that medium requires decision-making.

Not surprisingly the Stokowski four-channel version (which I played on discrete open-reel tape) makes more use of front-to-back effects, although essentially the perspective is that of the concert hall. The American Symphony is not as closely on mike as the London orchestra, and the quality of the over-all recorded sound of the English players is considerably clearer, cleaner, and more pleasing to the ear. Moreover my tape suffers from an unacceptably high hiss level, although not all copies may have this trouble.

But the London Symphony recording uses its rear channels essentially to provide the effect of a spacious and resonant hall. Thus the listening room opens up somewhat (an effect that obviously is relative to its inherent reverberation), and you have the sense of being in a good ground-floor seat in a fine auditorium. But the action is centered on a stage up front, and that's where your attention is fixed. This is a valid use of four-channel recording techniques, but hardly the most interesting.

R.C.M.

**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS:** Songs. Robert Tear, tenor; Neil Black, oboe (in the *Blake Songs*); Philip Ledger, piano (in the remaining songs). ARGO ZRG 732, \$5.98.

Songs of Travel; Ten Blake Songs; The Water Mill; Linden Lea; Orpheus with His Lute.

Robert Tear seems to be recording more than any tenor around. And his musicianship deserves respect: On this disc he and his colleagues follow Vaughan Williams' elaborate tempo and dynamic markings scrupulously. His phrasing is impeccable. But the thick, unpleasant sound of the voice makes it difficult to derive much enjoyment. At full voice (particularly above the staff) the sound is spread

and strained. Scaled down the voice becomes a wobbly croon. At that the voice is less unattractive than Peter Pears's, but Pears could frequently compensate with his brilliant verbal projection. With Tear unfortunately the declamation is generally overblown in a pseudo-operatic way. (English can be sung beautifully, unaffectedly, and incisively, but to hear it done you'll have to turn to an American—Donald Gramm, a scandalously underappreciated singer. How about a Gramm recording of the *Songs of Travel* coupled with Copland's *Old American Songs*?)

As a result the nine poems from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Songs of Travel* that Vaughan Williams set between 1894 and 1907 sound rather pompous and rhetorical. For all their "poetic" convolutions ("Wealth I seek not, hope nor love. . .") the poems are simple and direct, and they are sensitively set. The cycle has no greater musical or dramatic unity than the title suggests (except for the brief final song, added as an epilogue), but there is sufficient variety (from *The Roadside Fire* to *The Infinite Shining Heavens*) to sustain interest. All the songs sound vaguely familiar (though they also look forward—it's not hard to hear *Peter Grimes* in *The Vagabond* or *Let Beauty Awake*). The conventional (by contemporary standards) harmonies are simple but fluid. But the songs are effective. At least one—*Whither must I wander?*—sticks in the memory. The Tear recording of the *Songs of Travel* is certainly better than none, but English buyers have a choice of recordings by Janet Baker and John Shirley-Quirk.

The *Blake Songs*, with solo oboe accompaniment, were written for a 1958 film, *The Vision of William Blake*. Out of context (and in Tear's blustering delivery) they sound monotonous.

As suggested, both Noel Black and Philip Ledger provide first-rate accompaniments. The voice pickup is somewhat distant for a song recording, but considering the quality of the voice it may be just as well. There are notes and texts. K.F.

**WAGNER:** Parsifal. For a feature review of recordings of this work, see page 67

## recitals and miscellany

**B** **BAROQUE MASTERPIECES FOR TRUMPET AND ORGAN.** Edward Tarr, trumpet; George Kent, organ; Helmut Böcker, bassoon; Bengt Eklund, trumpet (in the Greene-Boyce Suite). NONESUCH H 71279, \$2.98.

**GREENE-BOYCE:** Suite of Trumpet Voluntaries, in D. **PRENTZL:** Sonata for Trumpet, Bassoon, and Continuo, in C. **KREBS:** Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme (two settings). **PEZEL:** Sonata for Trumpet, Bassoon, and Continuo, in C. **PURCELL:** Voluntary for Organ, in D minor, Z. 718. **STANLEY:** Suite of Trumpet Voluntaries, in D.

Comparison:  
Scherbaum: "La Tromba Sacra" DG 136 558

Chalk up another triumph for Edward Tarr, who steadily continues to consolidate his eminence among the younger generation of instrumentalists who can combine executant and musicological virtuosity. Here he joins





Edward Tarr and George Kent—bringing still vital music to gripping sonic life.

Maurice André and the elder Adolf Scherbaum in exploiting the arresting sonic potentials of trumpet-and-organ recordings. I stress sheerly sonic distinction since, although the strictly musical values are considerable, the sound is more immediately and spectacularly impressive. As a matter of fact, there is a rather scant repertory of works expressly composed for the trumpet/organ pairing. But that catalogue can be legitimately extended in two easy ways: one, by simply replacing harpsichord with organ in works scored for trumpet and continuo (most justifiably in music of a nature suitable for performance in churches or on ceremonial occasions); another, by having a real trumpet play the "trumpet-stop" part in so-called "trumpet voluntaries" and "trumpet tunes" originally written for organ only.

All three repertory types are represented in the present program. The chorale settings by Bach's star pupil Johann Ludwig Krebs were written for organ and trumpet—specifically the slide trumpet (much like the better-known slide trombone), which permits free use, as can be heard here, of lower register passages than those within the range of the valveless, keyless, "natural" trumpet of the baroque era. Continuo-organ parts are used in the fascinating sonatas for trumpet and bassoon (probably the only two of their kind) by Johann Christoph Pezel, best known for his brass-ensemble *Tower Music*, and an obscure late-seventeenth-century disciple of Pezel, known only by his last name, Prentzl, and an Upsala University ms. of the present Sonata. Trumpet voluntaries are represented by the all-English Maurice Greene, William Boyce, and John Stanley examples. (The solemn yet bravura Purcell voluntary is for organ only, as are the second, by Boyce, of the Greene-Boyce voluntaries, and the second, Adagio, movement of the Stanley suite.) Except for the Stanley voluntaries (included in Scherbaum's 1970 "*Tromba Sacra*" program) and the Krebs chorale settings, the other works here are new to me. Indeed I've never before encountered any recorded representation of Prentzl, who reveals himself as an eloquent as well as skilled composer even in direct comparison with Pezel's superbly noble and moving sonata for the same combination of instruments.

But quite apart from its many scholarly attractions, the electrifying interest of this program lies above all in the ability of all the performers here (with Tarr *primus inter pares*) to bring the still tremendously vital music itself

to dramatically gripping sonic life. You'll have to search far to find more incandescently blazing trumpet timbres, more infectiously zestful interpretations, more cleanly honest recording, or, for that matter, more informative jacket notes—which document not only source and modern editions of the music played, but also the actual instruments used, not excluding the detailed stop specifications of the Glatzer-Götz organ so deftly played by George Kent. The only respect in which this recording possibly falls fractionally short of the ideal is in the acoustical ambience of the village church in Arosa, Switzerland, in which it was made—admirably warm and lucid, but just not quite as impressively expansive as the more cathedral-like ambience of "*La Tromba Sacra*" program, the location of which, not specified in DG's notes, is rumored to have been Hamburg's St. Pauli Church. R.D.D.

**MARIA CHIARA:** Soprano Arias from Italian Opera. Maria Chiara, soprano, Vienna Volksoper Orchestra, Nello Santi, cond. LONDON OS 26262, \$5.98.

**DONIZETTI:** Anna Bolena. Piangete voi. Al dolce guidami. **BELLINI:** I Puritani. Qui la voce sua soave. Vieni, detto. **VERDI:** Aida. Qui Radames verrà. O patria mia. **BOITO:** Mefistofele. L'altra notte in fondo al mare. **PUCCINI:** La Bohème. Sì, mi chiamano Mimi! Donde lieta usci. Suor Angelica. Senza mamma. Manon Lescaut: in quelle trine morbide. Turandot: Signore, ascolta. **MASCAGNI:** Lodoletta: Flammen, perdonami.

What should one say about these "calling-card" operatic recitals? Miss Chiara has what is basically a very lovely voice, but has not yet attained sufficient mastery or experience to stand comparison with established singers who have undertaken the same scope of repertory—for example, Maria Callas, who has recorded nine out of the ten arias here. With sound musical guidance and careful refinement of technique, she may well become an important singer—although never, I think, an Aida or an Elvira. The sound is silvery and well focused, the intonation not consistently up to snuff (terribly important, given such a pointed, low-vibrato tone), the instincts not unmusical (although she is prone to indulgences of tempo that the conductor ought not to have condoned, especially in Mimi's two arias). At her best—say, in the *Suor Angelica* aria—she can make a very touching effect, but there are things on some other tracks that an aspiring singer should not have put before the public, such as the unfortunate compromise

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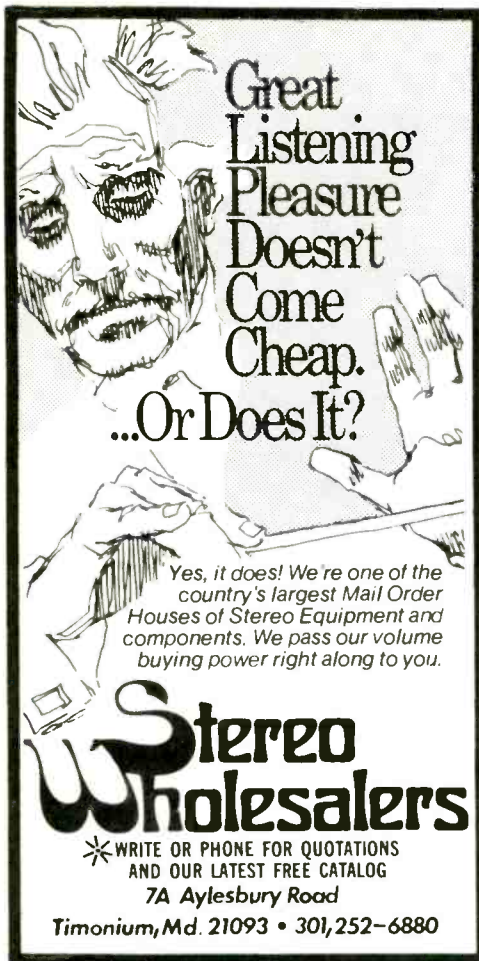
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on the final phrase of the *Aida* aria. And the producer should not have passed a patch of bad ensemble with the orchestra in the *Boito* aria.

In fact, there must be a better way to present a young singer to the public. Once upon a time, the single 78-rpm disc served as a suitable medium: Two carefully chosen arias made a better impression than overkill with ten (not to mention the problem that, except for the cabaletta of the *Puritani* aria, all the music on this disc is slow). Out-of-the-way repertory would be one possibility: Ten arias as relatively uncommon as the *Lodoletta* piece would have an interest that all the chestnuts inevitably lack unless performed with superior technique and vibrant imagination. Or why not a grab-bag introductory recital—five different singers, two arias each? That would at least have greater informational value, and would not extend the singers, for the sake of variety, into unsuitable repertory.

As is usual with this sort of disc, there are no texts or translations, merely a laudatory biography and brief plot summaries. D.H.

**COLIN DAVIS AT THE LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS.** BBC Chorus; BBC Choral Society; BBC Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 6588 011, \$6.98.

**BERLIOZ:** Les Troyens: Gloire, gloire à Didon (sung in English). **WAGNER:** Wesendonk Lieder: Traume; Schmerzen (Jessye Norman, soprano). **MENDELSSOHN:** Octet in E flat, Op. 20; Scherzo. **WALTON:** A Song for the Lord Mayor's Table: The Contrast; Rhyme (Elizabeth Bainbridge, mezzo-soprano). **ELGAR:** Pomp and Circumstance March, in D, Op. 39, No. 1. **WILLIAMSON:** The Stone Wall. **ARNE:** Rule Britannia (Elizabeth Bainbridge, mezzo-soprano). **PARRY:** Jerusalem (arr. Elgar). **TRAD.:** God Save the Queen (arr. Elgar).

Comparison:  
Last Night of the Proms (1969) Phi. 6502 001

Sequels are notoriously anticlimactic, but this one seems deliberately designed to disappoint everyone thrilled by the earlier sonic-documentation masterpiece which I reviewed with awed relish in October 1971. Moreover, it's a flagrant example of deceptive identification—though by omission rather than commission. "Recorded live at the Royal Albert Hall, London" is correct as far as it goes. But neither label nor jacket notes even suggest that while everything on the first side documents a Last Night of the Proms (that of September 16, 1972), the second side is a patchwork quilt made up of: a brief conductor's speech from the same concert; Williamson and Arne selections drawn from a previously unrepresented recording of the previous year's Last Night; plus the Elgar march, Parry *Jerusalem*, and *God Save the Queen* brazenly cannibalized from the earlier recording, which was actually—although not so labeled—the Last Night of September 13, 1969. (The provenance of these last three items is unmistakable to anyone who heard them earlier; for the other facts and dates I'm indebted to *The Gramophone's* reviewer, Alan Blyth.)

The rationale for all these curious, Watergate-on-the-Thames shenanigans is easier guessed than forgiven. The whole A side is a fine example of big-hall, big-sound live recording which, however, not only never approaches the extraordinary sonic thrills of the 1969 Last Night but is programmatically less suitable for so festive and mostly informal an occasion. Except for a rather tepid Mendelssohn Scherzo for full string orchestra and a not particularly dramatic Berlioz chorus,

these 1972 performances are decidedly admirable in themselves with both Norman and Bainbridge singing magnificently. But the familiar Wagner songs and the unfamiliar (to most Americans) energetic Walton songs are patently out of appropriate context here.

The obvious need for more effective materials apparently just couldn't be met by further 1972 excerpts, so the producers desperately turned back to their 1971 and 1969 tapings. From the former come the public rehearsal and then performance of Martin Williamson's extremely amusing "Cassation for Audience and Orchestra," *The Stone Wall*, and a *Rule Britannia* starring Bainbridge and drawing on audience participation in the refrains—both first-rate Last Night favorites even though the fervency of the Arne performance falls considerably short of the jingoistic frenzy achieved in the 1969 *Rule Britannia* section of Sir Henry Wood's *Fantasia on British Sea Songs*. And of course the direct 1969 repeats, *Jerusalem* and *God Save the Queen* in particular, are as ineffably spellbinding as ever. But we had them before, and we expected something new here!

The present release, then, is by no means a complete gyp, but it's certainly no fair deal. For a philosophically minded purchaser, perhaps it's most valuable for its proof that audio miracles, like other kinds of miracles, are indeed unique, and that the 1969 Last Night remains incomparable. It can be looted, but it can't be imitated. R.D.D.

**PHILIPPE ENTREMONT: A la Française.** Philippe Entremont, piano. COLUMBIA M 32070, \$5.98.

**RAVEL:** Le Tombeau de Couperin: Rigaudon; Pavane pour une infante défunte; Miroirs: Alborada del gracioso. **DEBUSSY:** La Fille aux cheveux de lin; Réverie. **CHABRIER:** Pièces pittoresques: Scherzo-Valse. **SATIE:** Gymnopédies (3). **FAURÉ:** Nocturne No. 6, in D flat, Op. 63; Impromptu No. 3, in A flat, Op. 34. **POULENC:** Trois pièces: Toccata.

I was all set to hate this album. I mean, all cannot be forgiven a record company that puts silly little Philippe Entremont stamps on the otherwise fascinating historical postcards of the Eiffel Tower used for the cover art. And whoever selected the works on this album seems to have caught a mild case of the "greatest hits" plague. How much nicer it would have been to have had all of Poulenc's *Trois pièces* instead of just the toccata. Entremont performs the toccata splendidly, skillfully highlighting its almost hidden lyricism while maintaining the essential momentum inherent to the genre. Granted, Entremont does sacrifice a bit of the breathtaking pace of the old Horowitz recording (Poulenc's favorite), but to me Entremont's rendition has more of a Poulenc flavor to it. It is also hard not to admire the brilliance and spirit with which Entremont plays the Ravel pieces—particularly the *Alborada del gracioso*—and the famous Chabrier Scherzo-Valse. Of course, Entremont still suffers a bit from heavy-hand-itis, and this takes its toll here and there, especially in the opening of the Fauré nocturne and in most of the impromptu. Yet in the Debussy selections Entremont captures an appropriately dreamy atmosphere that is carried over to the Satie *Gymnopédies*, which he plays much better than he conducts. All these pluses, combined with very well-recorded piano sound, make this album quite attractive and a pleasant surprise. R.S.B.

**B** **WALTER GIESEKING:** Piano Recital. Walter Giesekeing, piano. SERAPHIM 60210, \$2.98 (mono); from various Angel originals, recorded 1953-56).

**R** **DEBUSSY:** Two Arabesques; Masques; L'Isle Joyeuse; Suite bergamasque. **RAVEL:** Jeux d'eau; Miroirs; Oiseaux tristes; Le Tombeau de Couperin; Forlane. **GRIEG:** Lyric Pieces; Butterfly, Op. 43, No. 1; Little Bird, Op. 43, No. 4; Album Leaf, Op. 47, No. 2; Melodie, Op. 47, No. 3; Halling, Op. 47, No. 4; Bell-Ringing, Op. 54, No. 6.

All of these pieces, re-released here as part of Seraphim's "Great Recordings of the Century" series, were recorded toward the end of Giesekeing's life. At this time he was playing as well as at any point in his career, if not better, and these readings give the listener an excellent sampling of his considerable talents. His playing was always highly polished and handsomely finished. Indeed, his sound is so pure and his articulation so even that one gets a definite impression of detachment; everything seems terribly easy and consequently almost matter of fact. It is a style that works beautifully in the Ravel, as well as in the earlier Debussy pieces—the *Arabesques* (1888) and the *Suite bergamasque* (1890). But the later *Masques* (1904) and *L'Isle joyeuse* (1905) are more complex works that suffer from this seemingly off-hand treatment, and they appear overly brittle and lacking in tension. The little Grieg pieces, all of which are short and lyrical in nature, come off exquisitely. They wear their charms openly and without pretense, and Giesekeing's direct and uncluttered performances are perfectly suited to let them make their own effects in their own modest way. The mono sound is excellent. R.P.M.

**HISTORIC ORGANS OF EUROPE, VOL. 1:** Sounds of XVIII Century Spain. Paul Bernard, organ (organs of San Jaime, Calatayud, and Santa Maria, Darocca). ANGEL S 36914, \$5.98.

Works by Joan de Segovia, Francisco Palero, Pedro de Soto, Pablo Bruna, Diego de Torrijos, and Joan Moreno.

The classical Spanish organ is a curious and wondrous beast: Its outstanding feature is always a battery of majestic reed pipes jutting out horizontally from the main case, which buzz and snarl and honk with an awesomely heroic voice. Behind the reeds are choruses of mild and light-toned flute and principle pipes; pedal divisions are either nonexistent or extremely limited. Obviously, the instruments are utterly useless for most of the world's great organ literature, but the music written for them is often stunningly effective (and not playable on "conventional" organs lacking their blazing and fiery *trompetas*).

There have been only a few recordings of these unique instruments, and very little Spanish organ music is well known. Paul Bernard's well-played and beautifully recorded new Angel disc is therefore a valuable addition to the catalogue. It doesn't compare with E. Power Biggs's often bizarre and sensationally entertaining Columbia record ("Historic Organs of Spain," MS 7109—one of his best records ever), but Angel's "Historic Organs of Europe" series has been launched with an auspicious beginning. Let's hope the planning and playing continue on such a level. C.F.G.

**MUSIC AT MAGDALEN:** The Twentieth Century. Jeremy Suter, organ; Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford, Bernard Rose, dir. ARGO ZRG 722, \$5.98.

**BUSH:** Magnificat. **COLE:** Nunc Dimittis. **G. ROSE:** God's Strange Ways (Gregory Rose, cond.). **WULSTAN:** Let My Prayer Come Up. **B. ROSE:** We Will Rejoice; Magnificat; Nunc Dimittis. **LEIGHTON:** Nunc Dimittis. **HEWITT-JONES:** Magnificat. **STEWART:** Veni sancte spiritus. **JOHNSON:** Dum medium silentium. **MACCKE:** We Wait for Thy Loving Kindness. **HOWELLS:** Nunc Dimittis.

Only the tight little isle could produce a line like this in the notes on a record jacket: "Bernard Rose has been Informator Choristarum, Organist, and a Fellow of the College since 1957. This short introit [by him] was written to commemorate the 70th birthday of the Chapel Porter, Mr. B. G. Talboys, on 10 December 1958. He served the College from 1914-1970. It was sung in Antechapel after Evensong on that day."

The disc contains twelve short pieces by eleven composers, all of them written for the choir of Oxford's Magdalen College, with heavy emphasis on the texts of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. They are all very beautifully made, but their endless emphasis on supple counterpoint in a reverential mood grows a little wearying after a while, and one is delighted that Gregory Rose, the young son of Bernard Rose, has written one work, called *God's Strange Ways*, in a dissonant, twelve-tonish, modern idiom.

Of the more traditional pieces, I was especially impressed with the settings of the Nunc Dimittis by Hugo Cole and Herbert Howells, but all twelve of these works are worth hearing (though not at one sitting!), and they provide insight into an old tradition about which we in this country know far too little. A.F.

**ISAAC STERN:** Romance. Isaac Stern, violin; Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Frank Brief, cond. COLUMBIA M 31425, \$5.98. Tape: MA 31425, \$6.98; MT 31425, \$6.98. Quadraphonic: MQ 31425 (SQ-encoded disc), \$6.98; MAQ 31425 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.98.

**CHOPIN:** Nocturne in E flat, Op. 9, No. 2. **MENDELSSOHN:** On the Wings of Song, Op. 34, No. 2. **RUBINSTEIN:** Soirées de St. Petersburg; Romance. **WIENIAWSKI:** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 2; Romance. **SCHUBERT:** Schwanengesang; Serenade. **DEBUSSY:** La Fille aux cheveux de lin. **RACHMANINOFF:** Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14. **BORODIN:** Quartet for Strings, No. 2; Nocturne. **SATIE:** Gymnopédie No. 3. **TCHAIKOVSKY:** Sérénade mélancolique, Op. 26. All arr. Arthur Harris.

When Heifetz and Kreisler used to play this sort of music, in the benighted days of a generation or more ago, they were more straightforward in their musical approach: Stern seems to enjoy playing a number of violinistic tricks here—portamento, vibrato, and sentimental phrasing that he would eschew in Beethoven or Brahms. I suspect he had fun making this record; it is the sort of thing he would kid around with at an evening with friends. Arthur Harris' arrangements are skillful and expertly played, but their lack of variety begins to pall after a while, especially with the continually slow tempos and quiet mood prescribed by the format.

The buyer of this record, unlike a reviewer, will probably just put it on his changer and let it play without really listening; in this respect, it is far better played than most salon music. But I still wish that Stern would explore more intensively the repertory for which his art so eminently qualifies him: There are many sonatas he has never recorded—and others that need new versions by him.

Perhaps if this record sells, Stern and Columbia will be encouraged to risk some meatier fare. P.H.

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# the lighter side

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ROYAL S. BROWN  
R. D. DARRELL  
HENRY EDWARDS  
MIKE JAHN  
JOHN S. WILSON



**TEMPTATIONS:** Masterpiece. Temptations, vocals; instrumental accompaniment. Norman Whitfield, music and lyrics, prod.; Paul Riser, arr. *Hey Girl*; *I Like Your Style*; *Masterpiece*; *Ma*; three more. GORDY G 965 L, \$5.98. Tape: ● M8965, \$6.98; ●● M5965, \$6.98.

In 1962 the Temptations with their performance of *Hey Girl* broke and broke big. The Temptations' skillful harmonies, enormous energy, lively dancing, and uncanny ability to mimic both black and white acts turned them into a supergroup. Much time has passed since the Temptations made their debut but they are still on top, even though their lead singer David Ruffin has become a solo artist. When Holland/Dozier/Holland, that brilliant writing-producing trio, left Motown a few years back, Norman Whitfield took over H/D/H's chores and he has not only kept the Temptations on top but has also developed the jazz aspects of their performance. The musical and commercial success of "Masterpiece" proves that Whitfield has been on the right track.

The average length of a selection on this disc is seven minutes. The title tune takes almost fourteen minutes to unfold. These extraordinary lengths feature vocals that are edgy and purposely disjointed. Voices appear from nowhere, deliver a line, and then disappear. These vocals swirl around an extended set of improvisations featuring flowing melodic lines, compelling rhythms, and plenty of wah-wah guitar. The result is striking, unusual, fascinating, and truly sophisticated.

"Masterpiece" is quite a bit different from *Hey Girl*. Call it "soul-jazz"; applaud its vitality and musical intelligence. H.E.



**NICKY HOPKINS:** The Tin Man Was a Dreamer. Nicky Hopkins, piano; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Sundown in Mexico*; *Waiting for the Band*; *Edward*; *Dolly*; *Speed On*; *The Dreamer*; *Banana Anna*; *Lawyer's Lament*; *Shout It Out*; *Pig's Boogie*. COLUMBIA KC 32074, \$5.98. Tape: ● CA 32074, \$6.98; ●● CT 32074, \$6.98.

There is a phenomenon that might be called the Famous Sideman Solo Album. That is, a man who has made a good rep playing this-or-that on the LPs of noted rock bands and then comes out with his own LP. Usually it's a col-

lection of original songs of no great interest, played by the famous sideman accompanied this time by those for whom he's worked in the past, and most often it's a bust, a bore.

Nicky Hopkins has all the credentials to pull one of these. He has played on everybody's sessions and has toured as the sixth member of the Rolling Stones. He is beyond a doubt the British pop scene's most wanted pianist. Yet he has broken tradition and made an impressive solo debut, even a great one. "The Tin Man Was a Dreamer" is a masterful collection of piano-oriented rock and jazz tunes, a few of them quiet, sentimental, and Cole Porterish; a few others damned exciting. My favorite is *Edward*, a riffy jazz tune that sounds familiar and probably is related to some famous melody. Whether he wrote it, stole it, or found it under a rock, this is a good tune—and a good debut LP. M.J.

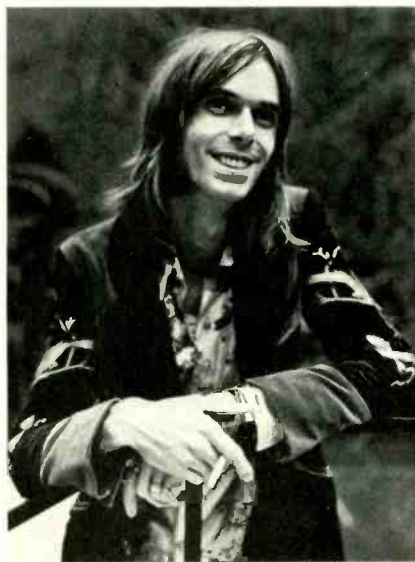
**CHER:** Bittersweet White Light. Cher, vocals; Mike Rubini, Al Harris, Mundell Lowe, others, arr. *By Myself*; *Why Was I Born*; *The Man I Love*; eight more. MCA 2101, \$5.98. Tape: ● T 2101, \$6.98; ●● C 2101, \$6.98.

Let's begin by viewing Cher Bono's new album in terms not of its heart (Cher) but of its spine (how it was put together). Indeed, the album could serve as a kind of lesson for pop arrangers and orchestrators.

The basic arrangements, song concepts, and color ideas of this album were done by Mike Rubini, who was also involved in its production and some of the keyboard playing. Rubini probably chose the kind of orchestra to use. A major part of his task was to decide on orchestrators and get across what he wanted in each song. It was then the orchestrators' task to write to the style of Cher and the concepts of Rubini.

Several orchestrators were used, all expert—including Gene Page, John D'Andrea, and Rubini himself. But the one who came up with exactly what Cher needed—whether by intuition, experience, accident, or all three, I don't know—was Albert Harris.

The thing to remember about slim, svelte Cher Bono is that she is a big, fat singer. Writer Harris, who can write in nearly any



Nicky Hopkins—a great solo debut.

style, had the wits to write in none of them. He just wrote big and fat, with strings soaring, French horns cascading, and everything in place harmonically and dynamically. Cher loved his charts, and the song getting all the airplay. *Am I Blue*, was done by Harris.

I have always loved everything about Cher Bono except her voice and her singing style. It is strictly a matter of taste and tonnage. So heavy is her singing that she slips off nearly every note as it ends, a grating habit once you notice it. This is not to say that Cher's emotion is not real, not warm. It is. But she is a Rolls Royce tank. To each his own.

Cher is as trend-conscious with her music as with her wardrobe. There is not a song on this album less than twenty years old. Cher is one of those personalities who relates to nostalgia well, honestly, and with a genuine sense of fun. She does this material expertly, in her way.

Let's not forget about Sonny Bono. Please. He did the cover photo (nice) and acted as executive producer (nice).

With time and practice it becomes possible to respect without liking and vice versa. This is a most respectable album. M.A.

**FACES:** Ooh La La. Rod Stewart, vocals and electric guitar; Ian McLagan, keyboards; Ron Lane, bass, acoustic guitar, tambourine, and vocals; Ron Wood, guitars, bass, and vocals; Ken Jones, percussion. *Silicone Grown*; *Cindy Incidentally*; *Flags and Banners*; seven more. Warner Bros. BS 2665, \$5.98. Tape: ●● WST 2665, \$7.95; ● M82665, \$6.95; ●● M52665, \$6.95.

"Ooh La La" is a curiously restrained album. Everyone knows that the Faces, that campy, talented, slightly mad quintet of English rockers, can pound their guitars with the best of them. On this disc, however, they are in a gentle, romantic mood. Their reserve only serves to remind everyone once again that Rod Stewart is one of rock's most gifted vocalists. The croaking, ground-glass sound that surges from his throat growls and gurgles and roars and is capable of opening up to the listener an entire spectrum of emotions. The voice shimmers with colors even though it has such an unlikely sound. With his unique vocal instrument, Stewart makes all of these Faces songs (some of which he has written in conjunction with McLagan and Wood) seem better than they are.

Stewart pushes hard with *Silicone Grown*, a somewhat pointless number. The vocalist works wonders with the country-and-western-flavored *Flags and Banners* and brings rich feeling to *My Fault*, a tender but somewhat naive rock ballad. The disc's title cut also is naive—a romantic wisp about growing old. *Borstal Boys*, a dramatic effort about that infamous reformatory, deserves a far more

## Explanation of symbols



exceptional recording

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●● Open Reel

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●● Cassette

dramatic effort than the Faces give it. The best song on this LP is another romantic rock ballad, *If I'm on the Late Side*. This bluesy tune—its simple melody a bit too simple, its simple lyric effective almost in spite of itself—is effective but not dynamic rock musicianship until its fadeout, a striking drum solo. That touch coupled with Stewart's vocalizing gives this cut true distinction.

The material is weak; the musicianship earnest but uninspired. Faces is not the first band to rely on its vocalist to plug the holes in its act. H.E.

**DAVID BLUE:** *Nice Baby and the Angel*. David Blue, vocals, guitar, piano, and songs; David Blue and Graham Nash, arr. ASYLUM SD 5066, \$5.98. Tape: ● M85066, \$6.95; ●● M55066, \$6.95.

**NED DOHENY.** Ned Doheny, vocals, guitar, and songs; Don Menza, arr. ASYLUM SD 5059, \$6.95. Tape: ● M85059, \$6.95; ●● M55059, \$6.99.

**EAGLES:** *Desperado*. Eagles, vocals, songs, and rhythm accompaniment; Jim Ed Norman, arr. ASYLUM SD 5068, \$5.98. Tape: ● M85068, \$6.95; ●● M55068, \$6.95.

**STEVE FERGUSON.** Steve Ferguson, vocals, keyboards, guitar, mandolin, and songs; George Bohanon, arr. and cond. ASYLUM SD 5067, \$5.98. Tape: ● M85067, \$6.95; ●● M55067, \$6.95.

**TOM WAITS:** *Closing Time*. Tom Waits, vocals, guitar, piano, and songs; rhythm accompaniment. ASYLUM SD 5061, \$5.98. Tape: ● M85061, \$6.95; ●● M55061, \$6.95.

The record industry can be viewed in terms of sounds. Motown has a sound; A&M, Elektra, RCA, Decca—each has a kind of sound, as do certain recording towns such as Muscle Shoals, Dallas, and Nashville.

In the past year or two one of the most successful sounds, creatively and financially, has been that of Asylum Records, headed by David Geffen and Elliot Roberts and distributed by Atlantic. Asylum's tastes run to thoughtful pop (Joni Mitchell), often with country-and-western overtones (Jackson Browne). Their stable is small and choice. If you like the sound of Crosby, Stills, Nash, etc. in any of their incarnations, you will like Asylum's artists, many of whom crossbreed musically from album to album.

The Eagles are the best vocal group since Crosby, Stills, etc., with the best group material heard since then. There is a rumor—based partly on publishing greed and partly on fuzzy thinking—that if a rock group writes, their songs must be worth recording. This is proved wrong regularly. The Eagles sell because their material is as strong and individual as their sound. The new set, *Desperado*, features the hit *Tequila Sunrise*. It's a fine album, with a couple of exceptions such as the jive *Out of Control*.

This is not David Blue's first record but it's his first good one. He rode in on Dylan's energy, proved a poor second, and dropped out. This album is beautifully produced by Graham Nash, who also played and sang backgrounds for such performers as Dave Mason and Jennifer Warren. Traces of the old (young) Blue are heard on such tracks as *On Sunday, Any Sunday*. I much prefer the energetic Blue of *Outlaw Man*.

Another interesting Asylum debut is Ned Doheny. Doheny writes, plays, and sings. His songs are warm and well written. His singing and playing are bright, accomplished, and charming. The album is expertly arranged by Don Menza and produced by Doheny and John Haeny. They make a handful of musicians sound like much more. *Salud*.

With Steve Ferguson, Asylum is pitching most the new artist I like least. The missing quality is relaxation. Ferguson sounds forced. He also owes a deep bow to Randy Newman. While Ned Doheny got about eight musicians, Ferguson got several times that many (all well written for by trombonist George Bohanon). Ferguson sings, writes, and plays. The talent is there but it has not yet jelled.

Tom Waits gives us what Ferguson does not: fun. He gives it by having it. The album is foxily produced by Jerry Yester, who also wrote a pretty string-quartet arrangement for *Grapefruit Moon*. Tom Waits is a young man with quaint, old-timey instincts. It is the young/old quality, plus humor, that gives Tom Waits his charm. Sweetening certain tunes with a New Orleans-ish muted trumpet was sheer inspiration on someone's part. It works particularly well on *Virginia Avenue*.

These artists may or may not have hits here. They all have futures. Imagine how many lesser talents the Asylum people passed up on the way. That is *their* talent. M.A.

**PAUL MCCARTNEY AND WINGS:** *Red Rose Speedway*. Paul McCartney, bass, piano, guitar, and vocals; Linda McCartney, piano and vocals; Denny Laine and Hugh McCracken, guitars; Denny Seiwell, drums. *Big Barn Bed; Little Lamb Dragonfly; Single Pigeon*; nine more. APPLE SMAL 3409, \$5.98. Tape: ● 8XW 3409, \$6.98; ●● 4XW 3409, \$6.98.

This newest release from McCartney, his sheep, his American wife, his rock band, and his inflated sense of the mundane is, like the last, boring. One bit of it, a medley of four short tunes, comes close to the liveliness of McCartney's 1971 album "Ram" (Apple SMAS 3375), the best thing the man has done since departing the Beatles. Still, no one tune on "Red Rose Speedway" approaches McCartney's best solo effort, the song *Maybe I'm Amazed*. Additionally, for a man who married a photographer, he sure has the worst art direction and photography I've seen in recent years. M.J.

✳ **BILL WITHERS:** *Live at Carnegie Hall*. Bill Withers, guitar and vocals; Bernorce Blackman, guitar; Ray Jackson, piano; Bobbye Hall and James Gadsen, percussion; Melvin Dunlap, bass. *Use Me; Friend of Mine; Ain't No Sunshine*; eleven more. SUSSEX SXBS 7025-2, \$11.96 (two discs).

From beginning to end, this two-record set is a truly distinguished reproduction of a soul recital at its best. Bill Withers—who burst on the scene with his eloquent, stirring performances of his tunes *Ain't No Sunshine; Grandma's Hands*; and *Lean On Me*—is a prime example of the total professional. Using these numbers as a nucleus, Withers is not afraid to sing



Bill Withers—soul at its best.

straight as well, and this singer/songwriter can deliver a ballad as cleanly as the most classic pop singer. During his performance Withers also sings the blues and provides long bursts of rhythm-charged instrumentals that are natural for hand-clapping and dancing in the aisles. He is also a talker, and these discs capture his raps—amusing, honest, provocative discussions about his life, his family, the attitudes men have toward women, and the nature and meaning of blackness. The audience spontaneously chants "Amen" every time Withers delivers a truism, and there were plenty of "Amens" the night these recordings were made.

Playing Carnegie Hall is now just another gig for many pop performers. Sometimes, however, an artist appears who believes in the traditional magic of this particular venue. Then the evening has the potential to be more than just another concert. That potential fulfilled itself the night Bill Withers took to the Carnegie Hall stage. The result has been captured faithfully on "Live at Carnegie Hall."

H.E.

**GIPP FORSTER:** *Walkin' Real in an Unreal Land*. Gipp Forster, poems and narrations; Miles Goodman and John Wood, arr. *Hey God; Gideons Road; The Sea*; seven more. Ranwood R 8107, \$4.98.

Here's a trendy item. Gipp Forster is your poet and this is your poetry-type album. Forster is incontestably sincere. He speaks deliciously, no matter what he's saying. The voice is soft, low, close-miked, self-consumed.

In short, Gipp Forster is in love with himself and they are very happy together. Each thought is presented as its own precious jewel. The album begins: "I am a Poet—and a singer of songs./I have poured my blood upon this earth as an offering." One must admire such assurance. The image becomes even more self-savored in the title poem: "I'm a bastard child that chose to dream in a dreamless world./But now I'm too weary to lift up my

heart no more, /so I'm allowing paper to take the words from me. . . ."

Then there is *I'm Leavin' You Words, Boy, an' Goin' Away*. All those needless apostrophes suggest role-playing. It would be like Ike and Tina Turner writing, "I'se gwine down by dee leby." Forster approaches colloquialism as a scholar, not as a real person. His narrations sway between this kind of sterile earthiness and a kind of amateur Shakespearean sound.

The success of Rod McKuen gives new hope to people such as Gipp Forster, for McKuen plugged into an immense hunger that simply had not been filled by other talents, good or bad. It is said that Gipp Forster appeared on a local radio show in Vancouver (Forster, thirty-five, is a native of Ottawa, Canada), where he read some of his poems. The station received 3,000 letters. Many were from the elderly, many from adolescents. Like McKuen, Forster has the knack of emotional oversimplification, a quality particularly precious to the very young and the old.

To appreciate Gipp Forster, all you have to do is take him as seriously as he takes himself. Randy Wood took him seriously enough to produce this album. Wood long ago proved his music-business acumen. For one thing, he puts out all Lawrence Welk albums. Perhaps he heard about those 3,000 letters in Canada.

As classic comic books are to the great classics, so Gipp Forster is to poetry.

It must be said that an intelligent hand is discernible behind the scenes of this album. The spare and pretty keyboard-and-percussion backgrounds are by Miles Goodman and John Wood. There are moments when the sweetness of the music almost makes the words work. M.A.



**MICHAEL QUATRO JAM BAND:** Look Deeply Into the Mirror. Michael Quatro, keyboards and vocals; Patti Quatro and Ted Nugent, guitars; Kirk Arthur Trachsel, drums. *Prelude in A flat Crazy*; *Natural Way*; five more. EVOLUTION 3021, \$4.98.

Quatro, a young concert promoter from the Detroit area, tired of the rock bands whose concerts he was promoting, and switched careers. He brought his classical and jazz training to rock, and now is doing rather well; at times, he does spectacularly well. There isn't a dull moment on this album, and the peaks are high: *Prelude in A flat Crazy* is one of the few excellent adaptations into a rock format of classical themes; *Natural Way* is a great, hard-rock tune.

Quatro's credits include everything known to man with a keyboard on it, and after hearing this album I'm willing to believe he's expert at all of them. M.J.

**B. J. THOMAS:** Songs. B. J. Thomas, vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Songs*; *Early Morning Hush*; *Down on the Street*; eight more. PARAMOUNT PAS 6052, \$5.98.

On this outing B. J. Thomas has placed himself in the center of a genuinely tasteful album. Thomas has elected to sing a set of well-crafted contemporary ballads written by some of our most talented songwriters. The roster of songwriting talent on this disc includes Barry

Michael Quatro—  
a promoter turned  
performer who's  
expert at  
everything known  
to man on  
a keyboard.



Mann and Cynthia Weil, Carole King, Gerry Goffin and Mark James, and Goffin in conjunction with Barry Goldberg. Thomas is backed by a talented and well-known group of musicians including five members of the current Blood, Sweat & Tears aggregation and four members of Bulldog, the newly formed band that includes two of the Rascals. Eric Weissberg, that banjo-picking *Deliverance* lad, also puts in an appearance. The arrangements on this LP, employing a subtle use of horns and backup vocals, are expert, restrained, and completely devoid of gratuitous effects.

Yet "Songs" does not catch fire. Thomas is a capable vocalist. He can produce a mellow sound and can give a meaningful reading to a lyric. If Thomas were a singer/songwriter, his vocal approach would have more meaning—one would assume that his approach is the way the songs *should* be sung. As a vocalist only, Thomas lacks the color to offer new insights into the material of other people. The musical approach on this recording, while intelligent, also offers little variety, and the eleven cuts on this disc eventually wash each other out.

Professional and obviously an act of love, "Songs" has built-in limitations and those limitations have not been overcome. H.E.

**THE BEATLES:** 1962–1966. Paul McCartney, vocals and bass; John Lennon, vocals and guitar; George Harrison, vocals and guitar; Ringo Starr, vocals and drums; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Love Me Do*; *Please Please Me*; *I want to Hold Your Hand*; *A Hard Day's Night*; *Yesterday*; twenty-one more. APPLE SKBO 3403, \$9.98 (two discs). Tape: ● 8XKB 3403, \$11.98 (two cartridges); ●● 4XKB 3403, \$11.98 (two cassettes).

**THE BEATLES:** 1967–1970. Paul McCartney, vocals and bass; John Lennon, vocals and guitar; George Harrison, vocals and guitar; Ringo Starr, vocals and drums; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Strawberry*

*Fields Forever*; *A Day in the Life*; *Hey Jude*; *Back in the U.S.S.R.*; *Let It Be*; twenty-three more. APPLE SKBO 3404, \$9.98 (two discs). Tape: ● 8XKB 3404, \$11.98 (two cartridges); ●● 4XKB 3404, \$11.98 (two cassettes).

During 1964–1970 the Beatles released seventeen albums in this country, and at least several dozen 45s, some of which were never included on American albums. Yet there was never an adequate Beatles anthology. Side 2 of "Magical Mystery Tour", released late in 1967, was made up of singles not previously included on an LP. The album "Hey Jude," released in 1970, served a like function. Still, anyone wishing to understand the scope of the Beatles would have to buy at least a dozen, and perhaps all seventeen, albums. Now, with the release of the first major Beatles anthology, the burden is eased.

The purchaser of this new set may be assured of at least an adequate sampling of Beatles material. It contains all their best-known songs, and most of their best ones. There are some problems with the set, though, which I bring up not simply because nit-picking is fun. With a bit more effort, this anthology could have been much better.

The set consists only of Lennon/McCartney compositions. This neglects a nearly two-year span (1964–66) when the group recorded many excellent versions of rock-and-roll and rockabilly standards. Their Chuck Berry and Carl Perkins tunes are especially memorable, and their reading of Chuck Willis' *Bad Boy* remains a classic. None of these made the anthology.

Yet there are a number of tunes here whose value is certainly arguable. By any scale, the *Magical Mystery Tour* theme: *Don't Let Me Down*; *The Ballad of John and Yoko*; *Old Brown Shoe*; *Across the Universe*; and *The Long and Winding Road* are meek efforts. Included too is the early, 45 version of *Revolution*, a shoddy product when compared with the slower LP version that appeared a few

months later. Another thing that's missing: an adequate sampling of songs from the album "Revolver," which many consider the Beatles' best album.

So we're left with adequacy instead of excellence. Were this politics, it might be an acceptable exchange. But this is rock-and-roll, where I believe that standards are higher. M.J.

**DION'S GREATEST HITS.** Dion, vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *A Teenager in Love; Runaround Sue; Lonely Teenager; The Wanderer*; six more. COLUMBIA KC 31942, \$5.98.

**DION & THE BELMONTs:** Reunion (Live At Madison Square Garden). Dion & the Belmonts; instrumental accompaniment. *A Teenager in Love; Runaround Sue; The Wanderer*; seven more. WARNER BROS. BS 2664, \$5.98.

There was a time when sensible people, even in popular music, considered 1950s rock-and-roll a load of crap. Today, nearly everything that happened during that decade is considered a treasured piece of Americana. Wrong. Dion & the Belmonts are a load of crap, whether singing it then (the Columbia LP) or now (the Warner Brothers release). There are some absolutes in this world. M.J.

## theater and film

**NOW VOYAGER:** The Classic Film Scores of Max Steiner. Earl Wild, piano (in *Symphonie Moderne*); Ambrosian Singers (in *The Informer*); National Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Gerhardt, cond. RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0136, \$5.98.

Now Voyager: King Kong; As Long As I Live (from *Saratoga Trunk*); The Charge of the Light Brigade; *Symphonie Moderne* (from *Four Wives*); *The Big Sleep*; Johnny Belinda; *Since You Went Away*; *The Informer*; *The Fountainhead*.

If you want to go back to the sources for just about everything, good and bad, done in the name of symphonic film scores, there are few better places to start than this new album—the second in an important RCA series—of movie-music excerpts by pioneer Max Steiner. As Rudy Behlmer points out in his notes (essential reading). Steiner started in the cinema at the beginning of the sound era, when producers were wary of using "background" music in nonmusical films, and it was Steiner who, with the encouragement of David O. Selznick, helped develop the art of cinematic incidental music. Steiner, of course, was the right man in the right place at the right time. Little could have been better suited to the essentially romantic orientation of 1930-1940 Hollywood than the style of Viennese-born and Viennese-trained Steiner. Unlike even the subtler and more atmosphere-directed Erich Korngold (the subject of the first album in this series, LSC 3330). Steiner aimed directly at the emotions and—again unlike Korngold—did not shun one-for-one synchronization between music and screen action. Thus, many of Steiner's techniques and devices, such as the repeated, four-note chromatic motive in the "chase" sequence from *The Big Sleep*, represent prototypes that were eventually totally worked to death. Steiner also caught the heartstrings, however, with some of the most notable and endemically cinematic melodies to

come out of Hollywood. What else could have inspired the main theme of *Now Voyager* besides a film of the Bette Davis genre?

Fortunately and unfortunately, Steiner arranged many of his film scores into suites: fortunately, because this practice allows for several stimulating continuous works on this album, especially the appropriately sinister and rousing *King Kong* music, the *Big Sleep* suite, and the more atmospheric score for *The Fountainhead*; unfortunately, because some of the "filler" background music—often representing the most interesting part of a film score—has been omitted, as it is on almost every soundtrack album ever made. Certainly, more music from one of the scores recorded here would have been more welcome than the millionth version of the *Saratoga Trunk* pop tune *As Long As I Live* (in which one finds a reminiscence of Steiner's *Gone With the Wind* theme), which sounds particularly silly coming after the *King Kong* score. And why couldn't we have had some of the *Distant Drums* music, for instance, instead of another version (although this one has been "expanded" by conductor Charles Gerhardt) of the bloated *Symphonie Moderne* used in *Four Wives*? In spite of some moody scoring and attractive theme toward the beginning, nothing about this "symphonie" (actually a sort of piano concerto) is "moderne," and by the time the ending comes along, Steiner has indulged in almost every pseudo-Rachmaninoff cliché imaginable.

As with the Erich Korngold release, the recorded sound here is unbelievably good—you'll certainly never hear the scores this way in the theaters or on TV. Gerhardt's interpretations seem perfectly appropriate to the music, and pianist Earl Wild's performance of the *Symphonie Moderne* is so brilliant that I can only hope Wild and Gerhardt—and producer George Korngold—will soon team up for Bernard Herrmann's *Hangover Square* concerto, a much better piece of the same ilk for a much more interesting movie.

New releases in this series will be devoted to music from Bette Davis films, Alfred Newman, more Erich Korngold (including the Cello Concerto) and a complete Steiner *Gone With the Wind* score. R.S.B.

**COWARD:** Oh Coward!; Cowardy Custard; Bobby Short Is Mad About Noël Coward; The Noël Coward Album; Greatest Hits, Vol. 1. For a feature review of these recordings, see page 70.

**THE GREAT WALTZ:** The Great Waltzes of Johann Strauss II (as heard in the film—presented in their original full-length versions). Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra, Felix Slatkin, cond. *Emperor; Tales from the Vienna Woods; You and You*; four more. ANGEL S 36056, \$5.98. Tape: 8XS 36056, \$7.98; 4XS 36056, \$7.98.

A Department of Dirty Tricks has been busy here in an attempt to ride the coattails of the latest film version of Wright & Forrester's long-attar-Strauss *The Great Waltz*—the actual soundtrack of which appeared earlier this year under MGM's own label. No Angel label or Big-Lie subtling claims or sonic face-lifting can cover up the fact that this is a zombie program excavated from Capitol's graveyard. Most likely this is a reissue of the six-item

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Strauss Waltz program (now augmented by a *Voices of Spring* probably recorded at the same time) that first appeared in 1958 (mono disc and two-track stereo tape) and 1959 (stereo disc SP 8421). It's less likely that they are later re-recordings (and in any case couldn't have been later than February 9, 1963, when Slatkin died), since the SP 8421 originals were maintained in print until 1970, and while I don't have it around for direct comparisons, my original notes on both the interpretive characteristics and the score abbreviations still apply.

The performances themselves are a poor memorial to Slatkin (in marked contrast to the recent reissue of his fine "U.S.A./The Military Band" program) for they are only too typical of their era in their lack of Viennese grace and atmospheric magic; and all the artificial reverberation in the world can't endow these hard, however robust, sonics with any real warmth, let alone sensuous appeal.

But the worst skulduggery is the patently absurd subtleting claim to score completeness, one unconscionably amplified in the jacket notes to assert that these waltzes "are heard not in excerpts or adaptations, but in the full splendor of their original full-length versions as Johann Strauss wrote them and played them in his own lifetime." Who's kidding whom? Where's the introduction and zither solos in the *Tales*? Where is everything Strauss wrote in the *Vienna Life* and *Emperor Waltzes*? Where are most of the repeats Strauss specified, including those in *The Blue Danube*, which also sustains a some thirty-bar cut in its coda? *Voices of Spring* is complete, to be sure, and a couple of other relatively short waltzes may be. But in any case the loss of this music's lilting spirit is even more damaging than the surgery practiced on the letter of its longer scores—which here are most definitely *not* just as the composer wrote and played them. R.D.D.

**THE STRAUSS FAMILY:** Their Immortal Music. London Symphony Orchestra, Cyril Ornadel, cond. and arr. *Radetzky March; Einzug Galop; Ball Raketen Waltz*; nineteen more. POLYDOR PD 2-3506, \$7.98 (two discs). Tape: 8F 2-3506, \$9.98; CF 2-3506, \$9.98.

More cause for the Waltz King to roll unhappily in his grave, groaning "*Lèse-majesté!*" The imported ATV series, shown over the ABC TV network in this country, partly compensates for its soap-opera "drama" by seemingly authentic costumes, choreography, and lavish ballroom settings. But the producers obviously have made no real attempt to achieve comparable *musical* authenticity. Instead of hiring a Boskovsky and Viennese players with a fluent mastery of the true idioms, they hired a musical-show, film-soundtrack, and pop-hit *routinier* who makes the fine London Symphony musicians sound here as incongruously British as do the TV actors whose voices and looks as *Wiener Bürger* never possibly can persuade even a child to suspend disbelief. Worse: While these methodical performances are powerfully and brilliantly recorded, if with excess reverberation, all the longer scores are brutally cut and the vital zither omitted in *Tales from the Vienna Woods*. And while Ornadel apparently doesn't bugger up the orchestrations as much as his "arranged by"

credit ominously threatens, he does perpetrate a "Strauss Family Theme" (based on *Vienna Bonbons*, I think), which proudly flaunts all the inflations and vulgarity of film-score "themes" at their worst.

The best I can say is that there is a lot of music here, at least some of which is quite imaginatively chosen. Besides the aforementioned Theme, there are two overtures, nine waltzes, six polkas, and a single march, galop, quadrille, and *Perpetuum mobile*. And while Josef and Eduard are very inadequately represented, not only does Johann I get a whole disc side to himself but that side includes four real novelties—*Einzug Galop*, and the *Ball Raketen, Tauberl'n*, and *Maskenlieder Waltzes*—as well as the more familiar *Radetzky March* and *Lorelei-Rheinklänge Waltz*. There is also one valuable Johann II novelty, the very early Op. 2 *Début Quadrille* of 1844. R.D.D.

**THE THIEF WHO CAME TO DINNER.** Original motion picture soundtrack recording. Henry Mancini, composer and cond. WARNER BROS. BS 2700, \$5.98.

Logically, one of the values of soundtrack recordings would be to document the musical element of a successful film—certainly, great scores have often enhanced the over-all artistic value of numerous movies. Logically, another value would be to offer good music from a rotten film, such as Goldsmith's score for *The Last Run* (MGM SE 30ST). But when the companies start releasing mediocre compositions—even by a composer of Mancini's stature—for less than mediocre films, one begins to wonder. *The Thief Who Came to Dinner* does, of course, contain the Mancini earmarks, particularly in the catchy bass ostinato and in the nonbanality (a hard thing to come by) of the title theme, obviously of the same vintage as Mancini's theme for NBC's "Mystery Movie." And I must admit the music grows on you (my seven-year-old is particularly fond of this album). What grates, however, is the slick, TV sound that Mancini, like just about everybody else these days, obtains by giving much of the duty—particularly thematic—to diverse electronic instruments while beefing things up with a good-sized background orchestra. The sound may be "in," but it is also indistinguishable from just about everything else that spews forth from the media. Since there is so much of this kind of music to be heard, why couldn't Warner Bros. instead have stuck with a release it had scheduled last year (Schwann even had disc and tape listings for it) of one of 1971's best scores for one of 1971's best films—Michael Small's haunting, poignant, weird, and strongly original music for Alan J. Pakula's *Kluge*? With the slightest amount of imaginative promotion to back up creative production (I have heard the tapes of the projected *Kluge* album, much of which is stunning), couldn't such recordings be made just as attractive to the public as fifty-volt Mancini or another recent Warner Bros. release, this one a genuine horror, the soundtrack for *Steelyard Blues* (BS 2662)? R.S.B.

**BOOK OF NUMBERS.** Original motion picture soundtrack. Composed and arranged by Al Schackman. Sonny Terry, harmonica; Brownie McGhee, guitar and vocals; Al



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Schackman, bass; Warren Smith, drums; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I Walk With the Lord*; *Blueboy's Holler*; *Moog Montage*; seven more. BRUT 6002, \$5.98. Tape: ●M86002, \$6.95; ●●M56002, \$6.95.

In the wake of Isaac Hayes's *Shaft* score, many of the recent black movies have sported soundtracks reminiscent of the first 500 teenage rock bands to discover Jimi Hendrix. This one is a happy exception. Using exceptionally good taste and better judgment, the producers engaged legendary black bluesmen Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee to play the bulk of the music in this set-in-the-Thirties movie. The men were left relatively free and hence created a movie soundtrack breathtakingly ahead of the field. The few numbers by other people are also fine. Vocals by Barbara Massey and Pat Kesseee are superb, and even composer Schackman's *Moog Montage* goes down well. M.J.

**B** **WALTON:** Music from Laurence Olivier's Shakespeare Films (*Henry V*; *Hamlet*; *Richard III*). Philharmonia Orchestra, Sir William Walton, cond. SERAPHIM S 60205, \$2.98 (from Angel S 36198, 1964).

One of the major sins committed in the name of disc deletions has been atoned for with Seraphim's sonically improved reissue of William Walton's scores for Laurence Olivier's incomparable Shakespeare films. In spite of their symphonic, film-score gloss, Walton's scores often create, in their harmonies, rhythm, and scoring, an appropriately archaic quality notable in such sections as the *Globe Playhouse Overture for Henry V* and in much of the *Richard III* score (one might also mention the players' music from *Hamlet*, unfortunately not recorded here but available on RCA's mono disc of excerpts from the *Hamlet* and *Henry V*. LM 1924). Even the fanfares—*de rigueur* it would seem for almost any Shakespeare production—have a strong originality and character to them. But even when not concerned with suggesting the period, such as in the incredibly moving funeral march from *Hamlet*, Walton shows profound sensitivity to the poetry, grandeur, poignancy (note the *Death of Falstaff* passacaglia), humor, and tragedy of Shakespeare. The liner notes (by Rory Guy) for this reissue are an improvement over the original—even the full casts of the three films are given, reminding us that horror-film ghoul Peter Cushing played the delightfully obsequious and effete Osric in *Hamlet*. And I can only add my amen to Guy's lament that Olivier was not given the chance to put more than three (four, if one counts the film of his National Theatre production of *Othello*) Shakespeare plays on film. The composer-conducted performances of the music are admirable. R.S.B.

## jazz

\* **JAZZ GREATS.** Various performers. COLUMBIA COLLECTORS' SERIES, \$5.98 each disc (from various Columbia originals; Columbia Special Products,

51 W. 52nd St., New York, N.Y. 10019).

Columbia has just done something that, to the lay mind, seems so obvious that it is a shock to realize it may actually be precedent-setting. They have just reissued twenty-five jazz LPs (well, twenty-four jazz LPs and one by the Hi-Los) that are not variations on old LPs (as the recent fifteen-disc Capitol set was) or miscellaneous repackagings. These are the actual, original LPs, complete with original liner notes, which have been out of print for varying lengths of time. If you missed the originals, here they are again (hopefully, Columbia will keep them in print this time). No longer will you be faced with buying a record that contains bits and pieces collected from here and there with the consequent probability of duplications in your own collection. The set is "Jazz Greats" in Columbia's "Collectors' Series," put out by Columbia Special Products. The artists represented include Dave Brubeck, Herbie Mann, Denny Zeitlin, Teddy Wilson, George Benson, Earl Hines, and Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross. But the most noteworthy discs on the list are "The Sound of Jazz" (JCL 1098, mono), the recordings made for the celebrated 1956 television show with Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Red Allen, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, and others; four magnificent Duke Ellington records—"Masterpieces by Ellington" (JCL 825, mono), his Shakespearean suite "Such Sweet Thunder" (JCL 1033, mono), "Black, Brown, and Beige" with Mahalia Jackson (JCS 8015), and "A Drum Is a Woman" (JCL 951, mono); two of Thelonious Monk's best—"Monk's Dream" (JCS 8765) and "Criss-Cross" (JCS 8838); Louis Armstrong's tribute to Fats Waller, "Satch Plays Fats" (JCL 708, mono); "Gene Krupa," the orchestra from 1940 to 1947 with Anita O'Day and Roy Eldridge (JCL 1268, mono); and, in a limited edition, "Jazz Tracks," Miles Davis' soundtrack score for the French film *Frantic*, plus one side by the Davis Sextet of 1958 with John Coltrane, Bill Evans, and Cannonball Adderley (JCL 1268, mono). J.S.W.

**JIMMY GIUFFRÉ 3:** Music for people, birds, butterflies, and mosquitoes. Jimmy Giuffrè, flute, clarinet, and tenor saxophone; Kiyoshi Tokunaga, bass; Randy Kaye, percussion. *Mosquito Dance*; *The Bird*; *The Chanting*; nine more. CHOICE 1001, \$5.98 (Choice Records, 245 Tilley Place, Sea Cliff, N.Y. 11579).

Jimmy Giuffrè, who in a quarter of a century has gone from the forthright swing of his *Four Brothers* through a period of country funk and, later, atonal experimentation, is now into pastoral, impressionistic playing with just a touch of Eastern feeling floating through it. Playing flute and tenor saxophone and, less frequently, clarinet, he has created a set of evocative miniatures conjuring up moods, visions, and situations. To some extent, this music has its roots in his "swamp music" days of *The Train and the River*—most of his work on tenor saxophone has the same monotonous jiggling that characterized his music then. But there is an over-all calmness to this current music, particularly when he is playing flute or clarinet (still favoring the low register). Although his bass player, Kiyoshi Tokunaga,

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frequently plays lead lines that are part of an over-all ensemble, the group tends to become static and disjointed when he takes a traditional rhythm section position. But in *The Butterfly*, for example, the trio pulls together in beautiful balance. J.S.W.

**STAN KENTON:** Birthday in Britain. For a feature review of this recording, see page 75.

\* **JIM HALL-RON CARTER DUO:** Alone Together. Jim Hall, guitar; Ron Carter, bass. *Whose Blues; Prelude To A Kiss; Alone Together*; five more. MILESTONE 9045, \$5.98.

Jim Hall and Ron Carter are both solid, unflashy but brilliant instrumentalists who have been honing their special talents for more than a decade (in Hall's case, it is closer to two decades). For the past two or three years, they have been working as a duo—occasionally with a pianist—and the kind of honing that went into the development of their individual talents has now been applied to their work together. They have developed an intersensitivity that is unusual in the normally peripatetic world of jazz, not only supporting each other with the imaginative confidence that comes from long experience together, but employing subtle colorings, shifts, and adaptations that make their performances a sort of understated geyser of ideas. They both have a spare, economic style, but within the clean, lean lines there is more going on than you will hear in a group several times larger.

This set of performances, recorded in the summer of 1972 at a Jazz Adventures session at the Playboy Club in New York (with, as a result, some clanking of dishes and silverware in the background, which oddly enough makes a very satisfyingly alive background), is a good display of this twosome's range. It is not just a case of the sheer swinging joy they find in Sonny Rollins' *St. Thomas* or the unusual, off-the-beaten-track ideas they develop in two originals. What reveals them even more is the freshness, the totally new sounds that they find in such played-to-monotony pieces as *I'll Remember April* and *Autumn Leaves*. The whole set is an immaculate gem. J.S.W.

**NEW BLACK EAGLE JAZZ BAND.** Tony Pringle, cornet; Stan Vincent, trombone; Stan McDonald, clarinet and soprano saxophone; Bob Pilsbury, piano; Peter Bullis, banjo; Eli Newberger, tuba; C. H. Pameijer, drums. *Sidewalk Blues; Buddy's Habit; Algiers Strut*; six more. GHB 59, \$5.50 (New Black Eagle Jazz Band, 128 Front St., Marblehead, Mass. 01945).

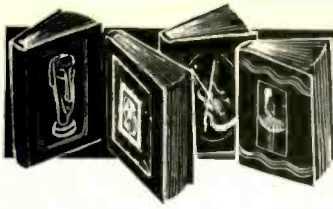
If the New Black Eagle Jazz Band could hold to the level they achieve in this set on *Algiers Strut* or on parts of *Kansas City Man* or *Le Marchand de poissons*, it could be the best New Orleans revivalist band in the country. As it is, even its weaker numbers develop some redeeming features (usually through the efforts of clarinetist Stan McDonald or trombonist Stan Vincent) so that it stands as one of the better of the revivalist breed. The New Black Eagle has, with varying personnel, been around for several years and is made up now, as it always has been, of New England busi-

ness and professional men. The band's prime failing is the tendency, common to English trad bands of the Fifties, to race into a number with a nervous, breathless pushing attack carried on a stiff, herky-jerk, puppetlike beat that leaves the players sounding as though they were dangling in air. In a manner that seems habitual with record program planners, both sides of this disc open with pieces that give predominance to the band's failings—*Weary Blues* and *There'll Come a Day*. However, they show that they really can cope with a fast tempo as they take Jelly Roll Morton's *The Chant* at a headlong pace and not only stay on top of it but get Eli Newberger's tuba into a proper relation with the rest of the rhythm section so that it has a properly rugged foundation. Although most of their performances are derivative—Morton, Bechet, Kid Thomas—they give Louis Armstrong's *Potato Head Blues* an interesting twist, turning what was originally a virtuoso showcase into a warmly swinging piece for the whole band before Tony Pringle comes in at the end to do a commendable solo in the Armstrong manner. In McDonald, Vincent, and pianist Bob Pilsbury, the band has an unusually strong line-up of soloists. McDonald, in particular, is a jewel on either clarinet or soprano saxophone, playing with flair and dash that owe a lot to Sidney Bechet, although he rarely (and then apparently deliberately) becomes a copy. J.S.W.

\* **BUD POWELL:** Broadcast Performances, Vol. 1. Bud Powell, piano; Oscar Pettiford, bass; Roy Haynes, drums. *Tea for Two; Lullaby of Birdland; Ornithology*; five more. ESP BUD 1, \$5.98 (mono).

That breed of record collectors who once could adjust their ears to absorb the dim sounds of scratchy old 78s has been succeeded by a new generation who can do similar aural tricks with recordings made from radio broadcasts in the '40s and '50s. Sometimes the compensations are extremely difficult to make, but at other times it comes relatively easy—after only a few grooves. Fortunately, a projected six-volume series of Bud Powell broadcasts being undertaken on the ESP label is in the latter category. Vol. 1 has clarity, balance, and presence, and if the piano is slightly distorted, it is probably caused as much by the instrument that Powell was playing at Birdland as by the radio transmission. Taken from broadcasts in February 1953, Powell is in brilliant form on these recordings. His execution, shading, control, and conception are in his very best vein whether he is flying joyously through *I Want to Be Happy* or *Lover Come Back to Me* or probing the candlelit romanticism of *Embraceable You*. The accompaniment by Roy Haynes and Oscar Pettiford is consistently sensitive and understanding. Haynes, in particular, gives Powell a marvelously buoyant springboard on the faster pieces. This is an auspicious start to what could be a vitally valuable set of records. J.S.W.

**GEORGE FREEMAN:** Birth Sign. George Freeman, guitar; Lester Lashley, trombone; Von Freeman and Maurice McIntyre, tenor saxophone; Sonny Burke and Robert Pierce, organ; Billy Mitchell, drums. *Cough It Up; My Scenery; Birth Sign*; four more. Delmark 424, \$5.98.



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George Freeman—a Chicago guitarist who has been around since the early Fifties, mostly as a member of organist Groove Holmes's group but more recently with Gene Ammons—makes his recording debut as a leader with this disc. Using a variety of groups—a trio, a quartet with his brother, Von Freeman, on tenor saxophone, and a quintet in which Maurice McIntyre is the saxophonist and Lester Lashley is added on trombone—Freeman shows an urgent, singing style on guitar and an interesting ability to bounce his lines off his organ accompaniment. The quintet is rather heavy, but the quartet is bright and warm as the two Freemans team up for some provocative, closely knit effects. **J.S.W.**

## in brief

**STEELEYE SPAN.** CHRYSALIS CHR 1046, \$5.98.

This group's name bears an unfortunate resemblance to Steely Dan (an excellent group), but their music does not. Span is in the genteel, Olde English rock mold, with all traditional material. They're good but, the Pentangle did it all well a few years ago. **M.A.**

**LYN CHRISTOPHER.** PARAMOUNT 6051, \$5.98. Excellent new singer; beautifully produced (Ron Johnsen) and arranged (Al Gorgoni) album. From here on it's up to the promo department, and it's rough to sell a new singer who doesn't write or play, such as Miss Christopher. Let's hope she hangs in, with or without Paramount, because she's wonderfully talented. **M.A.**

**ARCHIE & EDITH:** Side By Side. RCA APL 1-0102, \$5.98.

Archie and Edith are, of course, the central characters in TV's epic sitcom "All in the Family" and are played by Carroll O'Connor and Jean Stapleton. Here America's favorite married couple run through a batch of standards like *You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby*; *You're the Cream in My Coffee*; and *Button Up Your Overcoat* as well as Hurricane Smith's *Oh Babe. What Would You Say?* Lots of fun, even though Ms. Stapleton's whine tends to get a bit out of control. **H.E.**

**ANDY PRATT.** COLUMBIA KC 31722, \$5.98. Tape: ● CA 31722, \$6.98; ●● CT 31722, \$6.98.

Pratt sings in his normal, untrained voice and also utilizes a screeching falsetto. This combination of perverse vocals and unusual lyrics makes this disc a puzzling but fascinating experience. **H.E.**

**SEALS AND CROFTS:** Diamond Girl. WARNER BROS. BS 2699, \$5.98. Tape: ●● WST 2699, \$8.95; ● M82699, \$6.95; ●● M52699, \$6.95.

Seals and Crofts deserve a long, long review but I've already written several. Like the others, the new album is difficult to get off the turntable. Ten stars. **M.A.**

**PAUL HUMPHREY:** Supermellow. BLUE THUMB 47, \$5.98.

Paul Humphrey is one of the busiest drum-

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# the tape deck

BY R.D. DARRELL

**Little-Giant Big Sound.** Since open-reel developments have demanded so much of this column's attention in recent months, it's high time to spotlight some cassettes (in addition to those noted below) that are outstanding for both brilliant showpiece performances and for the sheerly sonic impressiveness once thought the exclusive property of open reels.

André Previn's London Symphony Tchaikovsky program—1812 Overture (without chorus), *Marche slave*, and *Romeo and Juliet* Overture (Angel 4XS 36390 cassette, 8-track cartridge 8XS 36390; \$7.98 each)—confirms the success these artists had last March with their complete *Nutcracker* ballet. While there have been many fine recorded versions of these familiar warhorses, few have endowed them with fresher interpretative vitality or more dazzling recorded sound. (Unfortunately, Angel's companion Ravel spectacular, Maazel's *Bolero*, *Alborado*, *Pavane*, and *Valse*, 4XS/8XS 36916, \$7.98 each, fares less well in both respects. It's most notable—or notorious—for what must be the fastest *Bolero* on record at 12:58.)

The always formidable Stravinsky *Sacre* scarcely sounds like the same score in the fascinatingly different Michael Tilson Thomas/Boston Symphony and Leonard Bernstein/New York Philharmonic versions, yet each provides in its own way an overwhelming dramatic experience (respectively DG 3300 269 cassette, 89 455 cartridge, \$6.98 each; DG/Ampex L 3252, 7½-ips reel, \$7.95; and Columbia MT 31520 Dolbyized cassette, MA 31520 cartridge, \$6.98 each; also MAQ 31520 Q-8 cartridge, \$7.98).

Personally, I relish Thomas' reading more than any other except the composer's own: I prefer the well-nigh immaculate recording of the Bostonians' superb playing; and I'm delighted with the program bonus: a recording first of Stravinsky's 1911 cantata *Zvezdoliki* or *Le Roi des étoiles*. But there is considerable surface noise in the non-Dolbyized cassette edition, and even some (by the latest standards) in the non-Dolbyized reel.

Bernstein will please Stravinskians less than a more general public more susceptible to his romanticizations and nervous intensities, and who won't be bothered by the often close-up recording of less-than-ideal orchestral playing. But even I tend to forget many of my objections when I listen to the quadraphonic version with its controversial, highly provocative "surround-sound" effects. I've yet to make up my mind about the ab-

stract desirability of this sonic approach to works not written with it in mind, but meanwhile I must admit that it can be at times almost stupefyingly spellbinding.

## "You first, my dear Maestro Gaston!"

No echoes of a so-called "classical music crisis" reverberate in Ampex's 1973 *Stereo Tape Catalogue*. Contrariwise, the pop-repertory entries which led off the 1971 and 1972 editions have been moved back to give front-pages precedence to the classics. For these now bring in some 35 per cent of the Ampex Shoppers' Service mail-order business—in marked contrast to the 5 per cent or less classical music usually is credited with in over-all domestic disc-and-tape record sales. Anyway, whatever one's tastes, this 154-page catalogue is a must for every tape collector whether or not he actually deals with the Ampex Shoppers' Service itself. It's available for a 50¢ service charge from P.O. Box 178, Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007.

## Tape's Procrustean-Bed Problem . . .

As experienced audiophiles well know (and as novices soon learn the hard way), disparate "side" lengths are a more serious problem in tape than in disc recordings. In discs the main difficulties are in avoiding any side running longer than thirty minutes or so and in avoiding too large blank areas on a short side—and the latter can be done by simply widening the groove spacings so as to give the appearance of greater length. But in tape reels and cassettes the recorded duration of the longer side determines the over-all length of tape needed, and the shorter the recorded duration of the other side, the longer a blank stretch leftover.

The only way to avoid blanks is to divide the whole program into roughly equal halves—easy where groups of short pieces may be juggled into balance, artistically brutal whenever such side-length matching involves a midmovement "break." It costs a little more to provide enough tape for artistically reasonable side imbalances, preferably achieved with a longer Side 1 so that the blank follows the whole program's end on the shorter Side 2. If, however, the music requires making Side 1 shorter than Side 2, the editor is faced with a hard choice: either place the blank at the end of Side 1, with a consequent interval of silence before the music can be resumed at the start of Side 2, or place the blank at the beginning of Side 1, which ensures a minimum of silence between sides and incidentally facilitates the use of automatic reversing devices, but which can be highly disconcerting if one isn't prepared for it. I've campaigned for years to have special warnings of such delayed Side 1 starts printed on the reel label, but without success (though I may have helped to inspire reel specialists Barclay-

Crocker to provide blank sticker-labels for this purpose).

. . . **And Three Exemplary Solutions.** In the Rubinstein/Ormandy Rachmaninoff Second Piano Concerto (RCA ARK 1-0031 cassette, \$6.95) the economy-obsessed tape editor with whom I've jousting in the past (Mr. Procrustes, Jr.) pitilessly chops the work in half, securing near-equal side lengths—at the cost of breaking the slow movement just before its cadenza, thus jarringly shattering both musical continuity and the mood composer and performers worked so hard to establish. But three other tape editors have done better.

In the Solti/London Philharmonic first taping of Elgar's First Symphony (London/Ampex M 10260 Dolbyized cassette, \$6.95; L 480260 Dolbyized 7½-ips reel, \$7.95), the 17:40 first movement is allotted Side 1 by itself, with a long blank interval following in the cassette edition, preceding it in the reel; the remaining three movements take up the 30:50 Side 2.

One way of handling an awkward-length work like the Rachmaninoff concerto is RCA's hard-boiled one; another, more reasonable, is the 1969 Richter version (DG 923 058 cassette), which breaks between the second and third movements, adding a Beethoven Rondo to fill out Side 2. An even better one is the current "Sound of Genius Masterworks Library" Dolbyized cassette reissue of the 1965 Graffman/Bernstein coupling of the Second Piano Concerto with Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* (Columbia MT 31813, \$6.98) where the 33:45 concerto performance is generously allowed to run without interruption on Side 1, and the twenty-three-minute *Rhapsody* on Side 2 (followed of course by the time-difference blank).

Fortunately, since most home listeners are more interested in interpretative, executive, and engineering attractions than in anything else, each of these releases is likely to be liked or disliked for reasons that have nothing whatever to do with their side layouts. The Elgar symphony, a musical revelation for Americans who have previously known this British composer only by his marches and *Enigma* Variations, adds new laurels to both Solti's and the London engineers' fame. The Graffman/Bernstein Rachmaninoff concerto remains an excitingly bravura if somewhat slapdash version that still is decisively overshadowed by the pair's more successful high-voltage electrification of the coupled *Rhapsody*. And the Rubinstein/Ormandy Rachmaninoff concerto, even with its rude interruption, is surely one of these Old Masters' most warmly endearing triumphs—one likely to sound richer still in a quadraphonic cartridge edition (ART 1-0031, \$7.95) I haven't yet heard. ●





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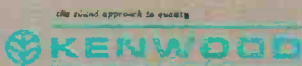
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