

JUNE 1975

HIGH FIDELITY

JUNE 1975 \$1.00
08398



Ingmar Bergman's
Magic Flute

Has the Bookshelf Speaker Had It?

SPECIAL **SPEAKER** ISSUE

How to Coordinate Your Room and Speakers



Neosonic SP-12

Dynaco A-25SL

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TEST REPORTS Six Speakers Under \$160

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Amplifiers,



phase distortion, plus substantially better stability with four double tuned phase linear ceramic filters and four monolithic IC's in the IF section.

6-stage limiters

The IF section includes 6-stage limiter circuits. Used in conjunction with differential amplifiers in monolithic IC's, noise interference is completely eliminated with a signal to noise ratio of 75dB.

Exclusive Phase Lock Loop (PLL) IC circuitry in the TX-9100 multiplex section

Developed and used for the first time by Pioneer, the Phase Lock Loop (PLL) circuit is actually an electronic servomechanism. It maintains continuous and precise phasing between the pilot signal and the subcarrier, supplying optimum channel separation. Completely drift free, no alignment is ever required.

The PLL cannot be affected by humidity or temperature since there are no coils or capacitors to be detuned. This provides complete stability and reliability.

New pulse noise suppressor in the TX-9100 operates with computer control

This circuit operates automatically when it is switched on. It effectively blocks radiated noise from airplane and auto ignition systems, neon and traffic lights, etc. It does not interfere with frequency response and stereo separation. Whether the signal is weak or strong, this automatic "brain" decides when the PNS gate circuit is to operate.

Unique muting control

A 2-position variable muting control uses electronic switching as well as reed relay switching. This eliminates interstation noise and the popping noise of tuning and detuning.

Complete command with a wide variety of controls

Whether it's for AM, FM or headset output levels, Pioneer provides greater operating precision with three independently operated output level controls. A headset may be used without a following power amplifier. Precision tuning is achieved with the aid of signal strength and tuning meters.

AM section highlights IC's

The entire AM section, following the front end, is a unitized IC. A monolithic IC replaces 84 individual components plus a ceramic filter. By using a differential amp circuit and a balanced mixing circuit, there are better spurious characteristics and special AGC amplification.

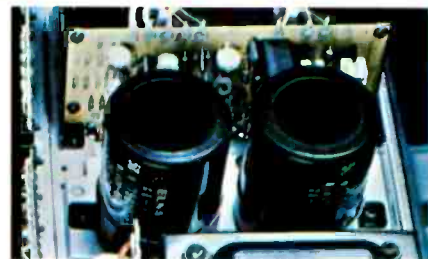
Great specs for great performance

	TX-9100	TX-8100	TX-7100
FM Sensitivity (IHF)	1.5uV	1.8uV	1.9uV
Selectivity	90dB	80dB	60dB
Capture Ratio	1dB	1dB	1dB
S/N Ratio	75dB	70dB	70dB
Image Rejection	110dB	100dB	85dB
Stereo Separation	40dB	40dB	40dB
Distortion (THD)			
Mono	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Stereo	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Spurious Response	110dB	100dB	100dB

The Amplifiers: SA-9100, SA-8100, SA-7100

Two separate power supplies utilize 30,000 uF total capacitance

You read it right. The power supply in the SA-9100 uses a total capacitance of 30,000 uF. 15,000 uF each for the balanced positive and negative power supplies. This completely eclipses anything now available in integrated amplifiers. This super high capacitance results in an absolutely pure DC voltage supply. There's constant DC voltage regulation regardless of line voltage changes and signal input.

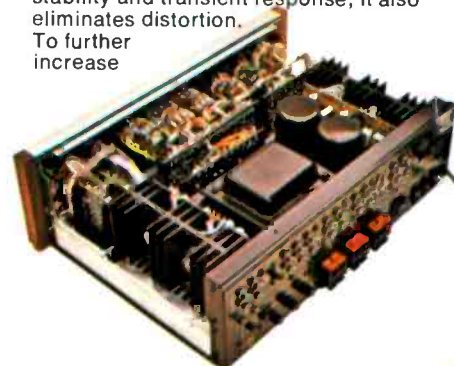


Two 15,000uF power supplies eclipse anything now available in integrated amplifiers.

Even at extremely low frequencies, there's stable power output, excellent transient response and low total harmonic distortion — not greater than 0.1% at any power level up to 60 watts minimum continuous power per channel, at any frequency from 20Hz to 20,000 Hz, using 8 ohm loads.

These positive and negative power supplies provide absolute stability in all stages, even in the equalizer amp and proceeding to the control and power amps. Therefore, the signal lines become zero potential to completely eliminate the usual (and annoying) click noise of operating controls and switches.

Stability is increased even further by the differential amplifier used in the first stages of the equalizer and control amplifiers (also the power amp.) 100% DC negative feedback supplies excellent stability and transient response; it also eliminates distortion. To further increase



Interior view. SA-9100

In tuners and amplifiers Pioneer is the very best.



The Tuners: TX-9100, TX-3100, TX-7100

FM front end — an engineering triumph

The height of sophistication, the TX-9100's stabilized, drift-free front end replaces printed circuit boards with completely metallized construction. The same used in high precision communications equipment.

Employing three dual gate MOS FET's and a buffer circuit in the local oscillator,

there's exceptionally high gain with extremely low noise. Two tuned RF stages with a 5-gang variable tuning capacitor contribute to the highest selectivity (90dB) and astonishing FM sensitivity (1.5uV). The exclusive use of a heavy gauge die cast aluminum housing assures uncanny stability.

IF section — the epitome of advanced research

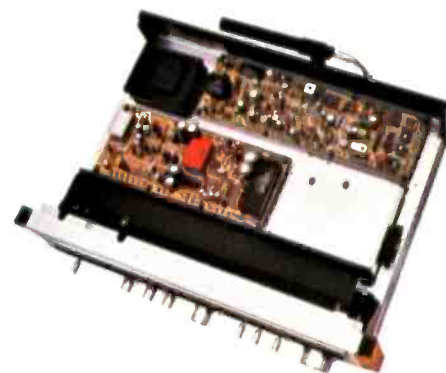
In the pursuit of excellence, significant new IF section technology was developed. The result is optimum selectivity with minimum

The time has come to completely re-evaluate the standard you now use to judge high fidelity performance.

With this new line of tuners and amplifiers, Pioneer presents many ingenious innovations in circuitry that are being used for the first time. However, this exclusiveness is only secondary. While each new circuit can be considered revolutionary by itself, what is even more important is that their combined capabilities achieve precision and performance heretofore unattainable.



Exclusive heavy gauge die cast aluminum housing assures uncanny stability.



TX-9100 interior view. Chrome plated shielded front end housing and multiplex section.

Critics acclaim...



HIGH FIDELITY: "... The performance of the SA-9100 is so exceptional and the many extras in the way of switching options, and so on, so eminently useful, that we find it the most exciting piece of audio hardware we've yet tested from this company."

HI-FI STEREO BUYERS' GUIDE: "(The SA-9100) is a powerhouse of sound level, performance and features. Works like something the chief engineer had built for his own use."

AUDIO: "You can't buy better audible performance than is achievable with Pioneer's new TX-9100 (AM-FM stereo tuner) at any price."

STEREO REVIEW: "... The TX-9100 unequivocally outperforms anything we have tested up to this time."

"The Pioneer TX-9100 AM/FM stereo tuner offers notably excellent performance and sound quality."

STEREO REVIEW: "This (SA-9100) is an essentially distortionless, bug-free, and powerful amplifier with exceptional flexibility... A highly complex array of electronic circuitry has been packaged into a consumer product of relatively modest price without a trace of 'haywire' or slipshod assembly. It almost seems a pity to hide internal workmanship."



stabilization, special electronic regulator circuits are used. Transient response is also improved with a superb damping factor of 70.

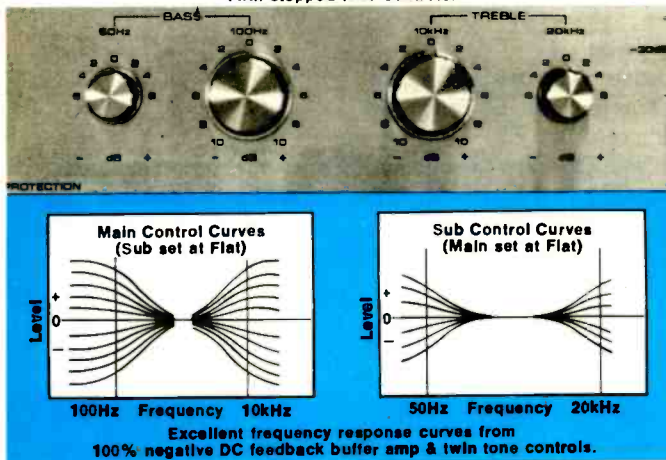
The unique equalizer amplifier

To make certain that extraneous signals do not interfere with the input signal, the equalizer amp is totally enclosed and sealed to shield it against leakage.

There's also extra assurance of precision with special low noise metal film resistors and styrol capacitors. Both are manufactured under continuous computer control to highest laboratory test equipment tolerances: $\pm 1\%$ for resistors; $\pm 2\%$ for capacitors. Until now such precision has been unheard of in hi-fi equipment. Deviation from the ideal RIAA curve is only $\pm 0.2\text{dB}$.

Since a direct-coupled SEPP complementary circuit is used in the equalizer amplifier, virtually any dynamic phono cartridge can be accommodated without overloading or distortion. For example, with 2.5 mV sensitivity, the overload at 1KHz is an unbelievable 250mV, and 1200mV at 10KHz!

Twin stepped tone controls.



The control amplifier: Twin stepped tone controls custom tailor your listening.

Now you can make the most critical bass and treble adjustments with supreme ease. In fact, there are 5,929 tonal combinations to suit your listening room acoustics and to compare or compensate for component frequency response.

On the SA-9100 and SA-8100 four tone controls (two for bass, two for treble) make 2dB (2.5dB with SA-8100) step adjustments for the entire audio spectrum. Working together with the tone controls is a buffer amplifier with 100% negative DC feedback. The main bass control governs $\pm 10\text{dB}$ at 100 Hz; the sub-bass, $\pm 6\text{dB}$ at 50 Hz. The main treble control governs $\pm 10\text{dB}$ at 10KHz and the sub-treble, $\pm 6\text{dB}$ at 20 KHz. This, plus the tone defeat control (described in the next paragraph) makes the SA-9100 the most exciting-to-use amplifier that has ever powered any hi-fi system.

New tone defeat switch

Because of the extremely wide variety (5,929) of frequency adjustments made possible by the twin tone controls, the tone defeat switch adds extra flexibility. Adjusting the tone controls to your satisfaction, you can flip the tone defeat switch. Bass and treble responses instantly become flat. When it is switched off you return to the original tone control settings.

The power amplifier

To sustain the ultra sophistication of the equalizer and control amp sections, the power amp has a direct-coupled pure complementary SEPP circuit, double differential amplifiers and two constant current loads. The combined effect is the achievement of wide power frequency range and excellent transient response. 100% negative DC feedback is supplemented by 66dB dynamic negative feedback for minimum distortion and absolute stability. The pre and power amps can be used independently with a separation switch.

Exclusive direct-coupling in all stages

Until now direct-coupling has been used only with the power amplifier. Pioneer takes it a dramatic step further in the SA-9100 and SA-8100. Direct-coupling in all stages from the equalizer amp to the control amp to the power amp. More effective? Absolutely. It achieves the finest transient response, wider dynamic range, with no greater than 0.1% total harmonic distortion. It's an incredible achievement.

Level set, volume and loudness contour controls adjust to listening preference

Three controls working together adjust to any degree of loudness. The level set control is the primary volume control. Its maximum loudness setting is 0dB.

Successive settings of -15dB and -30dB result in lower gain. Once the desired volume is obtained, the volume control is used for fine adjustments within the given

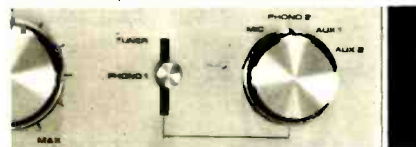
range. While the loudness contour boosts bass and treble, it may also be used with the level set control. The more advanced the position of the level set control, the lower the effective range of the loudness contour.

The original and positive speaker protector circuit

Since the signal is fed directly to the speakers because of direct-coupling, an automatic electronic trigger relay system is incorporated into the power amplifier. This protects the speakers against damage from DC leakage which can also cause distortion. It also prevents short circuits in the power transistors.

Maximum convenience for program source selection

While there is a multiple function rotary switch for microphone, phono 2 and two auxiliaries, Pioneer has included an



Convenient program source selection switch & control lever.

PIONEER

when you want something better

CIRCLE 37 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

additional convenience. A separate flip type lever control for instant switching between the more widely used tuner and phono 1 and any other single program source. Incidentally, both switches are shielded to protect the input against undesirable extraneous signal pickups.

Two-way tape duplicating and monitoring

There are two separate flip type switches on the front panel of the SA-9100 for tape-to-tape duplicating and monitoring. Two tape decks can be connected for recording, playback and duplicating in either direction, with simultaneous monitoring.

Level controls for phono 2, aux 2

In order to match the level of various inputs, individual level controls are provided for phono 2 and aux 2.

Speaker B control

This special control helps in the use of two pairs of speaker systems of different efficiencies. There is no sacrifice of damping or distortion when switching from one pair to the other.

Impedance selector for phono 2

An easy-to-use switch allows you to employ any phono cartridge input (25K, 50K, 100K ohms).

Two-position high & low filters

The low filter switch on the SA-9100 and SA-8100 has subsonic (below 8Hz) and 30Hz positions. The high filter switch has 12KHz and 8KHz positions.

Maximum versatility in program sources

Inputs	SA-9100	SA-8100	SA-7100
Tape monitor—S/N	2-90dB	2-90dB	2-90dB
Phono—S/N	2-80dB	2-80dB	2-80dB
Auxiliary—S/N	2-90dB	2-90dB	2-90dB
Microphone—S/N	2-70dB	2-70dB	1-70dB
Tuner—S/N	1-90dB	1-90dB	1-90dB
Outputs			
Speakers	3	2	2
Headsets	1	1	1
Tape Rec.	2	2	2

Consistent power for every requirement

Continuous power output per channel, both channels driven into 8-ohm loads, at any frequency from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz. at no more than the total harmonic distortion indicated.

Rated Power	Rated Maximum	Total Harmonic Distortion
SA-9100 60 watts, minimum		0.1%
SA-8100 40 watts, minimum		0.3%
SA-7100 20 watts, minimum		0.5%

This new lineup of Pioneer tuners and amplifiers is unquestionably the most advanced available today. Yet despite this overwhelming sophistication, they're sensibly priced.

See your Pioneer dealer. He'll show you how this series of fine instruments can outperform any units in their price range. All prices include walnut cabinets. SA-9100—\$449.95; SA-8100—\$349.95; SA-7100—\$249.95; TX-9100—\$349.95; TX-8100—\$249.95; TX-7100—\$199.95

While not discussed here, Pioneer is also introducing the SA-5200 stereo amplifier and the TX-6200 stereo tuner for high quality hi-fi on a low budget. Only \$139.95 each, with walnut cabinet.

U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp.,
75 Oxford Drive, Moonachie,
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90248 / Midwest: 1500 Greenleaf, Elk
Grove Village, Ill. 60007 / Canada: S. H.
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HIGH FIDELITY

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XUV

The source of perfection in sound...tracks at one gram (or less) in stereo and discrete.

Frankly, perfection doesn't come easily.

Pickering's engineers pursued the idea of a totally new departure in cartridge design with all the zeal of true crusaders.

They had a reason . . . there was a demand for a pickup to play both stereo and discrete (as well as SQ and QS) with total and absolute precision at one gram.

That they succeeded is a remarkable achievement because this cartridge successfully tracks all types of records at forces even lighter than one gram. It is a real first to do it this accurately.

The Pickering's XUV/4500Q possesses excellent performance characteristics that provide outstanding frequency response and separation beyond 50 kHz. These improvements make possible the most faithful reproduction of the 30 kHz FM-modulated material on discrete records. It is noteworthy that Pickering's exclusive, new design development, which provides superior 4-channel discrete performance, also greatly enhances the reproduction of stereo records.

The XUV/4500Q features Pickering's patented Quadrahedral® stylus assembly. The Quadrahedral stylus assembly incorporates those features that produce extended traceAbility™ for 4-channel as well as stereo. This means that it possesses not only superior performance in low frequency tracking, but also in high frequency tracing ability. When combined with the exclusive Quadrahedron™ stylus tip, a brand new shape, it can truly be called: "the Source of perfection in Sound", whether the playback requirement is stereo, SQ, QS or discrete 4-channel.

The specifications are so exciting that we hope you will write to Pickering and Company, Inc., Dept. HF, 101 Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, New York 11803 for further information.

 **PICKERING**

"for those who can hear the difference"

CIRCLE 36 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Coming Next Month

Want to hear your stereo system sound off with a dramatic improvement—and still spend less than \$10 to accomplish this? **TONE ARM DAMPING—THE OVERLOOKED FEATURE** will tell you what this spec does for your system and how you can take advantage of it—even if you're a do-it-yourselfer. Discotheques are creating today's stars and hits, and **THE STREET PEOPLE ARE TAKING OVER THE DISCOTHEQUES!** interviews three disco soul trend-setters, Barry White, Gloria Gaynor, and Patti La Belle. **SOUNDTRACK ALBUMS: WHY?** Because there's plenty of interesting and good music to be heard on them, and HF offers a selected discography. Herbert von Karajan has been studying the works of the composers of the New Vienna School—Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern—for years. Now for the first time he has recorded their music, and David Hamilton reviews the four-disc set.

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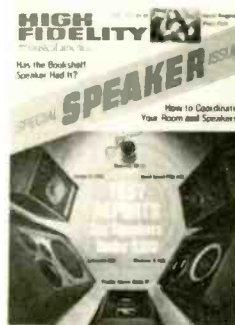
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- Hi level hum and noise 90db below rated output. Phono, 80db below 10mv input.
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Now, examine the seven-position mode selector switch (two phono, two tape, two auxiliary and one tuner), and a highly sophisticated cascade phono preamp. On top of that, there are push-button controls for scratch and rumble filters, tape-1 and tape-2 monitors, loudness compensation, separate channel tone controls and instant flat! Then CROWN's exclusive panorama control allows continuous mixing of two stereo channels from normal stereo through mono to reverse stereo.

Add it all up and you've got one of the greatest audio bargains ever offered, CROWN'S incomparable preamp.

For controlling signal outputs from your power amp, consider CROWN's new OC-150 output control center. See them both at a CROWN dealer. He'll show you what CROWN flexibility can do for your system.

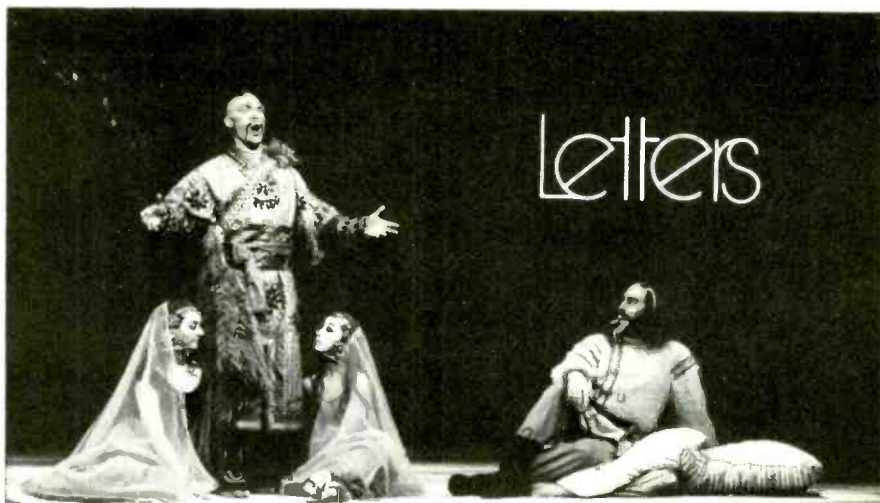
For independent lab test reports, write: CROWN, BOX 1000, Elkhart, IN. 46514.



CROWN

WHEN LISTENING BECOMES AN ART

CIRCLE 12 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



William Chapman and Julian Patrick in the New York City Opera's production of *Prince Igor*.

Fred Fehi

Russian Opera

I am sure that I echo the sentiments of many readers in welcoming back to the pages of HIGH FIDELITY the criticism of Conrad L. Osborne, even if it is only a guest appearance. My high opinion of him as vocal critic when he was a regular contributor was really reinforced by his Russian-opera discography (December 1974 and January 1975). The combination of wit, intelligence, and insight is, in the opinion of quite a few of your readers, unsurpassed. (Indeed, I think his description of the plot of Dargomizhsky's *Russalka* deserves some kind of award.)

Can Mr. Osborne please be persuaded to make more frequent guest appearances?

Jay Kauffman
Philadelphia, Pa.

We hope so. (As a matter of fact, in the near future he will be reporting on a bizarre saga that grew out of the Russian-opera discography.)

Many thanks for the thoughtful Russian-opera discography. I have a number of comments and questions, at least some of which may interest other readers. . . .

Prince Igor: Yes. Igor's campaign would have been defined in the U.N. and other hypocritical circles as aggression; but the nomads did make constant raids in southwestern Russia for pillage and slaves. Igor proceeded rashly in 1185, but his task was nonetheless a necessary one for the survival of the Russians. Trade routes, important as they were, had secondary consideration. . . .

Boris Godunov: I've owned a copy of the Angel stereo version for some years: no St. Basil scene, just the whole of Rimsky II. Has Angel changed its edition since to include the scene? . . .

Barry Frauman
Chicago, Ill.

No. It is the Karajan/London set that adds St. Basil to Rimsky II; somehow that bit of information was transposed to the Cluytens/Angel, which is indeed straight Rimsky II.

Incidentally, anyone who is interested in Boris should have the fall 1974 issue of Musical Newsletter, which contains—as Part I of a Mussorgsky scorography by Edward R. Reilly—the most illuminating and thorough discussion we've seen of the various editions of the opera, including an exceptionally cogent argument for the dramatic integrity of each of the two fundamentally different "original" Mussorgsky versions. Part II, in the current issue (winter 1975), completes the Mussorgsky scorography. Both issues are available for \$3.00 per copy from Musical Newsletter, 654 Madison Ave., Suite 1703, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Antoine Duhamel, not Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov, was responsible for the orchestration of Mussorgsky's *The Marriage* used in the reissued Oceanic recording Mr. Osborne discusses. In fact Ippolitov-Ivanov never orchestrated Mussorgsky's first act at all; he merely added to it his own version of the rest of the Gogol play.

This singular resistance to temptation

Watts's Schubert

In Harris Goldsmith's April review of the four new André Watts discs (page 84), the paragraph describing the Schubert A minor Sonata, D. 784 (on an all-Schubert disc, Columbia M 33073), was inadvertently omitted. It should have read:

"Watts gives a poetic account of the Schubert sonata. He manages to hold interest in the problematical first movement and Andante, but I especially like his light-fingered, shadowy account of the scale-laden finale. Although this interpretation must yield to the truly great recorded performances by Kempff (DG) and Kraus (a prewar Parlophone set, reissued on a long-vanished Decca LP), it stands head and shoulders above the heavy, finicky Brendel (Philips) and the wan Badura-Skoda (Victrola)."



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ONLY the ESS Heil air-motion transformer diaphragm can, alone, accelerate air to a speed more rapid than its own moving surfaces. Instantly. Accurately. Cleanly.

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When a revolutionary new principle recreates the excitement and grandeur of an original performance with a clarity and dynamic power never experienced before, technical arguments aren't necessary. Hear the new ESS standard of excellence yourself. Visit a franchised ESS dealer, one of a handful with the courage to premier the most advanced state-of-the-art designs in high fidelity—the ESS Heil air-motion transformer. Listen to ESS, you'll hear sound as clear as light.

Illustrated left to right are the ESS amt 1 Tower, amt 1, amt 3 and amt 5—four of six ESS Heil air-motion transformer loudspeaker systems. Sound as clear as light for every requirement.



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(Stereo Review, February, 1975)

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was made possible entirely by the fact that Rimsky-Korsakov had already published his own orchestration of the first act—smoothing, sweetening, and vulgarizing like his other Mussorgsky editions. And if Mr. Osborne had been able to obtain the Westminster issue of the MK recording of *The Marriage*, he would have heard the complete Rimsky-Korsakov/Ippolitov-Ivanov score—performed, it must be admitted, by a remarkable cast of Russian singing actors.

The gadgety Duhamel orchestration at least does not change Mussorgsky's harmony; but any new recording of this work should stick to Mussorgsky's text and the solo piano, which is all the piece requires. (Olympic/Everest, by the way, added no echo to their reissue: it was there from the start.)

Gregory Wm. Audette
Hanover, N.H.

Six cheers for the excellent Russian-opera discography; Mr. Osborne is indeed a solid champion of my favorite "lost cause." Inasmuch as 1974 was a Pushkin anniversary year (the 175th anniversary of his birth), may I point out one or two niggling little inconsequentialities?

First, the poet wrote not a trio, but a quartet of "playlets" during the so-called "Boldino Autumn" of 1830, just prior to his marriage. The fourth, which Mr. Osborne does not mention, is called *A Feast During the Plague*: it is a brilliant adaptation of a scene from Wilson's *The City of the Plague* of 1816. César Cui wrote an opera to this text in 1900 (I have been unable to track down a recording).

Second, Mr. Osborne neglected to mention, as he did in other instances, that *Rusalka*, *Boris Godunov*, and *Queen of Spades* are also Pushkin subjects.

Third, in his discussion of *Ruslan and Ludmila* he mentions that Lemeshev sings the role of "the Bayan singer." "Bayan" is the name of a singer: The legendary bard is mentioned in *The Lay of Igor's Host*, but exactly who he was we do not know.

One final thing, regarding Pushkin himself. He was a friend of Glinka, and at one time the two men talked of the possibility of the poet himself fashioning a *Ruslan* libretto. What a collaboration that might have been! Unfortunately Pushkin was killed before he could do it. He had an uncanny proposal for the operatic stage: In a conversation with Dargomizhsky (also a friend of his), he said, "I should like to see a lyrical opera in which all the miracles of the choreographic, musical, and scenic arts might be joined into one whole. Shades of Richard Wagner!"

Donald B. Pruitt
University Fellow in Russian
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

In addition to the *Melodiya/Angel Fair* at Sorochinsk, there is also a recording by the Slovenian National Opera under Samo Hubad (first issued here on Epic, last available as Artia ALS 505/2, rechanneled), which purports to have used the Lamm edition, using Shebalin's additions. Since I have no printed score, I can make no helpful comparative comments about the text; how-

ever, the quality of the singing ranges from good to passable, the acoustics are good, and the Artia disc surfaces are quiet. The accompanying notes include a short plot synopsis but almost no information about the production itself. (On my copy the discs are also labeled out of sequence.)

Scott Marovich
West Lafayette, Ind.

One recording Mr. Osborne does not mention is the pre-LP Bolshoi recording of *A Life for the Tsar* conducted by Melik-Pashayev (subsequently issued on domestic LPs by Vanguard and Bruno). The performance,

with Mikhailov as Susanin, Shpiller as Antonida, and Nelepp as Sobinin, is quite respectable, though Mikhailov sounds to be at the end of his career and is strained on top. Even now, with some adjustment this set can be made to sound quite acceptable.

Wilfred J. Healey
Los Angeles, Calif.

More next month.

Fine Tuning

I would like to answer James C. Galbraith's April letter about AM classical broad-

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casting in the San Francisco Bay area. I am a broadcaster who is sympathetic to the idea that classical-music listeners deserve an outlet for their musical tastes if at all feasible within a given radio market. However, to put it tactfully, Mr. Galbraith does not know what he is talking about.

Here are the facts.

KIBE in Palo Alto [one of the area's two AM classical stations], which Mr. Galbraith says "is allowed to run only one kilowatt and must go off the air at sundown," is a 5-kilowatt station. The format of a

there are around 6,000 radio stations in the country, some of them must broadcast with limited power and hours so as not to interfere with other radio stations on the same frequency.

KKHI in San Francisco [the other classical station], which Mr. Galbraith says "is jammed between a couple of 100-kilowatt rock and rollers," is a 10-kilowatt station at 1550 kHz, between two San Jose stations whose power is no greater than its own. (No AM station in the U.S., by the way, is allowed to broadcast over a power of 50 kil-

watts during the day and 5 at night. Its format is all news. The "barbaric thumping" that "you can often hear . . . in the background" on KKHI comes from Top 40 station KLIV in San Jose, whose power (5 kilowatts) is in fact half of KKHI's. Since radio frequencies travel farther at night, all three stations are directional. This may cause Mr. Galbraith some listening difficulty, but in no way is it "a clear example of discrimination against a minority group."

Bill Saul
KLZ

tain that they will find more there than Mr. Harris suggested.

Thomas Layman
Minneapolis, Minn.

The music editor comments: *I don't propose to inject myself into this age-old controversy now, but I would make a modest counter-suggestion to Dr. Layman's: If you want to sample Schwarzkopf's way with this music, go instead to her first recording (with Otto Ackermann), fortunately still in print on Angel 35084. The approach isn't all that different, but the voice is. If you like what she does with (or to) a musical line (I am struggling to avoid the word "mannerisms"), it is surely preferable to hear her when her interpretive choices really were choices and not technical dodges. I prefer Ackermann's accompaniment too; I would agree with Dr. Layman that Szell's is "very decent," but I would also agree with Mr. Harris that it is "prosaic" (by my dictionary "as plain, ordinary, or unimaginative as prose; unpoetic; prosy; dull; commonplace; matter-of-fact").*

Enesco's Bach

For her March review of Georges Enesco's recording of Bach's sonatas and partitas for solo violin (Olympic 8113/3), Shirley Fleming was unable to ascertain the exact date of the recording.


I interviewed Enesco in January 1950 for the French-language program of the Voice of America, in circumstances that I remember well. He was accompanied by a younger lady, violinist and friend (whose name, however, I can't recall), and when they entered the recording studio I became a little apprehensive: Enesco looked old, hunched, arthritic. But no sooner was he seated, and the conversation started, than the interview proceeded like a house on fire (indeed I kept a copy of it!), ranging from his beloved Yehudi—a better gauge of Enesco's mastery would be the recording of Bach's double concerto with Menuhin and the Paris Symphony Orchestra under Pierre Monteux—to his equally beloved Bartók.

Well, the lady told me in the ensuing conversation not to miss the Bach solo violin works, which Enesco had "just" recorded. I could not believe that, half crippled as he was, such a feat was within the realm of possibilities. But the verve displayed in the interview I found in the album put out by Continental Records (CLP 104/6), which on a single sheet of colorless commentary indicated a copyright date of 1950. I assume that is the recording rechanneled by Olympic.

I agree with Ms. Fleming's assessment in general. But if the recording was done then, in Enesco's physical condition, one still has to marvel at the spirit, the vital force, indeed the drama with which he was able to carry out his traversal of these toweringly demanding works. I understand Menuhin's appraisal of Enesco as violinist. So well, as a matter of fact, that despite the recording's drawbacks I never could bring myself to buy any other!

Francis R. Erville
New York, N.Y.

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Behind The Scenes

Complete Haydn draws closer. The Haydn operas remain one of the great wastelands of the repertory, live and recorded, for reasons that may not relate to their quality. If your curiosity is further piqued by Paul Henry Lang's feature review of the Italian oratorio *Il Ritorno di Tobia*, take heart: The operas are coming.

The last time H. C. Robbins Landon dropped in to see us, about a year ago, he was fresh from the completion of the Dorati/Philharmonia Hungarica Haydn-symphonies project for Decca/London. But rather than looking backward, he was—in his usual ebullient way—looking ahead to his next undertaking: editing the operas for publication and recording. As each text was prepared, it would be rehearsed, performed, and recorded—again with Dorati and the Philharmonia Hungarica, but this time for EMI. Somewhere along the line Philips took over the project, and it begins later this month in Lausanne with *La Fedeltà premiata*. The cast includes Ileana Cotrubas, Frederica von Stade, Lucia Valentini, Luigi Alva, Tonny Landy, Alan Titus, Maurizio Mazzieri, and Kari Lóvaas.

The text problem, H.C.R.L. explained to us, has been an enormous obstacle to performance of the Haydn operas (of which there are, according to Grove's, thirteen that survive complete). The materials available are extremely limited and poor in quality. With good performing materials conveniently available, and with recordings using major singers and a high-quality orchestra, the Haydn operas now stand their best chance ever of entering the repertory.

We were chatting about this with a knowledgeable record-industry acquaintance, who expressed skepticism about the commercial wisdom of Philips' undertaking, arguing that Haydn fans aren't opera buffs and vice versa. Our acquaintance suggested that for out-of-the-way operas, Philips might do well to stick to its early-Verdi series. Which only reminded us how quickly commercial wisdom changes: ten years ago an early Verdi opera was considered noble folly. It will no doubt take us a while to absorb these operas (for

which, after all, there is no performing tradition, unlike early Verdi or even baroque opera), but Philips could just find itself in sole possession of the biggest opening-up of the repertory since the Mahler boom.

Elsewhere on the complete-Haydn front, Decca/London has announced plans for an *intégrale* of the piano sonatas, played by the English composer/critic/pianist John McCabe.

More Korngold. Readers disappointed with the Genesis and Orion batch of Korngold juvenilia reviewed this month may be cheered to know that RCA plans to record his *Die tote Stadt* this summer in Munich with Carol Neblett (the New York City Opera's heroine this spring), René Kollo, and Hermann Prey. Erich Leinsdorf will conduct.

Other RCA offbeat operas. In reviewing the London recording of Massenet's *Thérèse* last October, Patrick J. Smith commented, "I find in this score a certain mechanicality, a certain safe timidity, not present in other of his works. Of his lesser-known compositions, *La Navarraise* may be crude and obvious, but it packs a more genuine *verismo* punch (it's quite simply a ballsy opera and rather atypical of Massenet)." In July and August RCA plans to record *La Navarraise* in London (for September release?!) with Marilyn Horne, Plácido Domingo, and Sherrill Milnes. Henry Lewis conducting the LSO.

Also on the schedule is Verdi's *Aizira*, with Anna Moffo, Domingo, and Milnes.

Favorite in Bologna. Finally, Susan Gould reports from Italy:

"Having had little trouble in the past obtaining permission to attend recording sessions in Vienna, Berlin, London, and New York, it was quite a blow to find out that Decca/London was not permitting any outsiders into their sessions last August and September in Bologna (only sixty miles from my adopted home town of Florence), where Richard Bonyngue was to record Donizetti's *La Favorite* and *Maria Stuarda*.

"Favorite producer Christopher Raeburn explained that the behavior of overenthusiastic fans of Luciano Pavarotti had caused such distraction as to preclude the presence of anyone not directly concerned with the work at hand, even—or perhaps especially—journalists. As for the later *Stuarda* sessions (to be produced by Michael Willcocks), Queen Mary herself (Joan

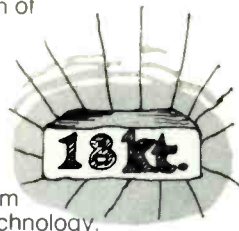
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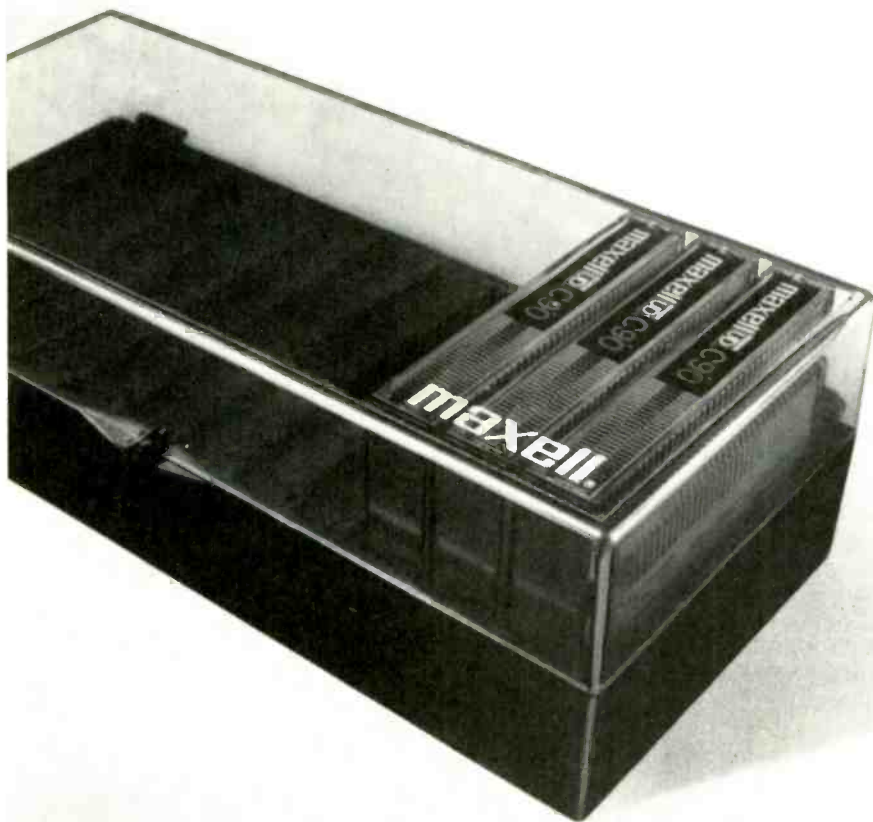


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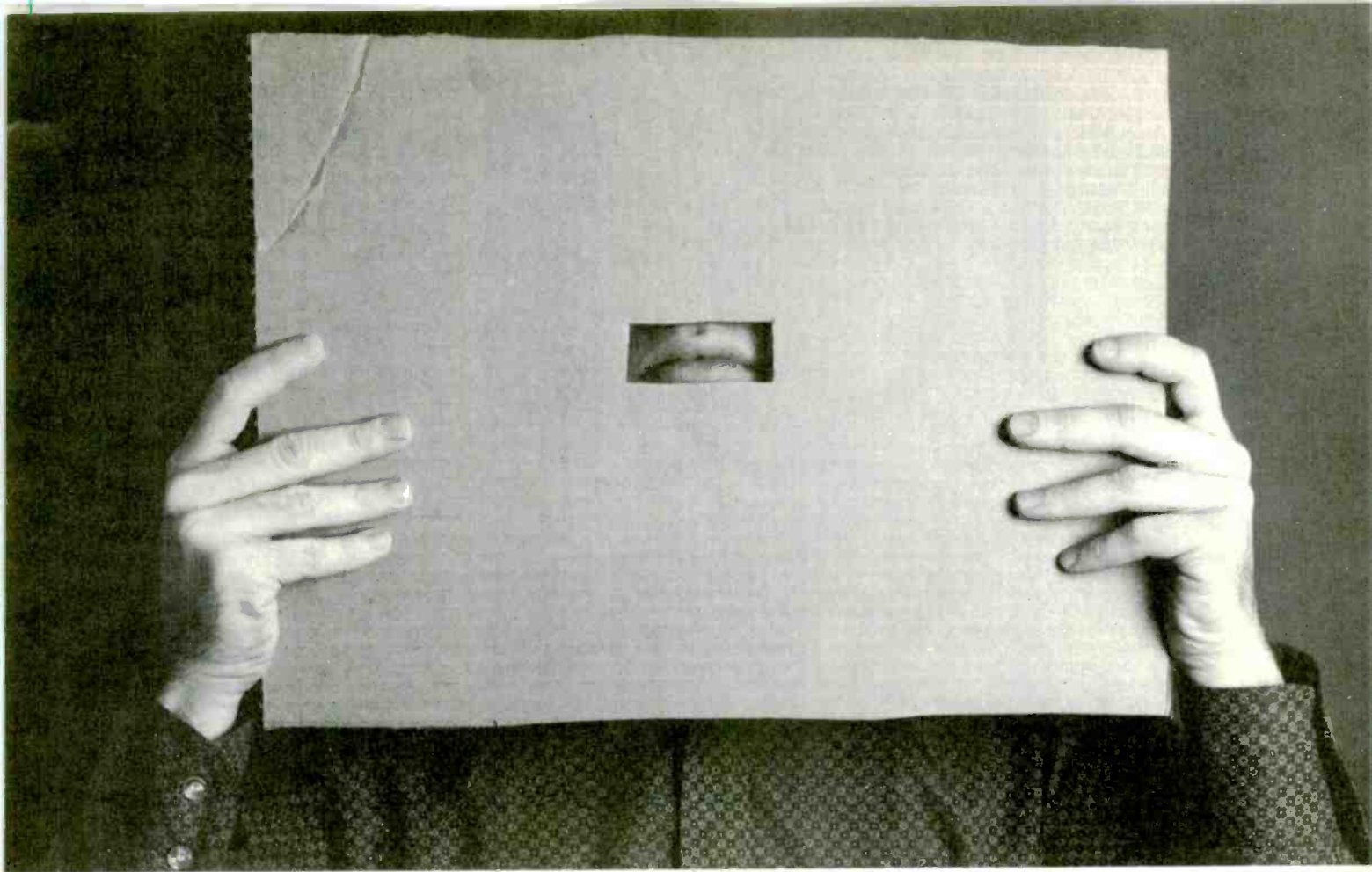
Sutherland) decreed no outside intrusion.

"Fortunately Raeburn gave me all the information he could over the phone, beginning with the *Favorite* cast: Fiorenza Cossotto, Pavarotti, Gabriel Bacquier, Nicolai Ghiaurov, Ileana Cotrubas, and the omnipresent Piero de Palma as Don Gasparo, the same role he sang in Decca/London's 1956 edition with Simionato and Bastianini! Bonyngé had, as usual, researched the text thoroughly and chosen to record the original French edition, with the complete ballet music. The French text caused some difficulty for the Italian stars, who knew the work in the standard Italian translation, but the chief difficulty was having the singers on hand, what with illness (Pavarotti) and outside engagements (Ghiaurov had to finish early to be in Hamburg, and Cossotto had to sing the Verdi Requiem and *Aida* in Verona). Yet somehow time was successfully organized, and *Favorite* was completed as planned.

"How did Decca/London choose Bologna's Teatro Comunale as a recording site? Raeburn replied that working conditions in Rome had deteriorated to the point that it was no longer possible to achieve the results of the 1950s and 1960s. Most of their recent Italian-opera recording had been done in London, but it was felt that Italy should still be the site. By chance someone suggested the Bologna theater, a beautiful eighteenth-century structure designed by the celebrated Bibbiena, noted for good acoustics and a fine resident opera orchestra. After a positive report by a Decca technical team, Pavarotti and Bonyngé made the 'Pavarotti in Concert' recital there in summer 1973, and the results led to the decision to record the two Donizetti operas there.

"All the seats were removed from the 'platea' (orchestra to us, stalls to Raeburn and crew) for the orchestra, conductor, and soloists, except when the chorus was needed, when the stage and an apron were used. After some experimenting, the hall was dampened with cloth hangings to eliminate floor-to-ceiling rebound ('slapback'). Both operas were done in the standard Decca stereo setup, not quadrophonically.

"A scheduled interview with Bonyngé, to talk about both the *Favorite* edition and *Stuarda* (which was being done in his performing edition, with some cuts), was aborted when Pavarotti's recurrent illness forced the *Stuarda* team to pack up and leave Bologna, leaving Willcocks with the headache of reassembling the participants at some future date." ●



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Hugo Friedhofer— Still Striving at the Periphery

IT'S FUNNY HOW things work out. Sometimes they even work out for the better.

Three years ago, Leonard Marcus and I tried to get Hugo Friedhofer, the dean of motion picture composers, to write an article for this magazine's big issue on film music [July 1972]. He said he'd do it and then performed his famous mysterious disappearing trick. As deadline approached, I suggested to Len that he get Elmer Bernstein, which he did. Elmer, himself one of the finest of Hollywood composers, wrote an article titled "What Ever Became of Great Movie Music?"

In another article in that issue, "The Investment Market in Movie Music Albums," an editorial box was inserted that mentioned a record club Elmer was hoping to organize to rescue some of the great scores of the past from pending oblivion. As a direct result of the mail Elmer received in response, he told me recently, he proceeded to form Filmusic Collection, which is both a mail-order record club and magazine (P.O. Box 261, Calabasas, California 91302). He has already recorded and released Max Steiner's scores for *Helen of Troy*

and *A Summer Place* and his own music for *The Miracle* and *Toccata for Toy Trains*. Now he is at work on his third project: Hugo Friedhofer's Academy Award-winning score for the 1947 film *Best Years of Our Lives*—which, like the others in the Filmusic Collection, was never before available on records.

Now, if Hugo hadn't copped out on HIGH FIDELITY, if he had fulfilled his commission to write the article, Len wouldn't have gotten in touch with Elmer, our readers wouldn't have written all those letters, and Elmer wouldn't have started Filmusic Collection. And the *Best Years of Our Lives* music would sooner or later have been lost. The original full score and parts have already disappeared, the movie studios having a charming habit of burning old music to make shelf space. Elmer has twisted Hugo's ear and arm sufficiently that he has agreed to reconstruct the orchestration from the conductor's condensed score.

What's more, somebody has finally done something about preserving Friedhofer's encyclopedic knowledge of movie music: The American Film

Institute recently induced him to tape an oral history of the subject.

He almost certainly knows more about the topic than any man alive. He became involved with motion picture music even *before* sound came to the movies. In the days of the silents, large theaters often had orchestras of fifty men to play the scores that came along with major films. These orchestras, augmented to as many as sixty-five musicians for concerts, became an important part of the musical life of the community. Hugo worked in such orchestras in San Francisco (where he was born May 3, 1902) and Oakland.

Friedhofer moved to Hollywood in 1929—only two years after sound itself arrived there—to orchestrate scores for some of the early movie musicals. One of them was *Sunny Side Up*, with Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell and songs by Henderson-Brown-DeSylva. For years he worked, usually anonymously, as the orchestrator of other people's music. Not until 1937 did he get a shot at his own picture, with screen credit: the Gary Cooper feature *Marco Polo*.

There is a certain amount of snobbery about orchestration in films, even today—a vague and unspoken attitude that it is somehow shameful to use an orchestrator.

"Every composer in Hollywood uses orchestrators, including me," Friedhofer says. "Not because I can't orchestrate . . . but because of time. Anybody who says he never uses an orchestrator is probably lying or else his name is Bernard Herrmann, who never used one in his life."

Friedhofer was for some time Erich Korngold's orchestrator, first working on the Errol Flynn movie *Captain Blood*. "I stayed with him through fifteen out of his eighteen pictures for Warner Bros., including *Anthony Adverse*, *The Sea Hawk*, and *Elizabeth and Essex*."

After Max Steiner came to work at Warner Bros., Friedhofer worked with both men for a time. He orchestrated parts of *Gone with the Wind* for Steiner and, in fact, composed some of that score.

But his own reputation was growing, and so was the list of his credits. This would eventually include *Ace in the Hole* (also released as *The Big Carnival*) and *The Bishop's Wife*, which he thinks are among his best scores, *The Young Lions*, *The Rains of Ranchipur*, *The Lodger*, *Boy on a Dolphin*, and *One-Eyed Jacks*.

The vicissitudes of fad and fashion being what they are, he hasn't scored a feature motion picture in three years, although he is the most modern of composers. However, he recently

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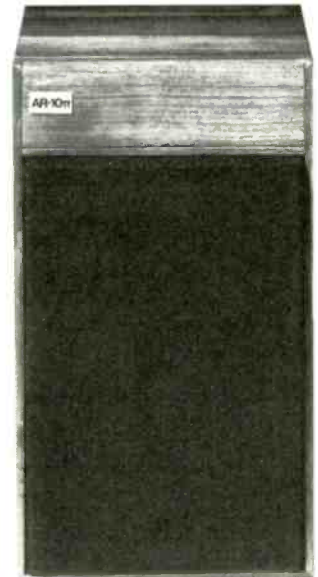
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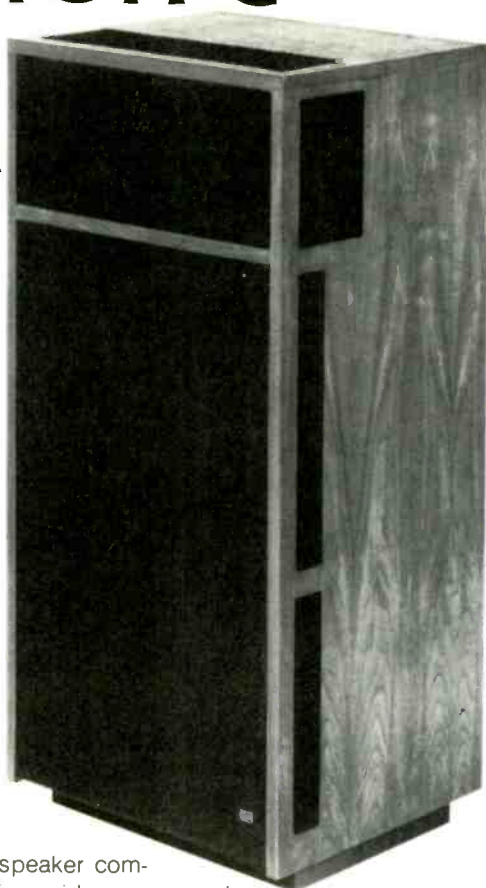
Monitor-C is unique in its speaker complement — 12 in all, including four wide-range speakers for the bass and mid-range regions and eight tweeters for treble notes. All speaker diaphragms are of neoprene-coated aluminum and, thus, are non-hygroscopic, so that changes in atmospheric humidity do not result in changes in performance.

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completed the score of a one-hour documentary on ecology, a detailed examination of the life cycles in a forest. I've heard the music—it's exquisite. Americans will probably never hear it, though: The film will be seen only in British Commonwealth countries.

Of current film scores, Friedhofer says, "There are few that stand out or, for that matter, have very much to do with the picture. The conglomerates that control what's left of the film industry are more interested in getting a hit record than a really meaningful score." He noted the trend in studios to demand title songs for movies, which often results in some very awkward and tortured lyrics.

Hugo thinks it is wrong to expect film music to be what it cannot be, by the nature of its function. "It has two strikes against it—one, the avant-garde critics, who look down their noses at anything issuing from Hollywood; and two, the fact that this music is not a thing unto itself. . . . If you put as much detail and intricate texture into it as you would into a symphony, you would distract from the important thing, which is the image on the screen. The trick is to do something that is meaningful, as well as an adjunct to the picture."

A sensitive and secretly romantic man, Friedhofer has all his life tended to doubt himself and his talent, and this has led him, at times, close to compositional paralysis. "Every time I sit down at the score paper," he once confessed to me, "I feel nine centuries of tradition staring over my shoulder."

One day I picked him up for lunch. He is seventy-three now, a goateed leprechaun of a man too youthful of soul and mind to be complacent about what age sooner or later does to all of us. As we drove along Sunset Boulevard I asked, "Hugo, how come a man with all your accomplishments and honors, and the unbounded admiration of your peers, has all the emotional security of a twenty-two-year-old?"

He thought for a moment. "Well, you know, there are composers in this town—and I use this term with respect—who are hacks. They are very capable men. If you ask for a certain emotional effect, they have done it before, they know exactly how to get it, and they can give it to you again.

"But if you care about music . . . you are always trying to do what you have not done before, you are always working at the outer periphery of your abilities.

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styles mass and dust bugs so that wow, flutter, and drift virtually do not exist.

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CIRCLE 44 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

by Jeff Burger

Yearning for the peaceful sounds of a country pasture or a deserted beach? They could be as near as your stereo rig.



Environments on Vinyl

IT IS DAWN on a warm summer morning in the country. You lie back and listen as a bee buzzes nearby, and somewhere down a dirt road a dog barks. A tree's shadow shortens; off in the distance you can almost see the last puff of cloud from last night's rainstorm disappear over the horizon.

Almost?

Well, you're only listening to a record. But if your actual window on the world reveals a mass of chilling icicles or admits a congerie of city noises, you might well prefer "Dawn at New Hope, Pennsylvania," and Irv Teibel's other "Environments" records to the realities of your season or location.

Teibel is president of Syntonic Research, Inc., a rather unusual kind of record company. In seven years it has released nine LPs, most of them billed as "psychoacoustic experiences" and given titles like "Ultimate Thunderstorm," "Optimum Aviary," and "The Ultimate Heartbeat (Lovemaking Sound)."

"Putting these albums together allows me to combine a lot of different interests," says Teibel,

whose skills include recording technology, acoustics, packaging, and merchandising. "I'm basically a very restless person, and I get bored with any one field after a while. That's why I'm no longer a phototechnologist. It was very limiting."

He left that vocation about a decade ago and in 1968 founded Syntonic Research; since then, he has considerably broadened the range of his activities. For example, he recently launched a Syntonic subsidiary, Simulacrum Press, which specializes in publishing facsimiles of rare old books. At the New School for Social Research, where he is a faculty member, he lectures on potential uses for psychologically based sound. He also writes music and has performed his own synthesizer compositions at such places as New York's Museum of Contemporary Crafts.

But Teibel's main concern remains the "Environments" albums, which evolved from psychoa-

Jeff Burger, former associate editor of Luv World, is a freelance writer.

oustic research he conducted in association with several psychologists and computer programmers. Containing both natural and synthetically created sounds, the LPs are designed to make one's surroundings more pleasant; they can heighten active dispositions or induce more relaxed ones, in both cases by disguising unappreciated noise.

A number of methods are used to achieve this purpose. In some of the recordings, sounds such as those of rain, wind, and surf—which simultaneously emit all audible frequencies—soften the contrast between objectionable noise and the ambient sounds of a room. Others mask it in a dense but agreeable random pattern of modulation. Surprisingly, all of the albums are most efficacious when heard at very low volume settings.

To develop their "Environments," the Syntonic Research people go to no small amount of trouble. Before producing "The Psychologically Ultimate Seashore," for instance, they made more than a hundred seashore tapes at locations ranging from Malibu, California, to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, to Dover, England. When all of them were found to be less than 100% effective, computers were used to isolate and then combine the best portions of two selected recordings, thereby yielding the desired result.

"You can't really tell how successful the sounds will be till you bring them back and try them in an interior environment," explains Teibel. "We finally realized the only way we were going to get a psychologically perfect ocean sound was to make our own ocean—feed the tapes into a computer and create what we wanted."

After Teibel and his staff are satisfied with their work on a particular sound source, they seek to determine "whether we've gotten ourselves into a corner, convinced ourselves that something is good when someone listening to it cold might not think so. You know, sometimes you depend too heavily on your own judgment."

For this reason, psychology majors at a New York City college listen to each proposed album and offer their reactions. Then test pressings are sent to several hundred "listening respondents" who are asked to describe how and where they've used the record, what effects they've experienced, and what they might like to see improved.

Syntonic Research continues to solicit feedback after release; from response to questionnaires enclosed with the LPs, the firm is able to determine with some accuracy who buys them and why.

"When the seashore record first came out," says Teibel, "it seemed like everybody who lived by the ocean wanted a copy. . . . You can't leave your windows open all the time; the sea spray comes in, and the salt rots everything. So people build airtight, soundproof enclosures. They leave their windows open maybe four hours on a sunny day. And down in Florida, you hear nothing—even right alongside the beach—because almost everything is air-conditioned."



Louis Katz

Syntonic Research's president Irv Teibel does a little field work with an experimental seven-channel Stellavox/Uher portable recorder to create his recorded environments.

Assuming one could leave windows open continually, he contends, the "ultimate seashore" would still prove superior to the untampered-with sounds of Mother Nature. "The ocean is so varied," he explains. "At two places on the beach, ten feet apart, the effects could be totally different. In one place you might hear just the crashing of waves, which can be rather disquieting."

The effects promised for those who listen to "The Psychologically Ultimate Seashore" and the other "Environments" records are far from disquieting, however. According to the album jackets: "If used while reading, comprehension and reading speed improve noticeably. If used at mealtime, appetites improve. Insomniacs fall asleep without the aid of drugs. Hypertension vanishes. Students' marks improve. Its effect on the aesthetics of lovemaking is truly remarkable. In noisy or very quiet surroundings, improvement in working conditions is often little short of miraculous."

Asked about these seemingly grandiose claims, Teibel stands by his product. "We spend years," he insists, "working on a very few sounds and refine them to the point where they actually do everything we say they do."

This may be somewhat of an exaggeration. Playing the records at mealtime, for example, this listener doesn't feel any hungrier than usual; nor do the LPs help bring him slumber on nights when he's wondering who's going to turn his set off if he does fall asleep. Nevertheless, the "Environments" are relaxing and most pleasant; and at times when Mother Nature herself is not, they can be particularly nice to have around.

Distribution of the Syntonic Research albums is rather spotty and many of the outlets that do carry them bury them among sound-effects records. They are available by mail order, however, from Syntonic Research, Inc., 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010. The firm's current newsletter, which describes all available "Environments" LPs, is sent to anyone requesting it. ●



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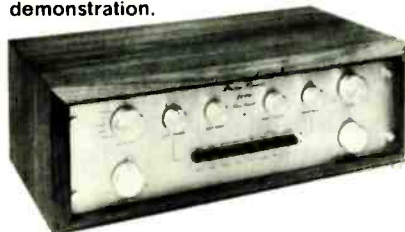
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CIRCLE 34 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Too Hot to Handle

When a company puts a line like "specifications subject to change without notice" on its advertising—as Marantz does, for example—does this mean it can advertise one thing and sell another?—John R. Knauff Jr., Baltimore, Md.

If the difference is relatively minor, we assume that it would. But we can't imagine that the FTC, which has elaborate rules against false advertising, would brook major changes.

Actually the "elbow room" implied by the disclaimer works both ways. We have known specs to be upgraded after a new unit has been in production for a while simply because the manufacturer's predictions of worst-case behavior were based on greater variability of parts than he is experiencing or because an alignment procedure proves more precise for a given cost factor than he had anticipated.

My impression was that the Allison loud-speaker systems would be available by now, but I can't find them anywhere. Are they sold only in the Boston area [where Allison Acoustics is located]?—Lester C. Henry, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Take another look. While Allison is well behind the schedule it had predicted (for example, at the New York High Fidelity Music Show last fall, where you may have picked up your information), we understand that shipments to dealers began in March.

Your April report on the Switchcraft Dolby-FM equalization adapter doesn't mention any insertion loss. I understand that it is quite severe and that it can cause problems if there is not enough gain in the Dolby decoder with which it is used.—Thomas S. Wilson, Westfield, N.J.

There is a considerable insertion loss (about 10 dB) in using the Switchcraft. That is, levels through the adapter are more than 10 dB below those available in the leads before insertion of the Switchcraft unit. All the equipment we have tried it with has more than enough gain to compensate for the loss.

I collect 78-rpm discs and was very interested, therefore, in your test report on the Burwen Dynamic Noise Filter [DNF-1201, April 1975]. You say that you liked the unit for the best-quality 78s (I assume you mean DGs and frrr's), but you also imply that it's a high fidelity device intended for removing small quantities of noise in good-quality sources. That, as my non-collector friends keep telling me, wouldn't include any 78s. So I can't tell whether or not I would find the Burwen useful.—Dale S. MacNeill, Meriden, Conn.

Your friends probably will like its effect on 78s better than you will. Our comments were addressed primarily to the average high fidel-

ity user, not to specialists. Collectors of 78s are notorious for having scratch filters built into their ears. If you have the knack of listening through the surface scratch, you may find the opening and closing of the Burwen's filter more obtrusive (even, perhaps, on the very best 78s) than the surface noise itself, which can sound like distortion on loud passages that open the filter once you've become used to suppression of the scratch (and, usually, some of the recording's highs) on the quieter ones. Your friends who don't have that knack, however, may prefer fluctuating noise to continuous scratch. We'd suggest you listen for yourself and then decide whom you want to please—yourself or your friends.

There is an alternative that might please everybody, but it's a relatively expensive one: the Autocorrelator in the Phase Linear 4000 preamp. We haven't tested the unit, but we get very positive reports from those who have tried it with extremely noisy originals—including 78s.

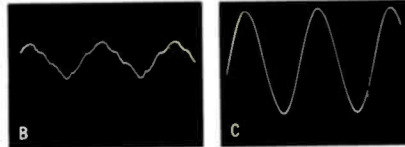
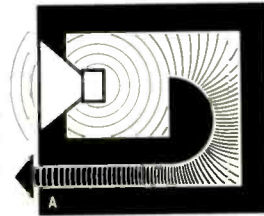
Can you tell me if there is any alteration to an SQ-encoded signal that is passed through a Dolby B unit when taping? A local station transmits the San Francisco Opera in SQ. I have been recording the broadcasts using a Marantz Model 20 tuner, Akai GX-400DS, Teac AN-300 Dolby unit, and Marantz SQA-2 decoder. The first broadcast of the season, which I didn't Dolbyize, sounds fine. On the ones that I made with the Dolby I have experienced bewildering apparent phase shifts and movement of the music from front to back while playing back the tapes.—Ward W. Stevens III, San Francisco, Calif.

Dolby B encoding can pass signals without introducing phase anomalies (and hence the sort of matrix problems you complain of), but it also can vary from one manufacturer to another. When we checked with one expert who has experimented widely with matrixed tapes and B-encoder circuitry built by Dolby Labs (the model is not available commercially) we were told that he has had no problem of this sort. But he and others who have experimented a good deal in this area point out that Dolby licensees may vary the circuit specifics substantially and that resulting performance is not necessarily equivalent in all respects. Since we haven't tested the AN-300 we must allow for the possibility of high-frequency phase anomalies in signals that pass through it.

But that's not the only possible, or even the most likely, cause of your problem. If you do an imprecise job of aligning the Dolby unit for your tape—specifically if the alignment is different in the two channels—it will "mismatch" the matrix decoder of relative amplitudes in the Dolby range (particularly above 1 kHz) and might produce the kind of phenomenon you describe. And tape skewing

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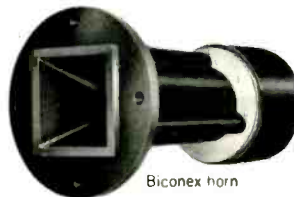
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B — Shows output of low frequency driver when driven at a freq. of 22 Hz. Sound pressure reading, 90 dB. Note poor waveform.

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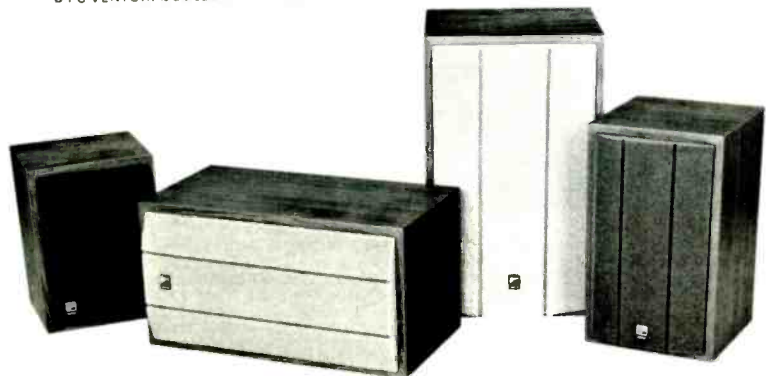
A 4-page color brochure is needed, at the very least, to properly describe what makes these B·I·C VENTURI speaker systems so different, and we think you'll agree, better. So this is what we will send you, upon request. Or better still, visit your B·I·C VENTURI dealer, and hear for yourself.



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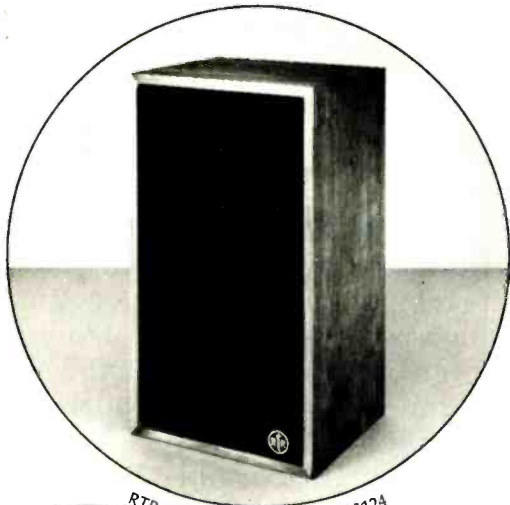
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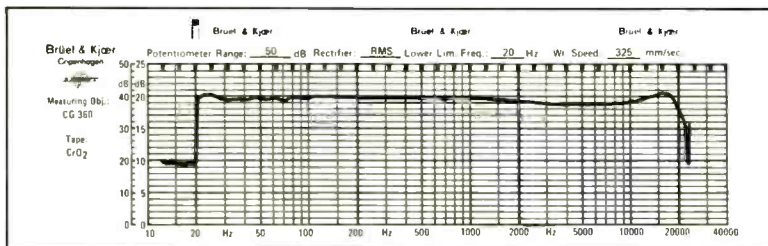


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can misinform the decoder about phase relationships. The degree to which it does so depends on several factors. The slower the tape speed, the greater the angular skew, and the greater the spacing between track centers, the lower the minimum affected frequency and the larger the phase-displacement angle for a given frequency. Therefore, use of a lower transport speed, physically distorted tape, and/or a more widely spaced pair of tracks (the Akai being a four-channel recorder, any two tracks of which may arbitrarily be chosen as a stereo pair) could account for the inferiority of the decoded sound from your Dolby tapes.

What is the difference between the full-price record labels (Angel, Red Seal, etc.) and the budget ones (Vox, Nonesuch, etc.)? Is it recording quality, disc quality, performance, or a combination of all three? I've had some Nonesuch records with outstanding performances and surfaces as quiet as DG's.—James Conklin, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Largely it's a question of how the record company thinks it can earn back its cost plus some profit. If the costs are fairly low (say, for chamber music recorded in Europe), a budget price may produce a larger profit—by selling far more records—than full-price sales would, even with identical quality in pressings and packaging. If production costs are high (and in opera especially they are staggering today, particularly in this country), full price may seem the only route to profitability. Trimming a little in vinyl quality or lavishness of the printed matter generally is critical only if the project is deemed marginal to begin with.

But we seem to sense in your letter—as we have in other readers' letters—an implication that if good records can be produced cheaply, expensive records must be a ripoff. It's not necessarily true, though ripoffs are not unknown in the recording industry. The biggest, perhaps—and paradoxically it's associated with budget labels, rather than the full-price ones—is at the expense of the performing artists rather than the buying public. It works like this: Company A signs a royalty contract with the artists and issues the recording. Before a specified minimum number of copies have been sold (which, theoretically, would earn back recording costs and permit royalty payments to begin), the recording is withdrawn and sold to Company B—which may even be owned by the same people as Company A. Since Company B is under no obligation to pay royalties, it can issue the record indefinitely for the costs of pressing, packaging, and distribution alone. The artist gets nothing except his initial (and usually minimal) fee for the recording session—a fee to which he may have agreed only on the expectation of future royalty checks.

I plan to purchase the Fisher 180 stereo receiver, but the power-output specs are at 4 and 8 ohms. I'm using Leak "sandwich" speakers, which have an impedance of 16 ohms. Can I use them with the Fisher, or would impedance-matching transformers be required?—C. W. Henwood, Escondido, Calif.
With a 16-ohm load you generally will get somewhat less maximum power than you will with the amp working into 8 or 4 ohms, but distortion may be lower—at least at some power levels. A transformer is not required—nor recommended.

We're too British to boast. So here's what the experts say about us.

Rather than appear immodest, we'll let the experts who write for the audio publications tell you about two automatic turntables we're quite proud of—our 810QX and 710QX Transcription Series models.

High Fidelity magazine says:

"The new cam system (in the 810QX) is credited with providing smoother and quieter operation than in past models. Average flutter was very low at 0.05%; total audible rumble by the CBS-ARLL method was -52db. The arm has negligible friction laterally and vertically, and requires a 0.3 gram stylus force for automatic trip. Taking it all together—performance, features, styling—the BSR 810QX moves into ranking place among the best automatics we know of."

Stereo Review magazine says:

"The BSR 810QX has an unusually complete array of operating controls and adjustments, yet is simple to use. The wow and flutter were very low—respectively 0.03 and 0.045% at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm and 0.05 and 0.04% at 45 rpm. The BSR 810QX, undeniably a well-constructed and attractively styled record player, was also a very easy one to operate. The controls had a smooth, positive feel and action."

Audio magazine says:

"Wow and flutter (of the 710QX) measured a low 0.06% and 0.08% respectively. Rumble measured -35 db (unweighted) corresponding to an audible rumble loudness level of about -59 db. Calibration of the tracking force dial was very accurate and tracking error itself was under 0.5 degrees per inch over the whole record."

Stereo Review magazine says:

"710QX lateral tracking error was a very good 0.4 degrees per inch at the 2.5 inch (or inner groove) radius, and was under 0.5 degrees per inch over the entire record.

The turntable had an unweighted rumble of -32 db. With RLL weighting for relative audibility, the rumble was -55 db, which is typical of the best automatic turntables. The wow and flutter were completely negligible—respectively 0.06 and 0.095% at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm, and 0.05 and 0.06% at 45 rpm. Let it suffice to say that we found the mechanical functions of the BSR 710QX to be flawless and its overall ease of operation excellent."

This is a modest way to tell you how good our Transcription Series 810QX and 710QX really are. We would be pleased to send you detailed specifications, Just drop us a note.

BSR(USA)Ltd.,Blauvelt,NY.10913

BSR

McDONALD

CIRCLE 9 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



BSR 710QX

BSR 810QX





The game plan is familiar: the glowing accounts of technical breakthroughs, the confident bandying of introduction dates and selling prices, the wry depreciation of potential competitors. And yet each time around it's a little different. When home video playback systems stand up to acknowledge the limelight it's always from a different spot in the seemingly endless labyrinth in which an admittedly attractive idea seeks to find a viably marketable embodiment.

The limelight shone bright last March in New York's Hotel Pierre when Philips and MCA—the players on whom today's smart money appears to have been bet—demonstrated their laser-powered optical disc system. To an uninitiated visitor the demonstrations and the data must have seemed an unqualified success. The system works. The player will cost about \$500. The 12-inch Videodiscs hold up to 30 minutes per side (currently; up to 60 minutes per side or 2 hours total is possible) and may cost from \$2 to \$10 for up to three discs, depending on program length. MCA has a vast catalogue of programs ready for transfer to discs, plus some very inventive technical talent. Philips has comparably vast technical resources, plus one gloriously successful technical innovation (the audio cassette) under its belt. And the Videodiscs and players will be beckoning seductively from dealers' shelves by the fall of 1976.

By accepted scorekeeping practices these specifics are extremely encouraging. The companies have unassailable credentials. The prices are right: Approximately \$700 per player and \$10 per hour of programming have been taken as the magic numbers above which broad public acceptance of any home video programming system is unlikely. The Videodisc technology lends itself to all sorts of applications—commercial as well as consumer—through stop-motion and slow-motion capabilities, dual audio tracks (for stereo or bilingual sound), easy access to any point in the program (an inherent advantage of disc over tape), and a virtually undamageable disc format (surface scratches, for example, aren't read as noise by the pulse coding system, and there is no stylus or groove to cause mutual wear). Why, then, our obvious reservations?

Partly, it's habit. We've seen too many price points that went unmet, too many introduction dates that passed with no product, too many technical solutions that developed new problems. EVR came and went; so did Cartrivision; RCA's holographic (again using lasers, but in a very different way) vinyl-film system never got off the ground; and there are a host of others that have never turned the corners they were "just around."

Many of them (including Cartrivision, of course) were and are magnetic systems. And magnetic tape or cards imply exciting (if, usually, expensive) potential for a more active involvement by the owner. "Home movies" via videotape are, in our opinion, little more than a chimera; film

The Videodisc Makes a Bid for Your Future



The Philips/MCA laser-scan Videodisc player is so simple . . .

does the job both better and cheaper. But the ability to snap up, for repeated viewings, the oases in the TV wasteland has undeniable attractions.

The question is: How important is recordability in the marketplace—particularly in view of the demise of Cartrivision (which had it) and the expense both of good performance in videotape equipment and of the tape itself? At those prices can the market possibly be big enough to entice the companies that (like MCA) have large inventories of popular-appearance programming into a format commitment? Or will the market be split between a popular, play-only disc format and one or more deluxe, hobbyist recording systems?

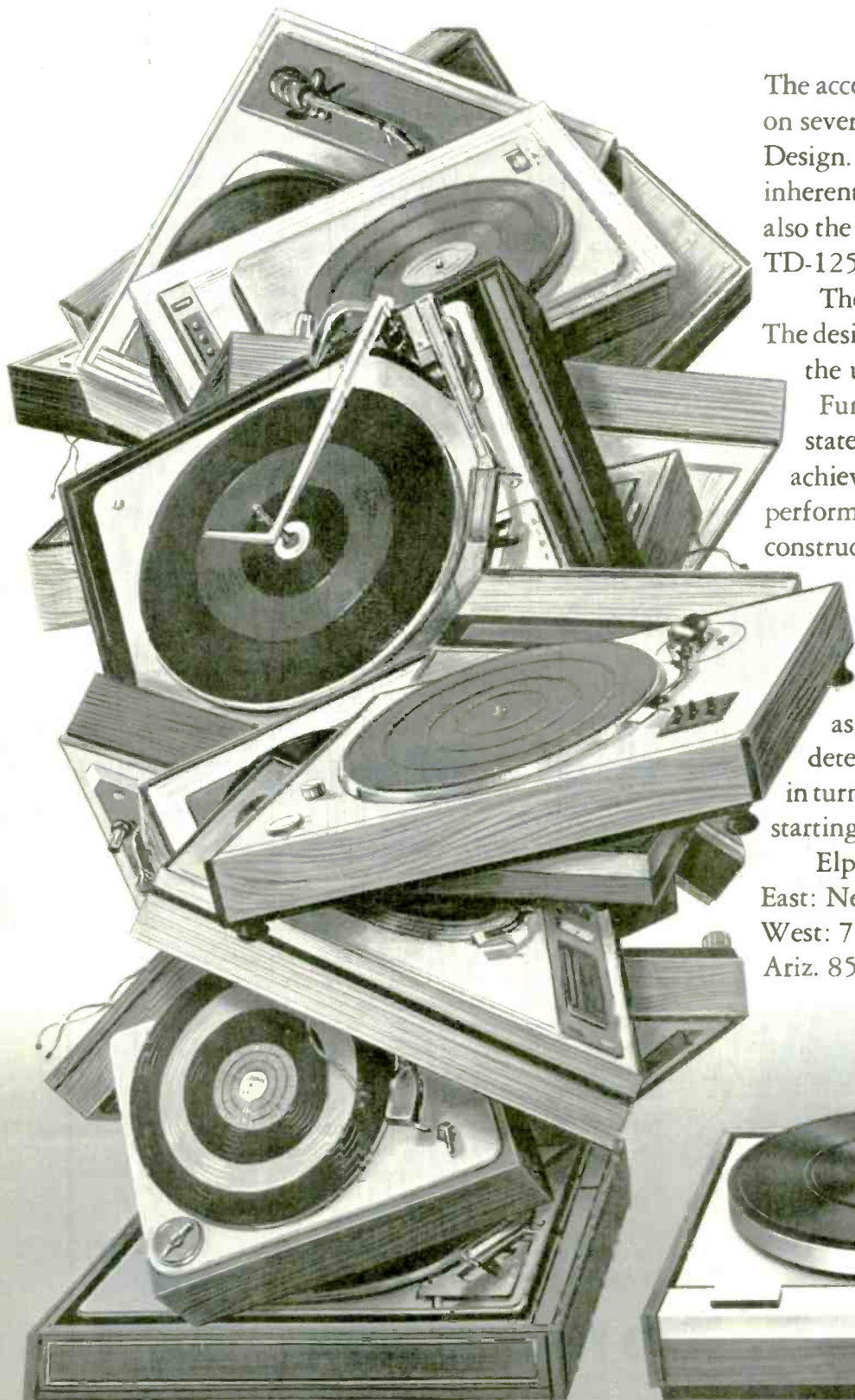
Some months ago a reader informed us that in a Danish department store he had seen a reasonably priced U-Matic (the Sony videotape cassette format, widely used here for industrial purposes) play-only deck. A harbinger of mass-market U-Matics here? We think not.

The answer seems to lie in the fact that, we are told, prerecorded U-Matic cassettes are available in the Copenhagen porn shops. Whether or not this is true, it echoes what we have been told about other sleepers of the videotape industry: that sex has done what even the most inventive marketing directors couldn't. It has put videotape into—well, the bedroom if not the living room, and presumably in well-heeled or hung-up homes. That market may be lucrative, but it's not large—not large enough, at any rate, to generate the sort of sales that prophets of the Next World in home entertainment have predicted.

The MCA/Philips bid is not pre-emptive; nor, for all their finesse, have they played the Last Trump.

RCA—perhaps by way of making this point—began blowing its horn about a week after the Philips/MCA demonstrations. In a series of relatively private showings RCA unveiled its SelectaVision disc contender, which would hold a maximum of 1 hour per double-sided 12-inch disc. The players are expected on the market by the end of 1976 at a cost of about \$400, with the discs selling for something in the neighborhood of \$10. The disc has a groove that is traced by a "stylus"—but only as a means of alignment between a capacitive element in the pickup and one embedded in the disc. The rhythm of change in capacitance between the two generates the video and (dual) audio signals. There is no mechanical transferral of information via the stylus, avoiding problems of wear and high-frequency tracing.

Some things hold up better than others.



The accepted concept of durability is based on several very important factors. Material. Design. Engineering. Function. And inherent value. Coincidentally, these are also the hallmarks of the Thorens TD-125 AB Mark II.

The materials are the finest available. The design and engineering incorporate the ultimate in turntable technology.

Functioning flawlessly, it originates state-of-the-art that others have yet to achieve. To match the impeccable performance, this Thorens is constructed to hold up . . . not wear down. It has inbred longevity instead of built-in obsolescence.

The precision performance of the TD-125 AB Mark II serves as continuing proof of the Thorens determination to remain the classic name in turntables. There are other models, too, starting at \$169.95.

Elpa Marketing Industries, Inc.
East: New Hyde Park, N.Y. 11040;
West: 7301 E. Evans Rd., Scottsdale, Ariz. 85260.

THORENS®



The emergence of this disc (which RCA has been working on since the Fifties) is of particular importance because of the progression that the company has been through in recent years. First, as far as the public was concerned, came the holographic vinyl-film SelectaVision system—as an apparent counterpoise to the then CBS EVR system, which, like the holographic ribbon, conceivably could be adapted to home playback but not to home recording. Then, as news of progress by Philips, Cartrivision, Sony, and others in perfecting tape-cartridge or tape-cassette systems stirred up interest, RCA shelved the original SelectaVision in favor of a recordable magnetic version. And until recently, that was the center of RCA's efforts.

The holographic system remained on the shelf (company officials say they have not lost faith in it as a video recording medium for commercial, if not home, purposes), but it was bruited that RCA market research had shown a strong preference among potential playback-system purchasers for one that also was capable of home recording: i.e., a magnetic system. Then, a few months ago, came the Day of Reckoning. The magnetic system—still in the r&d stage—was in limbo (along with some of the executives who had touted it), and the disc rose in splendor.

Is it any wonder we play this one like a card game with apocalyptic overtones?

Making It with the FTC Warmup Rule

As readers who follow these pages are aware, the Federal Trade Commission's rules on amplifier power-rating speci-

fications, which went into effect late last year, have one very thorny provision: "preconditioning" of the amplifier under test for one hour at one-third of rated output. This requirement is very different from an hour's worth of music reproduction, of course, and controversy continues on whether preconditioning simply drives up the cost of a given amplifier design with no advantage to the purchaser, or whether it makes for significantly greater reliability even under normal music-reproduction conditions.

One company that has expressed itself in favor of the FTC's warmup rule (and most dissenters have avoided public criticism of it lest their products be assumed somehow substandard) is BGW—the company whose amplifiers (not incidentally) were selected for the Sensurround system used in reproducing the soundtrack of the movie *Earthquake*. But though BGW has been justly proud of the output power, low distortion, and ruggedness that it has achieved in its amplifiers, it appears that some redesign was necessary to meet the FTC rule.

The 750 (the amp used for *Earthquake*) has become the 750D, the 500R (HF test reports, February 1974) now is the 500D. Other models, apparently, remain unchanged. Among the specifics of the new models, according to BGW, are a "vastly improved thermal system [including] a dual-speed thermostatically controlled fan. . . ten rugged 150-watt output transistors per channel instead of the previous six per channel. . . [and] the removal of all current-limiting circuitry." Outside of this last specific, the changes do suggest greater manufacturing costs. And, whether for this reason or because of other inflationary factors, we note that the price of the 500D is \$799—as opposed to \$729 for the 500R.

SECRETS FROM THE AUDIO FILE



Sock that sibilant singer

ADVICE FROM: John Wilson, recording engineer, Capitol Records, Inc.

PROBLEM: Distortion and background wind. You're stalled by a sibilant singer. Or a performer who pops his p's. Or you're losing the wails of a howling wolf under the whistle of a howling wind.

RECORDING TIP: You can improvise a windscreen by fastening an old woolen sock over the mike. It shields the mike diaphragm from those sudden blasts of wind. You'll lose some high frequency, but you'll lessen the pops, whistles and rumbles. This makeshift filter works best with the worst mikes and well worn socks. Experiment with it. Sure, it's unscientific, but it's a good tip to have up your sleeve. Or, in your sock.

TAPE TIP: Accurate, distortion-free recording starts with the best tape and equipment you can afford. If you record music, the most demanding of sounds, there's no better tape to buy than The Music Tape by Capitol.

When you record ordinary things, use an ordinary tape.
But when you record music, record on

the music tape
cassette • cartridge • open reel

BY CAPITOL



CAPITOL MAGNETIC PRODUCTS
A DIVISION OF CAPITOL RECORDS, INC.



REG. TM OF CRI LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90028 • A MEMBER OF THE EMI GROUP TM OF EMI LIMITED

CIRCLE 10 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

New Heathkit "Super-Amp"



The new Heathkit AA-1640 is one powerful stereo amplifier — 200 watts, minimum RMS, per channel into 8 ohms at less than 0.1% total harmonic distortion from 20-20,000 Hz.

That massive power virtually eliminates one of the most common forms of distortion — clipping. Driving low or medium-efficiency speakers (like acoustic suspension) to a moderate listening level may require 20 watts per channel. But a momentary musical peak that's twice as loud as the average level requires 10 dB more power — that's 200 watts per channel. If your amplifier can't deliver that much, the peak is "clipped" off. That destroys the music's dynamic range, making it sound dull, constricted and unrealistic. Clipping also produces rough, raspy harmonics that can actually damage tweeters. You simply won't believe how good "unclipped" music can sound until you hear the AA-1640.

And what you don't hear sounds good, too. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are under 0.1% at any power level from 0.25 watts to full power. We think that makes them absolutely inaudible. Hum and noise are also inaudible — 100 dB below full output. And you can enjoy all that quiet because the AA-1640 requires no fan. Even as a PA amplifier, its massive heat sinks need only normal ventilation.

The optional backlighted meters are unusually useful. They monitor the power output directly in watts from 0.2 to 200 watts into 8 ohms and in decibels from -30 to +3 dB. Special ballast circuitry allows the meters to respond to peaks as short as a record click, making them extremely effective overload indicators. The meters can be added to the basic AA-1640 during or after construction.

It almost takes an engineer to appreciate the AA-1640's conservative, reliable design — direct-coupled, differential input amplifier, 16 output transistors (8 per channel) in parallel,

quasi-complementary configuration, 12 pounds of diecast heat-sinking, a 25-pound power supply transformer, dissipation limiting, automatic thermal shutdown, and output compensation to make the AA-1640 unconditionally stable with any load. A special relay circuit prevents power on/off thumps from reaching your speakers and protects them from DC and extremely low frequency AC. In an exclusive Heath design, speaker fuses are located in the primary feedback loop where they don't degrade bass clarity by lowering its greater than 50 damping factor. And its 1.5V input sensitivity is compatible with most stereo preamplifiers.

But it doesn't take an engineer to hear how great the AA-1640 sounds. Its massive power and incredibly low distortion make a big difference. For the first time you'll hear how good your system really is — solid bass, free of boom and distinct, note for note... spacious, effortless, mid-range... realistic, high-definition treble. Combine that with the exciting dynamic range that rivals a live performance and inaudible distortion and you've got sound that's nothing less than spectacular.

And when you compare performance and reliability, we think you'll agree that the price is spectacular, too — just \$439.95* in kit form.

The optional AAA-1640-1 meter accessory kit is just \$69.95* and if you buy the amplifier and meters together you pay just \$489.95* — a savings of \$20.

Build the Heathkit "Super-Amp" — make your music sound its very best.

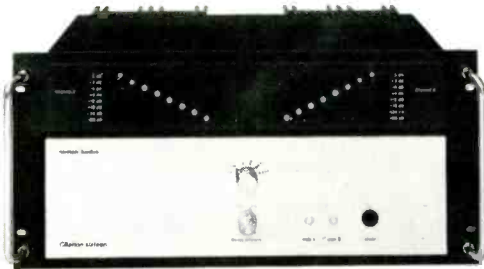
Send for your FREE 1975 Heathkit Catalog — the world's largest selection of electronic kits!



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		Benion Harbor,	
		Michigan 49022	
Please send my free 1975 Heathkit Catalog.			
Name _____			
Address _____			
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<small>PRICES AND SPECIFICATIONS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. *MAIL ORDER PRICES; F.O.B. FACTORY.</small>			
			HF-294

CIRCLE 19 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Equipment in the News



A new Citation for Harman-Kardon

H-K's Citation line of premium components, though it has been very impressive (or perhaps because of that), has not been added to in over three years, since the name was reintroduced following a long hiatus. Now comes the Citation 16, a basic stereo power amp rated at 150 watts per channel. It includes displays (one per channel) of light-emitting diodes to show output levels (calibrated from 0 to -30 dB) and is switchable for full-power indications at 4, 16, 64, and 160 watts. The price of the Citation 16 is \$795.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Stanton's old-name, new-design turntables

Stanton Magnetics has reintroduced the Gyroplane turntable and Uni-voice tone arm—names that readers with long memories may recognize, but not in their current incarnations. There are two integrated turntable/arm assemblies with base, dust cover, and pickup. Both use a low-friction magnetic platter suspension, which aids shock isolation; both use a tone arm with one-point suspension plus antiskating and other common adjustments, though the arm is engineered for, and accepts only, the Stanton pickups—the only difference between the two models. The Model 8004-II (\$199.95) includes a 681 EEE elliptical stereo pickup; the Model 8004-IV (\$224.95) has a 780/4DQ Quadradial CD-4 pickup.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



ADC makes it Mk. II for XLM and VLM

Mk. II versions of two highly regarded ADC stereo pickups—plus a CD-4 model—are said to meet or exceed all specifications for their predecessors: the XLM and VLM. All are delivered in "jewel box" packaging with stylus brush, screwdriver, and mounting screws. The Super XLM Mk. II (with Shibata stylus for CD-4) is designed to sell for \$125; the XLM Mk. II (stereo elliptical), \$100; the VLM Mk. II (also stereo elliptical), \$75.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Sansui adds a moderate-price AM/FM tuner

The Sansui Model TU-4400 incorporates a number of innovations. For example the etched dial and slanted glass front are said to improve dial visibility. A new type of ceramic filter, used ahead of the amplifier in the FM IF section, is said to improve selectivity with both weak and strong stations. Use of a three-gang "linear" tuning capacitor keeps station spacing equidistant on the FM dial for maximum dial legibility—an objective in which Sansui has been a leader. The price of the TU-4400 is \$199.

CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



New company offers budget cassette deck

Meritron, a name that only recently has appeared in the marketplace, offers both blank cassettes (including ferrichrome) and a line of inexpensive equipment. One of its more interesting models is a cassette deck that might be appropriate for low-budget component systems: the HD-500. Controls include tape switch (chrome/"normal"; curiously, a ferrichrome position is not included), recording-level sliders, limiter on/off, and pause. (This is not a Dolby model.) There are jacks for left and right mikes (in addition to line inputs) and stereo headphone. The price is \$129.95.

CIRCLE 153 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Keep on trackin'

With an Empire wide response cartridge.

A lot of people have started "trackin'" with Empire cartridges for more or less the same reasons.

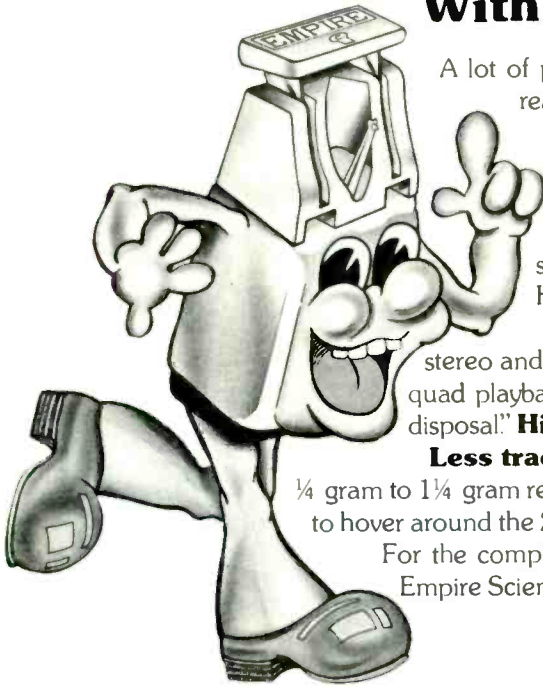
More separation: "Separation, measured between right and left channels at a frequency of 1 kHz, did indeed measure 35 dB (rather remarkable for any cartridge)." **FM Guide, The Feldman Lab Report.**

Less distortion: "...the Empire 4000D/III produced the flattest overall response yet measured from a CD-4 cartridge—within ± 2 dB from 1,000 to 50,000 Hz." **Stereo Review.**

More versatile: "Not only does the 4000D/III provide excellent sound in both stereo and quadriphonic reproduction, but we had no difficulty whatever getting satisfactory quad playback through any demodulator or with any turntable of appropriate quality at our disposal!" **High Fidelity.**

Less tracking force: "The Empire 4000D/III has a surprisingly low tracking force in the $\frac{1}{4}$ gram to $1\frac{1}{4}$ gram region. This is surprising because other cartridges, and I mean 4 channel types, seem to hover around the 2 gram class." **Modern Hi Fi & Stereo Guide.**

For the complete test reviews from these major audio magazines and a free catalogue, write: Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, N.Y. 11530. Mfd. U.S.A.








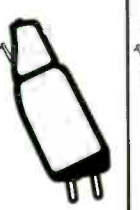


EMPIRE

Choose the Cartridge Designed to Play Best in Your System

Plays 4 Channel Discrete (CD4) and Super Stereo

Plays 2 Channel Stereo

Plays All 4 Channel Matrix Systems (SQ, QS, RM)

Model	4000 D/III	4000 D/II	4000 D/I	2000 E/III	2000 E/II	2000 E/I	2000 E	2000
Frequency Response in Hz:	5-50,000	5-45,000	10-40,000	5-35,000	6-33,000	8-32,000	10-30,000	10-28,000
Output Voltage per Channel at 3.54 cm/sec groove velocity:	3.0	3.0	3.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Channel Separation	more than 35dB	more than 35dB	35dB	35dB	35cB	35dB	30dB	30dB
Tracking Force in Grams:	$\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$	1 to 3	1 to 3
Stylus Tip:	miniature nude diamond with .1 mil tracing radius ™4 Dimensional	miniature nude diamond with .1 mil tracing radius ™4 Dimensional	miniature nude diamond with .1 mil tracing radius ™4 Dimensional	nude elliptical diamond 2 x 7 mil	nude elliptical diamond .2 x 7 mil	nude elliptical diamond .2 x 7 mil	elliptical diamond .3 x .7 mil	spherical diamond .7 mil
For Use In:	turntable only	turntable only	turntable or changer	turntable or changer	turntable or changer	turntable or changer	changer only	changer only
								
	(White)	(Yellow)	(Black)	(Clear)	(Blue)	(Green)	(Red)	(Smoke)



IMF Products adds Model R

The newest loudspeaker in IMF's line, the Model R, is said to be the first of a projected Reference Series, a result of research by IMF on impulse response and its relation to speaker-system enclosure design. The Model R has what is described as "line tunnel" woofer loading: a form of foam-loaded, ducted port. The woofer itself is the latest KEF oval flat-piston driver. The plastic-cone midrange driver has its own transmission-line loading. The tweeter is a small dome rated to beyond 30 kHz. The Model R costs \$330 and is supplied in mirror-image stereo pairs.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Yamaha makes its FET amp official

About a year ago we were shown a prototype of the first amplifier we know of to use power FETs: the Yamaha B-1. Commercial production of the superamp was announced in March, with first dealer deliveries scheduled for May. As delivered it is a basic stereo power amp with only on/off switch, speaker level controls, and protection-action indicators on the front panel. But this panel lifts out and can be replaced by the optional UC-1 control panel with additional switching and level controls for five speaker pairs plus power-output metering. At this writing prices are only approximate: \$1,600 for the B-1, \$250 for the UC-1.

CIRCLE 154 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



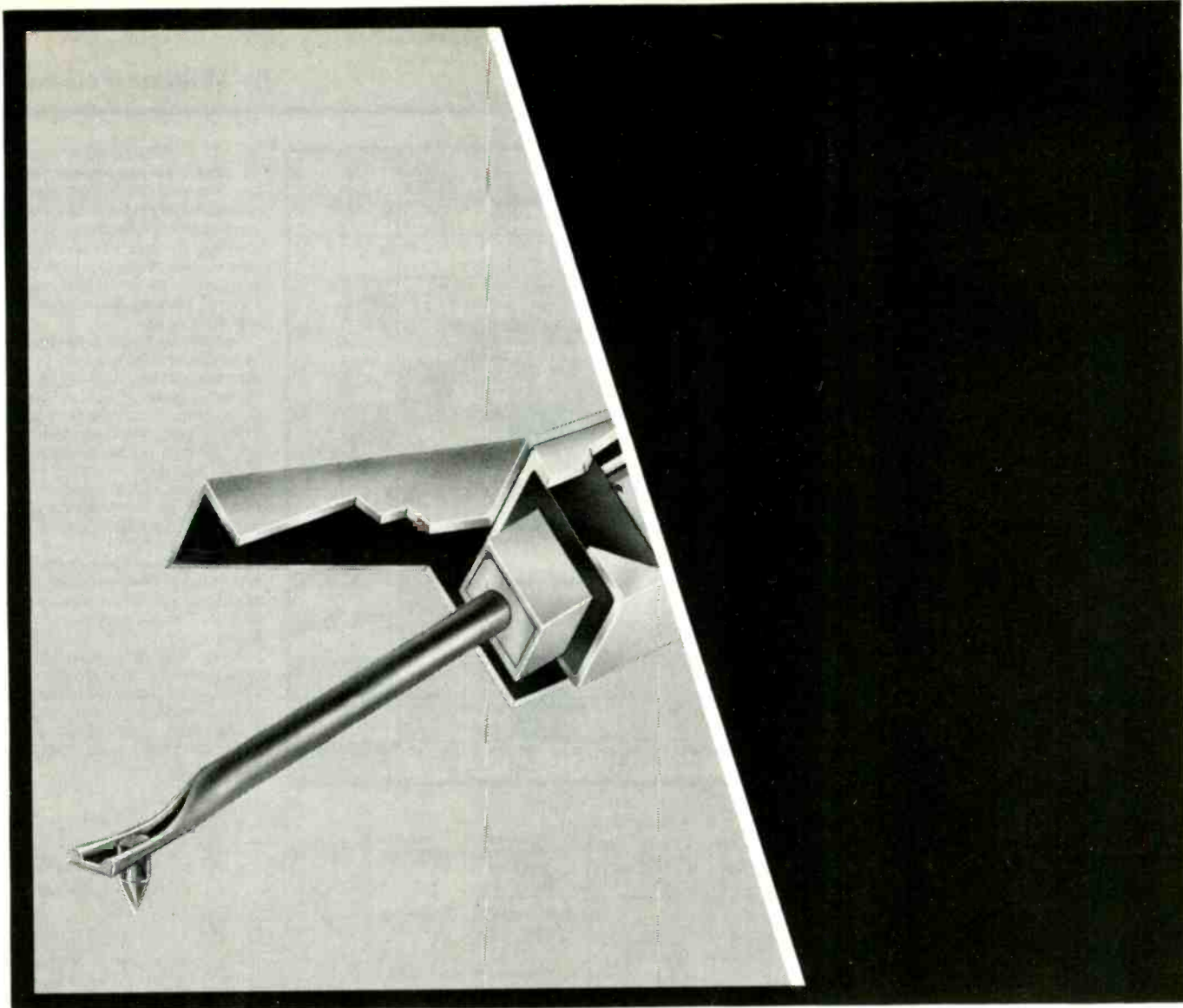
From DISCWASHER

D'STAT. An active carbon disc that's a runaway best seller in Europe. Just set D'Stat on your grounded turntable and forget about static.

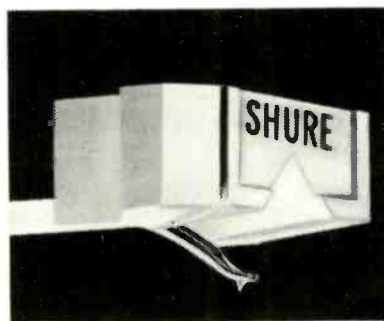
The Discwasher™ System—with new **dll** fluid—removes dust, dirt, fingerprints, and manufacturing lubricants without pulling polymer stabilizers from your vinyl discs.

Discwasher, Inc.
909 University, Columbia, Mo.





This...protects your most expensive hi-fi investment.



Look for the name SHURE on the stylus grip and the words "This Stereo Dynetic® stylus is precision manufactured by Shure Brothers Inc." on the box.

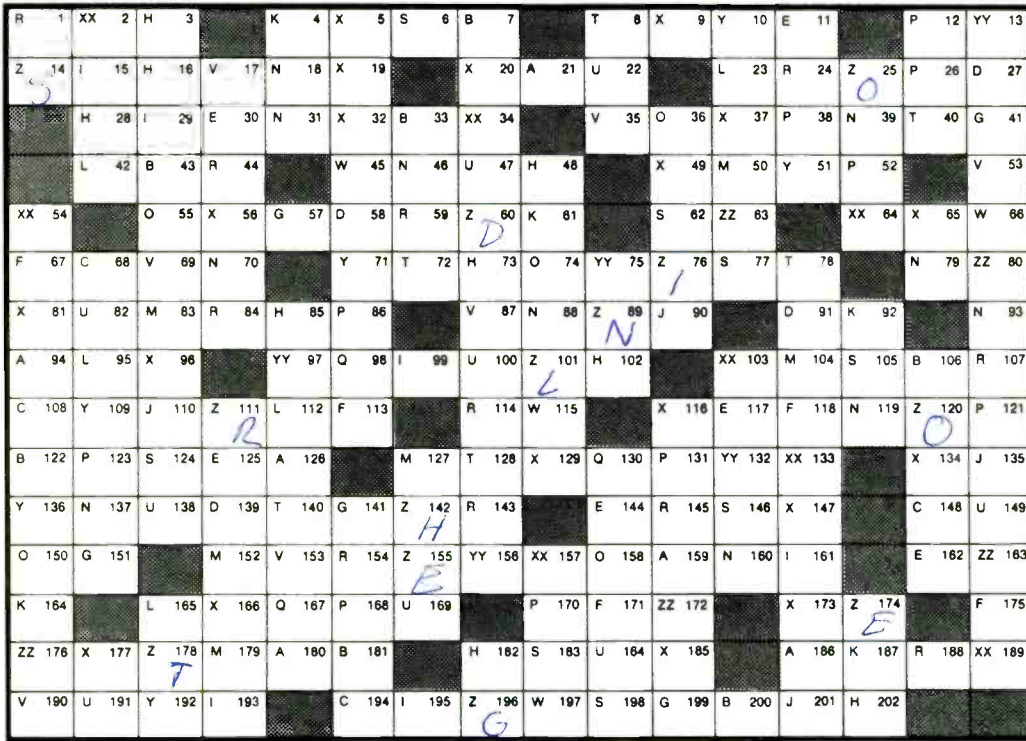
Recognizing that a penny saved is a penny earned, may we suggest that trying to economize by putting off the replacement of a worn stylus could be like throwing away five dollars every time you play a record. (Multiply that by the number of records you own!) Since the stylus is the single point of contact between the record and the balance of the system, it is the most critical component for faithfully reproducing sound and protecting your record investment. A worn stylus could irreparably damage your valuable record collection. Insure against this, easily and inexpensively, simply by having your dealer check your Shure stylus regularly. And, when required, replace it immediately with a genuine Shure replacement stylus. It will bring the entire cartridge back to original specification performance. Stamp out waste: see your Shure dealer or write:

Shure Brothers Inc.
 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL 60204
 In Canada: A. C. Simmonds & Sons Limited



Manufacturers of high fidelity components, microphones, sound systems and related circuitry.

CIRCLE 43 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



DIRECTIONS

To solve these puzzles—and they aren't as tough as they first seem—supply as many of the Output words as you can in the numbered dashes following the Input. Unless otherwise specified in the Input, the Output consists of one English word. "Comp." means compound, or hyphenated, word.

Transfer each letter to the square in the diagram that bears the corresponding number. After only a few correct guesses you should begin to see words and phrases emerging in the diagram, which when filled in will contain a quotation related to music, recordings, or audio.

The words in the quotation are separated by darkened squares and do not necessarily end at the end of a row.

Try to guess at these words and transfer each newly decoded letter back to its appropriate dash in the Output. This will supply you with further clues.

A final clue: The source of the quotation—the author and his work—will be spelled out by the first letters in the Output, reading down.

The answer to HiFi Croctic No. 1 will appear in next month's issue of HIGH FIDELITY.

INPUT

- A. English composer of anthems (c. 1553–1621)
- B. See Word Q.
- C. In ancient Greece, a type of musical composition
- D. To produce harmonious sounds vocally
- E. Contends
- F. Collect
- G. Wrote down a musical score
- H. Norwegian composer, (1823–1874), pupil of Chopin
- I. Is superior
- J. With Word ZZ., a song by Sir Arthur Sullivan
- K. See Word Y.
- L. English composer of songs (1799–1877): "When Delia Sings," "The Captive Greek Girl"
- M. Furnishes for service
- N. German musicologist, edited *Archiv für Musikforschung* (1905–1950)
- O. The speaking part of a wind instrument

OUTPUT

- 126 94 21 186 159 180
- 43 7 181 33 200 106 122
- 108 68 148 194
- 58 91 139 27
- 144 117 30 11 162 125
- 171 67 175 118 113
- 141 57 199 151 41
- 85 202 16 28 3 73 182 102
48
- 29 195 99 15 193 161
- 110 135 201 90
- 92 187 61 4 164
- 42 95 165 23 112
- 104 127 83 179 152 50
- 119 88 46 160 93 18 31 137
79 70 39
- 150 74 36 158

- P. With Word XX., popular name of an orchestral work by Schubert
- Q. With Word B., a Dutch soprano
- R. Hawkers' phrases, sometimes arranged as rounds (2 wds.)
- S. Dramatic poem set to music
- T. Chinese fiddle
- U. Paris school of composers, 12th–13th centuries (2 wds.)
- V. To change a recorded sound in the playback
- W. A woodwind
- X. Method of radio broadcasting especially suited to high fidelity transmission (2 wds.)
- Y. With Word K., an English soprano now resident in the U.S.
- Z. Operetta by Gilbert and Sullivan (2 wds.)
- XX. See Word P.
- YY. French composer: (1890–1962): *Le Poète et la Fée*
- ZZ. See Word J.

123	121	12	131	26	38	86	170
						168	52
98	130	55	167				
143	114	188	154	24	1	84	145
					107	59	44
77	6	105	62	183	198	124	146
128	78	8	140	40	72		
191	138	22	169	149	82	100	184
							47
35	17	53	87	190	153	69	
66	45	115	197				
37	65	185	177	49	5	96	134
19	147	81	116	166	32	129	173
					9	56	20
136	192	109	10	71	51		
178	142	174	196	120	89	60	25
			101	76	155	111	14
189	133	103	64	2	54	157	34
13	97	156	75	132			
176	163	63	80	172			

L. H. PRICE, JR.

March 4 1975

Thank you, Mr. Price

Dynaco
P.O. Box 88
Blackwood
New Jersey 08012

Gentlemen:

I am attaching the warranty card for my new FM-5 tuner.

I want to tell you how much I enjoyed putting this kit together. It was my first try at any electronics kit, and I was impressed by the clarity of your instructions, and its completeness.

The tuner is fantastic and worked perfectly from the first moment.

Thank you for making this unit available.

Very truly yours,



L. H. Price, Jr.



*you do
get much
more with a
dynakit.*

dynaco

Division Tyco Laboratories

Box 88, Blackwood, N. J. 08012

Also available in Canada from Dynaco of Canada Ltd.

CIRCLE 14 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

INTRODUCING TDK SUPER AVILYN. IT OUTSOUNDS CHROME. AND THE #1 FERRICHRROME.

INDEPENDENT LAB TEST RESULTS

	TDK SA	A	B	C	D
Signal-to-Noise Ratio	1 st	4 th	1 st	6 th	7 th
Distortion (I. M.)	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	7 th	6 th
Low-Frequency Response Accuracy	1 st	1 st	1 st	1 st	1 st
Mid-Frequency Response Accuracy	1 st	2 nd	5 th	5 th	2 nd
High-Frequency Response Accuracy	2 nd	2 nd	6 th	5 th	1 st
Maximum Output Level (3% thd)	1 st	2 nd	4 th	6 th	5 th
Output (0 VU)	1 st	4 th	5 th	2 nd	2 nd
Surface Abrasiveness	low	high	high	high	low

You want the best sound you can get from your cassette recorder without worrying about headwear. And until now, chrome and ferrichrome had the sound — they outperformed ferric oxide tapes in extended high frequency response with lower noise.

Well, TDK has advanced cassette recording to a new standard of high fidelity. It's new Super Avilyn, the cassette that outsounds chrome, the best-selling ferrichrome, and the top-ranked ferric oxide tapes.

Its magnetic particle is new. It soaks up more sound and plays it back with less distortion. That's power and clarity you can hear.

Super Avilyn doesn't require special bias/eq. setting for optimum performance. It is compatible with any tape deck that has the standard CrO₂ bias/eq. setting.

Distortion — that's the big story. Look at these lab test figures.

LEAST DISTORTION — CLEAREST SOUND.

	TDK SA	A	B	C	D
0 VU	11%	13%	26%	50%	32%
-5VU	4.5%	5.4%	11%	17.5%	5.4%
-10VU	4.2%	4.5%	8.5%	7.8%	4.8%
-20VU	4.9%	5.0%	8.0%	5.2%	6.0%

SMPTE METHOD: I. M. DISTORTION — 7000 Hz — 60Hz, 4:1 ratio.

There's just no contest. Super Avilyn delivered the clearest, cleanest sound. More lifelike sound — and to a discriminating ear, that's the ultimate test. Fact is, Super Avilyn is the new state of the art.

TDK Electronics Corp.
755 Eastgate Blvd., Garden City,
N. Y. 11530. Also available in Canada.

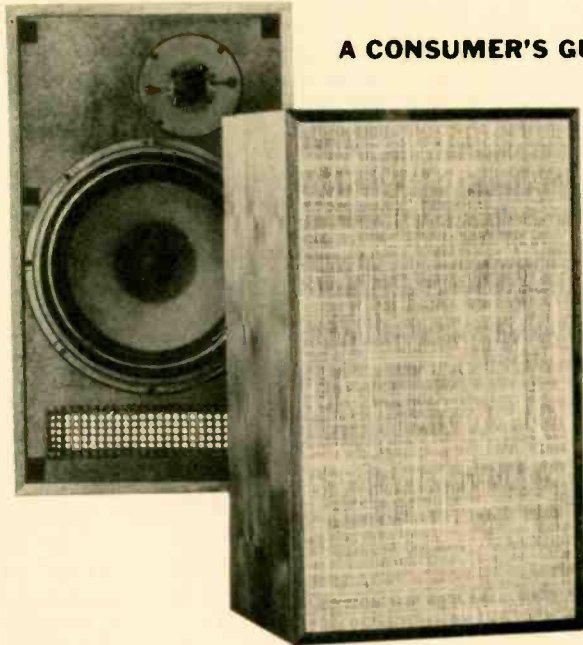


Wait till you hear
what you've been missing.



Seven tapes were tested (TDK SA, TDK KR, Scotch Chrome, BASF Chromdioxid, Advent Chrome, Scotch Classic, and Maxell UD) and ranked 1st to 7th. The chart shows the results for 5 representative tapes tested.

The following tape decks were selected for use in the tests: Nakamichi 500 & 1000, Advent 201, and TEAC 450.



A CONSUMER'S GUIDE

New Equipment Reports

Dynaco Upgrades the Popular A-25 as the \$110 A-25XL

The Equipment: Dynaco Model A-25XL, a full-range loudspeaker system in walnut enclosure. Dimensions: 11½ by 20 inches (can be used either horizontally or vertically), 10 inches deep. Price: \$109. Warranty: one year parts and labor (five years on drivers only), shipping paid one way. Manufacturer: Dynaco, Inc. (Division of Tyco Laboratories), Box 88, Blackwood, N.J. 08012.

Comment: Long known as an electronics—specifically electronics kits—company, Dynaco's success with the loudspeaker line introduced a few years ago was immediate and continuing. The A-25, which we reviewed in our July 1969 issue, was Dynaco's first speaker system and one of the successes. Now it has been redesigned for greater efficiency and power-handling capacity plus improved high-frequency response and dispersion.

The new enclosure has the same dimensions as its predecessor, but you can distinguish between the two by the grille cloth: flush with the wood framing it in the A-25, projecting slightly in front of the wood in the A-25XL. The woofer is about the same size as the 10-inch driver used in the older model, crosses over at 1,200 Hz (instead of 1,500 Hz) to a new 1-inch soft-dome tweeter. Positioning of the drivers and of the highly damped slot port (a feature of Dynaco's Aperiodic design) remains basically the same.

The sound of the new model is very similar indeed to that of its predecessor in A/B comparisons with either music or test tones. (Our test of the A-25 appeared before we adopted the present CBS Labs measurement method, so a full comparison of data is impossible.) Bass is perhaps a shade better defined and treble a little more open and extended in the new model. Neither dramatizes the frequency extremes, delivering instead a good, well-balanced account of the range between those extremes; the similarities are much more striking than the differences.

Nor would we want the A-25XL to be radically different. It offers excellent sound for its price class: honest and natural with good balance, response, and dispersion. The highs, though not particularly prominent, are well defined and hold up well to the neighborhood of 15 kHz, with very little evidence of beaming below about 14 kHz in tests us-

ing sine-wave tones. Test tones in the bass (and in a normal listening room, which of course reinforces bass by contrast to the anechoic chamber in which response curves are made) hold up splendidly to at least 50 Hz. By 35 Hz some doubling is audible; below that frequency the fundamental rolls off.

The response curves were made with the stepped brightness control on the back of the unit set midway between minimum and maximum. This control has little effect below about 2.5 kHz; in the range from about 3 to 16 kHz it alters response by about 5 dB. In musical listening tests we tended to prefer the midpoint setting, though this admittedly is a question of taste and room acoustics.

On the panel with the brightness control are a color-coded pair of binding posts that will accept several types of amplifier leads: bared wire or terminated in banana plugs or large spade lugs. The impedance curve shows a nominal value (at the minimum just above bass resonance) of 7.5 ohms—substantially confirming Dynaco's 8-ohm rating—though the impedance does drop somewhat below this value above about 4 kHz. On normal musical signals, however, there should be no worry about paralleling pairs of A-25XLs across amplifier outputs rated to accept 4-ohm loads.

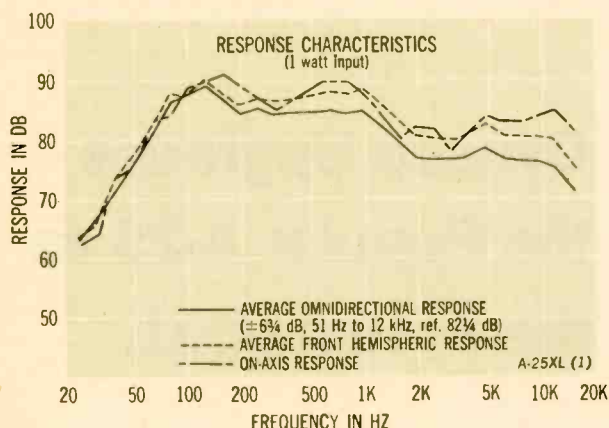
Oscilloscope photos disclose some ringing in 3-kHz pulse tests, though it is not severe. The pulse tests also establish that the unit will take tone bursts of up to 125 watts (average) before serious distortion. On steady-state tones it handles up to 64 watts for an acoustic output of 105 dB. The standard output of 94 dB was achieved for 6.8 watts

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.

of electrical input, representing efficiency that is moderately low but still surprisingly high for so small an enclosure. Since the speaker will produce more than 10 dB additional output (and sound, roughly, twice as loud) before distorting significantly—even on steady tones—its dynamic range is good.

If you liked the original A-25, you will like the new version

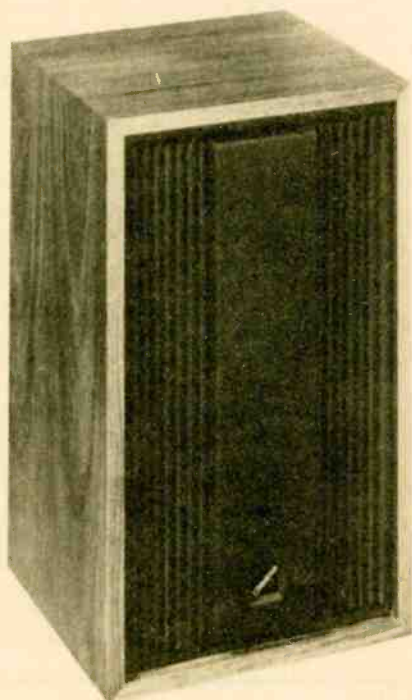
CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Dynaco A-25XL Harmonic Distortion*

Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	0.35	0.80	0.50	0.33
75	0.25	0.55	0.25	0.33
80	0.16	0.85	0.21	0.33
85	0.11	0.70	0.23	0.33
90	0.26	1.5	0.50	1.00
95	0.90	3.8	1.1	1.20
100	1.2	5.0	2.0	1.25
105			4.0	.90

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



Re-enter Maximus with the \$100 X-100

The Equipment: Maximus X-100, a full-range speaker system in walnut case. Dimensions: 13¾ by 24 inches (front); 11 15/16 inches deep. Price: \$99.95. Warranty: five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Maximus Sound Corp., 1000 Zeckendorf Blvd., Garden City, N.Y. 11530.

Comment: In the Sixties, Maximus was associated, in particular, with a mini-mini loudspeaker system that achieved considerable popularity. Then it went underground, so to speak, as it limited its speaker production to "private label" models that have appeared under various brand names. Now the Maximus name is back.

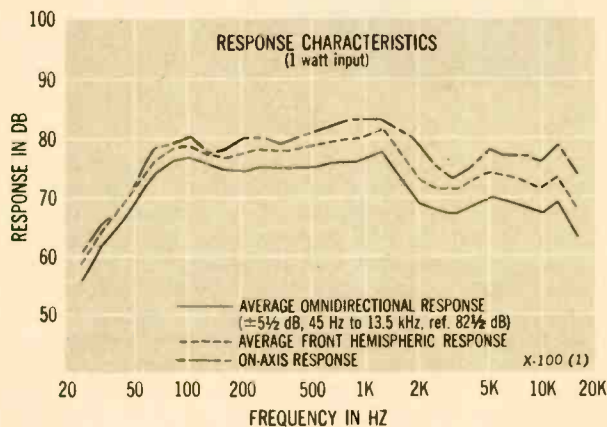
The Maximus X-100 makes use of a slightly offbeat speaker-loading principle: an auxiliary diaphragm or passive radiator here called a drone cone, suspended in a cut-out on the baffle-board so that it is free to move as if it were a speaker. Similar devices have in the past been described as an ingenious substitute for a vent or duct. Maximus, on the other hand, describes its variation on the concept (which it calls an acoustic woofer) in terms of modified acoustic suspension theory. In effect, the drone cone in this model acts as if it were a compliant section of the speaker enclosure. Because of the compliant section—and its resemblance in loading properties to a ducted port—the design is higher in efficiency than a completely sealed system with rigid enclosure sides. In fact, a major claim made for the system is greater efficiency vis-à-vis conventional air-suspension designs.

With the grille in place, of course, the Maximus X-100 resembles the conventional, sealed two-cubic-foot system. The enclosure is finished in walnut veneer. Input connections are made to color-coded binding posts (stripped leads, spade lugs, or banana plugs may be used) set in a recess on the rear panel. A two-way system, the X-100 employs a 10-inch woofer and a 2-inch dome tweeter. The drone cone is a flat membrane about 8 inches in diameter

held in place on the front baffle board by a compliant surround. There are no controls.

As expected, the speaker did exhibit relatively high efficiency for a bookshelf model. In CBS Labs' tests it needed only 2.64 watts to produce the standard output test level of 94 dB (at 1 meter on axis). It could handle up to 32 watts (steady-state power) before distorting excessively, to produce an output of 105 dB. This indicates good dynamic range and, for an efficient speaker, good power-handling capability—particularly since in pulse tests the X-100 took peaks of 600 watts (the limit of the test amplifier) without distorting. We would not, however, recommend driving it with amps rated at much over 50 watts per channel.

The impedance is rated at 8 ohms; it measures 6 ohms just past the usual bass-resonance peak and then rises gradually to average higher than 8 ohms across the audio band. The measured response curves indicate generally good dispersion, and the speaker's response, referenced to an output level of 82.5 dB, is within ± 5 dB from 45 Hz to about 13 kHz. Actually, the response from about 60 Hz to 1 kHz is quite linear; then there is a small peak followed by a large dip, with another very linear stretch from 2 kHz to beyond 10 kHz. Some ringing is visible in oscilloscope photos.



The X-100's listening tests closely confirm the measured data. Bass holds up nicely to about 45 Hz and then diminishes rapidly below that; raising the level does very little—not even producing the usual doubling effects.

The midrange, except for the irregularities between 1 and 2 kHz, is smooth and with hardly any directional effects. Some directivity becomes evident in sine-wave tone tests at about 5 kHz, but it is no more pronounced at 9 kHz. At 10 kHz, directivity becomes more evident, although tones as high as 13 kHz remain audible somewhat off axis. A 14-kHz tone is audible mainly on axis, and from here the response dips to inaudibility. White-noise response is generally smooth and well dispersed, but with a midrange emphasis.

The musical performance of the Maximus X-100 is fair; at times there was a slight boxiness to the sound. We found it, generally speaking, more attractive on rock or pops, where its bass "sock" is welcome, than in classical music, where a more controlled bass and maximum clarity in the highs are at more of a premium. The speaker's efficiency recommends it to owners of relatively low-powered systems, of course; and that is the sort of system to which the X-100 seems best suited.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Maximus X-100 Harmonic Distortion*

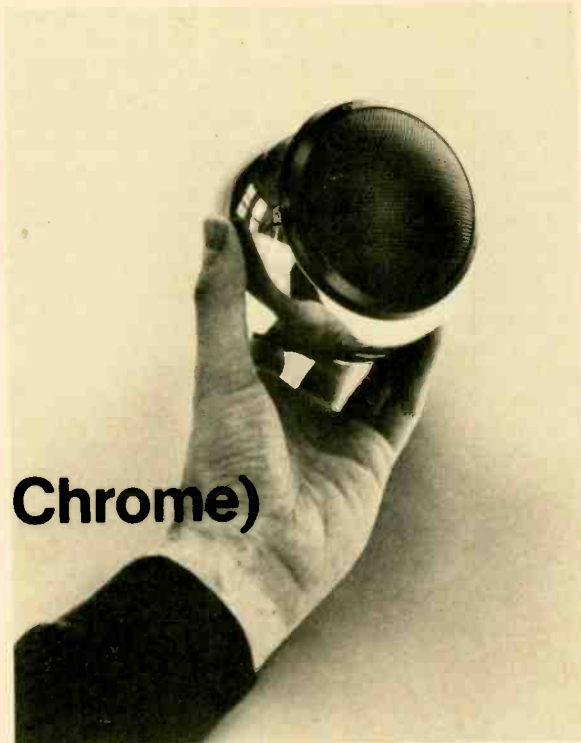
Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	0.55	0.70	0.70	0.70
75	0.55	0.65	0.70	0.75
80	0.55	0.75	0.70	0.75
85	0.55	0.75	0.75	0.75
90	0.60	0.75	0.90	0.75
95	0.80	0.90	1.4	0.80
100	1.8	2.0	2.9	0.85
105			6.0	1.1

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

SPOTLIGHT ON BUDGET SPEAKERS

This month's test-report section is an extension of that in the May issue, where we reviewed receivers and turntables that, in one way or another, may be considered budget models. This month we turn our attention to speakers with top prices in the \$100 range, and going as low as below \$30. There are, of course, literally scores of models we might have tested within this range; this is but a sampling of a crowded field. And within this field, even more than among better speakers, sound-quality tradeoffs must be expected. For that reason it is, if anything, even more important that you listen carefully to a budget speaker before buying.

Neosonic's \$25 (\$30 in Chrome) Extension Speaker



The Equipment: Sonosphere Model SP-12, a miniature speaker system in spherical metal housing. Dimensions: 4¾ inches (diameter), base adds approximately 1 inch. Price: \$24.95 in black, orange, or cream; \$29.95 in chrome. (Automotive model, SPR-12, with screw-down adjustable base: same finishes and prices.) Warranty: ninety days, parts and labor. Manufacturer: Audax, France; U.S. distributor: Neosonic Corporation of America, 57 Old Country Rd., Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

Comment: Frankly, this is not the sort of speaker we usually test for HIGH FIDELITY. Most tiny extension speakers are decidedly poor in sound quality. But (particularly since this issue is devoted to speakers that emphasize either price or value) we wanted to sample performance levels available today. Encouraged by the Audax name (which is well known in its native France but, we are told, is no relation to the Audax pickup and arm made in this country some twenty years ago), we chose the Sonosphere. We were further encouraged by the familiarity of another name: Joseph N. Benjamin, for many years president of Benjamin Electronic Sound (importers of Miracord and Lenco products) and a principal in Neosonic, which imports the Sonosphere.

Advance literature describes it as providing "crisp, clean reproduction over a 100- to 16,000-Hz range." The speaker uses a single long-throw driver in the sealed steel sphere, which contains glass-fiber damping material. Power handling is rated at 10 watts and impedance at 8 ohms. (The SPR-12, intended for automotive use, is a 4-ohm model.)

The audio cable, which emerges from the sphere opposite the speaker grille, has steel-wire reinforcing so that the speaker can be suspended by it—and therefore radiate downward—if you wish. As delivered, however, the cable is threaded through a small metal "pan" that is held by a

magnet against the steel sphere wherever you place it. The pan then acts as a base, and the vertical "firing angle" of the speaker can be adjusted over a wide range simply by repositioning the pan on the sphere. (The automotive model has a threaded stud protruding from the sphere and through a slot in a cast base. Tightening a nut on the stud fixes the base in position for the desired vertical angle. The base is supplied with screw holes so that it can be affixed to the mounting surface—say, the rear deck of a sedan. But this base might be equally appropriate for wall mounting in home systems, assuming that the 4-ohm impedance of the automotive model is appropriate for extension-speaker use with your electronics and main speakers.)

The sound proved to be better than we might have expected on the basis of size and price: clear and clean to moderately high levels and reasonably well balanced. It is not truly wide range, of course. The frequency limits stipulated by Neosonic are reasonably chosen. Doubling increases rapidly below 100 Hz in sine-wave tone tests, with response falling off noticeably below about 80 Hz. Some audible fundamental remains to about 45 Hz; but this is not a speaker for deep bass—nor should you expect it to be. At the top, some rolloff is evident at about 9 kHz, but audible output continues to beyond 14 kHz and the highs are very well dispersed and clearly audible off axis.

This is the sort of sound that one might expect from a particularly good table radio—except in terms of dispersion, which usually is far "beamier" in typical table radios. The Sonospheres have the additional advantage of mounting flexibility, of course, and they are stylishly attractive. They are, in a word, cute little speakers that, though they are not really high fidelity units in themselves, can deliver satisfactory sound (excellent sound, in fact, for the format and price) in situations that preclude use of larger enclosures—say, in a kitchen or car.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

The Equipment: Frazier Model F8-4SH-A (Monte Carlo IV A or Super Monte Carlo), a compact full-range loudspeaker system in oiled-walnut enclosure. Dimensions: 10½ by 19 inches (front—may be used horizontally or vertically), 11¾ inches deep. Price: under \$100 (may vary locally). Warranty: five years parts and labor, shipping paid one way. Manufacturer: Frazier, Inc., P.O. Box 34216, Dallas, Tex. 75234.

Comment: This is by far the smallest and least expensive speaker we have ever tested from Frazier—though it is not, in fact, the most unassuming the company has offered in a finished system. (The minute, one-way, \$50 Super Midget is.) Frazier's reputation rests on an excellent series of floor-standing models plus a line of equipment for use in commercial sound reinforcement. What kind of a min-speaker would it make, we wondered.

There were some surprises in the answers the Super Monte Carlo gave us. First of all, we had assumed from the small enclosure size that here would be one Frazier system of relatively low efficiency. No way. CBS Labs found that the Monte Carlo could produce 94-dB test level with only 1 watt of input power, confirming the manufacturer's claim that in average rooms only ½ watt will be needed. All right, so it's not power-hungry; but can it take power with equanimity? The lab hit 40 watts—for an output of 108 dB—before encountering excessive distortion, indicating excellent dynamic range as well as good power handling. And in pulse tests the speaker handled over 130 watts (average) before distorting excessively. So any amplifier rated at between, say, 5 and 40 watts should be an excellent match, with the choice at the bottom end of the range dictated both by how much reserve power you want and by your patience in hunting for a low-power amp of sufficiently high quality.

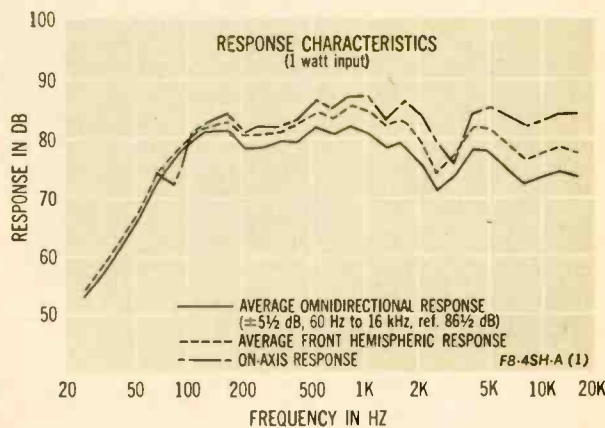
From the foregoing description it should come as no surprise that the Monte Carlo employs a ducted port for relatively high efficiency in a small enclosure without drastic sacrifice of bass. The port actually is a slot whose operation is described by Frazier as a modified Helmholtz resonator. The system uses an 8-inch woofer and a piezoelectric horn tweeter. There is no electrical crossover network; the natural response characteristics of the two drivers are matched to deliver an effective acoustic crossover point of about 4 kHz. (The presence of the piezoelectric tweeter is specified by the "SH"—for "super horn"—in the model number and "Super" in the model name.)

Presumably because of the loading provided by the port slot, the system's impedance curve shows multiple peaks in the bass. The rating point (at the next minimum—about 350 Hz) was measured by CBS Labs at 9.5 ohms, confirming Frazier's 8-ohm listing. Since the 9.5-ohm figure is the lowest measured at any frequency (average across the audible band is in the neighborhood of 16 ohms, though values throughout the midrange are lower than that), there should be no problem in paralleling these speakers with any other 8-ohm model off a transistorized amplifier. (This is particularly important if you are contemplating them as extension speakers.)

Despite its small size the Super Monte Carlo reaches to below 40 Hz. Of course you can't have everything, and doubling is fairly high in the extreme bass region. That is to say that in small enclosures a tradeoff must be made



Frazier's \$90 Super Monte Carlo



Frazier Monte Carlo Harmonic Distortion*

Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	0.6	1.3	0.65	0.75
75	0.7	1.3	0.65	0.80
80	0.9	0.9	0.65	0.88
85	1.2	1.5	0.65	0.92
90	2.1	2.3	0.70	1.0
95	4.3	2.3	0.70	1.1
100	9.0	6.0	0.70	1.3
105			0.80	1.9
108			0.90	3.0

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

somewhere, and Frazier appears to have opted for fairly extended response rather than minimum deep-bass distortion. It has done so without producing a boomy bass, however, and the doubling is less noticeable in music listening than with sine-wave test tones.

On the high end, test tones confirm the extended range shown on the anechoic-chamber curves; but in the listening room dispersion seems better than the curves would indicate. Beaming first becomes discernible at about 13 kHz with the speakers positioned horizontally, at 14 kHz when they are vertical. In either position 15-kHz test tones are distinctly more pronounced on axis than from any off-axis position.

In listening to music we judged the speaker to be very good in balance though somewhat colored. There is a certain brightness or throatiness (different listeners use different terms) to the midrange—properties that, of course, do not show up on frequency-response curves—which

gives an apparent prominence to this portion of the range. Some listeners might describe this quality as "boxiness" (particularly in white-noise tests), others as "forwardness." This too must be taken as a tradeoff of the design.

All told, the Super Monte Carlo presents a useful solution to the multivariable loudspeaker equation. Cleaner and less colored sound can be achieved in this small enclosure size, but not at the same time, to our knowledge, with the present model's extended response and high efficiency. And of course the lower the price bracket, the harder it is to find adequate solutions to the problem, and therefore the greater the audible variables from one brand to another. If you have space and/or budget restrictions, you will have to make your choice among the available tradeoffs; the Frazier—particularly in view of what it can save you in amplifier power—is an exceptionally interesting candidate in the under-\$100 bracket.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Royal Sound's \$101 PRO-350

The Equipment: Royal Sound Model PRO-350, a full-range loudspeaker system in wood enclosure with wood-grain vinyl laminate (available in several finishes). Dimensions: 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ by 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (front—may be used horizontally or vertically), 10 inches deep. Price: \$101.50. Warranty: five years parts and labor, shipping paid one way. Manufacturer: Royal Sound Co., Inc., 409 N. Main St., Freeport, N.Y. 11520.

Comment: This is the top of an admittedly inexpensive speaker line. As of early this year Royal Sound's price list included four systems ranging from \$51.50 to the present model's \$101.50: two acoustic suspension models and two described as "air flow." About the time that this issue appears, Royal Sound tells us, more models will be added in higher brackets.

The PRO-350 is one of the air-flow speakers, meaning that it has a port (as opposed to the sealed, acoustic sus-

pension models) whose plastic orifice treatment and glass fiber "stuffing" add loading—acoustic resistance in the port itself. The two-way system crosses over at 1,500 Hz from a 10-inch woofer to a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch soft-dome tweeter. Connections, at the back, are via screw terminals for use with bared-wire leads or spade lugs. There are no controls.

Royal Sound rates the model at 8 ohms. Nominal impedance as measured at CBS Labs is very close: 7.5 ohms at about 125 Hz—just above the rise at bass resonance—and remaining between this value and 16 ohms at all higher frequencies. Paralleling pairs of PRO-350s from the output of typical transistorized amplifiers should therefore pose no problems.

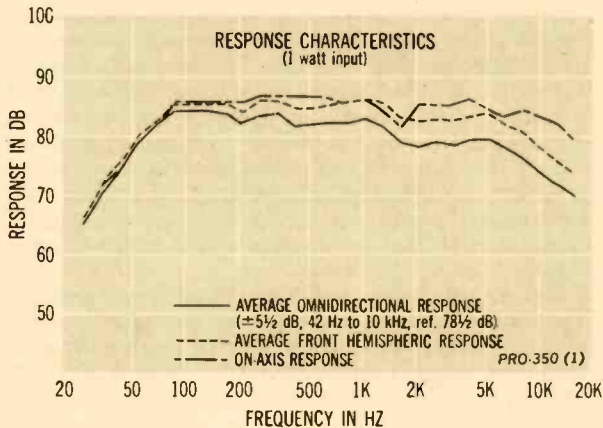
Response, as shown in the graph derived from anechoic-chamber measurements, is unusually flat in the midrange: It stays within ± 3 dB from about 50 to 6,000 Hz. The downward slope of the treble rolloff is fairly gradual, making the choice of rating point arbitrary. We have used $\pm 5\frac{1}{2}$ dB as the spread, for a frequency range of 42 to 10,000 Hz; had we chosen a slightly greater spread we could have shown a significantly higher top frequency with equal justice. In listening to both music and test tones in a normal environment we were impressed by the performance at both extremes. Both response and dispersion sound better at the high end than one might assume from the anechoic curves. Tones above 10 kHz are almost as audible from the sides of the speaker as from directly in front of it; by 15 kHz, response is noticeably down and the tone subject to discernible beaming. In the bass we were able to get clean, audible fundamental to about 30 Hz, with very little doubling at any reasonable setting of the driving amplifier.

The over-all sound, however, was judged a little on the reticent side—particularly, of course, by contrast to speakers with the common (though not necessarily desirable) emphasis of the "presence" range to produce a sensation of immediacy in the sound. One reason the PRO-350 seems to have struck some listeners this way is because it requires more amplifier power for the same subjective loudness levels vis-à-vis many other models—even quite small ones. The lab found that 7.88 watts was necessary to drive the unit to the standard 94 dB (at 1 meter on axis). This represents moderately low efficiency, but it is made with evenly distributed noise in the range between 200 and 6,000 Hz. A speaker with a more "forward" sound can seem equally loud even when it is not pumping as much total energy in this region into the room. Therefore a listener at the volume knob may drive the Royal Sound as though its efficiency were lower than it is.

The PRO-350 can take this sort of use. It is rated by the manufacturer for power handling of 100 watts. CBS Labs was able to achieve that level (represented by the 107-dB figures in the distortion chart) but found that distortion rose rapidly on steady-state signals in this test. Therefore we would prefer to see it driven with no more than 80 watts. At that input it delivers an output of 106 dB, more than 10 dB above (or ten times the "sound level" of) the 94 dB used in the efficiency test, establishing a good dynamic range. In tone-burst tests it handled 240 watts (average)—the limit of the test amplifier with this speaker—

for an output of over 113 dB without excessive distortion. Over-all, we were more impressed than we had expected to be. Royal Sound apparently has resisted the temptation to "upgrade" a budget line by adding a top model that simply "has more punch." Its stated design aim here is to produce an accurate and uncolored reproducer, and its success in that direction may, at first hearing, put the product at a disadvantage against competing models with more punch but less accuracy. Don't be put off by first impressions. The PRO-350 is a worthy contender in the \$100 price class.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

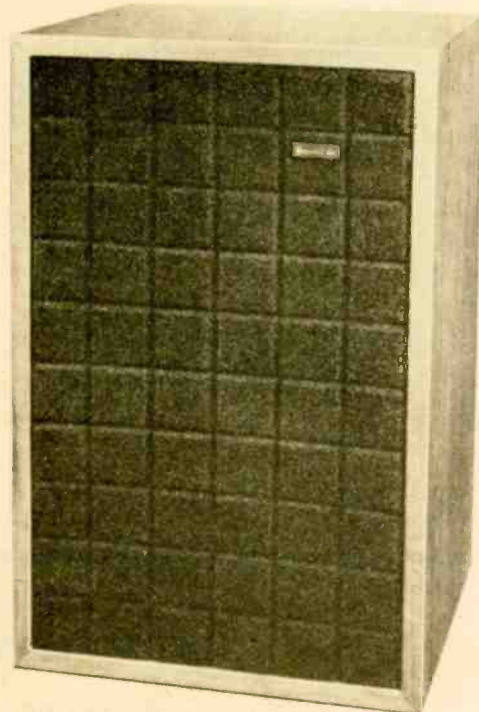


Royal Sound PRO-350 Harmonic Distortion*

Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	0.60	0.75	0.65	0.75
75	0.56	0.65	0.70	0.75
80	0.56	0.85	0.75	0.85
85	0.56	0.65	0.75	1.1
90	0.56	0.65	0.85	0.80
95	0.65	0.70	0.85	0.85
100	0.90	1.4	0.85	0.75
105			1.2	0.80
107			5.0	2.0

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

Lafayette's \$160 Criterion 888



The Equipment: Lafayette Criterion Model 888, a full-range speaker system in walnut case. Dimensions: 24 by 15 3/16 inches (front); 13 15/16 deep. Price: \$159.95. Warranty: five years parts and labor; shipping paid one way. Manufacturer: Lafayette Radio Electronics, 111 Jericho Turnpike, Syosset, L.I., N.Y. 11791.

Comment: The Criterion 888 is one of a series of acoustic suspension speaker systems recently developed as a proprietary line by Lafayette. The full line includes eight models priced below the Model 888 and one priced above it. The 888 is a four-way system; its oiled walnut enclosure houses a 12-inch woofer, a 6-inch lower-midrange cone, a

5-inch upper-midrange cone, and a dome tweeter. Cross-over frequencies are 400, 900, and 7,000 Hz. The two mid-range drivers and the tweeter may be adjusted independently for tonal balance via three separate controls at the rear. Input connections are two screws that accept stripped leads or spade lugs. In addition there's a phono-jack input should you care to use a shielded cable fitted with a phono plug as your speaker lead. Minimum recommended input power is 15 watts (continuous); maximum rated power-handling capacity is 100 watts. Nominal impedance is 8 ohms. The Model 888 may be positioned horizontally or vertically. Its removable front grille, made of acoustically transparent foam, is colored dark brown.

With moderately low efficiency, typical of air-suspension systems, the Model 888 needed 10 watts to produce the standard output test level of 94 dB at 1 meter on axis in CBS Labs' tests. It handled over 160 watts average pulse power before distorting, to produce an output level of 109 dB. Though this is above the claimed 100-watt power capacity of the model, the lab found that at 40 watts with steady-state sine-wave signals (at 300 Hz) the harmonic distortion exceeded 10%. So while the unit may be safe to use with 100 watts the output will not remain clean to that point. At 40 watts the output measures 100 dB, representing somewhat less dynamic range than average.

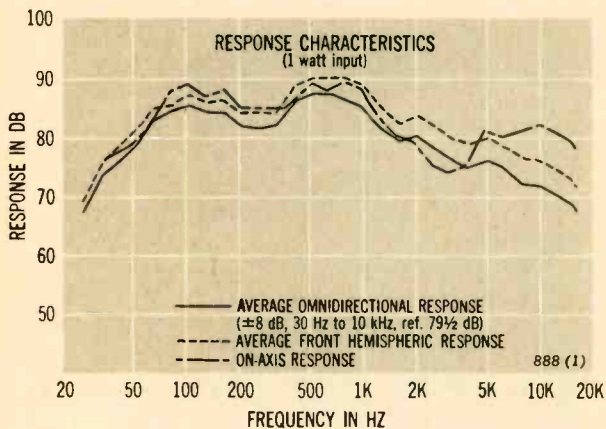
Impedance across the audio spectrum remains above 8 ohms and is remarkably smooth once past the typical low-frequency rise. Tests of the action of the controls confirm that each functions in the range intended. The lower mid-frequency control varies the response from about 300 to 1,500 Hz by several dB, with maximum effect (about 10

dB) evident from 500 to 1,000 Hz. The upper mid-frequency control averages 10 dB from about 1,300 to 5,000 Hz and about 5 dB above 5,000 Hz to about 7,000 Hz. The high-frequency control handles the range out to 20,000 Hz, providing about 10 dB of adjustment from 3,200 to 4,200 Hz and averaging 5 dB of change from about 8,000 to 20,000 Hz. The response curves shown here were obtained with all controls set at their middle position, although in listening tests we preferred to advance the controls almost to maximum for most music. White noise response varies, as expected, with the settings of the controls but remains generally smooth and well dispersed into the listening area.

On test tones, the Model 888 reaches to beyond audibility, with an apparent dip at 15,000 Hz. High frequencies, including tones above 10,000 Hz, are heard well off-axis of the system. The middles and highs are well dispersed and smooth sounding. The bass response reaches cleanly down to 43 Hz, where the first hint of frequency doubling occurs. Doubling increases gradually as frequency is lowered, with fundamental-bass present (but growing relatively weaker) down to 28 Hz. The system continues to respond to 20 Hz, but the sound is mostly doubling in this region.

Over-all, the sound of the Model 888 on normal program material can be described as smooth and natural, with a minimum of coloration, a nice sense of upper-end "air," ample midrange "body," and a strong bottom with heft and definition. For its price, it seems to offer typically good performance.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Lafayette 888 Harmonic Distortion*

Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz % 2nd	80 Hz % 3rd	300 Hz % 2nd	300 Hz % 3rd
70	0.35	0.95	0.65	0.35
75	0.40	0.85	0.45	0.50
80	0.45	0.85	0.55	0.85
85	0.65	0.85	0.85	1.6
90	1.8	1.7	1.6	2.7
95	4.0	1.0	3.6	2.0
100	9.0	2.0	8.5	6.0

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

TEST REPORTS IN PROGRESS

Nakamichi 550 AC/battery portable Dolby cassette deck
 Sansui QRX-7001 QS/SQ/CD-4 quadriphonic receiver
 Stanton 681 Triple-E stereo phono pickup
 Sony TAN-8550 FET power amp

Introducing the 601. Dual's first medium-priced single-play turntable (fully automatic, of course.)

With the 601, Dual introduces its second fully automatic single-play turntable. Like the first, the electronic direct-drive 701, it shares several features with Dual's familiar multiple-play turntables, and offers a number of innovations as well.

The 601 drive system consists of an 8-pole synchronous motor, developed especially for this new model, and a precision-ground belt running directly from the drive shaft to a flywheel beneath the 12-inch dynamically-balanced platter. The motor's absolute speed constancy, its exceptional smoothness, and the isolation of the platter from the motor combine to reduce wow, flutter and rumble to an insignificant level.

The 601's 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " tonearm is suspended in the same low-friction double gimbal as the more costly 701. Operation of the tonearm is optionally fully-automatic, manual, or continuous repeat.

Variable pitch-control is provided for both speeds, and an illuminated strobe is built into the chassis. The anti-skating system has separate calibrations for conical, elliptical and CD-4 styli.

The high level of performance and quality for which Dual turntables have been known for years is incorporated in the 601. Thus, music lovers who desire a single-play turntable in the medium-price range, with Dual precision and performance, now have it.



United Audio Products, 120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553
Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual



Our new series is so advanced, we expect our first customers to be Audio Research & Crown.

They'll haul it back to their labs. And play it. And play with it. And in general, examine it to pieces to find out How We Did It.

Sony's Vertical Field Effect Transistors: What our competitors are eating their hearts out about.

It's a shame the term "state of the art" has been worn ragged in dozens of "This is it, this is finally and really it" stereo ads. Because anyone in the business will tell you that V-FET's are the biggest thing since the invention of the vacuum tube. V-FET's combine all of the advantages of both triode vacuum tubes and conventional transistors. With none of their disadvantages.

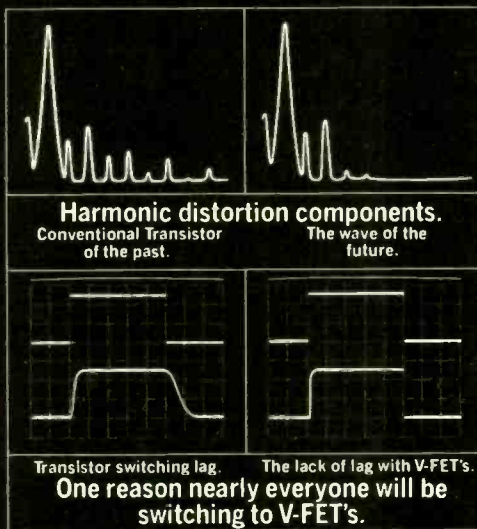
But nobody else can take advantage of these advantages yet. Ask anybody else how their V-FET's are coming. The responses will range from a forthright and candid "we're working on it," to an equally forthright and candid "buzz off." Sony is the first company in the world making commercially available equipment with V-FET's. A power-amp and integrated amp.

Herewith a partial and oversimplified explanation of just what in the world we're talking about.

Triode vacuum tubes: Pros and cons.

To belabor the obvious for a moment, in amplifiers, the name of the game is distortion. And until now triode vacuum tubes have yielded the lowest levels around. That's because of their non-saturating voltage versus current characteristics. Also, they do not suffer from carrier storage effect (which is standard equipment with regular transistors, and causes notch distortion and deterioration in transient response).

So much for the good points of tubes. They also tend to be inefficient, begin to deteriorate as soon as you use them, and wear out. Their high impedance characteristics generally require an output transformer to drive the speakers. And there's no way you can set up a true complementary circuit with vacuum tubes, so there's no way you can get true wave form symmetry.



Conventional Bi-polar transistors: Pros and cons.

The advantages of bi-polar transistors can be dealt with in a sentence. They're very reliable, very efficient and last almost forever. But there are a number of bugs in the ointment.

Bi-polar transistors can become saturated with current. And they all cause switching lag distortion. To obtain acceptably low levels of distortion, plus wide frequency response, you need to pump in a lot of negative feedback. Which can make the amp unstable.

Plus (at no extra charge), as they heat up, bi-polar transistors have a

marked tendency toward thermal runaway (which is a fancy way of saying they try to self-destruct).

V-FET's: All pros. And that's no con.

First off, V-FET's are very reliable, very efficient and last almost forever. They also match the highly defined tonal quality previously provided only by vacuum tubes. V-FET's don't become saturated with current. But at the same time, they protect themselves as temperatures build up. So there's no possibility of thermal runaway. Their low impedance characteristics mean no output transformer (the less gizmos in the circuit, the better the sound). The use of V-FET's allows for better control of negative feedback, making the amp more stable. V-FET's don't have carrier storage effect to cause switching lag. And you can use V-FET's to build a true complementary circuit, thus obtaining true wave form symmetry. And isn't that what it's really all about?

One more thing. We'd be less than forthright and candid if we didn't admit that our new amplifiers are a bit pricey. As much as \$1300 a piece.

At Sony, we've always maintained that, in the end, the best way to buy equipment is to hear it for yourself. So we're making what's probably the best offer you've ever heard. Have your dealer hook up our new V-FET equipment against *anything* made by *anybody*. If we sound sure of ourselves, we are.

And we're sure your own ears will tell you we've got the best sound you've ever heard.

SONY®

CIRCLE 35 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

by David Weems

Has the Bookshelf Speaker Had It?

ONE OF THE BIG national magazines once did a story comparing women's skirt lengths with the stock market. In the Twenties, for example, when the market was booming (and Americans presumably could afford all the yard goods they wanted) skirts too reached new highs. But with the Great Depression of the Thirties, fashion's fabric requirements seemed in inverse proportion to the state of the economy. A parade of vintage loud-speaker models would demonstrate a similar tendency to move in counterpoint to social and economic trends. During the freewheeling Sixties, "bookshelf" speakers of modest appearance prevailed. Can it be pure chance that big speakers have had a revival in this sober decade?

It's easy to explain the popularity of the small speakers of the last twenty years. It was the mid-Fifties—when most high fidelity speakers occupied 5- or 6-cubic-foot floor cabinets, when closed-box "infinite baffle" speakers were even bigger, and when small speakers usually sounded like table radios—that saw the arrival of the acoustic-suspension speaker. It was the first speaker, as audio writer G. A. Briggs noted, "to get a quart of good bass out of a pint pot." It equaled or surpassed the giants in every ordinary test but one: efficiency.

The bookshelf models were already gaining in popularity when the emergence of stereo made big speakers obsolete for most people. It simply was too difficult to find space for two large enclosures in the average listening room. Later, as we got set for quadriphonic sound, common sense suggested that once again speaker systems must shrink. Now some facts of life are threatening the small speakers' dominance, and one of these is, surprisingly, quad sound.

Moving on Air

The acoustic-suspension speaker's designers made a shrewd bargain with nature by trading cone stiffness for the restoring force of a small air volume behind the speaker. They increased the mass of the floppy woofer cone to produce smoother response and a lower resonant frequency. And to keep the voice coil in a uniform magnetic field, they made it longer.

Even skeptical ears confirmed what test equipment had measured: flat response down to about the frequency of a predetermined speaker/box resonance with low distortion. The air cushion, or "spring," was a more linear restoring force than the stiffer "surround" suspensions on other speakers. Acoustic-suspension manufacturers said, in effect, "We designed for quality, and we got a small box as a bonus."

Audiophiles generally were delighted. Some of them did find it difficult to adjust to the novel reality that this speaker of modest mien was harder to drive to normal loudness levels than the most intimidating monster models. The heavy cone sopped up power; and once in motion it represented more kinetic energy, which had to be damped.

The power-hungry little speaker helped to reverse a longstanding trend in amplifier design. Some early high fidelity enthusiasts used amplifiers with "high" rated power outputs (which, in those days, meant up to 60 watts) in order to get very low distortion at the far lower output levels actually demanded of them by the older speakers. After engineers discovered the virtues of negative feedback, several good "little" (10 to 15 watts) amplifiers became popular. The bookshelf speaker made them useless because its conversion efficiency (sound output/electrical input) was so low. But to most buyers that was about as relevant as the kind of gas mileage they got from their full-sized family car. Amplifier power—like gas—was cheap.

Loudspeaker zealots abandoned debates on bass-reflex vs. infinite-baffle enclosures to form new battle lines. The new dispute, about the merits of high-efficiency against low-efficiency speakers, was inflamed by a controversial 1958 report by a consumers' publication, which appeared to draw a sharp line between good speakers and bad speakers. High-efficiency speakers turned up on the wrong side of that line. The report first admitted that some speakers could fill a theater with a thunderstorm at an input of only a few watts; then it observed that the noise wouldn't sound very much like thunder. Some audio salesmen agreed. One told me several years ago, "All high-effi-

ciency speakers sound hard. They're really public-address speakers in disguise." The term "air suspension" had become a synonym for sound quality.

A Small Voice, Never Stilled

A dedicated minority denied that claim. The people who make and like high-efficiency speakers say that low-efficiency designs lack dynamic range; that they can't reproduce instantaneous musical peaks cleanly, even with super-powered amplifiers driving them. Voice-coil wire can stand just so much current before it overheats and sustains damage. The validity of that criticism depends on the design of a specific speaker, the size of the listening room, and the sound level demanded by the listener.

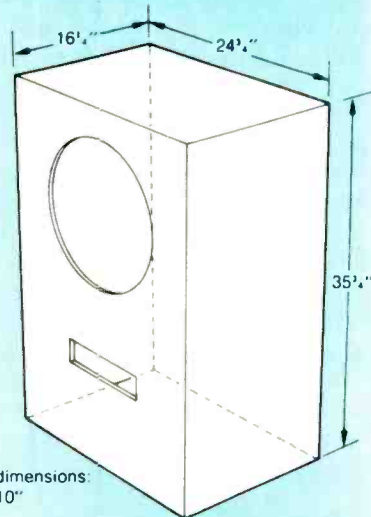
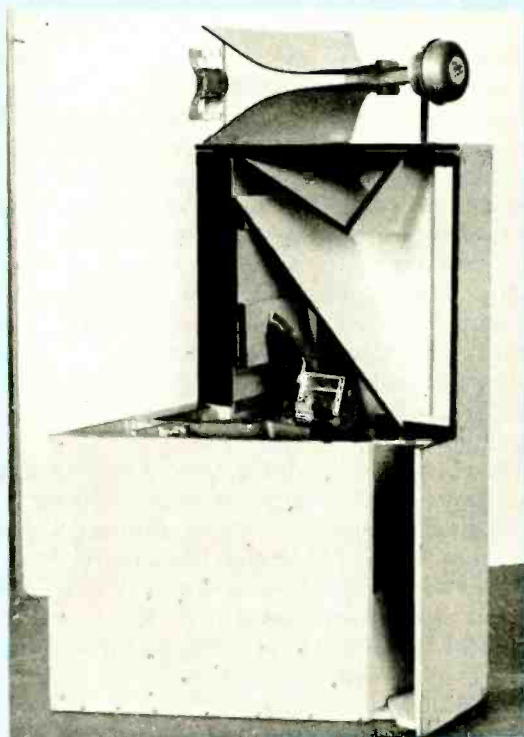
Some makers of big high-efficiency systems sprinkle their talk about the futility of trying to telescope a 32-foot organ-pipe wavelength to fit into a small box with other, less tongue-in-cheek objections to the bookshelf speaker. They note that the long voice coil, necessary for deep cone movement, adds electrical inductance to the amplifier/speaker circuit. This inductance acts as a low-pass filter, limiting the upper frequency range of the woofer and putting an extra burden on its speaker mates. Therefore it's easier to design a large high-efficiency system for satisfactory sound with only a woofer and a tweeter. Most of the bet-

ter full-range bookshelf models must employ (at minimum) a separate woofer, midrange driver, and tweeter. Three-way systems are more complex and, of course, cost more.

There are four main types of loudspeaker enclosures used for dynamic speakers: closed box, ported box (bass reflex), transmission lines (based on labyrinth designs), and horns. Horns offer the highest efficiency but are big and expensive. Transmission lines, with low to moderate efficiency, are also usually expensive. All through the high-efficiency/low-efficiency game it has been bass reflex (in one form or another) that has carried the ball most often for the high-efficiency team.

The reflex principle makes use of the speaker's back wave (that is, the sound energy generated by the back of the woofer cone) in conjunction with the air mass of the port. This air "piston," vibrating in response to cone motion, compresses and expands the air within the box but not nearly to the extent inherent in acoustic suspension. A reflex driver doesn't need the extra-long voice coil or super-heavy cone of a compact closed-box speaker. And the second radiation source, the port, gives the reflex a basic theoretical efficiency advantage of 3 dB over a closed box that "swallows up" the back wave.

Two decades of competition from the acoustic-suspension speakers have changed reflex systems. Reflex woofer cones are heavier now, with greater



Two classics of the days before the acoustic-suspension speaker are with us today. The floor-standing folded horn (here shown in a cutaway of the Klipschorn, left) is one of the biggest—and most long-lived—of home system designs. The basic bass-reflex cabinet (the drawing above is a housing for an Altec 15-inch concentric driver) has a simple rectangular port.

Archetypical acoustic-suspension (the AR-2ax is shown here) has two or three drivers and, of course, no port of any sort. This type of speaker made two-cubic-foot "bookshelf" systems a high fidelity norm.



compliance and lower resonant frequencies. Boxes are smaller. And the ports have tubes, or ducts, behind them. A duct increases the mass of vibrating air and tunes the smaller enclosure to a lower frequency. This box of moderate size will never equal a larger box in low-frequency range, but it can have other virtues. The old adage "bigger is better" has yielded to a concept of *optimum* volume as reflex designers match their woofers to a carefully designed enclosure. They can choose the specific ratio of box-air compliance to speaker-cone compliance that gives good transient response consistent with a satisfactory bass range.

Some recent reflex designs are like hybrids; they operate as reflexes but have no open ports. Some of them have ducts stuffed with damping material to produce a smooth speaker impedance curve and reflect a more constant load on the amplifier at different frequencies. Others use an extra cone, with no magnet or voice coil, covering the "port." This cone, called a "drone cone," a "passive radiator," or an "auxiliary bass radiator," vibrates in phase with the driver over a band of low frequencies, as does the port air in an ordinary reflex. The drone assures in-phase vibration across the port and helps to block reflected sound above its effective frequency range, which can escape through an open port. A reflex designer can use a drone to replace an inconveniently long duct (required for adequate air-mass loading in the intended design) by adding extra mass to the drone and thereby lowering its resonant frequency. Compared to a simple hole in the speaker board, the drone appears to have some advantages and at least one disadvantage. It costs more.

A Test of Reflexes

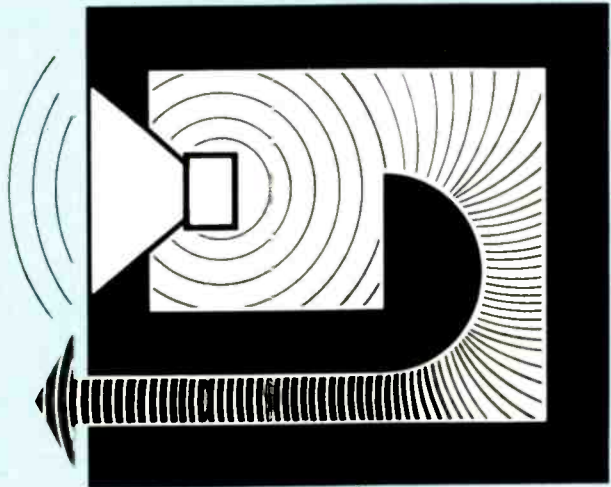
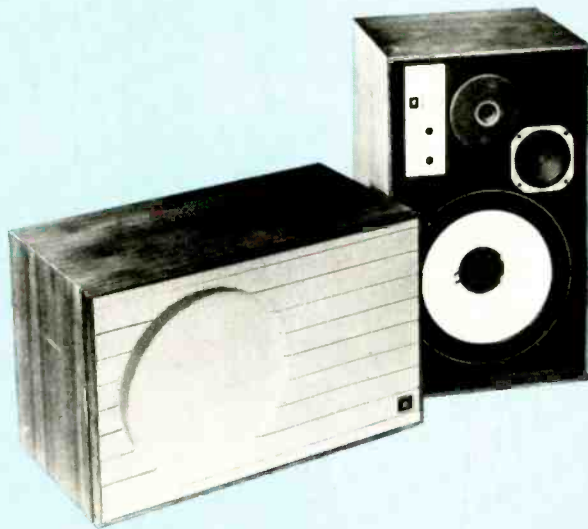
Early acoustic-suspension systems had a sound that was identifiably different from the reflex sound of that time. Has twenty years of cross-breeding muted that difference? One speaker company that makes both kinds decided to find out. Its engineers set up test demonstrations at several high fidelity shows with A-B listening compari-

sons. They put L-pads in the circuit to equalize the loudness levels between speakers of different efficiencies, leaving only relative sound quality as the basis of comparison. Listeners not only heard the difference, but nearly all of them had clear-cut preferences. (Which shows why a listening session should be the prime test for any speaker.) Their preference? They were split about 50-50 between closed-box and reflex sound.

But producing a successful speaker involves more than just getting the "best" sound. The designer must balance low-frequency performance against size against efficiency against cost. The buyer, as the final judge, then decides whether the balance is right for him. Both sides in the high-efficiency/low-efficiency confrontation admit that you can have a small speaker with high efficiency and a limited bass range or you can have a small speaker with a full bass range but limited efficiency. But you can't have it all together.

And all three are important in today's high fidelity world. Nobody wants to forgo good bass reproduction. Few want to pay for large enclosures (even if they can find room for them) when comparable sound can be achieved in a much smaller and less expensive package. And a growing number of people are concerned over energy consumption, and therefore speaker efficiency. This last factor could be a harbinger of a bright future for moderately efficient speakers; those that fit somewhere in the middle ground between very low-efficiency acoustic-suspension designs and the gargantuan horn models with big bass and high efficiency.

To see why, consider a typical situation. If we take 25 watts per channel as a good diet for acoustic-suspension speakers, we would need a healthy-sounding 50 watts for stereo but a more gluttonous 100 watts for quad. If we were to switch from the acoustic-suspension speaker at, say, 1% efficiency to another design that's 5% efficient (fairly high efficiency as speakers go), we suddenly would need only a skimpy-sounding *total* of 20 watts for quad, 10 watts for stereo. To a prospective buyer hedged in by inflation (including large fuel-cost adjust-



Among most popular solutions to the problem of maintaining good bass response in small box is the ducted port, visible (above, in 88 Plus system from JBL) as a round hole above mid-range driver and to right of tweeter; it is the woofer, however, that is loaded by the duct. Various types of labyrinthing ducts are possible. The diagram illustrates the Venturi design from BIC; transmission-line systems may have a similar looking duct but rely on sound-absorbent "stuffing" for critical damping. Undriven diaphragm may substitute for duct; that at right (the E-V Interface A) is larger than the woofer itself and has added the mass (the cylindrical protrusion) as an air-column substitute.

ments in his electric bills), the outlook has suddenly brightened.

An extreme case? Look through the new-equipment reports in back issues of HIGH FIDELITY. Over the past couple of years these reports show that the minimum average power to produce a sound level of 94 dB at 1 meter on axis varied with different speakers from about 1½ watts to about 30 watts. With a ratio of 20 to 1 in power demands, the speakers with the lower efficiencies had better have something special to offer—something you can't get in a more efficient model.

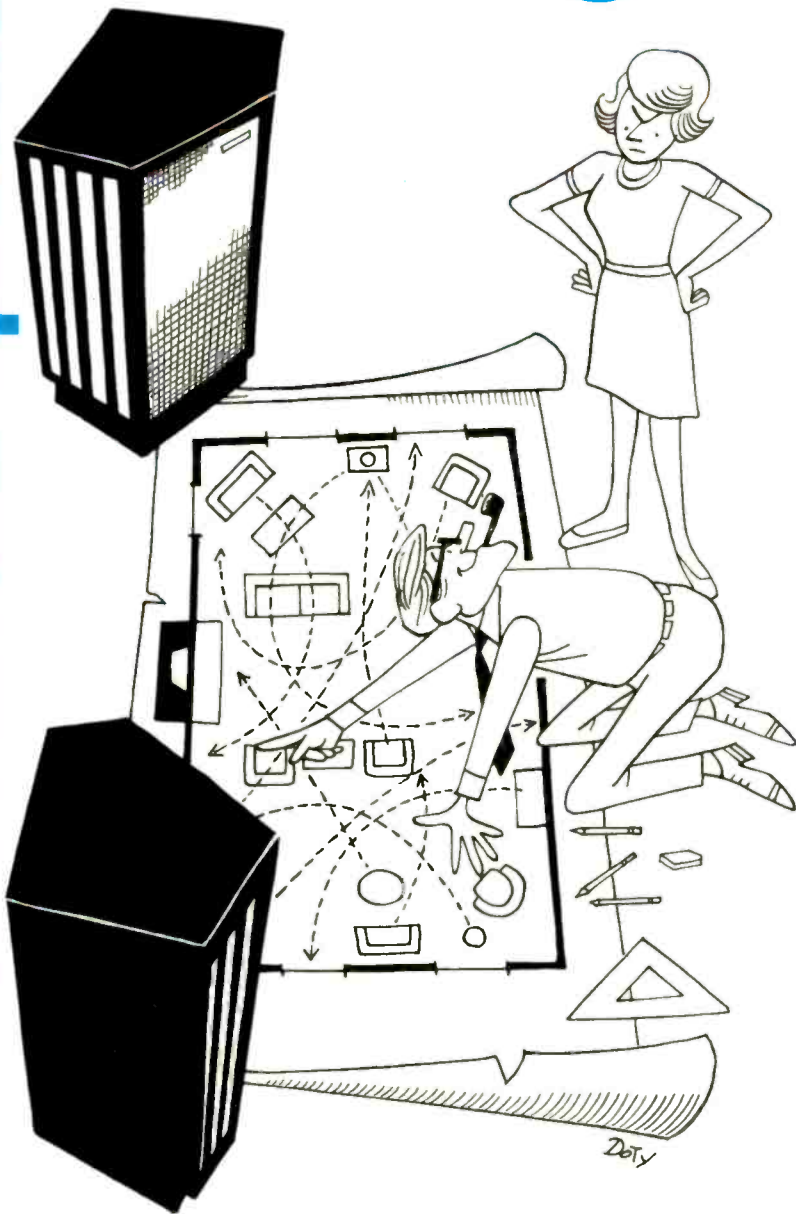
At least one company has stated that among its design goals is the development of wide-range speakers that can reproduce music at realistic sound levels with low-powered quad amplifiers. It appears to have met that goal with a ducted-port model. The bass reflex, that longtime underdog, may be about to show the closed-box speakers something about efficiency. But acoustic-suspension designers can also improve efficiency by ad-

justing enclosure size or limiting the bass range of their speakers. Some recently introduced closed-box speakers already show a trend toward higher efficiency.

Thinking about efficiency, like turning off lights, is not an American habit. One way to identify an American tourist, Europeans say, is to watch how he washes his hands. If he puts the stopper in the basin to save water, he is a native. An American lets the water run. At home he probably has a big amplifier and small speakers. His English counterpart often makes do with 10 or 15 watts per channel, although he may minimize the difference by calling them "British watts."

We mustn't underestimate the acoustic-suspension speaker. It's still on top. But the challenge it now faces, from improved reflex speakers, from the economic demands of quad, and even from the energy crisis, are the most serious it has faced in the two decades since it revolutionized loud-speaker design.

How to Match Your Speakers to Your Listening Room



OR VICE VERSA

by Robin Lanier

It's SOMETHING NOT every audiophile knows: Your listening room, all on its own, is part of your high fidelity system. Ineluctably it affects every sound your system reproduces.

Some claims overstate the room's influence—or more exactly, attribute to it an influence that it does not exert. On the other hand, it can be a major influence in areas that get little attention. If, for example, you take home great equipment and find that it sounds merely good, the room is probably responsible.

Mr. Lanier, a regular contributor to these pages, designs and installs custom home stereo systems.

But just what does the room do and how? If the effects are bad, is there anything you can do about it? How do you exploit room qualities fully?

Reverberation, Echo, and Ambience

Let's start by clearing up one area in which misconceptions seem rife: room reverberation. It is important to keep in mind that the reverberation inherent in your listening room is not at all the same as that of a concert hall—or of recordings made in a concert hall.

Reverberation is, of course, the sound energy

that continues to bounce around in any enclosed space for a short while after its source becomes silent. Each note in music gets a "tail" of repeats that extend its duration. A listener first hears the direct sound that comes in a straight line from instrument to ear. Then the first of the repeats reaches his ear, beginning a series that includes repeats coming in from all directions. If the direct sound can be thought of as a straight cue-ball-to-objective shot, the first reflection is (usually) a one-cushion shot; and the harder the shot and the more resilient the cushions, the more "bounces" the sound can take before it runs out of steam.

With no reverb—or too little—music sounds weak, thin, lacking in bass and brilliance, boxed-in. With too much the music may have rolling grandeur, but it will be muddled and confused. The distinguishing factor, and one that is important in showing how reverberation affects the listening room, is duration.

The first of the series of repeats must reach the ear within about 70 milliseconds of the direct sound or we will hear an annoying echo, a distinct and separate repeat of the original. (Note that this is *true* echo; an acoustic "echo chamber" is used in recording to create reverberation, not echo in this sense.) With the first reflection in soon enough, and with certain other conditions met, the hearing system amalgamates the direct sound and the succeeding train of repeats into a single sound impression, the *quality* of which is influenced by the repeats. Their duration is specified by the acoustician as reverberation time: the time it takes the reverberant energy to die down to one one-millionth of the power it had just after the original sound stopped—to the engineer, a drop of 60 dB. Typical large-hall reverberation times range from about 1.7 seconds (a clear, crisp sound that is excellent for much eighteenth-century music) to 2.5 seconds (a very full sound, preferred for the romantic orchestral music of the nineteenth century). This does not mean that we can't enjoy a Haydn symphony in Boston Symphony Hall, which has an RT of about 2.3 seconds; it is just that the effect with a shorter reverb will probably be a little closer to what Haydn was accustomed to and what he expected in writing his music.

Simple mathematics shows why the average home listening room cannot supply "concert hall ambience," no matter where the speakers are placed. For the reverberation to "stay alive" as long as 1.5 to 2 seconds, we need (with the usual hall or room construction) unobstructed reflection paths in the range of, say, 50 to 100 feet. The average living room, in contrast, supplies bounce-to-bounce paths usually in the range from about 8 feet (ceiling to floor) to about 18 feet (end wall to end wall).

The result can be seen in a study made recently by the BBC in England to find the reverberation times in about fifty typical living rooms, whose

volume averaged about 1,500 cubic feet. The RTs ranged from about 0.4 to 0.7 seconds—far below the concert hall range. It is true that we might prefer these short RTs for a small-room sound; but that sound cannot substitute for the concert hall "power" we expect with the symphonic repertoire.

That is why most of the concert hall ambience must be in the recording with the music—a principle that has guided the recording industry for decades. Recent studies have shown that we get the hall effect when there is enough trailing sound that is sufficiently *incoherent* with the original. That is, the reverberant sound must not, in a sense, repeat the original too closely. The main factor in producing incoherence is *time*. We need a minimum time gap of roughly 20 to 25 milliseconds (0.020 to 0.025 seconds) between source-sound and reverberation before we begin to get "worthwhile" incoherence.

Since sound travels roughly one foot each millisecond, it is simple to compute path lengths from time: For 25 milliseconds of delay the reflection path must be 25 feet longer than the path of the direct sound.

Four-channel stereo, of course, has emphasized more than ever the principle of having the hall ambience on the recording. The two rear speakers can reproduce separately the delayed, incoherent sounds—or at least that major portion of these sounds that would come from the sides and back of the listener in the concert hall. And the idea works magnificently in well-made recordings.

It is highly significant, though, that the four-channel effect is most definite and pleasing in *small* rooms, a fact noted by many observers. When we listen to four-channel reproduction in a space large enough to have its own reverberation effects, the reverberation on the recording gets diluted, masked, and we tend to lose the sense of actually being in the original hall. Obviously, then, a clear distinction must be made between reverberation in the listening room and that included (either naturally or synthetically, using an echo chamber or reverb device) in the original signals.

If you fully understand this distinction, you also will understand why some "truisms" of speaker placement, particularly for quadraphonic reproduction, aren't necessarily true. One stereotype of the four-channel system dictates a speaker in each corner of the room. But the reverberant effect intended by the ambience type of concert hall quad recordings turns out to be largely unaffected by speaker placement. The important factor seems to be that we have sources of separate, delayed (incoherent) sound. You can put the two "back" speakers at the sides of the room, or even near the front; experimentation is in order. The only firm principle is that for clear instrumental placements in the orchestra itself, at the front, the two "front" speakers must indeed span the front wall.

When we consider quadriphonic pops (meaning every variety, rock, jazz, and so on), the importance of reverb in the recording is even more apparent. The pops recording director, as everyone knows, uses artificial reverb freely for a variety of effects, usually applying it separately to different sound sources. Often a vocal soloist will be given far more reverb than the instrumentalists. The producer plans exactly what he wants the listener to hear coming out of each of the four speakers, and listening-room effects are largely ignored.

Rooms à la Mode

If the room is a minor factor in the *perceived* reverb effects, it can be a major factor, and sometimes a disaster, in its effects on the speakers' perceived frequency response. When sound bounces back and forth between two parallel surfaces in a room, there will be a certain frequency (or series of frequencies) that is strongly reinforced because the distance between the surfaces "tunes" them to that frequency. The first frequency so affected is the one with a half-wavelength equal to the distance between the two surfaces. At this frequency we encounter a "room mode" (resonance) and what is known as a "standing wave" (a fine contradiction in terms). A standing wave is one that vibrates "in place"—like a violin string, which vibrates at right angles to its length without wave motion *along* its length.

The room resonates at the room-mode frequency, which will get a big boost—a peak in response—whenever it occurs in the music. And sound at that frequency also will be unevenly distributed in the room since the standing wave exists as peaks at certain points and as nulls at others. You can experience this dramatically if you have an oscillator that puts out, say 50 Hz: Turn your volume control to moderately loud and walk around the room slowly. The 50-Hz bass sound is very likely to come on strong at certain points, drop almost to inaudibility elsewhere.

The two surfaces produce not only this "primary" mode, but a mode for every *multiple* of the original frequency as well. This sounds disastrous, but it is very fortunate. It means that the unevenness produced by room modes, though basically undesirable, is sufficiently "spread out" in frequency to avoid the severe boominess that would result if only one bass frequency were emphasized. The accompanying table shows the first ten room modes for four different dimensions (distances between parallel reflecting surfaces). The first dimension (70 feet) is one you might find in a large concert hall. The other three (15, 12, and 8 feet) could be the length, width, and height of your living room or mine. The frequencies are rounded off to the nearest whole number.

ROOM MODES
For four room dimensions

Mode	70 feet	15 feet	12 feet	8 feet
Primary	8 Hz	38 Hz	47 Hz	71 Hz
2nd	16	75	94	141
3rd	24	113	141	212
4th	32	150	188	282
5th	40	188	235	353
6th	48	225	282	423
7th	56	264	330	494
8th	64	301	377	565
9th	72	339	423	635
10th	80	377	471	706

A glance down the first column will demonstrate why room modes are not of any significance in large halls. At frequencies above the subsonic range, the modes are so close together that there are no substantial "holes" in the response. In this connection, remember that the modes for 70 feet are just one set for the hall; similar sets will exist for the other dimensions and "interleave" with the 70-foot set to produce substantially even response.

In the living room, however, we may have some very big holes in the bass, even with all three sets of modes put together. We also see some frequencies at which modes for two different dimensions coincide. Look, for example, at the second frequency in the 8-foot list and the third in the 12-foot list. Both are 141 Hz, and in a strongly reverberant room that can mean a nasty peak at approximately C sharp below middle C. This sort of problem arises whenever two dimensions have a common factor, as all these pairs of dimensions do. A cubical room—with *all* dimensions the same—would be the world's worst listening room, with hyperemphasized frequencies all up and down the scale. Ideally we need a room with such dimensions that their mode series have no coinciding frequencies. More on that in a moment.

The table also shows that above about 350 Hz, even in the living room, the room modes steadily become less troublesome; there are enough of them in a given frequency span to "fill" the response reasonably well. At frequencies above, say, 1,000 Hz living room modes are inconsequential. Not only are they extremely close together in the scale, but they tend to be much weaker in their effect on the sound than those in the bass.

When you assess the acoustics of a listening room, therefore, you should listen carefully for serious unevenness in the bass, noting especially the "holes" left by notes that ought to be there and are not, as well as bass that jumps out at you on some

notes. A good way to do this is with an organ recording that has pedal passages moving up and down the deep-bass scale. A record of this sort should be on every audiophile's shelf anyway for checking new speakers.

Peaks in the low midfrequencies are even more likely to produce serious coloration: a subtle nastiness that can give the listener a disappointing experience with new, highly anticipated equipment—at least after that initial trial in which new equipment always sounds great. A direct check for serious midfrequency peaks is more difficult to do by ear, but you should presume guilt in any small or moderate-sized room with mostly flat wall surfaces until you can prove it innocent of midrange coloration effects.

This will be especially true if the audiophile backs up the aural analysis (as he should) with a careful examination of the room dimensions, looking for pairs with common factors. If two dimensions are the same he is in real, but not irremediable, trouble.

Putting the Room to Work

Some bass unevenness is inevitable in any listening room smaller than about 15,000 cubic feet—and therefore in any but palatial surroundings. One way to moderate the unevenness is through speaker placement. The room modes will be strongly or weakly activated depending on where the speaker is. With a speaker in the corner and on the floor, all the room modes get the maximum excitation.

This gives the strongest over-all impression of bass, but also the most uneven. To reduce the unevenness, try moving the speaker out from the corner a little, along one wall or the other. For the maximum aural change in this direction, raise the speaker up off the floor as well or move it out away from the walls. The last position gives the weakest but also the most even bass. It might, for example, be just what satisfies an organ enthusiast who wants to hear all the pedal passages without drastic false dynamics added by the room. He may prefer advancing the bass control a little with the speakers in this position to playing his organ recordings "flat" with the speakers positioned for more bass.

But what about the room dimensions themselves? Let's say that your room measures 18 by 12 by 9? First, you must face the fact that, without some treatment, this will be a very bad room for listening to music. You should consider building a shelf area that covers most or all of one end wall and protrudes a foot or more into the room. This will reduce or eliminate some of the worst mode doublings.

It will also have an effect that points toward one of the most important curative measures. The

books and other objects on the shelves create a myriad of varied reflections of the incident sounds, and these subsidiary reflections tend to fill holes in the mode series, with excellent effects on the quality of both direct sound (peaks) and reverb (roughness).

In almost any room, in fact, adding objects that produce many reflections is almost sure to improve the quality of the sound. The seasoned audiophile probably will have the instinctive impression that a "dispersed" sound is a smooth sound, and his instinct will be right. The more numerous and varied the reflections in the room, the better the music is going to sound. The only limit will be the acceptability of reflective objects in the decoration scheme.

The Indirect Approach

One way of achieving greater dispersion than is generally provided by conventional speakers (particularly at high frequencies) is by intentionally aiming the drivers at walls or other sound reflectors, rather than straight out into the room. There are many speaker systems designed along these lines, often called omnidirectional models. Usually they must be placed at some minimum distance from the nearest wall (which, as I've said, helps to avoid worst-case room-mode problems by keeping the speakers out of the corners), and because most of the sound (or at least a significant portion, depending on design) is reflected from nearby walls and furniture the effect may be smoother and airier than the sound you might get with conventional speakers.

The speakers also may give the impression of "bigger" sound—though this is properly in the area of psychoacoustics rather than room acoustics. If a large enough proportion of the speakers' output must bounce off walls and objects before it reaches your ear, you will no longer localize the sound as originating at the speaker. Instead the area from which the sound is reflected appears to be the source—an effect that many listeners like, particularly in reproducing a symphony orchestra or other music to which a large sonic image is appropriate. This is, however, a matter of taste.

Some speaker systems (for instance, typical electrostatics) are "bipolar"—meaning that they radiate sound equally from front and back. But unlike most omnidirectional systems employing cone drivers, the sound issuing from the back is out of phase with that coming from the front. For this reason they too cannot be placed close to the walls of the listening room, or cancellation effects resembling room modes can result. And again, their freestanding placement can help in controlling troublesome room modes.

When you come to consider speakers that might be appropriate for your listening room, you should



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be aware that some manufacturers recently have paid renewed attention to the relationship between a system's sound and its placement in the room. If the manufacturer has specific suggestions about placement, don't ignore them. Some speakers have been specifically designed to tailor the bass output to placement: less bass for corner placement than for use in mid-wall, with the difference engineered for the predicted bass reinforcement in the corner position.

But, though all of these speakers have special properties with respect to either placement or dispersion (or both), they respond to the same basic acoustic laws as a conventional bookshelf system. And those systems designed to reflect a large portion of their sonic output off nearby walls put an extra premium on the ability of the walls to reflect sound.

Acoustic Treatment vs. Acoustics

Now to consider the opposite approach: sound absorbing treatment, which is high in the conventional "wisdom" of room acoustics. The first sad fact is that sound-absorbing materials of the kind ordinarily used to treat interior surfaces do nothing—literally nothing—in the low bass where room modes cause most problems. Very expensive construction can, within limits, help; but cost and appearance mitigate against this solution outside the recording studio or concert hall.

Wall sound absorption can be extremely helpful for the middle frequencies, however, if used judiciously. If there are two large parallel surfaces in the room, with nothing breaking them up, the chances are that some low-mid modes are troublesome. Some wall treatment can help to tame them. The point to remember is that *any* area of absorption, even one or two square feet, has some effect, and the effect increases as the area of absorption increases. It is usually better, in the interest of dispersion and irregularity of reflections, to place several small areas of absorption on the two walls but not directly opposite each other.

The same principle applies to heavy rugs on the floor. Two or three separated rugs, in many cases, will be better than a complete wall-to-wall treatment, and even a single rug that covers only part of the floor will provide some absorption. But total floor coverage could be right if the other room surfaces are hard and reflective. Overstuffed furniture and heavy drapes, in any quantity, also provide absorption.

How do you know when you have the right amount of absorption? The best sonic quality combines smoothness with brilliance. For this you need some absorption in the room but also some hard reflecting surfaces to preserve the high frequencies in the reflected sound. The room has to be "tuned" by ear. As you increase the ratio of ab-

sorption to reflection, the music will get smoother, but at a certain level it also will begin to be flat and dull. If you have gone that far, you must remove some absorption to increase the amount of hard reflecting surfaces. Again, the more irregular the reflectors are, and the more spread through the room, the better. If you can't change the decoration (and often you can't), you probably can add some objects that reflect sound: a desk, a large wooden screen, a tall chest of drawers, etc. Some brilliance will return with each set of strong reflections.

In Search of the Ideal

What about that rare and lucky audiophile who is building a listening room as part of a new or remodeled home? He or she needs a set of length-width-height ratios that will spread the room modes fairly evenly through the scale. Acousticians who have studied this problem over the years have come up with a number of answers. The second table shows some derived from a recent computer study.

"IDEAL" ROOM-DIMENSION RATIOS

	A	B	C
Height	1.00	1.00	1.00
Width	1.14	1.28	1.60
Length	1.39	1.54	2.33

Let's take one concrete example of how these ratios might work. Let's say that your ceiling height is fixed at 11 feet. (Often the height can't be adjusted.) The A set of ratios would give you width of 12 feet 6½ inches and length of 15 feet 3½ inches. Similarly, the B set yields a width of 14 feet and a length of 16 feet 11½ inches. The three sets are about equally effective in spreading the room modes through the spectrum.

Last of all, if you are building a house and can arrange it as part of the design, use the *largest* listening room possible (always with correct ratios for parallel surfaces) and have it *open at one or more areas into other, adjoining large rooms*. For me, the outstanding listening experiences have always taken place in spaces that had a fair balance of reflection and absorption, plus large openings into other rooms, and preferably with nonparallel surfaces (perhaps a sloping ceiling) that serve the same purpose: to break up the space and prevent standing waves. This is a counsel of perfection, admittedly, but some reader may benefit. The rest of us may dream, knowing that what we get in our smaller, boxier rooms still can be the superb experience provided by today's best equipment. ●

by Peter Cowie

TV Opera Shows



Playing a protective tune, Tamino (Josef Köstlinger) leads Pamina (Irma Urrila) through the place of ordeals in Ingmar Bergman's production of *The Magic Flute* seen on Swedish television last New Year's Day.

WHEN INGMAR BERGMAN was an assistant director at the Royal Swedish Opera in 1940, he heard conductor Issay Dobrowen say, "In about fifteen years I hope I'll be ready to do *The Marriage of Figaro*." At the time Bergman could not understand his comment, but now, he claims, he is glad that he waited over twenty years to stage *The Magic Flute*. Although known primarily as a film-maker, he has been closely associated with music and opera throughout his life (see the box "Bergman and Music"), and his Stockholm production of *The Rake's Progress* was brought to Canada during Expo 1967.

His film version (shot in sumptuous color by Oscar-winning cinematographer Sven Nykvist) was televised on New Year's Day 1975 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Swedish Radio. The budget amounted to 2.6 million Swedish crowns (about \$650,000), and the production occu-

ried well over a year. More than one hundred candidates were considered for the singing roles, although the final lineup still has a dominant Scandinavian ring: Ulrik Cold, recently appointed head of the Royal Danish Opera, as Sarastro; Håkan Hagegård as Papageno; Irma Urrila, the Finnish soprano, as Pamina; and Josef Köstlinger, who came to Stockholm from Salzburg seven years ago, as Tamino.

Without exception, these are handsome performers as well as accomplished singers. "The most important factor for me," says Bergman, "was that the singers should have natural voices. You can find artificially cultivated voices that sound marvelous, but you can never really believe that a human personality is doing the singing. Records have accustomed us to a kind of absolute perfection—but beauty cannot be perfect without being vibrant and alive."

The aim of the entire enterprise, both on screen and on disc (see the accompanying box, "The Bergman *Flute* on Disc"), has been to create an intimate, joyful *Flute* and evoke the original 1791

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Ingmar Bergman

How It Should Be Done

The famed director mounts a witty and cohesive version of *The Magic Flute* for Swedish television.

production at the Theater auf der Wieden. Bergman wanted to shoot the film inside the celebrated Drottningholm Palace Theater, in the royal park on the fringes of Stockholm, but the scenery was too fragile to accommodate all the paraphernalia of a TV crew, and so the stage—complete with wings, curtains, and wind machines—was painstakingly copied and erected in the studios of the Swedish Film Institute, under the direction of Henny Noremark. Rumor has it that Schikaneder spent 6,000 florins on costumes and scenery for the premiere in Vienna, and Noremark and his colleagues carefully painted every prop and backdrop in the same shade and tone as it would have been in the time of Mozart. Bergman even claims that Mozart wrote his score with a specific stage in mind (seven meters wide, if we follow the music when Tamino goes across stage to the Temple of Wisdom).

While these preparations were in hand, Bergman was supervising the actual recording with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra in the old Circus building just outside the city. Bergman is a great believer in the "playback" system whereby all the music is prerecorded by the artists and orchestra, and then replayed in segments in the film studio until the director is satisfied with both lip synchronization and acting performance.

TV opera need not, of course, be staged in this manner. John Culshaw, producer of such operas as *La Traviata*, *Owen Wingrave*, and *Peter Grimes* on British television, is sharply opposed to dubbing and prefers to use two adjacent studios. In one of these there is the orchestra and, if necessary, an augmented chorus. In the other, the singers perform, following the conductor's instructions on a monitor screen. Thus all the essential phases of production take place simultaneously.

Bergman opted for the "playback" method, however, because he disliked the idea of singers recording in fits and starts over the ten-week production period and also because it would have been prohibitively expensive for a full orchestra to sit around in the studios for such a long time. Throughout the recording sessions he was every whit as involved as Eric Ericson, the conductor, in ensuring that tempos, phrasing, and dynamics

were right for the stereo broadcast—and this was the first occasion on which the Swedes had harnessed a stereo soundtrack to a TV production. Apart from pleasing those listeners with stereo systems, it justified financial participation in the venture by the radio wing of Swedish Radio, to the extent of 15% of the budget.

It is said that, when Bergman stages a play, one performance differs from another in duration by only a few seconds. This precision marks his production of *The Magic Flute*, from the opening

Bergman and Music

Music has always played a significant part in Bergman's life. An accomplished organist, and a musicologist whose knowledge of the Bach family, for example, is impressive, he once told me that had he not become a film director he might have turned to conducting. (He collects classical records with something of the same avidity as he amasses old films for screening in his home on the island of Fårö.)

Music in Bergman's movies is invariably chosen with care and intelligence. As early as 1953 he used an arresting original score by Karl-Birger Blomdahl for *The Naked Night*. At the end of the Fifties he married the Finnish pianist Kabi Laretei, to whom *Through a Glass Darkly* was dedicated, and in that film he introduced excerpts from Bach's D minor Cello Suite with considerable skill. In *The Silence*, the same composer's Goldberg Variations summon up all kinds of resonances. Just as the variations were written for the young Johann Theophilus Goldberg to play at night to his protector, Count Keyserlingk, in order to alleviate the pain and insomnia caused by a serious illness, so in the film the music has a benign and pacifying effect on the dying Ester. For the musical accompaniment to *Persona*, Bergman turned to another prominent Swedish avant-garde composer, Lars Johan Werle.

Now that *The Magic Flute* has been so well received, it is quite likely that Bergman will proceed to other operas. Next in line? He has mentioned *Don Giovanni*—

P.C.



chords of the overture. Resisting the temptation to use shots of sunsets and verdant landscapes, as André Previn does, for example, when playing Rachmaninoff on television, Bergman cuts from one face to another in a stage audience. This swift cutting fulfills two purposes: It establishes the basically fast tempos that Bergman believes to be part of the opera's character, and it emphasizes the various "sorts and conditions of men" to whom Mozart was addressing his music.

As Ericson whips up the orchestra toward the close of the overture, the cutting accelerates, with one small girl's cherubic face reappearing again and again. During the very opera itself, Bergman on occasion cuts back to her smiling features, as if reminding us that *The Magic Flute* is a fairy tale whose "childish magic and exalted mystery" can appeal to audiences of all ages.

Yet while anything Bergman touches on stage or screen is stamped with his personal signature, this *Flute* is agreeably free of gimmicks. For a start, he has wisely decided to retain the theatrical atmosphere, in much the same way as Sir Laurence Olivier used the Globe Theater as a launch pad for fantasy in his film of *Henry V*. The dragon that pursues Tamino upstage in the opening moments is very much a creature of felt and bunting; the thunder-and-lightning is as tinny and delightful as it must have been in the Theater auf der Wieden; and even the climactic journey through "Death's dark night" has a comforting theatrical artifice about it.

Music lovers who have seen *The Hour of the Wolf*, with its numerous Mozartean and Hoffmannesque overtones, might well assume that Bergman's *Flute* would be a somber, metaphysical affair in which the Queen of the Night and Monostatos would hold sway over the spirits of Tamino and Papageno. Instead, the forces of sweetness

and light are always in the ascendant here. Hagegård's Papageno sets the tone for the rest of the cast. A zestful, rumbustious figure, unencumbered by the elaborate feathers and accouterments of Schikaneder's traditional bird-catcher, he "mm, mm, mm, mm's" deliciously while his mouth is padlocked, munches eclairs while Pamina gazes rapturously at the portrait of Tamino, and thoroughly enjoys his encounter with the old hag (Papagena in disguise) in the House of Trials.

Sarastro, whose role is often grave and statuesque, is seen by Bergman as the father figure in whose gift lies that exalted love sought in their different ways by Tamino and Papageno. Ulrik Cold's rich, ripe tones make him a vital as well as a beneficent character.

The theme of the quest is a key motif in Bergman's screen work—the quest for pure love—and the final vision of Papageno and Papagena frolicking with their children recalls the image of Jof and Mia trundling away in their wagon into the rising sun at the end of *The Seventh Seal*. It represents the apotheosis of human love, just as the twelve measures in Act II when Tamino exclaims, "Oh, eternal night! When will you vanish? When will the light reach my eyes?", and hears the ghostly response of the priests ("Soon, youth, or never"), symbolize the nadir of man's spiritual loneliness.

"Mozart, fatally ill," says Bergman, "asks his question in darkness and from this darkness he answers himself—or does he get an answer? I have never felt so close to the deepest secret of spiritual intuition as just here, in this moment."

And of course there are some typical Bergman frissons. The face of Pamina in the oval locket suddenly smiles and comes to life as Tamino gazes at it. The Three Boys, "spirits from a higher world," descend to the stage in an eighteenth-century hot-air balloon. As the Queen of the Night harangues

Some Bergman touches for *The Magic Flute*: Special makeup and lighting transform The Queen of the Night's (Birgit Nordin) face into a mask of fury as she harangues her daughter (opposite page), a knife-wielding Monostatos (Ragnar Ulfung) leads his forces of darkness at the close of Act II (left); and Pamina (Irma Urrila) and Papageno (Håkan Hagegård) examine the magic bells (below). In bottom photo director Bergman explains a point to members of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra.



her daughter in "Der Hölle Rache," a green filter and waxen makeup transform her face into a mask of fury. And as Tamino approaches the final Trial, he is escorted by two dark men with flaming helmets.

From a television point of view, one of Bergman's most intriguing devices is to confront the audience with the texts of certain passages, inscribed on placards manipulated by the cast at the foot of the frame. This, says the director, conveys the *Verfremdung* effect when one or more people turn to the audience with a moralizing remark, typical of eighteenth-century theater (e.g., "If we could give such liars all, / A lock their slander to restrain").

All these effects would go for naught were it not for the brilliant sound technique. I have never seen an opera on film or television in which the synchronization of voice and lips is so perfectly achieved. In some productions (e.g., the new Karajan *Otello*), the lip movements match the words on the track, but the spatial dimension is false. In Bergman's *Flute*, however, the voices emanate from exactly the right positions on set, creating a three-dimensional aura that draws an audience directly into the drama.

Although Bergman, as I have said, lays stress on the theatrical basis of the presentation, he also

knows when to transcend its boundaries—in the final scene, for example, as Tamino and Pamina pass through seemingly endless vistas of smoke and writhing bodies, and when Monostatos and his minions advance mercilessly toward the camera.

Both on the TV screen and on disc, this *Magic Flute* must rank with the wittiest and most gripping versions ever mounted. Bergman has successfully avoided the stylization that often cramps opera on-stage, while the singing has an alluring timbre that clearly comes from the cast's over-all enthusiasm for the project. It is a marvelous act of homage by a master of the visual arts to the eighteenth century's greatest artistic spirit. ●

[As we go to press, negotiations are underway for U.S. distribution of both the film and disc versions of the Bergman *Magic Flute*. Several companies have reportedly expressed interest in the records, but they are apparently reluctant to commit themselves until arrangements are made for distribution of the film. Meanwhile, the album can be obtained directly; the price is 111 Swedish krona (approximately \$28.50), not including shipping. Write to the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, SR Promotions-Export, S-10510 Stockholm, Sweden.]

The Bergman *Flute* on Disc

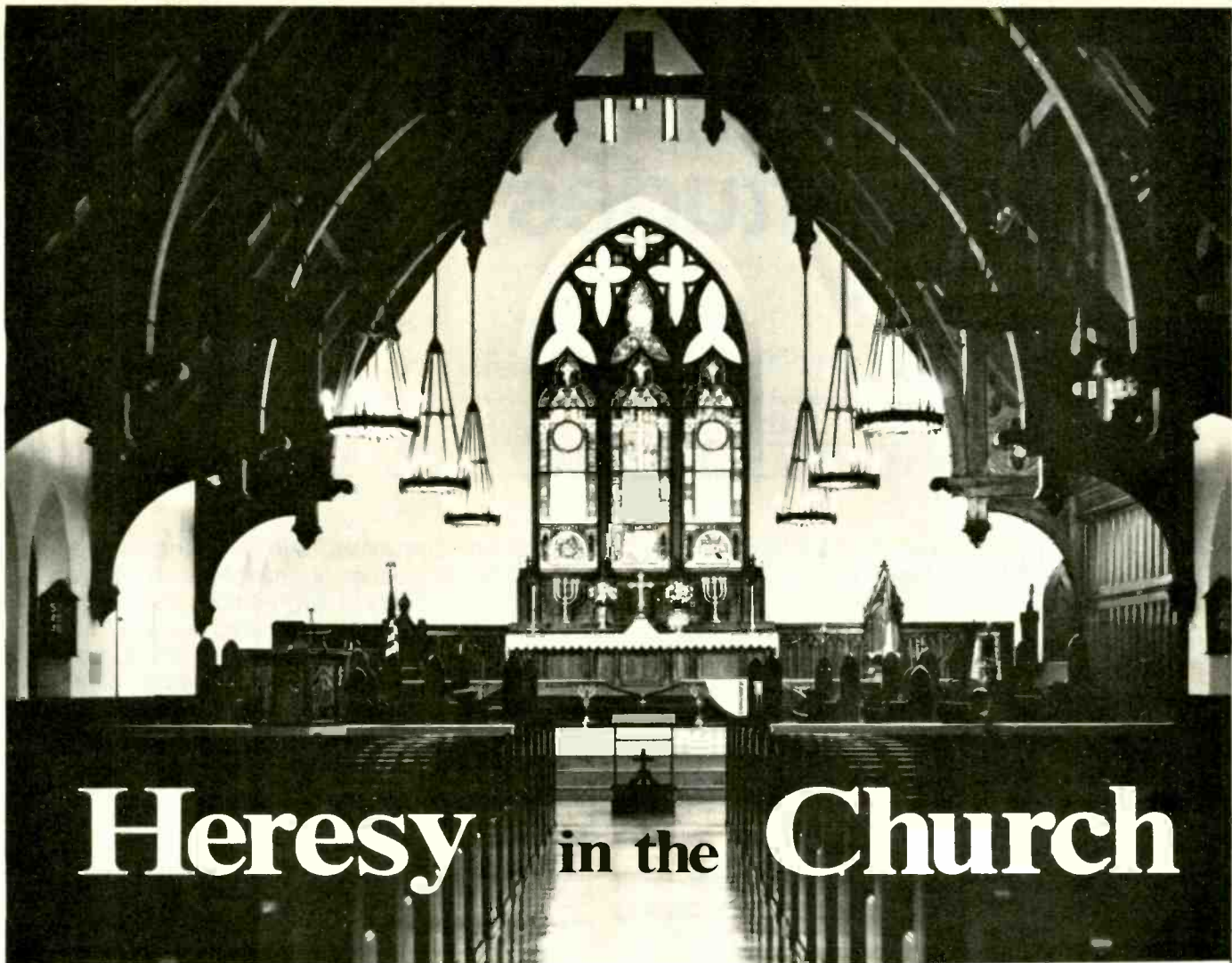
Swedish Radio has released the complete soundtrack of the Bergman *Magic Flute* as a boxed set of three discs (RXL P 1226/8), together with the libretto and a full commentary by Bergman on his attitude to certain scenes and personalities in the opera. This is provided in Swedish, English, and German parallel texts, so that the listener can overcome the admittedly major hurdle of the entire opera's being sung in Swedish. (This, by the way, is not so bad as it might seem, for the Swedish language possesses a natural singsong lilt.)

Like any soundtrack album, these discs are enhanced by certain special effects that are denied to the average recorded opera. A detailed comparison with, say, Karl Böhm's DG recording with Roberta Peters, Evelyn Lear, Fritz Wunderlich, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and Franz Crass (2709 017), betrays the difference between a stellar group of artists, assembled for a short time, and a unified, purposeful cast like Bergman's. Birgit Nordin's coloratura may not match that of Peters, and Irma Urrila may be no more than a pretty and honorable Pamina, but there is in general a more unflinching sense of pace to the singing on the Swedish Radio discs. Böhm's is the fuller version,

for Bergman has eliminated many spoken lines touching on Freemasonry, but at certain moments Bergman adds a decisive touch of his own, such as the revelation of Papagena's identity in the House of Trials; in the normal version, the scene is interrupted before the old hag can finish her sentence, "My name is. . ."

Atmospheric details such as footsteps approaching across the stage, singly or en masse, Papageno's chewing of cakes as he shows Pamina the picture of her prince, and the sly, lecherous whispers of Monostatos (sung by Ragnar Ulfung, well known to Met audiences for his incisive Mime and Herod), all contribute to the vivid impression of the Bergman/Ericson set. Indeed, the single most arresting moment in the album is when Monostatos suddenly hisses "Nur stille, stille, stille, stille!" from the left-hand speaker, and the Queen of the Night, skirts rustling ominously, advances with her army of women. During the ultimate ordeal, the brave notes of Tamino's flutes seem suspended above a vertiginous gorge, in the depths of which can be heard a ghastly wailing, while Böhm in his version settles for some rather tame timpani in the background.

All in all, one cannot help feeling that Bergman has exerted as much personal control over this boxed set as he has over the TV production. P.C.



Heresy in the Church

Most of the congregation of Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, thought the Rector had just started speaking louder. At the pulpit, where there was a microphone, his voice sounded exactly the same as it did at the altar, where there was no microphone. Just louder. There was no difference in voice quality. When told that the new P.A. system was installed, some members were disappointed. It "didn't sound like a P.A. system."

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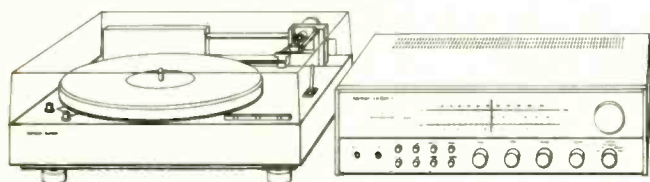


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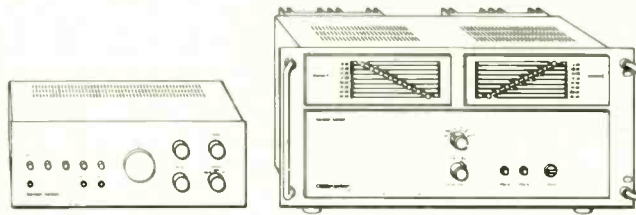
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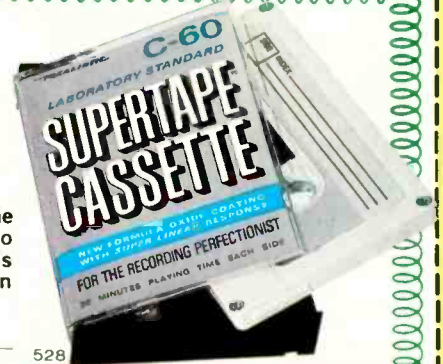
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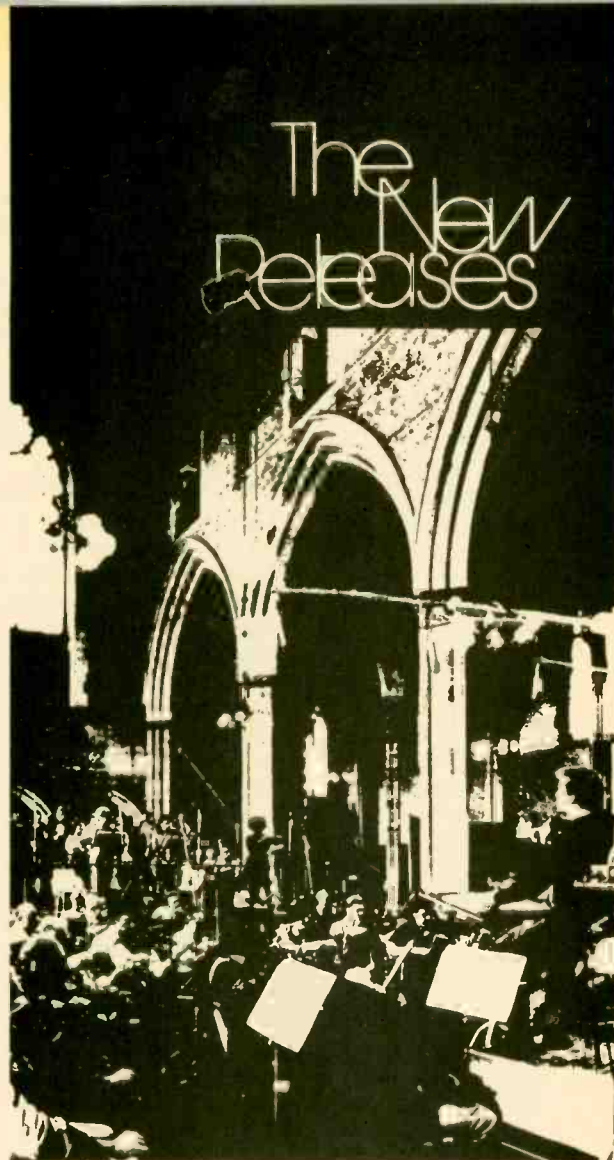
IN HIS THREE *grands opéras*, *Le Siège de Corinthe*, *Moïse*, and *Guillaume Tell*, Rossini adopted, with increasing rigor, a new, more elevated and massive manner that opened ways to Berlioz, Meyerbeer, Verdi, and Wagner. In these French operas by the Italian maestro we find a new vividness and vigor of recitative; new simplicity and directness of utterance; larger harmonic schemes; broader construction of numbers; grander use of the chorus and the orchestra; fewer roulades.

Le Siège de Corinthe (1826) is a reworking of the Neapolitan opera *Maometto II* (1820), as *Moïse* (1827) is of the Neapolitan *Mosè in Egitto* (1818). And in both cases a comparison of the French score with the Italian reveals two things, one expected and the other perhaps surprising: first, that with a sure hand Rossini removed numbers that are trivial or merely conventional (three *arie di bravura* disappear from each opera); but second, that many of the greatest things in the second version were already present in the first.

In fact, the conventional picture of the cynical and facile, if divinely gifted, composer, drawn earlier this century by men who had heard few of his serious operas, needs revision. After all, during his vital Neapolitan years Rossini was regularly and increasingly chided for giving the orchestra too much to do, for being too Mozartean, too learned, too "German." In *Semiramide*, the most hair-raisingly florid of all his operas and the last to be composed for Isabella Colbran, he seems to have gotten something out of his system. When at last, in Paris, he had financial security, a stable company, a good orchestra, and plenty of rehearsal time, when no longer pressed by impresarios, prima donnas, and the whole scurry of the Italian opera business, he could afford to work out more fully the ideas and ideals that had been present before but compromised by the need to score one success after another with each volatile local public.

In *Le Siège de Corinthe* the heroine's *Maometto finale*, shorn of its florid section, is moved to midpoint, and the opera ends not with a display of Colbran's virtuosity, but with the calm, lovely *prière* "*Juste ciel*" for soprano and chorus and then (as in *Moïse* and *Tell*) a coda for orchestra alone. (Yet, as "*Giusto cielo*," this prayer had already figured in the Italian version—but early on in the opera.) Berlioz wrote a scathing review of *Le Siège*, but Rossini's final scene left its clear mark on *La Prise de Troie*: During the coda the insurgents rush in, to be greeted by the spectacle of heroic maidens killing themselves rather than be captured, while outside the doomed city blazes. The rousing, catchy popular chorus "*Répondons à ce cri de victoire*" also seems to be a direct ancestor of Berlioz' Trojan March.

At the Paris Opéra, *Le Siège* scored its century within twelve seasons—being overtaken on the way by the even more successful *Moïse*. (*Tell* was more successful still—a hundred performances within five years.) *Tell*, grandly imposing, lacks the warmth and spontaneity of Rossini's earlier invention. *Moïse* contains more of the Neapolitan charm—it is the earlier *Mosè* purged, with its strongest numbers reordered in a stronger form. *Le Siège* is even closer to Naples—but not nearly close enough, it seems, for some modern tastes! Anyone who buys the Angel recording, or



The
New
Releases

by Andrew Porter

Siege of Corinth as Rossini Never Quite Wrote It

Angel's hybrid edition
wavers uncertainly between
Neapolitan vocal display and
Parisian grand opera.

attends or listens to the Metropolitan Opera production of the work, will hear a version corresponding to no printed score of *Le Siège de Corinthe* or *L'Assedio di Corinto* or, for that matter, *Maometto II*, but one that has been elaborately re-embellished with just those "abuses"—or charms—of which Rossini had sought to purge his *grand opéra*. This needs some explanation, and none is forthcoming in the booklet that accompanies the Angel issue. The title page has the credit line "Musicological Research by J. F. Mastroianni," and Mr. Mastroianni contributes an essay on the various textual adventures of *Maometto* and

Le Siège, stopping short—through no fault of his, but for reasons *sub judice*—of any consideration of the text that is here actually performed.

In the Italian translation by Calisto Bassi, as *L'Assedio di Corinto*, the work was revived at the Florence Maggio Musicale in 1949 and two years later in Rome, on each occasion with Renata Tebaldi as its heroine. In 1967, an RAI (Italian Radio) studio performance achieved wide currency; and then, in 1969, Beverly Sills made her European debut as the heroine of an *Assedio* at La Scala.

The Scala edition, by Thomas Schippers and Randolph Mickelson, was a conflation of Naples and Paris. The soprano regained her cabaletta. Marilyn Horne took over and amplified the role that Rossini had devised for that noble, intelligent tenor Adolphe Nourrit (in *Maometto*, this had been a florid contralto part). The new Angel/Met edition is not identical with La Scala's, and it takes account of a version of *Maometto* that Rossini himself prepared for Venice in 1823. (This had a happy ending, with "*Tanti affetti*," from *La Donna del lago*, as its finale.) A full analysis of the original Naples *Maometto*, the Venice revision, and the transformation into *Le Siège* is provided by Philip Gossett in a chapter of his Princeton dissertation *The Operas of Rossini: Problems of Textual Criticism in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (1970). I'll take up the tale from there. But first, let me quote some sentences from the Abstract that concludes Mr. Gossett's work:

A Rossini opera must be regarded as a collection of individual units that could be rearranged, substituted, or omitted depending upon local conditions of performance, local taste, or whim. The composer was as likely to make such alterations as any local musical director, and consequently there is rarely a single "best" version. Modern performances should be equally flexible.

The anonymous compilers—I almost wrote perpetrators—of the Angel edition can point to that paragraph in defense of what they have done. Given such virtuoso singers as Beverly Sills and Shirley Verrett, they give them to sing whatever they like singing best. Two points, however. First, it is one thing to provide an evening of glittering, exhilarating entertainment in the theater and another, surely, to "publish" such an ad hoc version in the relatively permanent form of a recording. And second, Mr. Gossett's remarks apply most pertinently to the Italian operas; it could be argued that the *grands opéras* are cast in a somewhat more nearly "definitive" form.

In the main part of his text, Mr. Gossett gives several instances of alterations, omissions, and insertions by the composer that spoiled his first ideas. (Handel, a similarly practical man of the theater, rarely improved his operas when adjusting them to the special needs of revival casts.) Some of the Angel alterations smash careful forms, and kick away one support of a balanced tonal arch, to an extent that seems to me unjustifiable. Better, I think, to record a complete *Le Siège de Corinthe* in the form given it by Rossini, and in the original language, rather than a translation; and reserve the ladies' glittering fancy-work for whizzing recital records. The complete *Tell* from Angel, and the dazzling composite *Maometto*+*Siège* aria recorded by Marilyn Horne (on



Reg Wilson

Justino Diaz's emphatic point amuses *Siège* colleagues Beverly Sills, Thomas Schippers, and producer John Mordler.

London OS 26305), provide parallels for this procedure.

Here, then, in summary, is what this recording of *The Siege of Corinth* (Angel uses the English title) contains. Unnoted are numerous cuts of a few bars here, a few there, of repetitions, and chunks of ensemble. The vocal lines are decorated up to the hilt, *passim*, sometimes stylishly, sometimes to a point where, for example, the lovely line of the soprano's "*Du séjour de la lumière*" is rendered unrecognizable; some melodies are newly composed descants rather than graced Rossini. (An *Assedio* vocal score is currently obtainable from Ricordi or, in a less expensive paperback reprint, from Kalmus.)

Rossini's *introduzione* consists of an E flat *maestoso*, a G minor-major *andante*, and an *allegro moderato* back in E flat; the last, ten pages long, is missing. The recitative and orchestral introduction to the bass's *cavatina* are missing (so are three pages of noble *cantabile* found in the French but not the Italian score); the *cavatina* starts suddenly.

In *Le Siège*, the soprano's big scene that opens Act II is a composite made from (a) a section of the *Maometto* finale and (b) the contralto's cabaletta from *Maometto*, adapted for soprano. On the disc, Miss Sills inserts, before (a), another section of the *Maometto* finale, "*Si, ferite*." In the manuscript score prepared for Cinti-Damoreau, the first Pamira (which survives, together with other materials of the first production, in the Paris Opéra Library), this section also appears but has been pinned up. It is printed in some early scores of *The Siege*. It is a poor piece. Then Miss Sills sings (a), which is the overdecorated "*Du séjour*" mentioned above, and after it not (b), for in this version it has been given back to the contralto, but a piece of early Rossini, a cabaletta he used in the cantata *Didone*, in *Ciro in Babilonia*, in *L'Inganno felice*, and in a *Mosè* revival, made up of empty, conventional roulades and passages.

The following duet, for the soprano and the bass, is harshly cut. Rossini gave it the form (a) *allegro giusto* in C, (b) *sostenuto* in A flat, (c) *allegro* back in C. In (a), Mahomet loses four measures of his strophe, and Pamira *all* (thirty-five measures) of hers. In (b), Pamira loses fourteen measures. Then (c) is missing altogether, leaving the number lopsided.

Odd things happen in the big Néocles scene that opens Act III. After the introductory scene, Miss Ver-

rett inserts a number from *Maometto*, "Non temer . . . Nel periglio . . . E d'un trono," taking it down a semitone into E flat. There follows the off-stage *prière*; Néocles' on-stage interjections are here reassigned to Cléomène, and after this comes, not the *Siège* cabaletta (as in Miss Horne's recording), but a trio from the Venice *Maometto*, "*Pria svenar*." This trio, for contralto, tenor, and bass, is followed immediately by the *Siège* trio, "*Céleste Providence*," for the soprano, contralto, and tenor.

Thereafter, except for cuts, everything is more or less on course until, into the finale, Miss Sills inserts an aria, "*Parmi vederlo, ah! misero*," that Giuditta Grisi sang in a Venice performance of *L'Assedio*. Whom is it by?

L'Assedio was first heard in New York in 1835. It had reached London the previous year, and Henry Chorley wrote that "the world has been too willing to let this work go, perhaps because the cause of Greek liberty, to which it was meant to appeal, soon ceased to warm anyone. . . . Yet *Le Siège de Corinthe* contains music too noble to be forgotten." Nobility is not the outstanding quality of the recorded version. Mobility, rather. What I wrote about Miss Sills's *Scala Pamira*, in 1969, seems applicable again:

"At this, her European debut, she certainly revealed a prodigious facility in rapid singing: Her divisions, her graces, her scales, her leaps were all surprising, while the treatment of long, slow phrases showed considerable feeling for line. The roudades (the music had been decorated up to the hilt) were amazing. . . . Reservations must be about the lack of solidity, of firm center, in the tone."

Miss Verrett, as Néocles, does not have Miss Horne's astonishing range, or her precision in rapid passagework and vertiginous chamois saltation, but she has her own allure and makes a very impressive and energetic Néocles. Since much of the written contralto part lies low for her, she often adopts the tenor version, taking it up an octave.

The men are less remarkable. Justino Díaz, who also undertook the role of Mahomet at La Scala, gets by in the theater, but on disc a more flexible, forward, sharply focused, and precise bass is called for. Harry Theyard, as Cléomène, seems strained and often falls into a braying timbre. In the bit parts, Robert Lloyd is outstanding. Gwynne Howell, who comes on, as Hiéros, to launch the patriotic chorus toward the end, has a splendid voice but not quite enough rhythmic dash.

The Ambrosians form a very efficient chorus. The London Symphony plays with verve ("It was really Rossini, in *Le Siège de Corinthe*, who first introduced noisy orchestration into France," said Berlioz); oboe and clarinet soloists, in the "atmospheric" entr'acte before Act III, play delicately. Thomas Schippers conducts the whole with great spirit. He sets just tempo, provides supple and subtle support for the soloists, and makes the most of Rossini's scene- and mood-painting.

The recording was done in the church of All Saints, Tooting (a suburb of London). Miss Sills recorded her *Manon* there, and the result was the best recorded account of her voice. But the *Traviata* that followed had, for my taste, too boomy, resonant, and "public" an acoustic quality; and often in this *Siège*

we could again do with cleaner, more sharply focused sound. In the opening exchanges, the governor, his general, and his prelate (if that is what Hiéros is) seem to be shouting at one another across a public bathhouse. A resonant, even too resonant, recording, then; but otherwise lively, "actual," and well-balanced sound.

The *Siège* is the familiar operatic tale of a heroine whose heart has been won by an enemy of her people. In the French version the action was moved from the Bosphorus, where Anna was the daughter of the Venetian governor, to Corinth, where Pamira is the daughter of the governor Cléomène, and otherwise things are much the same. Oversimplifying, one could say that *Maometto II* is an opera about singers in situations, and *Le Siège* a drama of situations set to music.

I find it hard to put my finger on what exactly makes me find this account of the work somewhat unsatisfying. Perhaps simply that it falls between the two stools: a feast of vocal virtuosity, and an epic, formal dramatic construction in the high French manner. The singers are not at the service of the music drama; the music drama is molded, mangled, manipulated to serve them—and in that case *Maometto II* would surely have served their purposes better than *Le Siège de Corinthe*. In other words, there are moments when I long for the ladies to stop going diddle-diddle-diddle, trilling away none too tidily, and leaping up to high notes (rather thin, peaky, or squeaky ones from the heroine, at times)—to forget Naples and Colbran, and to aim at a noble simplicity (touched—as are Mathilde's air in *Tell*, and Pamira's "*Du séjour*" and "*Juste ciel*" as written—with sudden, delicate fiorituras rather than submerged by a lava stream of roudades).

Another thing that definitely spoils pleasure is the fact that soprano, tenor, and bass are none of them very exact, every-note-true-in-the-center kinds of singer, so the important ensembles, especially the "canonic" trios, are not purely chorded, nor do we hear one line moving against another with each interval beautifully defined. In the theater, where there is much to distract attention from matters purely musical, I look forward immensely to hearing the production. This set will serve as a cherished souvenir of it.

The accompanying booklet, designed by Virginia Leishman, is illustrated with a very attractive and interesting series of scenes and costume designs from productions old and new. Less care has been taken with the typography of the libretto. All the lines are shouldered left to a single margin, and divisions between strophes and sections are eliminated. The English translation is by Gwyn Morris. The Schirmer libretto for the Met (from which a few lines of Pamira's last recitative are missing) has a different translation, by William Weaver.

ROSSINI: *Le Siège de Corinthe* (uncredited performing edition; sung in Italian).

Pamira	Beverly Sills (s)	Hiéros	Gwynne Howell (bs)
Néocles	Shirley Verrett (ms)	Omar	Robert Lloyd (t)
Mahomet	Justino Diaz (bs)	Ismène	Delia Wallis (s)
Cléomène	Harry Theyard (t)	Adraste	Gaetano Scano (t)

Ambrosian Opera Chorus; London Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Schippers, cond. [John Mordler, prod.] ANGEL SCLX 3819, \$21.98 (three discs, automatic sequence).

by Harris Goldsmith

A Major Addition to the Cantelli Discography

IT WAS JUST over a year ago (April 1974) that I welcomed Rococo's issue of the Cantelli/NBC Beethoven Fifth Symphony as a fitting tribute, however small, to this increasingly neglected musical giant. Now the Arturo Toscanini Society has moved into that deplorable void with the first of two six-disc sets* (and possibly more), in a new "Protégé Series."

After an important debut with the Scala orchestra in 1945 at twenty-five (the program included the Tchaikovsky *Pathétique*), Cantelli wasn't re-engaged there for three years. (As a matter of fact, he very nearly didn't make that debut; he was dramatically rescued by the Allies only days before his date with a firing squad for Resistance activities.) But then, in May 1948, came his big break: Toscanini, vacationing in Italy, happened to hear one of his rehearsals, liked what he heard, and invited him to conduct the NBC Symphony.

The association with the NBC orchestra proved fruitful indeed, and Cantelli gradually emerged as Toscanini's heir apparent. He was a remarkable virtuoso: a forthright and fanatically dedicated artist whose much-acclaimed performances were distinctive even in an age that still enjoyed the services of titans like Toscanini, Monteux, Kleiber, and Walter. But a gruesome twist of fate turned Cantelli from superstar into meteor: Returning to New York in November 1956 for his sixth consecutive season guest-conducting the Philharmonic, he was killed when his plane crashed on takeoff at Orly airport.

Like two other tragically short-lived artists, pianist Dinu Lipatti and violinist Ginette Neveu, Cantelli was a meticulous interpreter, utterly contemptuous of anything hasty or routine. David Bicknell, producer of nearly all of Cantelli's EMI recordings, relates (in *The Gramophone*, January 1957) that, when they met to discuss recorded repertory, the young conductor cautioned against doing anything too soon. It may therefore surprise many people to discover that Cantelli nevertheless amassed an extensive commercial discography.

With the NBC Symphony he recorded Haydn's Symphony No. 93, Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* Symphony, the Franck symphony, and *Pictures at an Exhibition* for RCA Victor. He did Vivaldi's *Four*

*"The Cantelli Legacy, Vol. 2," now in preparation, is scheduled to include the Bartók *Concerto for Orchestra*, the Tchaikovsky Fifth Symphony, the Schubert Second Symphony, the Hindemith *Concert Music for Strings and Brass*, and works by Vivaldi, Geminiani, Handel, Rossini, Casella, Cherubini, Verdi, and Britten.

Seasons with the New York Philharmonic for Columbia and a few items (the Tchaikovsky Fifth Symphony, Rossini's *Siege of Corinth Overture*, Casella's *Paganiniana*, and Busoni's *Berceuse élégiaque*) with Italian orchestras.

Most of Cantelli's commercial recording, however, was done in London with the Philharmonia Orchestra, for EMI. Three discs' worth of that material remains in print on Seraphim: the Mendelssohn *Italian* and Schubert *Unfinished Symphonies* (60002), a Debussy collection (60077), and Beethoven's Seventh Symphony (S 60038, stereo). Several important Cantelli performances—e.g., the Brahms Third Symphony, Mozart's Symphony No. 29 and *Musical Joke*, a suite from Debussy's *Martyre de Saint Sébastien*, Dukas's *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, and the Falla *Three-Cornered Hat* dances—have never even been issued in this country. Such other choice repertory as a memorable Brahms First Symphony, Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*, Schumann's Fourth, Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte* and *Daphnis et Chloé Suite No. 2*, and the aforementioned NBC *Mathis der Maler* and *Pictures at an Exhibition* has long been unobtainable.

A systematic revival of Cantelli's commercial recordings is long overdue, but what we have here may be even more noteworthy. "The Cantelli Legacy, Vol. 1," drawn from NBC Symphony concerts, comprises mostly works he did not record; even the one exception provides a fascinating alternative to the commercial version. Had he lived longer, Cantelli would doubtless have recorded—and re-recorded—all the works on these six invaluable discs. In fact, Side 1 includes snippets from a rehearsal for a Philharmonia recording of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, apparently unfinished at his death.

This anthology is far more than a nostalgic souvenir. We have here an extensive documentation of one of the most important conductors of the century, preserved in eminently decent sound. The sonics may not be quite state of the art for 1952-54 (I would guess that a limiter was used, particularly to hold down climaxes in the Tchaikovsky Fourth Symphony), but the instrumental detail is clear and colorful. And the total sonority, though less opulent than today's lavishly spread product, is more than adequate to the task of re-creating Cantelli's radiant spirit, his rhythmic élan and red-blooded impact.

Indeed, these concert performances add the di-

The Toscanini Society's six-disc NBC Symphony set provides a vital supplement to the (mostly unavailable) commercial recordings.

mension of excitement to the suave refinement heard in so many of Cantelli's recordings. Some of the difference is attributable to the NBC Symphony's style of execution, miraculously taut and disciplined, stressing clarity more than lush tonal color. Microphoning also undoubtedly accounts for the close-up, immediate impact here, in contrast to the more spaciouly resonant, softer focus in the majority of the Philharmonia performances.

The aforementioned 1956 Beethoven Fifth rehearsal fragments afford a dramatic comparison with the complete NBC performance from two years before. As rehearsals go, this one is only moderately instructive—one gathers that the conductor was interested in sharper motivic contouring, a more striding sonority, and greater rhythmic *sostenuto*. It would undoubtedly have been interesting to hear the finished performance, which I suspect might have lacked some of the incisiveness and immediacy of the NBC broadcast; the British excerpts are reproduced with warm, solid sound, but everything is a shade sober and given over to the soft tenuto phrasing that Cantelli seemed to be cultivating more and more in his two final seasons. I prefer the harder, less plushy tone of the closely miked NBC version.

It is often said that Cantelli copied Toscanini slavishly, inevitably falling short of his mentor because of immaturity and lack of experience. This wide-ranging ATS collection puts the relationship into better perspective. Cantelli's work with the NBC Symphony *did* resemble Toscanini's more closely than did his work with other orchestras, for a variety of reasons. The orchestra, to begin with, had worked for years under Toscanini, and the maestro also attended most of Cantelli's rehearsals with "his" orchestra. In addition, Cantelli's NBC work for the most part preceded his work with other American and British orchestras and thus found him more susceptible to the Toscanini influence; in later seasons, his increasing international prestige and professional experience brought his own special gifts of color and graceful lyricism to the fore, sometimes with less than happy results.

For all that, even Cantelli's 1949 performances gave unmistakable evidence of a conductor who was very much his own man. Toscanini may have exerted a tremendous formative influence, but Cantelli's close parallel to many of Toscanini's principles was, I think, due to their basic similarity of musical outlook.

One of the most noticeable differences between the young Cantelli and the venerable Toscanini was the former's relaxed grace and flow, which provided a perceptible contrast to some of the rather frantic Toscanini performances of that period. Cantelli's Beethoven Fifth is but one of several performances in this set that give the lie to the assertion that he played works on a smaller dynamic scale and with less intensity than Toscanini. The tempos are a bit slower, and the Andante in particular has a songfulness unique to Cantelli's style, but the climaxes

blaze with a power and energy at least the equal of Toscanini's. When I reviewed the Rococo issue of this performance, I likened it to the earlier, and better-controlled, of Toscanini's two recordings. Rhythmic control is one of the performance's strongest assets. The string figurations in the slow movement are bowed with almost militaristic precision, and the exulting brass-and-timpani fanfares in the finale are executed with machine-gun precision and power. For all the incredible power, Cantelli is able to elicit even greater reserves of sonority when needed. The sonics are dramatically superior to those of the dim-sounding Rococo disc, but the greater clarity and immediacy make it easier to perceive minuscule imperfections in the orchestral performance. The solo oboe, for example, is unattractively sour in the reprise of the scherzo, and there are one or two examples of cracked brass notes and lagging bass ensemble. For all that, this remains a performance of stunning virtuosity, unquestionably one of the great Beethoven Fiftths on record.

The "immaturity/lack of experience" notion demands a bit of clarification. Very little of Cantelli's work can fairly be described as "immature." From the outset, his technical authority and musical taste had uncommon conviction and controlled discipline. Nonetheless, he was a young, developing interpreter, and it is fair to assume that his prime was yet to come. His performances, even in the short period we came to know them, were changing. There is no comparison between the lightweight Beethoven Fifth of December 1950 and his later readings. Similarly, the December 1952 Haydn Symphony No. 88, the 1949 and 1951 *La Valses*, the 1950 Busoni *Tanzwalzer*, and the 1952 Brahms First Symphony were all, in their various ways, different from and less successful than his subsequent readings of these pieces. His first performances of the Verdi Requiem (December 1954 in Boston, February 1955 in New York) and *Te Deum* (March and April 1956) were direct enough but showed little of the characterization that Toscanini brought—and that Cantelli presumably would have brought—to that music. In fairness, sometimes repetition had the opposite result: None of Cantelli's later performances of Wagner's *Faust Overture* and Haydn's Symphony No. 93 had quite the flow and inspired spontaneity of the first ones in January 1949.

Schubert's "Great" C major Symphony was relatively new to his repertory when he gave the broadcast performance (December 27, 1953) in this set. (He had, so far as I know, played it only twice previously, in Europe.) This is a notoriously tough work to hold together, and the remarkable thing about Cantelli's reading is its astute avoidance of all the celebrated pitfalls. Technically and rhythmically, his interpretation is crystal clear and highly poised. The tempo relations are mostly fine—patterned along the lines of Toscanini's conception, but a bit broader and less extreme. Balances and articulation are close to perfect: One hears everything with clarity. The NBC Symphony's playing is absolutely beautiful: round-

er, warmer of tone, less pressured than in its recorded performance of a few months earlier under Toscanini (RCA LM 1835, deleted).

Cantelli obviously had a wonderful basic feeling for this piece, but even with that considerable affinity this performance falls short of the overwhelming experience it might well have become had he been granted the time to mellow his already sound interpretive instincts. This is not so much an immature reading as a tentative one. Certain sections are ideal—the first-movement introduction has supreme line and even some almost imperceptible tempo shifts within the basic pulse. I also admire Cantelli's refusal to make a premature acceleration into the main allegro. Yet, where Toscanini achieves this transition with overpowering cohesion and grandeur (especially in his great 1941 Philadelphia version, RCA LD 2663, deleted), Cantelli is merely heavy. Some of the phrasing in the second movement too is a shade metronomic and inexpressive; the huge climax later on is so controlled that it sounds antiseptic and inhibited. Nor has the coda of the finale, with its breathtaking groups of unison sforzando Cs, anything like the propulsive power of the Toscanini/Philadelphia record. It is unfair to measure the work of a thirty-three-year-old just gaining experience with this treacherous piece against that of Toscanini or Karajan (DG 139 043) at their seasoned best, but Cantelli meets the challenge without discredit.

I doubt that there is a conductor of any age who could lead Tchaikovsky's Fourth with such honesty and eloquence. The blockbusting climaxes, as heard in the hall, were simply pulverizing in impact. Even with the dynamic compression of this otherwise clean-sounding air check, the physical power is quite spectacular. But this is a subtle, poetic Fourth as well as an impassioned one. Cantelli's Tchaikovsky was not maudlin or hysterical, but it wasn't relentlessly straight and objective either. There are adjustments of tempo and a plenitude of rubato (e.g., the downward woodwind scales in the first movement's second theme). These innovations, though, are always of a conservative rather than a disruptive nature. The clarity is remarkable—particularly in the first-movement exposition, where various string, brass, and woodwind lines are judiciously delineated. There is also a balletic quality to Cantelli's phrasing: it breathes, it sings, it pulsates, but always within the over-all structure. Forward momentum and timing are remarkably gauged, color and texture differentiated without injury to the larger idea of the whole. For this performance alone, the set is indispensable.

Cantelli achieves another re-creative miracle with the *Rienzi* Overture, which he invests with a breadth and exultation comparable to Wagner's much later music. The introductory material, as played here, unfolds like the dawn music from *Götterdämmerung*; the stride of the NBC Symphony's brass section and percussion battery drumming out the heartbeat of the big tune is something to behold. For all that, this version of January 31, 1954, is not Cantelli's best performance; that of January 3, 1953, flows a little more smoothly and displays the orchestra in more polished estate.

One major point of divergence between the No-

vember 1952 NBC broadcast of Schumann's Fourth Symphony and the May 1953 commercial recording with the Philharmonia is the treatment of the first-movement introduction. The New York orchestra, used to Toscanini's iron hand, maintains Cantelli's brisker than usual tempo almost too inflexibly. The Philharmonia, by contrast, has equal urgency but far more spaciousness of design; the tempo is still faster than the norm, but just a shade more yielding than in the NBC version.

Both are decidedly Toscanini-ish readings—alert, lithe, rhythmically precise, and temperamentally electric. The phrasing is severe, expressive but decidedly reserved for such Romantic music. There is great clarity but a minimum of technical tricks. In the first-movement development, for example, Szell used to have his brass section hold some of its sustained notes for less than their marked duration, thus enabling the strings' reiterated figurations to cut through cleanly. Cantelli's musicians play the passage strictly as written, which makes it a bit harder—but not impossible—to hear the strings.

His remarkable gifts of pacing and proportion are revealed by his effectively literal reading of the work's finale. He is one of the few conductors who heed Schumann's directive to get faster at the first of the two *schneller* markings. (Too many interpretations accelerate too rapidly and must—necessarily—halve the tempo at that crucial point.) Cantelli's unusual rectitude and textual purity make all the more surprising his consistent elimination of the first-movement repeat and refusal to let the second movement follow the first without a delay.

I attended rehearsals for the Beethoven First Symphony preserved here and can attest that the repeats in that work were omitted only because of time limitations. The first movement, in any event, is not one of Cantelli's happiest efforts. The rhythm is sluggish, and the tempo often tends to pull back in an almost Mengelbergian way. The Andante, however, is beautifully expressive, though the kettledrum figurations are—surprisingly for the NBC Symphony's Karl Glassman—rather underplayed. The third movement, marked menuetto but actually the first of Beethoven's unbuttoned scherzos, has memorable thrust, and the finale, though less ebullient than Toscanini's performance with the same orchestra, has remarkable delicacy and lightness.

Haydn's Symphony No. 88 gets a magnificent performance. This broadcast of January 31, 1954, is equal in every way to Toscanini's 1938 recording. Cantelli had played the work a season earlier, but although his December 1952 version had plenty of sparkle and charm, there is simply no comparison between it and the fractionally less wistful but immeasurably more dynamic account preserved for us in the album. This is supreme Haydn playing: clear but warm in its phrasing, brooding but never stolid in its gravely paced Largo, full of crisp string articulation and felicitous, playful woodwind detail. It has earthiness and refinement in equal measure.

Many of the NBC Symphony musicians reserved their highest praise for Cantelli as a leader of modern music. In B. H. Haggin's superb book *The Toscanini Musicians Knew* (Horizon Press, 1967), cellist Alan Shulman says that he felt Toscanini played modern

music because he felt he had to, but since "he wasn't a hundred per cent sold on it in his own mind . . . it didn't come off. If Cantelli had lived, he would have done with contemporary music what Toscanini did with the standard repertory. When Cantelli did Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*, with its many parts in the opening fugue, it was with a feeling for balance and clarity of detail that made it nothing short of fantastic."

The performance of the Bartók that Shulman remembers is preserved here, and it is indeed "fantastic." The opening fugue is played in a manner that stresses its inspirational kinship with the first movement of Beethoven's Op. 131 String Quartet. The central climax builds to a dynamic range beyond belief (fortunately not flattened by the recording engineers!). Cantelli doesn't play Bartók as "modern" music; he plays it, rightly, as great music. This profound, stimulating work has entered the standard orchestral repertory and has now been recorded more than a dozen times. Some devotees of Boulez' reading with the BBC Symphony (Columbia MS 7206) may find Cantelli's account overly broad and romantic in its inflections, but for my taste his is the finest version of them all. Its recorded sound (from December 13, 1952) is unusually full and detailed, comparable to many of the modern tapings.

The two Ravel showpieces are scintillantly done. All sorts of refined details emerge in the *Bolero*, which Cantelli phrases like plastic steel. The wide dynamic range he obtains is too much for the recording; the opening, fully audible in the hall, is virtually lost. *La Valse* is done with similar aristocracy. C. J. Luten, in the brochure accompanying these discs, finds this performance of February 7, 1954, too loud

and aggressive. Cantelli's earlier 1949 and 1951 performances might conceivably have been more to Mr. Luten's taste. The 1954 version may indeed be louder (because of its closer microphoning) and is certainly more authoritative, hence "aggressive," than its predecessors. I find it incomparably more arresting in its stylized phrasing and stringent poise.

The Weber *Euryanthe* Overture is not a success. The orchestral playing is out of tune, and something went wrong with the microphoning at the very beginning, putting the brass and woodwinds at a sad disadvantage. This performance also serves as a reminder that Cantelli himself could, on occasion, be dogged.

Listeners who object to announcers and applause on records are forewarned that this set contains a generous quantity of both. I rather like hearing Ben Grauer's voice again, and the frenzied ovations are often as inspired as the performances they accompany. The sound of Cantelli's voice is also preserved, in a brief interview as well as in the Beethoven rehearsal. The ATS pressings are somewhat problematic: Two copies presented some tracking difficulties, and the surfaces are not as quiet as one might like.

H THE CANTELLI LEGACY, Vol. 1. NBC Symphony Orchestra, Guido Cantelli, cond. ARTURO TOSCANINI SOCIETY ATS-GC 1201/6, \$36 (six discs, mono; Arturo Toscanini Society, 812 Dumas Ave., Dumas, Tex. 79029).

BARTÓK: *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* (12/13/52). **BEETHOVEN:** Symphonies: No. 1, in C, Op. 21 (1/10/54); No. 5, in C minor, Op. 67 (2/21/54); plus rehearsal excerpts with the Philharmonia Orchestra, 1956). **HAYDN:** Symphony No. 88, in G (1/31/54). **RAVEL:** *Bolero* (12/20/52); *La Valse* (2/7/54). **SCHUBERT:** Symphony No. 9, in C, D. 944 (12/27/53). **SCHUMANN:** Symphony No. 4, in D minor, Op. 120 (11/29/52). **TCHAIKOVSKY:** Symphony No. 4, in F minor, Op. 36 (2/14/54). **WAGNER:** *Rienzi: Overture* (1/31/54). **WEBER:** *Euryanthe: Overture* (11/29/52).

Il Ritorno di Tobia: A "New" Haydn Oratorio

by Paul Henry Lang



Hungaroton gives this major work a welcome premiere recording that would have benefited from closer attention to the composer's revisions.

A NEW ORATORIO by Haydn? Surely this must be an event of considerable interest, for we are not dealing with an apocryphal or with a discarded juvenile product; *Il Ritorno di Tobia* is an authentic major work by a seasoned forty-two-year-old composer.

The oratorio, composed in 1774 and performed the following year, was very successful, but its post-humous history is sad. Like Haydn's charming opera *Lo Speziale* (*The Apothecary*), it was drawn and quartered until it became its own caricature. The original score was lost, and as recently as 1909 Universal Edition published a spurious piano score. Yet the work must have been popular, because copies, transcriptions, "favorite airs," and so forth are scattered all over Europe. It was only in the 1930s that reliable source material—half of it in Haydn's own hand—came to light, and after some heroic scholarly work on the part of Ernst Fritz Schmid an authentically restored score was published in 1963. The present recording was made from this score.

Upon first hearing *Tobias*, one is likely to be somewhat disappointed. It is remarkably fluent, written with the unquestioned mastery of a distinguished composer, yet its true depths of feeling are not imme-

diately revealed except in the choruses; the expression often seems elliptic, the train of thought discontinuous. These faults are due not to haste, but to overelaboration, an intention to give the already archaic Italian oratorio tradition its due. Indeed, it is the observance of this tradition that is responsible for Tobias' weaknesses. How ironic that twenty-five years later it was the great German oratorios of this same composer that rang the death knell for the Italian oratorio.

The *Return of Tobias* was not only Haydn's first oratorio, but his first large-scale dramatic work. He was familiar with the long-standing tradition of Italian oratorio in Vienna, and as a choirboy he must have heard and sung the oratorios of Caldara, Fux, the two Reutters, and others. As a matter of fact, the elder Reutter composed a *Ritorno di Tobia* just about the time Haydn was born, and one supposes that, as Reutter's pupil, Haydn was familiar with it. Most of these works were, however, in the old Metastasian-Neapolitan vein, which by 1774 was moribund.

The librettist was Giovanni Boccherini, the famous composer's elder brother. It was an unfortunate choice, because Boccherini turned out to be a watered-down Metastasio who provided the composer not with drama, but with pious moralizing in the form of simile arias.

This, as well as the old recipe of endless chains of the recitative-aria pattern (the Italian oratorio had few choruses), must have greatly inconvenienced Haydn. But apparently he felt the traditional pattern to be expected of him. Thus he composed *da capo* arias of inordinate length, many of them so long as to give the impression of rondos, the main section returning several times. Haydn's intellectual embarrassment is also evident in his dutifully executed coloratura passages. An aria goes along nicely until he starts to splice in rather meaningless fireworks, again solely because that used to be the thing to do. The recitatives too are numerous and very long.

But now let us take a closer look at these long-winded and undeniably tiring pieces. The craftsmanship is very *soigné*, the accompaniments are worked out with string-quartet delicacy, the vocal writing is suave (if we forget about the coloraturas), the orchestration is always imaginative and elaborate, indeed far more so than in Haydn's contemporaneous symphonies. The orchestra is large—flutes, oboes, English horns, bassoons, four horns, trumpets, trombones, and drums—but is seldom used in toto, and the variety of subtle combinations is remarkable. There are few *seccos*; instead Haydn composes accompanied recitatives of a really astonishing inventiveness that negates Boccherini's dull and inert text. Some of these, involving all the protagonists in rapid exchanges, are almost unprecedented for the times. Finally, all the choral numbers are superb.

Ten years later Haydn reworked the oratorio; he added two fine choruses, raising their number to five, and he made considerable cuts. What emerged is quite a different picture. To be sure, there are still some arias that are mediocre against a background of extreme respectability, but many, now whittled down to proper proportions, show their real beauty.

It is clear that by following Haydn's instructions

we would obtain a viable and attractive work, an ornament to the oratorio repertory. Regrettably, this is not what we get from the present recording, which gives us every single note of the first version *plus* the additions. Surely, especially given the clear indications in the score of Haydn's recommended cuts, it was a mistake to offer us a "documentary"; recordings are for enjoyment—the scholars can always repair to the archives.

While the performance shows a most commendable care, good singing, and good playing, the too literal and respectful rendition of the lengthy score contributes to the undeniable tedium. In his strict attention to the letter, conductor Szekeres does less than justice to the spirit, for Haydn does break through the wall of tradition, and those occasions should have been exploited. In addition, Szekeres is a little bland, his rhythm a bit sedentary, and the pace too steady, making the freely unfolding recitatives not only tame, but debilitating.

Even so, it is probably a better performance than comes through in the recording. The singers are too much in the foreground, while the orchestra, quite lively in the fine overture and in the ritornels, is behind a tonal scrim in the arias. This is a recurring failure of recording engineers who think that in arias the "accompaniment" is secondary. Also there is an echo (the recording was made in a church) that makes the forte passages muddy, especially when the chorus is also involved.

The chorus is excellent. Haydn is not afraid to carry the trebles to B flat—even C—and they hit those high notes with unanimity. (All right, I know that in Haydn's time the pitch was lower, but that does not concern these spirited singers.)

All five soloists are exceptionally secure, have good voices, and take the coloraturas in their stride, but some of them show little temperament and initiative—one can lead the conductor, if necessary, and then he must follow suit. Klára Takács is a capable, large-voiced alto with a nicely equalized range, which she uses intelligently but without letting herself be dramatically involved. In the animated recitatives she stays strictly in tempo. Veronika Kincses performs in very much the same manner in the soprano register, but Magda Kalmár uses her fresh and nimble soprano with temperament. Zsolt Bende injects a modicum of drama with his warm baritone, and Attila Fülöp, a good tenor, phrases fastidiously.

The orchestra, when clear of the scrim, is very good. The notes, professional and informative, are in Hungarian, English, German, and Russian.

So a good opportunity was not fully realized; nevertheless, there is plenty of good music to justify this recording. But listen to it in installments. And a little postscript to the zealots of "historical accuracy." At the original performance of *Tobias*, Haydn conducted an ensemble of "more than 180 participants"—in 1775!

HAYDN: *Il Ritorno di Tobia* (complete oratorio). Veronika Kincses and Magda Kalmár, sopranos; Klára Takács, alto; Attila Fülöp, tenor; Zsolt Bende, baritone; Budapest Madrigal Chorus; Hungarian State Concert Orchestra, Ferenc Szekeres, cond. [Antal Dóra, prod.] HUNGAROTON 11660/3, \$27.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

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Itzhak Perlman—romanticized, silken Bach.

BACH: Concertos for Violin and Orchestra. Itzhak Perlman, violin; English Chamber Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim, cond. [Suvi Raj Grubb, prod.] ANGEL S 37076, \$6.98.

Concertos for Violin and Orchestra: No. 1, in A minor, S. 1041; in D minor, after Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra, No. 1, in D minor, S. 1052. Concerto for Violin, Oboe, and Orchestra, in D minor, after Concerto for Two Harpsichords and Orchestra, No. 1, in C minor, S. 1060 (with Neil Black, oboe).

This is the belated Vol. 2 in a Perlman/Barenboim series (begun with S 36841, reviewed in May 1973) comprising not only Bach's familiar two solo violin concertos and the great concerto for two violins, but also the presumed lost original violin versions of three other concertos preserved only in later clavichord versions.

Gustav Schreck's reconstruction of the F minor Harpsichord Concerto, S. 1056, was included in Vol. 1, along with the S. 1042 solo and S. 1043 double concertos (the latter with Zukerman). The two reconstructions on the present disc are unaccredited, but they may be the best-known ones by Robert Reitz for S. 1052 and Franz Giegling (or Max Seiffert) for S. 1060. In any case, the violin and oboe version of S. 1060 (like Schreck's violin version of S. 1056) seems even more effectively Bachian than its better-known standard one. I've always been more dubious about the violin reconstruction of the great D minor Harpsichord Concerto—not because it doesn't sound authentic, but because for me a violin-and-orchestra performance of this music can never quite match the power and momentum of one for harpsichord and orchestra.

Yet if Bach purists are not likely to quarrel with the use of any of these reconstruc-

tions, they are more likely to find a lack of Bachian stylistic authenticity in the Perlman/Barenboim readings. These are frankly romanticized: silken solo tonal qualities, uninhibited interpretative expressiveness, and all. But since everyone, including the able oboist in S. 1060, plays with persuasive fervor and bravura skill, no nonpurist listeners will be bothered by the stylistic anachronisms. And they certainly will approve both the brightly vivid EMI audio engineering and the disc surfaces, notably smoother than those of many review copies I've been receiving from Angel lately.

R.D.D.

BEETHOVEN: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 61. Arthur Grumiaux, violin; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 6500 775, \$7.98.

A few months ago Philips released a new Szeryng version of this concerto with Haitink and the Concertgebouw (reviewed in February). Now the same company and orchestra are heard from again. If Szeryng's third recording must be promptly answered with Grumiaux's, so be it. It should be noted, however, that there is nothing whatever wrong with the 1967 Grumiaux/Galliera/New Philharmonia edition (Philips 802 719, now being deleted)—or, for that matter, with the earlier Grumiaux/Van Beinum account issued here in the late Fifties by Epic.

If memory serves, Grumiaux III is closer in style to I than to II. In the first movement, Grumiaux at times evokes Szigeti's memorable reading—for instance in the tough-

minded, muscular way he flicks off the opening broken octaves. He is more distantly microphoned here than with Galliera, and I prefer it this way. The dynamic range is greater, the refinement less obtrusive, the spiritual and physical excitement rather greater. In every way, Grumiaux gives one of today's outstanding accounts of this noble, introspective piece. His phrasing and shaping are masterly, the intonation impeccable, the command of nuance far above average. The first-movement cadenza is Kreisler's, but the other two are shorter and less familiar (Grumiaux's own?).

Davis gives superbly structured support in the two final movements and is serviceable enough in the first. My chief complaint there is his propensity for turning secondary accents into primary ones and sitting too long on certain chords. The orchestral playing is marvelous.

In sum, I slightly prefer Grumiaux III for the soloist but I and II for the conductors. The engineering of all three is good enough

Explanation of symbols

Classical:

-  Budget
-  Historical
-  Reissue

Recorded tape:

-  Open Reel
-  8-Track Cartridge
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Critics' Choice

The best classical records reviewed in recent months

BACH: Sonatas, Partitas. Novotný. SUPR. 1 11 1101/3 (3), March.
BARTÓK: Concerto for Orchestra. Kubelik. DG 2530 479, May.
BRAHMS: Symphony No. 1. Kertész. LON. CS 6836, March.
BRAHMS: Trios; **SCHUMANN:** Trio No. 1. Szeryng, Fournier, Rubinstein. RCA ARL 3-0138 (3), Jan.
CHOPIN: Scherzos. Barbosa. CONN. Soc. CSQ 2071, March.
DELIBES: Sylvania. Bonyngé. LON. CSA 2236 (2), Jan.
FRANCK: Symphonic Variations; **LISZT:** Totentanz. Watts. COL. M 33072, April.
HANDEL: Cantata Lucretia; Arias. Baker. PHI. 6500 523, March.
MOZART: Entführung. Böhm. DG 2709 051 (3), Feb.
MOZART: Concertos Nos. 14-19. P. Serkin. RCA ARL 3-0732 (3), May.
RAVEL: Piano Works. Simon. Vox SVBX 5473 (3), April.
SCHOENBERG: Moses und Aron. Gielen. PHI. 6700 084 (2), Feb.
SCHOENBERG: Pierrot lunaire. Maxwell Davies. UNI. RHS 319, May.
SCHUBERT: Wanderer; Sonata, D. 845. Pollini. DG 2530 473, May.
STRAUSS, R.: Last Songs; Death. Janowitz, Karajan. DG 2530 368, March.
TCHAIKOVSKY: Sleeping Beauty. Previn. ANG. SCLX 3812 (3), March.
VERDI: Aida. Muti. ANG. SCLX 3815 (3), Feb.
VERDI: *Giorno di regno*. Gardelli. PHI. 6703 055 (3), Jan.
AFTER THE BALL. Morris, Bolcom. NONE. H 71304, March.
ENGLISH HARPSICHORD. Kipnis. ANG. SB 3816 (2), April.

to convey the excellence of the performances, although naturally the most recent is marginally the brightest and most luminous. This is a superb, as well as redundant, release. H.G.

BEETHOVEN: Quartets for Strings: No. 5, in A, Op. 18, No. 5; No. 6, in B flat, Op. 18, No. 6. Quartetto Italiano. PHILIPS 6500 647, \$7.98.

With this release, only Op. 18, Nos. 2 and 4, and the three *Rasumovskys* are lacking in the Quartetto Italiano's current Beethoven cycle.

It is remarkable enough to find a foursome that has survived for thirty years without any change of personnel: only the Végli, founded in 1940 and still functioning with its original players, surpasses the Italiano's longevity. But in a way the quartet's interpretive growth is even more remarkable. Its ever increasing affinity with Beethoven is especially noteworthy: Twenty-five years ago, the Italiano's performances were marred by insipid little exaggerations of phrase and accent; today the execution remains remarkable for its luminosity and nuance, its superb togetherness and intonation, but tempos are more economical, dimensions are larger, and there is even a measure of vehemence in the playing.

The Italiano here represents a sort of middle ground between the inappropriate tonal luxuriance of the Vlach Quartet (Supraphon) and the more linear style of such groups as the Bartók (Hungaroton) and Budapest. It keeps textures ultraclear despite a prevailing smoothness of articu-

lation. Tempos are moderate—slower than most of Beethoven's metronome markings but still sufficiently mercurial. The first movement of Op. 18, No. 6, for example, is quite a bit faster than the Bartók's surprisingly limp pace. My only real quibble comes in the fifth variation of Op. 18, No. 5's slow movement: The players, in particular the cellist, don't quite project the Sousa-band effect with sufficient rowdiness and impact.

As in its other performances, the group is fairly generous with repeats, and the engineering is warm, impactful, and resonant, with considerable stereo separation—one can follow the inner voices with wonderful ease. The usual superb Philips pressing offers some compensation for the high price.

For some reason, the technically fearsome Op. 18 quartets seem to bring out the best in interpreters. The 1951 Budapest performances (*Odyssey* 32 36 0023) and the Hungarian's stereo remakes (Seraphim SIC 6005) are the best parts of those cycles. The lean, vibrant Juilliard version (Columbia M3 30084) and the equally linear but somewhat more darkly nuanced Bartók set (Hungaroton LPX 11423/5) too are outstanding. Though outclassed, the *Amadeus* (DG), Endres (Vox), Guarneri (RCA), Fine Arts (Concert Disc), and Melos (MHS) are by no means without merit. H.G.

BELLINI: *I Puritani*.

Elvira
Arturo
Riccardo
Giorgio
Enrichetta
Bruno
Walter

Joan Sutherland (s)
Luciano Pavarotti (t)
Piero Cappuccilli (b)
Nicolai Ghiaurov (bs)
Anita Caminada (ms)
Renato Cazzaniga (t)
Gian Carlo Luccardi (bs)

Chorus of the Royal Opera House, Covent

Garden; London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé, cond. [Ray Minshull, prod.] LONDON OSA 13111, \$20.94 (three discs, automatic sequence).

Comparison:
Sills, Gedda, Rudel/London Phil. ABC AT5 20016/3

The present recording is Sutherland's second of *I Puritani* and boasts the strongest "Puritani quartet" yet fielded in Sutherland, Pavarotti, Cappuccilli, and Ghiaurov. As a bonus (over all previous recordings), it includes the andante section of the final-act duet ("Mi credevi sì spergiuro"), dropped after the Paris premiere to shorten the opera—a luscious slow-waltz-like section reminiscent more of later Neapolitan song than of Bellini and done to a turn by Sutherland and Pavarotti. Bonyngé again uses the Palermo cabaletta close (for an extended discussion of the opera and its previous recordings see my review in the April 1974 issue), and Pavarotti (like Gedda) sings the celebrated high F in the last act in a eunuchoid head voice that must be heard to be believed. Is this the man to give us some inkling of what baroque opera sounded like?

And yet, despite the acres of mellifluous music-making (in one of the profligately lyric scores in opera) and the strong control of the ebb and flow of the music by Bonyngé, the distance between this recording and the one issued last year by ABC with Beverly Sills is not as vast as one might expect, given the quality of London's cast. The two recordings are dissimilar enough to preclude a definite choice.

Bonyngé has always emphasized the lyric in his work—often at the direct expense of the dramatic—and his *Puritani*, though not by any means lifelessly performed, is a lyrically oriented approach. I prefer greater attention to the dramatic demands of the score (even given the loony plot): with this cast—Sutherland aside, perhaps—we could have come close to a definitive reading, which could have combined the lyric with the dramatic in that special way that only Bellini ever achieved. Certainly Cappuccilli and Ghiaurov, as singers, could have brought-out a great deal more of their respective operatic characters (the comparison of Cappuccilli with Quilico on the Sills recording evidences the difference of approach—although neither does much with the coloratura). But that is not the way that Bonyngé sees the opera, and within his terms it is highly successful.

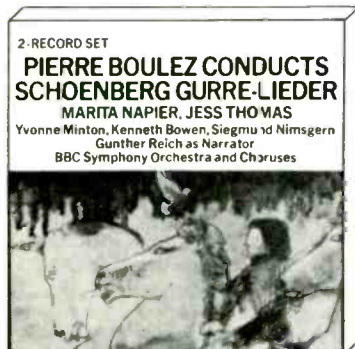
Pavarotti is the one singer who does bring a measure of special ardency to his work, as he should, and the voice *qua* voice is in excellent shape. Yet just because he is so right for this role I wish he were the Arturo I know he could be. Arturo is a stylist's paradise, with opportunities for *messaggio di voce* and countless shading effects (most of them carefully delineated by Bellini) that only Pavarotti could encompass in his sweetly tuned voice, but he is content to sing along in his usual, rather undefined, happy-jack way—lovely enough, but not (for me) enough.

Sutherland's performance is akin to her earlier reading, although the voice is a mite darker and her enunciation has improved, which automatically raises the dramatic level; the very power of the voice, carefully

Virtuoso Performances

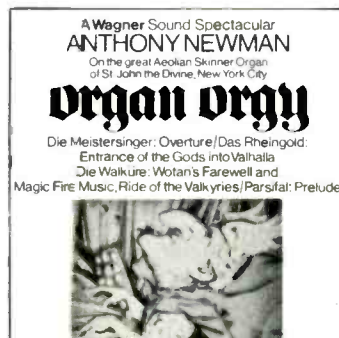


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A 3-record set (Op. 59, Op. 74, Op. 95)

Y3 33324 HAYDN: QUARTETS, OP. 76
(complete) A 3-record set

Y3 33320 SCHUBERT: THE LAST QUARTETS
A 3-record set (Nos. 13, 14—"Death and the Maiden," 15)

Y 33309 BEETHOVEN: SEPTET, OP. 20
(Roisman, Kroyt, M. Schneider, Levine, Oppenheim, Carmen, Barrows) Live performance (11/5/59) never before released.

Y 33315 FRANCK: PIANO QUINTET (with Clifford Curzon) FAURÉ: PIANO QUARTET, OP. 15 (with Jesús María Sanromá)
Live performances (12/18/56 & 10/31/57) never before released.

Y 33308 MENDELSSOHN: OCTET FOR STRINGS, OP. 20
(Roisman, A. Schneider, Kroyt, M. Schneider, Galimir, Cohen, Trampler, B. Heifetz) Live performance (12/18/61) never before released.

On Columbia and Odyssey Records



Outside the United States and Canada, Columbia Records bear the CBS Records label.

Jacobs' Schoenberg: An Essential Step Forward

Considering their significance, both in the piano literature of the century and in the composer's own catalogue, the piano works of Arnold Schoenberg have been remarkably ill-treated in the record catalogues. Not since the late Edward Steuermann's mono disc (Columbia ML 5216) was deleted many years ago has there been a recording that satisfactorily conveyed the substance and sensibility of these varied and fascinating pieces. It would still be good to have Steuermann's record available again (say, on the Odyssey label), for he was Schoenberg's close associate and preferred interpreter—and, more importantly, because his performances have great integrity and understanding.

However, Paul Jacobs' new Nonesuch disc is what we have most needed: a fresh and valid interpretation of the music from a pianist with the intellectual and digital equipment fully to realize all of its potential. Jacobs, the New York Philharmonic's staff pianist (and harpsichordist), has lived with the Schoenberg pieces for a long time—in fact, he made a recording some two decades ago in Paris that never circulated here—and has taken part in many significant contemporary performances. He was an obvious choice to undertake a new recording, and it emerges, to his credit and Nonesuch's, as a major contribution to the postcentenary harvest of Schoenberg recordings.

Right from the start, in the moody and quixotic first piece of Op. 11, the shapes are clearer, the characterization stronger than one has heard before. After the downward opening phrase, a shorter, rising phrase involving several simultaneous lines is twice repeated, each time with the elements shifted into a new "phase" relationship—and Jacobs keeps each strand distinctively voiced, so that the shifting perspectives emerge, rather than being swallowed up into lumped chords. Then comes some of that scampering figuration that Schoenberg introduced to the pianistic armory: all gossamer, fantastical. The subsequent harmonics (the notes of a middle-register chord are silently depressed and then set to resonating by loud bass notes) have sounded more clearly on other recordings, but at the price of banging the bass notes out of all proportion to the surrounding music. Next, more transformations of that rising phrase, and a canonic treatment of a descending variant, challenge the pianist's ability to distinguish "voices": again, Jacobs outstrips the field.

And so it goes, through the fluid central section, leading to the climax, well and truly carried through. And the last phrase, its inner voices winding downward one by one through the piece's basic motive, is launched with a subtly pedaled *sforzando*

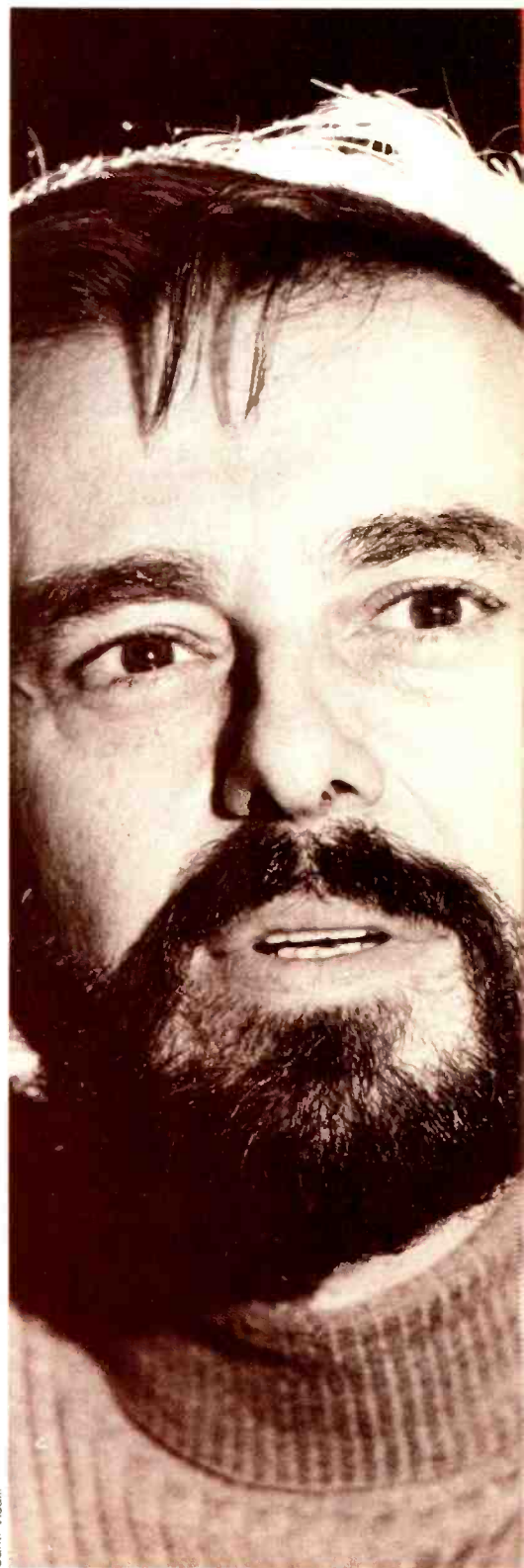
subito piano chord of telling effect.

Details, all of these, but their cumulative effect produces arrestingly clear delineations of the pieces that Schoenberg wrote. By comparison, most previous recordings (Steuermann's generally excepted) turn out to be, to some degree or other, approximations of those pieces. In some cases, I would surmise, simple technical shortcomings are to blame: Marie-Françoise Bucquet may have a clear idea of the contrapuntal structure in this first piece, but she cannot communicate that idea to us, nor can she expound the elusive extensions and contractions of the thematic phrases because she does not count the meter accurately. (In later, bigger pieces, she lacks, disastrously, both power and secure velocity.) Op. 11, No. 1, just moons—and not in the *Pierrot lunaire* sense—at her hands and also at Jürg von Vintschger's. Neither of them, characteristically, really follows through the prescribed dynamic shape of the main theme's final, climactic extension just before the end, thereby dissipating the limited energy they built up previously. Vintschger's Turnabout disc is weakly recorded and badly plagued by pre-echo, which haunts nearly all of these discs. Even Nonesuch hasn't eliminated this minor nuisance, apparently almost inevitable given the running time of nearly an hour, the music's wide dynamic range, and the desirability of providing individual spirals, however small, between the pieces.

Glenn Gould's Columbia disc dispenses with spirals (except between the larger groupings), offering a pretty clean, solid reproduction—not only of a piano and the occasional vocalism, but also of what I take to be that famous piano stool, standing in need of oil. If your internal Dolby can suppress that incidental racket, you will hear many strange things. Since Mr. Gould doesn't lack technique, one takes his disregard for the printed page to be entirely intentional. A miniature such as the first piece of Op. 19 is hyped up beyond belief, every phrase pressed to a climax worthy of Isolde's *Liebeshod*. Yet this is patently not what Schoenberg meant: His over-all direction is "light, tender."

What Schoenberg did mean is not always as easy to define as what he did not mean. As Jacobs points out in his thoughtful liner notes, there are textual questions: inconsistencies and ambiguities in the scores that even a recent "scholarly" edition has not cleared up. To some patently superior readings that this offers, Jacobs has added further conjectural but highly probable corrections.

The ambiguities involve not only such "yes-no" questions as individual notes, but also larger matters of expressive connotation. What is one to make of the juxtaposi-



Santi Visalli

by David Hamilton

tion of "very slow" and "eighth note = 108" at the head of Op. 23, No. 1? (That metronome mark means nearly two beats per second—try tapping it out from your watch's second hand. And the merely "slow" tempo of Op. 23, No. 3, is marked at a basic pulse exactly twice as slow!) Obviously, the whole import of the piece will change, depending on which of the two markings is followed, and then beyond that on precisely how the subsequent tempo modifications are read. The recorded performances exemplify rather a wide range, with Peter Serkin (on RCA LSC 3050, coupled with the piano concerto) and Jacobs definitely in the slow camp. Otto M. Zykan (on an Erato record, not released in this country) very nearly up to the metronome marking. Gould, Steuermann, Claude Helffer (another import, on Harmonia Mundi), and Beveridge Webster (Dover HCR-ST 7285) at roughly 90. Vintschger down at 78. (Miss Bucquet is slowest of all, but so unstable in the middle section that the piece simply doesn't hang together.) Is the initial mood of the piece pensive or fanciful? The best of these pianists—Jacobs, Serkin, Steuermann, and Helffer—all make cases for their choices, which in fact yield subtler varieties of expression than our standard adjectival vocabulary knows how to distinguish. For that matter, in this particular piece even Vintschger and Zykan (a very positive, if often wrongheaded pianist) make some interesting points.

All of which is to suggest that this music is, to a greater degree than, say, that of Chopin or Beethoven, still an open question. What we need most is the continuing application of good musical minds and fleet, imaginative fingers to its problems. This is happening. Within the last twelve months I have heard thoughtful, elucidating performances in concert from several first-rank pianists: Alfred Brendel (Op. 11), Ursula Oppens (Op. 23), Maurizio Pollini (Opp. 11, 19, and 23), as well as Jacobs' recital preceding the sessions for this recording. (A Pollini recording of the whole set is expected from Deutsche Grammophon.) As pianists—and listeners—explore its possibilities, expressive, sonorous, and technical, we will all be the gainers. In this process, the new Nonesuch disc is an essential element; recorded in firm, clean, warm sound, it should be in every collection of piano music on records.

SCHOENBERG: Piano Works. Paul Jacobs, piano. [Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] NONESUCH H 71309, \$3.96

Three Pieces, Op. 11; Six Little Pieces, Op. 19; Five Pieces, Op. 23; Suite, Op. 25; Pieces, Opp. 33a and 33b.

Comparisons:

Bucquet
Gould
Vintschger

Phi. 6500 510
Col. MS 7098 or M2S 736
Turn. TV-S34378

recorded throughout, is most evident in the ensembles and serves to tie them together superbly. (Bonyngé also allows her more freedom, by cutting out the vocal accompaniment in at least one place—the end of the "Vien, diletto" cabaletta in Act II—which he did not do on the early set.)

If I marginally prefer Rudel's conducting, it is because he brings out more of the rhythmic features of the orchestral writing and because his orchestra is more prominently recorded—a delicious example is the highlighting of the rising flute figure in the soldier's chorus of Act I to musicalize the morning hymn rising into the air. But he does not have the over-all grasp that Bonyngé does.

What we have, then, in the two recent recordings, is completeness and high singing standards, with the ABC leaning toward drama and the London toward the lyric. If I were to choose, it would be in favor of the London—with the proviso that any Bellini fan should also own the Callas version (Angel CL 3502). P.J.S.

BERG: Lulu Suite. **STRAUSS:** Salome: Final Scene. Anja Silja, soprano; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Christoph von Dohnányi, cond. [Christopher Raeburn, prod.] LONDON OS 26397, \$6.98.

From its placement in the London numerical sequence devoted to vocal records and from the cover illustration, one presumes this to have been conceived as an "Anja Silja record." In my mind, however, it will remain the "Dohnányi Lulu record," for young conductor and old orchestra give us what is surely the most lucid, most passionate, most explicitly sensuous reading of Berg's music to date, and it has been recorded with becoming luxuriance by the Decca/London Sofiensaal team. Dohnányi isn't afraid to let the music take its time (except in Lulu's Song, his timings are consistently slower than Abbado's, on DG 2530 146), yet it never loses momentum; I should have liked a more intense and positive gesture near the end of the Variations, where Berg asks for "molto accelerando," but elsewhere the tempos are well judged, the climaxes securely shaped. And most of the playing is so very good that one regrets the occasionally imperfect intonation of the crucial alto-saxophone part. But no other recording, including the complete Lulu sets, conveys as strongly as this one the extraordinary beauty of this music.

Miss Silja has relatively little to do in the Berg—about three minutes of singing all told—and she does it with considerable efficiency despite some wavery high notes and smudged coloratura. The material included in the suite does not convey much about her celebrated characterization of the part, but then no recording is going to do that anyway; she is as much actress as singer. The same might be said about the Salome excerpt, with the further qualification that her vocal power vis-à-vis the Strauss orchestra is certainly misrepresented by the recording balance. She has, clearly, a fine musical ear and, when not impeded by mechanical difficulties, can tune a note to a fare-thee-well. But the mechanical difficulties are very much there: Awkward placement of

the voice and inadequate breath support undermine her best intentions.

For a rarity, the excerpt begins, not at the usual orchestral upsurge as Jokanaan's head emerges from the cistern, but earlier, with the famous eerie double-bass notes as Salome listens to the sounds of the prophet's decapitation. This gives Miss Silja some fine declamatory opportunities, and she makes the most of them—it is, in fact, the most convincing part of the performance. (Later, the passage where Herod and Herodias squabble is omitted, as usual in concert versions.)

London provides complete text and translation for the Salome excerpt, but none for Lulu. And the liner notes fail to explain that the voice you hear in the final Adagio, though sung by Miss Silja, is not that of Lulu, but of the Countess Geschwitz. D.H.

BRAHMS: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in D minor, Op. 15. Alfred Brendel, piano; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, cond. PHILIPS 6500 623, \$7.98.

Brendel has more success with the Brahms D minor Concerto than he had with the B flat (reviewed in February). Although his performance is sometimes a shade prim and lacking the exultant stride that others have brought to this ardently youthful work, he sounds more confident than he did in the later work, less inclined to exaggerate every gesture and contort every phrase for "profound" effect. In the main he gives a lucid, straightforward account, with a clear, transparent, almost chamber-music-like sonority.

Brendel cultivates a few anachronisms from a bygone school of pianism: In the third movement he interpolates a low bass note overlapping the first note of the fugato, as Backhaus used to do. In basic style, though, Brendel's soulful, delicate interpretation is almost the antithesis of the Backhaus/Böhm ("Turnabout TV 34549, rechanneled), which was tough-minded and monolithic to the point of being prosaically academic. And where Backhaus produced a massive, velvety, basically monochromatic sonority, Brendel sometimes works too hard for weight and ends up sounding rather brittle and tinkly.

Schmidt-Isserstedt supports him well, though without the distinctive detail and razor-edged clarity Szell provided for Fleischer, Curzon, and Serkin. The Philips pressing is characteristically clean-sounding, but readers are again reminded that for the same price they can have the truly memorable Serkin/Szell coupling of both Brahms concertos. H.G.

BRAHMS: Sonata for Piano, No. 3, in F minor, Op. 5. Intermezzos: in E flat, Op. 117, No. 1; in C, Op. 119, No. 3. Clifford Curzon, piano. LONDON STEREO TREASURY STS 15272, \$3.49 [from LONDON CS 6341, 1963].

The demanding early F minor Piano Sonata has been extremely lucky in its phonographic history, but Clifford Curzon's 1963 performance is certainly as finely artistic

and perceptive as any. At budget price it is an irresistible bargain.

Curzon is at his best here, giving an expansive yet marvelously unpretentious interpretation. For all its loving care and subtlety, his manner is highly direct in its approach to rubato and phrasing. I particularly like the sturdy rhythmic pulse—for example, the tolling-bell-like tones at the end of the *Andante espressivo*. My only quibble is with Curzon's decision not to take the first-movement exposition repeat. It is not a long repeat, and I feel that the movement profits from that added breadth.

London's piano sound is not quite real—the instrument tends to separate into plushy bass and bell-like treble—but even so Curzon manages all sorts of wonderful shadings and colors. The two intermezzos are exquisitely done. H.G.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 3, in F, Op. 90; Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, István Kertész, cond. (finale of Op. 56a performed without conductor). LONDON CS 6837, \$6.98.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 4, in E minor, Op. 98. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, István Kertész, cond. LONDON CS 6838, \$6.98.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 4, in E minor, Op. 98; Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Adrian Boult, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL S 37304, \$6.98.

The present performance of the *Haydn Variations* is a very special one. At his last session before his death by drowning, Kertész did not have time to finish the recording. In tribute to him, the players of the Vienna Philharmonic elected to do the four-minute finale without a conductor, and this is the only recording I know of completed in this manner. I suppose one could cite some minor imprecisions to contrast the Kertész-directed and conductorless parts, but far more important is the strongly profiled, firmly sonorous character of the performance as a whole.

Kertész' Third Symphony, the major offering of the disc, moves straight to the top of the list of modern editions that can be obtained separately. (The buyer about to invest in his first recording of the symphony can stop reading now.) Free of any startling eccentricity, but molded with generous surge and freedom within the phrase, this reading is scrupulous in its attention to every tempo, dynamic, and articulation detail of the score. The crispness of the Vienna Philharmonic's fabled horns is awesome—note its voice-leading at measure 52 of the finale. Ensemble is tight, and part-writing is dovetailed with absolute control—e.g., the strings' cross rhythm from bar 63 onward in the second movement. That movement's opening clarinet solo is beautifully shaped too. Kertész takes the first-movement exposition repeat. (He observes all repeats throughout his Brahms symphonies.)

I retain my attachment to the special virtues of the Thirds of Toscanini, Sanderling, and Bernstein, all available only in complete sets, whose attractiveness to prospective purchasers may be limited by, respectively, age, price and limited availability, and uneven quality. Collectors with a tolerance for older sonics should know that



Christian Steiner

István Kertész
Brahms at the top of the list.

Electrola has reissued another of the great recorded Thirds, Mengelberg's with the Concertgebouw (DaCapo C 053 01453)—and with his fabled *Academic Festival* to boot! For me Kertész belongs in that select company.

The Kertész and Boult Fourth make an interesting contrast. As in his Fifties Nixa-Westminster version, Sir Adrian takes the second movement at a fast, Toscanini-ish clip, while Kertész is more funereal. (I incline to the latter approach.) Boult's emphatic, Klemperer-like massiveness in the scherzo contrasts with Kertész' bracing vivaciousness. Neither finale is as rock-steady as I would like (compare Dorati's deleted Mercury version), but Boult is generally more straightforward, ironically eschewing some of the effective rhetorical touches of his mono version. In respect to vertical shaping, however, Kertész is far more rigorous. For example, the syncopation between horns and strings in the buildup to the first movement's coda is astounding in its clarity. Boult/Angel is more blended and generalized in texture, lacking the dry thrust of the Boult/Westminster; the less detailed recording also tends to vitiating the effect of Boult's lateral separation of first and second violins.

One unqualified huzzah for Angel: For a change, the filler—in this case an *Academic Festival* that is more festive than academic—precedes the symphony on Side 1, rather than following it as a sort of fifth movement. Kertész' Fourth has no filler, like Haitink's (Philips 6500 389), another strong contender in the Brahms Fourth sweepstakes.

The domestic issue of Boult's Fourth brings us to the halfway mark in his cycle, long since completed in England. The two new Kertész discs—along with the First Symphony, reviewed in March—complete a cycle begun nearly a decade ago with the Second Symphony (CS 6435). Rehearing that coarse-grained and spasmodically violent reading throws into bold relief the conductor's growth toward a far more urbane and gracious, but no less rigorous and virile, musical personality. These final records underline the extent of our loss. A.C.

BROWN: Times Five; Octet I; December 1952; Novara. Various performers. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS SD 330, \$6.95.

The best of the four Earle Brown works recorded here, for my ears, is *December 1952* for two pianos (but only one player), because David Tudor plays it and David Tudor makes everything sound great. The work is full of rolling thunder, interior plinkety-plinks, plucked harmonics, and other devices Henry Cowell discovered a half-century ago, but without Cowell's folklore; it is straightforward atonal music and proves that atonal music can be written for the piano without driving all its auditors up the wall. Provided Tudor does the playing.

Times Five, for five instruments plus tape, is in five aleatory sections. As recorded here it is full of bright, interesting sounds and even a ghost of a tune or two—an indiscretion to which Brown is not often given, at least in my experience. The Octet for eight loudspeakers is made up of scraps and snippets of tape; it tweets, twitters, and boops along with amusingly insolent incoherence. *Novara*, for chamber orchestra, seems tiresome after the other pieces. A.F.

CZERNY: Sonata for Piano, No. 1, Op. 7; Fantasy and Variations on Persiani's "Inez de Castro," Op. 377. Hilde Somer, piano. [Robert F. Commagere, prod.] GENESIS GS 1057, \$6.98.

Poor old Czerny! Everyone is down on him, especially the older ones among us, in whose musical education Czerny was *de rigueur* and who remember the long, arid stretches of mind-dulling patterns and the interminable sameness of his exercises—but the darn things *did* loosen our fingers. And he had such a colorless life. A mama's boy who never even had a girl friend, he knew nothing but work, teaching twelve hours a day, and most of the night studying, writing books, treatises, and translations. At the age of forty-five he turned entirely to composition and became possessed by a *furor scribendi*; the opus numbers are astronomical—even Telemann could not beat them.

The historians, too, made short shrift of him, and the impression we were left with was that his music is like tea brewed for the second time. Let us try to put some substantive content into this uncharitable picture of his work.

Beethoven, difficult to please, had a very high regard for Czerny and entrusted the musical education of his troublesome nephew to him. His legion of pupils, led by Liszt, swore by him—he must have been an extraordinary teacher as well as a very good performer, among the first to play Beethoven's sonatas and concertos in public to their composer's full satisfaction. With his tidy, if perhaps slightly bleak, intelligence, he amassed a vast fund of knowledge in languages, literature, philosophy, history, and music theory. Nor was his intellectual gearbox always in neutral; his passion for music was genuine.

The sonata recorded here is among the first of his many sonatas, quartets, symphonies, Masses (twenty-four!), and all

kinds of other works, and though early it affords us a glimpse into Czerny's musical personality. It does not take very long before we realize that, contrary to the accepted views, his bones are not marrowless and his blood is not cold.

The sonata is very long and has five movements, which immediately shows that Czerny advanced beyond the Beethovenian orbit, but his Romanticism is not the maudlin kind of the satellites around Schumann, Chopin, and Mendelssohn. While not exempt from the usual embarrassment of the Romantics when attempting sonata structures, his writing is that of a highly cultivated musician whose thorough contrapuntal schooling shows to advantage even in homophonic part-writing. Two of this sonata's movements, the whirlwind Scherzo and the final Capriccio fugato, are pieces as good as any composed in the genre by anybody in the nineteenth century after Beethoven and Schubert. Compare this final fugue with Mendelssohn's keyboard fugues and see who goes "by the book"! The slow movements, though they have many nice patches, suffer from the not infrequent Romantic inability to end a piece at the proper spot.

Now this work, Czerny's first piano sonata, which shows him to be a musician to reckon with, was only his Op. 7—leaving at least 993 opera left to be investigated! One of them, Op. 377, Fantasy and Variations over an obscure opera tune, presents him as a member of the guild of fantasy and variation craftsmen whose home office was in Paris. Once more, he not only holds his own in this brilliant piece, but is obviously well ahead of the pack and second only to Liszt.

Hilde Somer plays the Fantasy and the fast movements in the sonata with blazing virtuosity and bracing rhythm, but she is mannered in the slow movements. P.H.L.

DAVIES: Points and Dances from "Taverner"; Second Fantasia on John Taverner's "In Nomine." Fires of London, Peter Maxwell Davies, cond. (in *Points and Dances*); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Charles Groves, cond. (in *Fantasia*). ARGO ZRG 712, \$6.98.

Peter Maxwell Davies' opera *Taverner*, based on the life of the sixteenth-century English composer John Taverner, has created a considerable stir in England since its premiere in London a couple of years ago. The *Points and Dances*, which consist of a series of short pieces for small chamber orchestra, are divided into two groups to accompany two parallel scenes in Acts I and II of the opera. (In both scenes the King and Cardinal discuss the measures needed to achieve a reformation.)

The composer's description of the musical content is helpful: "On one level, the *Points and Dances* are a sort of Muzak . . . but they carry forward the musical argument, going through transformation processes in miniature which will be developed in subsequent scenes." The music is extraordinarily evocative with its decidedly "antique" coloring, achieved partially through instrumentation (e.g., harpsichord, regal, and positive organ) but more importantly through specific compositional de-

VICES—the use of traditional dance rhythms and a process of gradual motivic transformation that produces a sort of mediievally static correspondence among all the musical elements. Much to Davies' credit, the result is never quaint, but commands our musical attention at every stage. I can think of no other composer currently active who is capable of doing this kind of thing so successfully. Britten and Henze come to mind, but to my ears they fail to achieve such a totally personal result in their use of "character pieces."

The *Second Fantasia* on John Taverner's "In Nomine," written in 1964, is a spinoff from the first act of the opera (completed at that time), which Davies felt contained many ideas "capable of a more symphonic development than was possible within the confines of the dramatic context." The result is an extended piece for full orchestra, whose materials are developed on a very broad, symphonic scale. Although the work consists of thirteen uninterrupted sections, these are grouped into larger segments corresponding to a sonata-form movement, a scherzo and trio, and a closing slow movement. Despite this, the developmental techniques employed are similar to those heard in the opera: The materials are constantly transformed, creating again a sort of static flux. The difference here, however, is that there is a pronounced larger rhythmic curve that links the various sections into a continuously unfolding structure.

The surface of this music is considerably less differentiated than that of Davies' more recent works, such as the *Songs for a Mad King* (Nonesuch H 71285) and *Versailles Icons* (Nonesuch H 71295), and its appeal lies more exclusively on a deeper level. For those willing to make the effort, however, these pieces offer a musical statement of an unusual and complex expressivity.

The performances are fine, especially that of the Fires of London on *Points and Dances*, and the sound is excellent. R.P.M.

DEBUSSY: Images for Orchestra; Jeux. Orchestre National de l'ORTF, Jean Martinon, cond. [René Challan, prod.] ANGEL S 37066, \$6.98.

This third album of the Martinon Debussy series turns (to paraphrase the title of *Ibéria's* first movement) "from the byways to the highways" of the repertoire. Since the competition is pretty big-time now (and not only in the aforementioned second of the *Images*), critical focus must turn to the performance per se.

After several years of Martinon, the Orchestre National has almost shed its bad habits. I find the woodwinds relatively free of whining nasality, the horns managing to restrain vibrato, and the strings something close to disciplined. If you put on this record blindfolded, you might not even think it was a French orchestra! It remains, however, a not yet world-rank orchestra, in a less than lovable recording ambience. There is a general shortage of truly soft and refined playing, so that in *Jeux* brass climaxes are inclined to be raucous rather than cuttily brilliant. The oboe d'amore in *Gigues*, and the flutes' and clarinets' dotted-eighth triplets in *Rondes de printemps*,

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by Harris Goldsmith

Yes, They're Still Making Great Recordings



There was nothing at all offensive musically about Artur Rubinstein's first recording of the Schubert B flat Trio, the 1941 collaboration of the "million-dollar trio" of Heifetz, Feuermann, and Rubinstein. The three virtuosos behaved in altogether responsible fashion, phrasing straightforwardly, balancing their respective parts admirably, and bathing the music in a flow of gorgeous tone and perfect intonation—a taut, brilliant spectacular by three superstars very much in the limelight.

Rubinstein's new recording of both Schubert trios with Henryk Szeryng and Pierre Fournier, while every bit as glamorous, reflects different values. The feeling this time is far more personal—almost as if these three great performers, gathered for an intimate impromptu session, are graciously including the listener in their inspired music-making. These records gave me a very special musical experience.

This is robust Schubert playing: genial, full of rich inflection and elasticity of phrase. Tempos are on the broad side, and the darkly colored ensemble tone veers closer to Brahms than to the tinkly quality so often considered appropriate for Schubert. This trio produced altogether distinguished results in its recent Brahms-Schumann set (ARL 3-0138, reviewed in January), but this set is even more extraordinary. Szeryng and Fournier are more assertive, and it is wonderful to hear their mutual relationships deepen and expand. Each instrumentalist phrases with complete confidence and is ever ready to complement the others' every nicety with a *bon mot* of his own. Treasurable details are so numerous that I scarcely know where to begin. But listen to the way

these masters shape the third-movement trio of the B flat Trio, and I think you will want these discs.

With all due respect to Messrs. Stern/Rose/Istomin, the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, and the Suk and Trieste Trios, one would have to go back to Thibaud/Casals/Cortot, D'Aranyi/Salmond/Hess, and—I must admit—Heifetz/Feuermann/Rubinstein for performances of D. 898 comparable in stature to this one. In the more problematical D. 929, some might still prefer the more tightly disciplined approach of the Trieste Trio (DG, deleted), and I am not about to part with the cherished older versions by Schneider/Casals/Horszowski (solid, granitic, imperious) and Serkin with the Busch brothers (particularly their later, more individualistic Columbia performance). The new Szeryng/Fournier/Rubinstein album, though, definitely qualifies as one of the phonograph's classic achievements. It is reassuring to know that great recordings like these are still being made.

The sonics are completely natural. In one or two spots, Rubinstein almost swamps his colleagues with his huge, bronzen tone, as he undoubtedly would do in real life. For the most part Szeryng and Fournier more than hold their own, and the forwardly balanced tone and satin-smooth surfaces of RCA's pressings are as beautiful as the performances themselves.

SCHUBERT: Trios for Violin, Cello, and Piano: in B flat, D. 898; in E flat, D. 929. Henryk Szeryng, violin; Pierre Fournier, cello; Artur Rubinstein, piano. [Max Wilcox, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 2-0731, \$13.98 (two discs, manual sequence).

Comparison—D. 898:
Heifetz, Feuermann, Rubinstein RCA LM 70

want for a little more airiness around them, that gleaming China-doll delicacy of sound one hears in the deleted Montoux/Philips version or the very old (and domestically unavailable) Ansermet of mono days. In the "Parfums de la nuit" section of *Ibéria*, the celesta is so reverberantly miked that distinct notes are not clearly articulated. Clarity and atmosphere thus both fall victim to the opaqueness of texture.

All of which is regrettable, as Martinon does his part with real flair. *Jeux* is a strongly profiled reading, expressively articulated and exciting. He lets the stops out even more than did Boulez (Columbia MS 7361, buyers of which should be warned that some recent pressings suffer a loss of left-channel high frequencies during the last three or four minutes).

The three *Images* are played in the correct order (in contrast to Columbia MS 7362), but Martinon's approach is more swaggering and extroverted, and a shade less subtle, than Boulez'. The rollicking and Hispanic flavor of the new *Ibéria* are marvelous indeed, so that such minor lapses as an occasional misplaced string glissando or a slightly anticipated ritard make less of an impression than the splendid clarinet solo in the final section (and the rubato between cues 58 and 59) or the over-all good judgment (and observance of the score) as to where to allow languor and where to press forward. Few other current versions of the three *Images* are really in the class of the Martinon and Boulez. The current Ansermet (London CS 6225) is uncharacteristically wooden. Thomas' account (DG 2530 145) suffers too much agogic distortion. Munch's (Victrola VICS 1391) pales by comparison with what I heard him do with this music before live audiences, but his is a respectable bargain alternative, which Argenta's (Stereo Treasury STS 15020) decisively is not.

Certainly the new issue is an attractive way to add two essential pieces to your library (they are not so coupled elsewhere). If you are not the ultimate perfectionist, Angel's continuing series is a convenient way to get the fullest recorded statement yet of France's greatest orchestral composer. A.C.

DVOŘÁK: Quartet for Strings, in G, Op. 106. Prague Quartet. [Franz-Christian Wulff, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 480, \$7.98.

Of Dvořák's rather considerable body of chamber music, his last five string quartets—from Op. 51 on—are true exemplars of a great tradition founded by Haydn.

The last two quartets, Op. 105 in A flat and the present work, were among his last works, written after his return from America. Despite the liner notes, obviously of German origin, one can make too much of the "exotic" American influence on Dvořák's last works. The pentatonic folk element, present in all his mature music, came from Bohemian, not American, roots. There is no doubt, however, that this G major Quartet is a masterpiece of string-quartet literature. Its first movement is a closely reasoned but highly original development of the rather elementary arpeggio material

with which it opens; the full melodic and rhythmic resources of Dvořák's maturity are brought to bear. The slow movement is a very free, almost rhapsodic, series of variations on an expressive theme. Typically of Dvořák's maturity, the scherzo and its two trios reflect more strongly the native Czech style. After a slow introduction, the finale is a large rondo, one episode recalling in varied form material from the first movement.

Unaccountably, this is the only current single-disc version of this important work, and I wish its performance were better. The deficiency is not in musicianship, for the Prague Quartet certainly understands this complex work, but rather in technique. The violins sound wiry and not always in tune,

and the whole ensemble lacks cohesive over-all sound, defects rather highlighted by very bright and detailed recording. P.H.

B **DVOŘÁK:** Symphony No. 8, in G, Op. 88. Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond. [John McClure, prod.] ODYSSEY Y 33231, \$3.98 [from COLUMBIA MS 6361, 1962].

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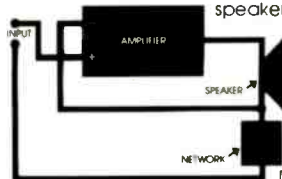
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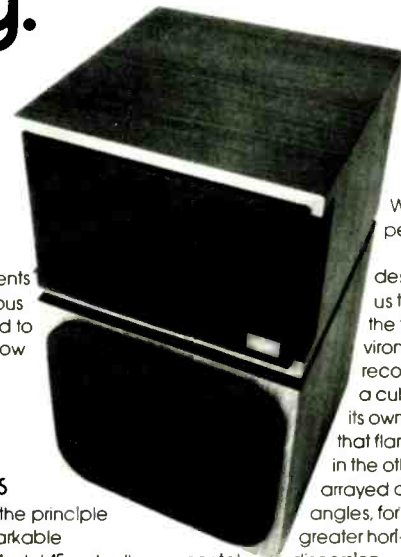
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the New York Philharmonic) was favored by many over even such outstanding readings as the earlier Talich/Czech Philharmonic and the Szell/Concertgebouw. The "Columbia Symphony" remake contrasts refreshingly with most of Walter's later recordings of Beethoven, Brahms, Bruckner, and even Mahler, which generally suffer from nerveless, flabby tempos. Here the sonorities are slim and focused by the acutely microphoned engineering, and the interpretation is characterized by alert, forward-moving, energetic phrasing.

It is true that the orchestra, even after working together as a unit for several years, could not quite match the work of ensembles that play year after year in the world's capitals. Its strings are often a shade thin and over-extended, attributable more to problems of intonation and unanimity than to the reduced personnel; the winds too lack absolute precision and tonal refinement. I could also observe that the exceptional rhythmic spring and energy of the magnificent first movement are not quite achieved in the later movements; the finale's theme and variations in particular are a bit shapeless and overly *maestoso*.

These, however, are minor points. It is good to have this altogether lovely performance with us again, especially at so reasonable a price. The Odyssey pressing is just fine. H.G.

FAURÉ: Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra—See Ravel: Concertos.

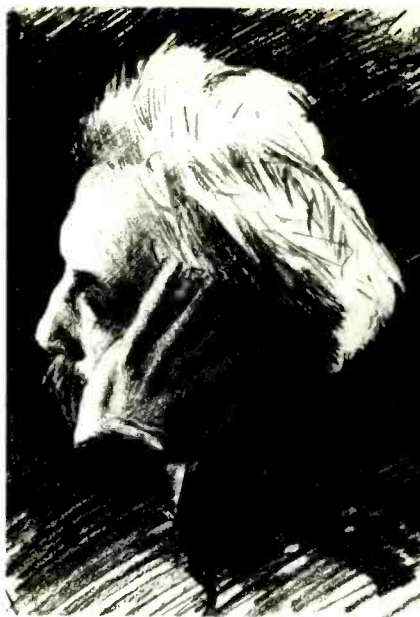
FAURÉ: Nocturnes (complete); Theme and Variations, in C sharp minor, Op. 73. Jean-Philippe Collard, piano. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY/PATHÉ MARCONI CS 2072, \$13.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

Nocturnes: Op. 33, Nos. 1-3; Op. 36; Op. 37; Op. 63; Op. 74; Op. 84, No. 8; Op. 97; Op. 99; Op. 104; Op. 107; Op. 119.

RACHMANINOFF: Etudes Tableaux, Opp. 33 and 39. Jean-Philippe Collard, piano. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY/PATHÉ MARCONI CS 2075, \$6.98.

Jean-Philippe Collard, who was born in 1948 and whose recordings here represent the first offspring of an agreement between Connoisseur Society and the French EMI affiliate Pathé Marconi, fits into a French school of pianism built around a virtuoso command of the instrument, an emphasis on tone, and a general tendency to impose as little of the performer's personality as possible on the music. Even in the fairly romantically oriented works on these discs (especially the early Fauré nocturnes), Collard offers straightforward playing that is often remarkable in the fluency and evenness of its forward movement and yet frequently uninspiring in its definition of the thematic and motivic lines.

Of course, neither the Fauré nocturnes nor the Rachmaninoff etudes tableaux are exactly examples of unabashed lyricism. Even in the first phase of the nocturnes (Nos. 1-5), the deceptive Chopinisms hide certain rhythmic and motivic complexities that cannot be carried by sheer pianistic élan, even as considerable as Collard's. By the time we get to the anguished No. 6,



Gabriel Fauré
His own kind of eternal melody.

Fauré already seems to be inventing his own kind of eternal melody, which in turn dissolves by Nos. 9 and 11 into a kind of pure musical movement in which a strangely hermetic harmonic language seems to exist almost totally in and of itself, with little support from rhythm or theme.

In his performances of the nocturnes, Collard proves to be more sonorous and less dry than Jean Doyen (Musical Heritage) and less warm and emotive than Evelyne Crochet on Vox, who remains my preference. Collard impresses most in the more impetuous middle sections of many of the early nocturnes. He also has a highly individualistic, almost meditative approach to certain slow, quiet passages, such as the opening of No. 1 or the sixth variation of the rather Schumannesque *Theme and Variations* in C sharp minor (Elgar also comes to my mind, for some reason). And Collard excels in the multitoned dynamic contrasts he can produce. But he has a few tics—for example, holding the final chord of a piece until the sound has almost totally decayed.

The Rachmaninoff pieces too, in spite of their etudes tableaux ("picture studies") title, have a much more abstract quality than many of the composer's earlier miniatures, such as the preludes. In fact, in these seventeen works (Op. 33, No. 4, has been kept in its revised version in Op. 39, so that Op. 33 has only eight pieces), all but two in minor keys, the thematic material is almost always subordinated to the movement of the typically large Rachmaninoff blocks of sound, whose harmonies tend to be much more acrid than one might expect.

Collard's full and well-rounded tone serves him well in his sounding of those rich, often moody Rachmaninoff chords, and in some works, such as the demonically spritely Op. 39, No. 6, he creates an amazingly pulsing momentum. I wish, though, that he would devote a bit more attention to separating the various layers of the music he plays, instead of burying everything in an over-all sound that depends

too heavily on purely rhythmic movement. But this style works better in the Rachmaninoff than in the Fauré. Collard's complete etudes tableaux are much preferable to Michael Ponti's (Vox), and in many pieces he has an edge over Beveridge Webster (Dover).

Pathé's recording is not as full-ranged and resonant as the typical Connoisseur Society piano sound, and the hiss level on the test pressings was on the high side. I found Heuwell Tircuit's Fauré liner notes quite well done; his Rachmaninoff notes struck me as gratuitously flippant. R.S.B.

HANDEL: Trio Sonatas (13). Ars Rediviva. [Jan Vrána and Jaroslav Krček, prod.] SUPRAPHON 1 11 1251/3, \$20.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

Early (Halle) Sonatas: No. 2, in D minor, Op. 2; No. 1b, in C minor; No. 2, in G minor; No. 4, in B flat; No. 5, in F; "No. 7," in G minor; "No. 8," in G minor; "No. 9," in E. Op. 5; No. 1, in A; No. 2, in D; No. 4, in G; No. 5, in G minor; No. 6, in F.

Over the years, the more recorded music I listen to and think about, the more I resent the grossly disproportionate attention given to Major Masterpieces at the expense of less pretentious "little" works and the more irked I become over the comparably disproportionate difficulties (near-impossibilities indeed) of trying to convey in print the special rewards often found in small-scaled but by no means necessarily "minor" tonal jewels.

I'm sure that a main reason for the despotism of the Cult of Bigness is the relative ease and persuasiveness with which commentators (from a Tovey to the lowliest reviewer) all can explain why, and even how, Great Music is truly great. Who can fail to convince even a novice that the *Jupiter* and *Eroica* symphonies are masterpieces and that they can be safely guaranteed to reward incalculably every attentive listener? But how does anyone convince someone unfamiliar with such smaller and obviously more casual works as Mozart horn concertos and divertimentos, say, that these too may be inexhaustibly rewarding—in quite different ways, of course, but if perhaps less impressively, often even more delectably.

Frankly, the problem of writing about music-for-fun baffles me. After I've said that it's quintessentially music composed for the sheer relish of music-making, and for the informal entertainment of the composer's pupils, colleagues, and friends, and that it's ideally suited both for home playback and for the infinite instant replays records permit, what else can I say? Except to quote the best key to the puzzle I've ever found. Yeats's:

... a casual
Improvisation or a settled game ...
Those deeds were best that gave the
minute wings
And heavenly music if they gave it
wit.

All of which is my lame excuse for a deeply regretted inability to express my own exhilarating relish of the present batch of little trio sonatas, and for my hopelessness of persuading many readers that they too may find in these seemingly trivial by-products of a great composer of greater works

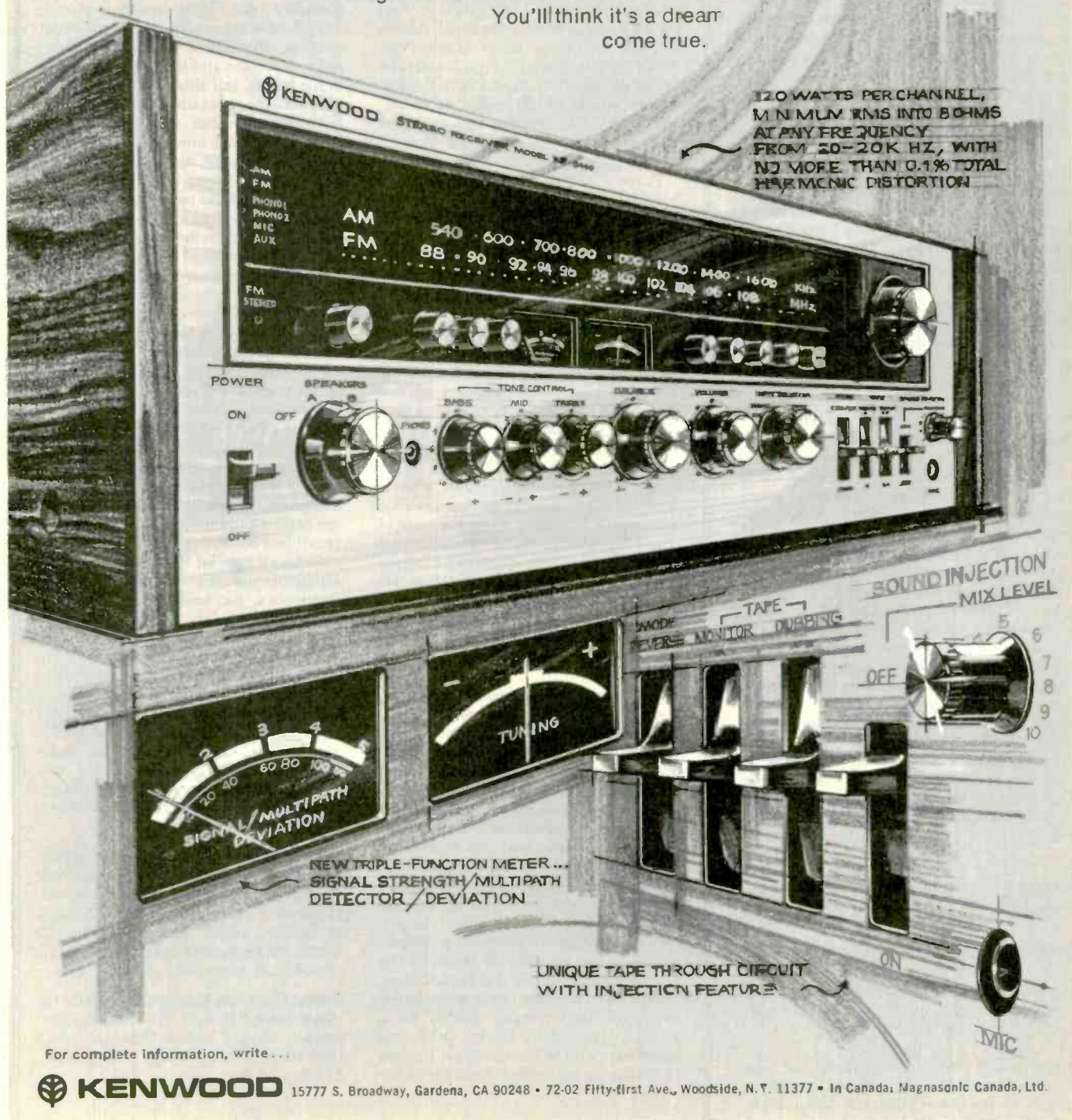
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quite incomparably rewarding satisfactions.

Any normal, rational review is unlikely to encourage potential listeners who are not already devout Handelians or baroque-era specialists. There are no fanciful titles here, no programs or "stories," no grand structures or heaven-storming passions—simply a long succession of alternately slow and fast short movements, grouped in no less than thirteen examples of the more than twenty-two Handelian trio sonatas.

(Well, there is one pertinent anecdote. When the elderly Handel was shown the manuscripts of six early trio sonatas, supposedly written when he was no more than ten or twelve, he is said to have exclaimed, "Ah, I could write like the devil in those days, especially for the oboe, which was my favorite instrument!" That just can't be apochryphal. And I can even believe, as apparently practically no one else does, that Handel—being Handel—actually was only ten or eleven when he wrote even so deft and larky a sonata as the early example included here.)

But, back to the discouraging side of things, there are no big sonorities or exotic colorings to make a special appeal to audiophiles, only two melody instruments (flute, oboe, violin in various pairings) stepping or flowing along over a cello/harpsichord continuo part. Then, too, there are no star virtuosos here, just journeyman Czech musicians among whom only flutist Milan Munclinger's name is familiar—and that as a conductor. They don't use period instruments or much improvised ornamentation to appeal to musical antiquarians. And in the clean, un gimmicked, but never exceptional recording the flute and cello parts often tend to dominate the others, the over-reticent violins in particular. While there are genuine interpretive, executant, and technological attractions, they just aren't particularly striking or impressive in themselves. So why bother with "another" collection of everyday, garden-variety baroque chamber music?

Well, the only thing I can say is that, if you don't bother, you're cheating yourself of the ineffably varied, stimulating, beguiling, amusing, and invigorating delights that have had me walking on air as I play and obsessively replay these discs. The experience already has brightened up the dreariest, most dismal of wintry days—even though I'm farther away than ever from discovering the secret of the magic involved in such true divertimentos. What I'm sure of is that at a time when everyone else is vainly seeking a cure for depressions, I've found one!

R.D.D.

HAYDN: Il Ritorno di Tobia. For a feature review, see page 81.

B **HINDEMITH:** Mathis der Maler Symphony. **R. STRAUSS:** Tod und Verklärung, Op. 24. London Symphony Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein, cond. [Harold Lawrence, prod.] NONESUCH H 71307, \$3.96.

Horenstein's fine performance of the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony could do much to revive interest in Hindemith, whose once high repute has been in eclipse

A Definitive *La Valse* and *Mother Goose*?

by Royal S. Brown

Of all the composers whose centenary will be popping up in this era so enamored of such excuses for festivities, Ravel needs a spate of new recordings far less than many I can think of. And yet we already have some gems: Abbey Simon's set of the piano music (Vox SVBX 5473, reviewed in April), and now the latest disc (Vol. 3) of Pierre Boulez' interpretations of the orchestral music, which contains nothing less than the most stunning version of *La Valse* I have ever heard.

There are those who will find the opening of Boulez' *La Valse* too deliberate. But unlike many conductors who use slow tempos to intellectualize musical details to death, Boulez here employs them to maintain an extraordinary tension, both in the structure of the various phrases, which are neither stretched beyond the breaking point nor sloughed over (as Ozawa tends to do), and in the instrumentation, the diverse facets of which are balanced against each other with a clarity that is as dazzling as it is revealing.

Furthermore, using strong accentuations—and once in a while some rather heavy rubatos—Boulez creates a pulse that builds in intensity so that the final movements of the piece reach a point of Dionysian, color-burst frenzy from which the five-note conclusion represents more of a fall than a release. He also makes the listener aware, better than any conductor I have heard, of the increasingly short musical episodes that begin to accumulate toward the end of *La Valse*.

Boulez gives a sonorous, moody, and generally very balletic account of the complete *Ma Mère l'Oye*. In this version of the music, which Ravel filled out from the five pieces of the original 1908 piano-duet scoring, there is a rather strong and somewhat disconcerting contrast between the sophistication of some of the pure ballet music and the ingenuous, fairy-tale candor of the original five pieces (note the Satie-esque simplicity of Beauty's haunting waltz in "Les Entretiens de la belle et la bête"). In particular, the "Danse du rouet et scène" seems to fall somewhere between Debussy and early Stravinsky. Nonetheless, the ballet as a whole has a marvelously evocative, dark-woody quality to it, nicely re-created by Boulez, who once again uses all the instrumental timbres to their very best effect, from the color-

istic birdcall imitations to the beautifully warm and touching muted strings in "Petit Poucet."

I do take exception to Boulez' strangely pointillistic and inappropriately lumbering rendition of the *Menuet antique*, which loses much of its autumnal mellowness and its archaic delicacy in his hands. But this is a minor drawback on a disc containing such fine, even definitive, versions of *La Valse* and *Mother Goose*. I must add that, in its brightness, clarity, and balance, the recorded sound seems to enhance the attractiveness of the conductor's conception of the Ravelian idiom. A somewhat larger drawback is the excessive surface noise of two copies I listened to; a third copy, however, proved noise-free.

It would be difficult to find a conductor who offers more contrasts to Boulez than Seiji Ozawa. Where Boulez is interested in the individual instrumental colorations (which strongly suits, it seems to me, the "French" concept of orchestration), Ozawa leans more toward an over-all orchestral sheen. And where Boulez lingers, occasionally excessively, on the separate motivic phrases, Ozawa rarely gives any single musical component a chance to assert itself, often creating the impression of a sort of breathless rush.

Ozawa's new *La Valse* and *Rapsodie espagnole* are not as bad as Leonard Bernstein's, but neither are they anywhere near as good as many others, so this umpteenth recording hardly makes sense to me. As for *Bolero*, I could manage somehow if it went unrecorded for the next decade or so. Although I recall a college dorm mate who knocked at my door almost daily asking to hear "Bolero," one of its chief attractions seems to me novelty. There just is not that much new you can do with it, though Ozawa seems to be trying for a volume record at the end.

RAVEL: *Ma Mère l'Oye* (complete ballet); *La Valse*; *Menuet antique*. New York Philharmonic, Pierre Boulez, cond. [Thomas Z. Shepard, prod.] COLUMBIA M 32838, \$6.98. Quadriphonic: MQ 32838 (SQ-encoded disc), \$7.98; MAQ 32838 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.98.

RAVEL: *Rapsodie espagnole*; *Bolero*; *La Valse*. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa, cond. [Thomas Mowrey, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 475, \$7.98.

recently. Both the Hindemith and Strauss works are studio recordings (dating from 1970 and 1972), the last he made before his death in 1973. They rank among the best representations in stereo of this remarkable, and during his lifetime rather neglected, conductor.

Unlike many other conductors, Horenstein succeeds admirably in lightening Hindemith's rather dense texture and in bringing tonal variety to what is often a rather restricted palette. He does this without violating Hindemith's scoring, but rather by directing his orchestra to play cleanly and in proper balance. Throughout his career, Horenstein was a dedicated interpreter of composers who were his contemporaries in Germany and Austria, and he obviously knows this score very well. His reading of the opening "Angelic Concert" emphasizes the melodic lines beautifully and is especially effective in playing the fugal sections without stiff pedantry. It is, in short, a superb reading—the best I have heard in concert or on records.

The same meticulous musicianship and rather individual sense of orchestral sound characterize Horenstein's performance of *Death and Transfiguration*. His Strauss is remarkably free of bombast, even in this rather theatrical work, and the more expressive passages are projected warmly without cloying.

The recordings are excellent, both in the responsive playing of the London Symphony and in their engineering. P.H.

KORNGOLD: Sonata for Piano, No. 2, in E, Op. 2; Fairy Pictures, Op. 3. Antonin Kubalek, piano. [Glenn Gould, prod.] GENESIS GS 1055, \$6.98.

KORNGOLD: Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 6; Four Pieces from Much Ado About Nothing, Op. 11. Endre Granat, violin; Harold Gray, piano. [Tony Thomas, prod.] ORION ORS 74166, \$6.98.

Tony Thomas, who did the liner notes for both discs, produced the Orion release, and was "coordinating producer" for the Genesis issue, tends in his notes to smile knowingly at the second-coming-of-Mozart mythology built around the young Erich Wolfgang Korngold shortly after the turn of the century. And yet isn't this very notion responsible for the existence of these two albums? Three of the four works recorded were composed by the time Korngold was fifteen.

Not, I hasten to add, that there is anything wrong with the music. All of it makes for very attractive listening and is quite well played and recorded. I particularly enjoyed parts of the two sonatas, which show a fine sense of musical momentum and take quite a number of refreshingly unexpected (and yet not gauche, for the most part) harmonic and thematic turns.

The violin sonata (1912) has an especially intriguing scherzo built around rather Richard Straussian rhythmic patterns but following some novel tonal (and, once in a while, polytonal) directions. And the finale, although overly drawn out, has one of the meatiest (and best developed) fugue themes I have heard in a work of this nature.

The Second Piano Sonata, although written two years earlier, strikes me as even

more original. Composed in what might be called the "big chord" style (Glenn Gould, in a less than laudatory supplementary essay on the piece, uses the term "octave overload," which I rather like) that dominated the output of countless composers after Schumann, Liszt, and Chopin, the sonata—obviously the offspring of an already accomplished pianist—finds enough new paths for this style to sound consistently fresh, except perhaps in the fourth movement. One can hear the beginnings of all sorts of directions that might have been followed, and throughout one senses a strong amount of feeling behind the writing, particularly in the melancholy third movement and in a lovely, rising theme in the first. There is also some droll musical humor in

the rather expressionistic and disjointed second movement.

The *Fairy Pictures* and the violin-piano arrangement of the 1919 *Much Ado About Nothing* pieces are deliberately much more picturesque in orientation and offer much less interest, to my mind, than the sonatas. (I much prefer the orchestral version of *Much Ado*, as recorded on Angel S 36999.) Both, in fact, often give the impression of somewhat sophisticated salon music.

But there is something slightly disquieting about the way both of these albums, complete with family portraits, dote on the child-prodigy side of Korngold. Perhaps the saddest irony in all this is that, while we now have several of the earliest writings to come from the pen of a composer whose

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later output had considerably more substance, not one of the fascinating and influential compositions by the young Korngold's mentor, Alexander von Zemlinsky, has yet made it to disc. R.S.B.

B MAHLER: Symphonies: No. 1, in D; No. 5, in C sharp minor; No. 6, in A minor; No. 10, in F sharp (Adagio only). Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel, cond. [Seymour Solomon, prod.] VANGUARD EVERYMAN SRV 320 SD (No. 1), \$3.98; SRV 321/2 SD (Nos. 5 and 10), \$7.96 (two discs, automatic sequence); SRV 323/4 (No. 6), \$7.96 (two discs, automatic sequence). Quadriphonic (SQ-encoded discs): VSQ 30044, VSQ 30045/6, and VSQ 30047/8, \$7.98, \$15.96, and \$15.96.

With these releases, Maurice Abravanel completes his cycle of the nine finished Mahler symphonies, plus the Adagio of the Tenth. (Rumor had it a while back that he was considering recording the Wheeler realization of the full Tenth.) One clear advantage of the Utah series is price: With the exception of the full-priced No. 7, all the symphonies are offered at budget price—Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 9 on Cardinal; Nos. 1, 5, 6, 8, and 10 on the even less expensive Everyman label.

Abravanel's Mahler can be characterized generally as a model of coherent and firm music-making, allowing the drama and passion of the scores to speak for themselves, an approach shared by Haitink in his cycle. Solti and Bernstein often take a different approach, and some of their Mahler performances are heavily inflected and rhetorical.

The Utah Symphony plays with a natural (or is it well-taught?) sense of the style—some of the wind solos, for example, have just the right touch of grotesquerie. Yes, one could ask for more virtuosity and tonal richness, but one can make that complaint of some of the full-priced rivals, notably the Bavarian Radio Symphony in Kubelik's DG cycle. As for the engineering, only Philips' Haitink/Concertgebouw cycle consistently offers such comfortably spacious, translucently detailed, and clean sonics.

Before discussing the new performances, I should say that they are not the most successful in the Abravanel cycle. His No. 7, even at full price, remains my top choice for its unforced structural mastery. Nos. 2, 8, and 9 too are performances of considerable strength, particularly at their price. With the others, price becomes more of a factor, and the existence of high-quality budget competition often makes a recommendation more qualified.

Now to the individual performances:

Symphony No. 1. Abravanel uses the 1899 edition (no *Blumine*) and skips the first-movement repeat. The impression of excess baggage shedded comes too in the general lightness of texture and in the avoidance of gratuitous distentions, but sometimes also of indicated slowdowns (e.g., between Nos. 24 and 25 in the first movement). There is nothing "amateurish" in the articulation of the trumpets and timpani near the beginning of the work. In the *Ländler*, I'm impressed by the lilt of the trio and, in the funeral march, by the good balance between *pp* timpani and *p* double-

bass solo. Abravanel commits no egregious errors but also sheds no startling light on the first three movements. The finale suffers from signs of tiredness or insufficient retakes. Not a performance I would seek out again and again, and really not competitive even with the best budget editions, Walter (Odyssey Y 30047) and Horenstein (Nonesuch H 71240).

Symphony No. 5. Most of the points Abravanel misses his more eminent colleagues miss too. I consider the Fifth the most difficult of all the Mahler symphonies to conduct, mainly because of highly intricate tempo interrelationships and rhythmic problems. Only Haitink's players, for example, seem to count correctly the time values in the long cello recitative before No. 12 in the second movement. Where Abravanel does succeed notably well is in clarifying much of the woodwind writing—e.g., the oboe *appoggiaturas* at No. 2 of the Scherzo. This is a brisk, fairly energetic interpretation, in which the Adagietto allows us to hear how the Utah strings, modest though they may be in number, can manage to pour out tone when the score demands it. This Fifth clearly supersedes Vanguard's earlier one (on Cardinal), Neumann's turgid reading with the Leipzig Gewandhaus. Walter's New York Philharmonic version (Odyssey 32 26 0016, rechanneled) is wonderfully fluent and glowingly played, but it sounds its nearly thirty years.

Symphony No. 6. As in the First, the only other symphony in which Mahler indicated an exposition repeat, Abravanel does not take the repeat in the first movement, which he plays briskly and with good over-all shape and momentum. The balance of the cowbells is quite satisfactory. The Scherzo is menacingly characterized by the usually excellent woodwinds. An expressive enough Andante is followed by a finale in which the performers seem a little over their heads—momentum is insufficiently sustained for this to be the "flattening" experience so well described by Deryck Cooke. The only current bargain alternative is Jiráček's on Olympic, a pretty awful affair. Judgment is reserved pending the imminent arrival of Nonesuch's Horenstein/Stockholm Philharmonic performance.

Following the Critical Edition, Abravanel's Sixth, in company with all the modern stereo editions, places the Scherzo ahead of the Andante, in keeping with Mahler's original intent and final preference. However, it should not be forgotten that for several years in between the composer preferred the reverse sequence of the middle movements. That is how many of us were brought up on the symphony, and I wish conductors would occasionally present it that way. The Andante, after all, begins with a slowed-down transformation of the very phrase with which the first movement concludes, while the Scherzo's dark tread (timpani and low strings in the final measures) is carried through to the texture—and nearly the tonality—of the initial measures of the finale. Also, positioning an Andante between the opening movement and the similarly marchlike Scherzo (and remember that the finale begins slowly too) better preserves the formal symmetry as a whole.

Symphony No. 10: Adagio. Abravanel's is the only budget listing of this poignant movement, and he does well in differ-



RCA Records

James Levine
Stunning Mahler Fourth.

entiating the main tempo from the brief andante of the opening (and repeated) viola melody. Dynamics are well managed (e.g., No. 35), and as always in this series woodwind detail is telling. Because of this Adagio's invariable "filler" status, I doubt that many people will choose a recording strictly for its own merits, but I do prefer Abravanel's to Haitink's somewhat stolid one. (However, Haitink's coupled Fifth Symphony is superior to Abravanel's.) It is more stable rhythmically than Boulez' brilliant but often capricious reading (Side 4 of his complete *Das klagende Lied*, Columbia M2 30061). Szell's stunning recording (Columbia M2 31313) also includes the Purgatorio movement, and it is now coupled with his superb Sixth, but the edition of the score he used has been superseded in many respects. Kubelik (DG 2707 037, also coupled with the Sixth, less impressive than Szell's) has the virtue of stereo opposition of first and second violins, which the Adagio almost demands, but so too does Wyn Morris' album of the completed five-movement Tenth (Philips 6700 067), which is another subject altogether. A.C.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 1, in D. London Symphony Orchestra, James Levine, cond. [Charles Gerhardt, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0894, \$6.98. Tape: ●● ARK 1-0894, \$7.95; ●● ARS 1-0894, \$7.95.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 4, in G. Judith Blegen, soprano; Chicago Symphony Orchestra, James Levine, cond. [Thomas Z. Shepard, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0895, \$6.98. Tape: ●● ARK 1-0895, \$7.95; ●● ARS 1-0895, \$7.95.

With these records, the thirty-two-year-old principal conductor of the Metropolitan Opera begins both his symphonic recording career and a new cycle of the Mahler symphonies. In throwing his hat into the ring with the two shortest and most popular of the symphonies, Levine raises more questions than he answers about his ultimate success.

The Fourth is nothing less than stunning. I wouldn't describe Levine's approach as particularly sensuous or mystically rapt or even humorously rustic. It seems to be a to-

tally and intensely musical argument, calling to mind Van Beinum's early London LP. Tempos go from brisk for the opening section to deliberate in the scherzo's trio to moderate in the slow movement. Every drop of rubato is exquisitely sculpted so that nothing sounds quirky or accidental. Observance of the most minute nuances of phrasing, dynamic scales, and articulation reaches slide-rule exactitude. Orchestral balance is beautifully refined. One can revel in the pungent blending of choirs and individual voices that is so fundamental a part of Mahler's uncanny ear.

The actual execution of the Chicagoans couldn't be crisper or more pointed. In the first movement, for example, note the technical aplomb and superb shading of the horn solo six measures past No. 24 (a passage that always calls to my mind the opening of Beethoven's Fourth Concerto). In the beginning of the finale, note the cellos' glissandos or, for that matter, the simplicity and innocence of Judith Blegen's nicely focused singing of the entire song. The recording job allows everything to happen that should, whether it's a matter of spotlighting the solo violin amidst the general texture of the scherzo or permitting us to pinpoint the exact moment of release on the closing measures of the symphony without the dying strains of harp and double bass sounding larger than life.

The First is in many ways a disappointment. Levine maintains clean rhythms, his tempos are not bad, and he takes the first-movement repeat. The execution, though, has many a rough spot. The off-stage trumpets near the beginning of the first movement, are blurry in articulation (The theoretically "inferior" players of the Utah Symphony do better in the Abravanel recording reviewed above.) In the development section, four bars after No. 14 a few cellos can be heard still sliding, though that device is marked only in preceding instances of the same phrase. French-horn tone is consistently bloated and coarse, and there is little variation in dynamics in sustained notes. The funeral march abounds with inconsistency as to how loud a *p* is compared to a *pp* or an *mf*, etc. Hence balance and voice-leading are often haphazard. Similar problems, including untidy violins in the first slow episode, plague the finale.

Part of the blame must go to the recording crew. In addition to the balance problems enumerated, I found a pervasive thickness and constriction of range here. (Switching to headphones, for once, didn't help a bit.)

Perhaps Levine isn't yet ready to be a great conductor all the time, but for starters .500 isn't too bad an average in Mahler! [Note: Because of the length of these works, RCA plans to issue the Quadradisc editions of the Levine First and Fourth together in a specially priced three-disc set.] A.C.

MOZART: Concertos for Flute and Orchestra: No. 1, in G, K. 313; No. 2, in D, K. 314. Andante for Flute and Orchestra, in C, K. 315. Karlheinz Zöller, flute; English Chamber Orchestra, Bernhard Klee, cond. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 344, \$7.98.

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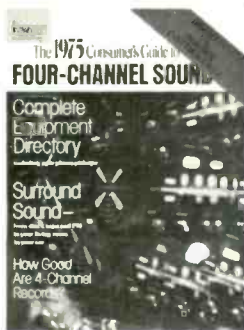


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It is well-known that Mozart disliked the flute, at least in his youth when he was commissioned by a Dutch amateur in 1778 to write three easy and short concertos. Actually, he composed only two, one of which (K. 314) exists in both flute and oboe versions. Since his patron, for some inexplicable reason, did not like the slow movement of K. 313, Mozart obligingly supplied a new movement—the Andante, K. 315.

Despite Mozart's aversion to the instrument, he wrote beautifully for it here. The G major Concerto, K. 313, is a large work in which an extraordinary Adagio occupies the central position. Even on the modern flute, these are not "easy and short" concertos, and they remain mainstays of the virtuoso repertory. Stylistically they resemble the earlier violin concertos more than the later ones for piano or clarinet; Mozart had not yet discovered the dramatic potential of the concerto idiom.

Karlheinz Zöllner is a brilliant and musically virtuoso exponent of this music. His tone is somewhat less sharply focused than we are accustomed to hearing from American flutists, but it has appealing warmth. While I have not heard all the competing versions of these works, I can say that the Zöllner/Klee disc is desirable in every respect. P.H.

MOZART: Don Giovanni: excerpts (arr. Triebensee); Die Entführung aus dem Serail: excerpts (arr. attr. Wendt). Netherlands Wind Ensemble. PHILIPS 6500 783, \$7.98.

In Mozart's time the hit tunes in his operas almost immediately jumped from opera houses to beer gardens, to be played by all kinds of little ensembles, particularly "wind bands"—sometimes larger ensembles anticipating the concert bands favored for outdoor summer music-making in the nineteenth century, but more often smaller ensembles like the octets heard on the present disc.

Here we have pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns (plus a string double bass) playing Johann Georg Triebensee's arrangements of thirteen selections from *Don Giovanni*; pairs of oboes, English horns, bassoons, and horns in eight selections from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in arrangements attributed to Johann Wendt. Hence musicologists, historians, and educators will be particularly interested in these resurrections of old traditions, the first of their kind that I remember encountering on disc. The scholars' only regret can be that Wendt's (or whoever's) scorings, delectable as they are, still remain a tantalizingly disappointing substitute for the wind-band *Entführung* arrangements that Mozart wrote his father he was about to prepare but that, if ever actually written down, have been lost without trace.

But to hell with the scholars! This disc is too much sheer fun to be monopolized for documentary, didactic, or exegetical exploitations. What makes it one of the most immediately and deliciously appealing musical discoveries you're ever likely to stumble serendipitously across is the heaven-blessed combination of Mozartean melodism with piquantly tangy timbres, infectiously zestful playing, and sparkingly fresh and vivid sonics—inexhaustible joys

to both ears and minds. If you're to judge by their jacket photograph, the members of the Netherlands Wind Ensemble represented here look more like soccer players than musicians. But, as no one who has ever heard any of the group's earlier releases needs to be told, they are not only precocious masters of superb executant skills, but also interpreters of rare poetic sensibility fired by even rarer exuberance.

Don't take my or anyone else's word for any of this. Listen—and exult—for yourself!

R.D.D.

MOZART: *Il Rè pastore*, K. 208.

Aminata	Edith Mathis (s)
Elisa	Arleen Auger (s)
Tamuri	Sona Ghazarian (s)
Alessandro	Peter Schreier (t)
Agenore	Werner Krenn (t)

Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra, Leopold Hager, cond. BASF KLB 22643, \$20.98 (three discs, manual sequence).

While we are well informed about all of Mozart's other operas, even those from his childhood, *Il Rè pastore*, written when he was nineteen, is shrouded in conjecture.

We are usually admitted to Mozart's inner sanctum when, with his irrepressible vivacity, he writes about his operative plans to his father or sister, but not one word about this one. All we know is that the opera was composed for Salzburg and that Metastasio's libretto was condensed from three to two acts—and of course neatly botched. We do not know, however, who was responsible for this job, and we are sure of the name of only one of the original cast, the castrato Consili. After the single performance in Salzburg, *Il Rè pastore* practically disappeared from the scene, reappearing in the first Mozart edition in 1879. To complete its melancholy fate, after World War II the holograph was lost.

The original libretto (1751) has the typical Metastasian plot: conflict between virtue, love, and loyalty, all ending in magnanimity, renunciation, and happy marriages. Yet while the tone is that of the old opera seria, *Il Rè pastore* is closer to the dramatic *serenata* used for festive occasions. It was a popular libretto and was set to music by a number of great composers, among them Gluck, Piccinni, Hasse, Jommelli, and Galuppi.

Mozart, though belonging to a new generation, had to put up with a leftover baroque frame, complete with castrato, the archaic alternation of recitative with aria, and even with the baroque protocol concerning the distribution of the arias among the protagonists. It did not worry him, and he went ahead with youthful exuberance, so that, while outwardly archaic, this opera, composed in 1775, shows ideas and procedures no Italian of the period would have employed.

The influence especially of Piccinni and Christian Bach is palpably present, but neither of them would think of the little developments Mozart makes in the middle sections of arias or could handle the orchestra with such skill. Though still very young, Mozart shows a thorough acquaintance with the neo-Neapolitan style; he is master of every trick in the operatic arsenal, and while his vocal writing is not yet the equal of that of the great Italians he is getting

close. There is little emotional involvement but plenty of Mozartean charm and invention. The young composer revels in his virtuosity and does not always coordinate his brilliant orchestration with the voices—he likes to scintillate. He gives to one soprano aria a nimble flute dancing around the voice (well played), to another a solo violin (timidly played), while in the one heroic piece, Alessandro's "Se vicendo," he unleashes four horns. The seccos are numerous and at times a bit perfunctory, but the accompanatos are fine, and in the concluding ensemble Mozart is before us in almost full stature.

The recording presents a remarkable cast. The three sopranos, Edith Mathis, Arleen Auger, and Sona Ghazarian, are all prima donnas with bright, well-placed voices of considerable power, good intonation, and variety of color. Their parts, uniformly high, are very demanding, but they toss off the involved coloraturas, whether forte or piano, without the slightest discomfort, and all three have plenty of personality and temperament. The two tenors, Peter Schreier and Werner Krenn, are also good reliable singers, though given to a little tenor pining. The conductor, Leopold Hager, does an excellent job but is slightly thwarted by a generally too open and forward sound; his orchestra follows him faithfully.

About the only small objection I may voice concerns the very long pauses between sections of arias. The seccos could have been pruned a little, especially since they are not printed in the accompanying libretto. This is an enjoyable recording, offering attractive singing and that indescribable mixture of trembling tenderness with brilliant virtuosity that is solely the young Mozart's property. P.H.L.

PALESTRINA: Song of Songs. Cantores in Ecclesia, Michael Howard, cond. OISEAU-LYRE SOL 338/9, \$13.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

The Song of Songs or *Canticum Canticum* is surely one of the most extraordinary books in the Bible, a book that anyone will agree offers stiff competition to any text. The lush sensuous language of the Songs—"Thy lips drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon," for instance—has embarrassed commentators in puritanical periods of history into a strangely forced allegory of Christ's love for the church. The current *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, however, describes these sumptuous texts as a miscellaneous collection of secular love poems, received into the Biblical canon because they were understood as wedding songs.

Not surprisingly, the voluptuous imagery of the texts has elicited magnificent settings from a number of composers. One thinks immediately of Monteverdi and Dunstable, both men with a gift for dramatic portrayal. But the appearance of Palestrina on this list is quite unexpected. In his Masses and motets the Roman composer deliberately eschewed the expressive techniques of his contemporaries—dissonance, wide leaps, rhythmic contrasts—and developed a style so smoothly flowing and consistently con-

trolled that it could serve as a model for centuries of counterpoint students. His madrigal composition is negligible; the clever conceits of the Italian poets never strike a spark of individuality in his settings. How astonishing it is, then, to come upon this single collection of motets, twenty-nine settings from the *Song of Songs* published in 1584, whose passionate texts are clothed in such glorious colors as to make them unique in his oeuvre. Not that Palestrina ever breaks his "rules." What is even more remarkable is that the rich rolling sound, the jewel-like images, the iridescent musical texture, are all created within the self-imposed restraints of his individual style.

Such a combination clearly proved irresistible for Michael Howard and his splendid chorus, *Cantores in Ecclesia*. Howard is developing into a fascinating conductor. He has great romantic spirit, a sense of grandness in structure that is unparalleled among specialists in this kind of music, and natural feeling for the sheer beauty of sonority. He is a passionate interpreter and a musician whose ideas are so compelling that he absolutely demands attention. Unfortunately, like some other flamboyant conductors—Leopold Stokowski, for example—he sometimes goes too far, for my taste at least. Not content to present the motets in the *Song of Songs* as individual works, he postulates a gigantic dramatic frame in which a monumental story is enacted between the Shulamite and the King, an interpretation that, though popular earlier in this century, seems as forced to me as the bloodless allegory of the church. The absence of any contemporary corroboration for his interpretation does not seem to bother Howard as he launches his choir into a dynamic performance aimed at a brilliant climax at the close of the third side of the two-disc set.

I must admit that, given this questionable scenario, the ebb and flow of the motets is beautifully conceived. The choir sings in tune with a splendid full-bodied blend of voices. As far as it concerns detail I like Howard's frankly romantic approach, although occasionally it gets out of hand, as in the sudden swells and diminuendos of *Descendit in hortum meum*.

The recording itself is excellent; the engineers have done full justice to the glorious sound. Buy it and enjoy it, but be aware that, were Palestrina alive today, he might find the story a bit surprising. S.T.S.

PRAETORIUS: Dances and Motets. Boys of the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St. Alban; Early Music Consort of London, David Munrow, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL S 37091, \$6.98.

Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) was a man with a keen ear for sonority. At a time when instrumental music was still a stepchild to its vocal counterpart, he was fascinated by everything about musical instruments: their playing, their construction, their sound. His encyclopedic treatise *Syntagma Musicum* is still one of our major sources of information about early instruments. Praetorius' own music also reflects his concern with sonority. His polychoral motets pit all sorts of combinations, vocal and instru-

mental, high and low, against one another, and his dances fairly cry out for vivid instrumental combinations.

Surely he could have wished for no better collaborator in the performance of his works than David Munrow, whose latest recording is a positive orgy of sound, elegantly and slickly presented with the gloss of the big dance bands of the 1940s. Such a comparison is not farfetched when one looks at the personnel assembled here by the Early Music Consort. Six sackbuts, two cornetts, and a serpent represent the brass section; five recorders, five krumphorns, four racketts, four rauschpfeifen, and a dulcian substitute for the clarinet and saxophone sections; and the band still contains a string choir (two violins, a tenor viol, two gambas, and a violone) in addition to

lute, chitarrone, two organs, regal, harpsichord, and percussion.

Not that all forty or so instruments play together most of the time. Munrow likes to use blocks of sound in similar colors, leaving the contrast for a higher level of organization. So the lovely clarity of muted brasses in the *Pavane de Spaigne* is preceded by the jolly low buzzing of four racketts in a delightful *Bourée* and is followed by the elegance of strings and harpsichord in the *Courante M. M. Wüstrow*. Some of the fourteen dances chosen from over 300 in *Terpsichore* are grouped into more obvious suites. The instrumentation of four voltas (Nos. 243, 210, 211, and 201 in the original collection) is arranged in cumulative fashion, winds, strings, brass, and finally a brilliant tutti, for example. Sometimes an

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instrumental solo will really take wing in the manner of the best jazz musicians. James Tyler's elegant and imaginative divisions in the lovely *Sarabande* (No. 34), for instance, should please the most jaded taste.

The motets on the reverse side continue the dazzling Praetorius/Munrow collaboration. Seven solo singers and a boys' choir augment the instrumental ensemble, which is divided into as many as five separate choirs. Not only are the pieces spectacular in their own right, but Munrow has even orchestrated the whole program so that it forms an arching half-hour with a life of its own. The joyful and familiar *Resonet in laudibus* (from *Eulogia Sionae*, 1611) makes an elegant prelude, followed by a lively allegro in the style of a big concerto movement on the chorale *Erhalt uns Herr* (*Polyhymnia Caduceatrix*, 1619). Two more sustained motets with slightly smaller forces form the slow movement. Another concertato movement, *Allein Gott in der Höh*, ends in a lively triple meter recalling the classical scherzo, and the disc concludes with a monumental chorale finale, *Christus der uns selig macht*, complete with trombones and angelic choirs.

All of this is accomplished with a bright resonant sound like molten gold. The singers and the instrumentalists throughout perform on the highest level, and the recorded sound is superb. A magnificent recording. S.T.S.

PROKOFIEV: *Concertos for Piano and Orchestra*: No. 3, in C, Op. 26; No. 5, in G, Op. 55. Michel Béroff, piano; Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Masur, cond. [David Mottley, prod.] ANGEL S 37084, \$6.98.

Michel Béroff is a fleet-fingered young pianist who has been well-received previously in the French and Russian repertory. While hardly young or unfamiliar, the Leipzig orchestra has lately enhanced its international image with a triumphal U.S. tour and renewed recording activity under the revivifying direction of its conductor, Kurt Masur. Together they make a formidable impression on this record, drawn from a complete cycle of the Prokofiev piano concertos (which was released overseas as a three-disc set, filled out with the *Overture on Hebrew Themes*).

What most delights me about this coupling is the performers' refusal to impose some monolithic "Prokofiev style" on these very different works. No. 5 is, appropriately, given a reading of almost manic energy, a quality somehow lost in the more scrupulously patterned and shaded pianism of Richter (whose patrician interpretation is available from both Angel and DG). Béroff and Masur are, by contrast, resplendently expansive in No. 3, whose brooding lyricism, ironic pathos, and frail colors have not been so vividly served since the mono-era Katchen/Ansermet (now rechanneled on Everest 3297). For those who prefer a more propulsive and biting Third, there is ample choice among Graffman/Szell, Kapell/Dorati, Prokofiev/Coppola, and Janis/Kondrashin.

The Gewandhaus Orchestra is in fine fettle, and Angel's sonics are splendid. One



Hans Joachim Mischel

Michel Béroff—making a formidable impression in the Prokofiev concertos.

couldn't ask for more depth or definition.

A.C.

RACHMANINOFF: *Etudes Tableaux* (complete)—See Fauré: *Nocturnes*.

RAVEL: *Concertos for Piano and Orchestra*: in D (for the left hand); in G. **FAURÉ:** *Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra*, Op. 111. Alicia de Larrocha, piano; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Lawrence Foster (in the Ravel) and Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos (in the Fauré), cond. LONDON CS 6878, \$6.98.

The more I listen to it, the more I become convinced that Ravel's piano concerto for the left hand is one of the true masterpieces of twentieth-century music. I know of few works in which the themes grow so naturally out of their instrumental milieu and in which the progression and interactions of these themes appear so dramatically inexorable. It is also difficult to find a non-avant-garde work in which the instrumental textures are woven so strongly into the actual musical meaning. Basically, the left-hand concerto accomplishes the minor miracle of shaping an intricate and intellectually intriguing sonic architecture into a musical flow of amazing emotional depth.

Alicia de Larrocha's playing of the piano part is particularly good in its delineation, in the midst of complex structures that would be hard enough for two hands to play, of the thematic material. She creates a marvelous sense of pulse—indeed, from what I have heard of her playing I would say that rhythmic vitality is perhaps the strongest of her many qualities. Certainly, it is a marked and ingratiating quality pervading all three works on this disc. Yet there is also a smoothness, a flow to the pianism that adds greatly to the over-all musical coherency.

What is slightly lacking, perhaps, is a certain incisiveness that is probably somewhat coated over by London's typically rich but also typically muted sound quality. Nonetheless, I have the impression that both De Larrocha and conductor Lawrence Foster have deliberately avoided a certain

sharpness and sense of contrast that might have given various parts of Ravel's music a bit more character. This takes its toll, particularly in the rhapsodic, rather meditative second movement of the G major Concerto, which comes across as rather dull and drawn out.

On the other hand, in spite of the muted sheen the conductor and pianist effervesce in the G major Concerto's first and third movements. I especially like the relief given to the various solo instruments that audaciously punctuate the work, from dreamy harp harmonics to a screeching E flat clarinet. Also effective is the way the jolting, often polytonal relationship between piano and orchestra stands out.

What makes this disc doubly attractive is its inclusion of the only domestically available version of the strangely haunting Fauré *Fantaisie* for piano and orchestra, written in 1919. (Two versions have recently been issued in France: One features Pierre Barbizet with Roger Albin and the Strasbourg Radio Orchestra on Inédits ORTF 995 027; the other, on *Cassiopee* 369 187, has Eric Heidsieck at the piano and Roberto Benzi conducting.) Although it starts out with disarming simplicity in one of those typically flowing, almost cyclically spiraling Fauré themes, the *Fantasy* quickly accumulates any number of intriguing musical ideas, in which the composer seems primarily interested in hermetic harmonic motives and their instrumental character. The work also contains an occasionally Franckian central scherzo section opening with a rhythmically jazzy piano figure that has an almost obsessive, surrealistic quality.

Particularly in comparison with the ORTF disc, in which the piano and orchestra are recorded with almost overwhelming brightness (although I must say the orchestra becomes oppressive at times), the De Larrocha/Frühbeck de Burgos collaboration suffers even more than the Ravel performances from a lack of sharpness. Nonetheless, the performance benefits especially from De Larrocha's pianism and communicates quite strongly, it seems to me, that sort of agitated quiescence that marks Fauré's "third" style.

Considering the high—if not absolutely top—quality of the performances and the very presence of the Fauré Fantasy, this must be considered a major release. R.S.B.

RAVEL: Orchestral Works. For a review, see page 96.

ROSSINI: Le Siège de Corinthe. For a feature review, see page 75.

SCHUBERT: Quintet for Strings, in C, D. 956. Taneyev Quartet; Mstislav Rostropovich, cello. WESTMINSTER GOLD WGS 8299, \$3.49.

This recording, made in 1963 in Leningrad, is worth having, though choices between it and other interesting performances are by no means clear-cut.

In general, Rostropovich and his colleagues go into the music with a healthy kind of directness and not much agonizing over details. Their tone is full and robust, in keeping with this approach, and they let the music speak for itself much more than, say, the Budapest players (Columbia MS 6536), who sound quite calculated and studied by comparison. The famous cello theme in the first movement is dealt with briskly and in a businesslike manner by Rostropovich, who lingers over it less than most cellists. Even the Juilliard players (Columbia M 32808) seem to savor the score more, and they find considerably more drama in Schubert's contrast of dynamics and accents. But neither the Juilliard, the Budapest, nor the Amadeus (DG 139 105) achieves quite the solidity and cohesiveness of sonority of the Taneyev. This group, incidentally, observes the first-movement exposition repeat, which none of the others does.

The second movement points up the problems of choices. The Russians create an almost hypnotic allure in the first section of the Adagio, due not only to the marvelous organ-like sonority of the ensemble playing, but also to the peculiar inwardness of the first violin. It is a powerfully sustained conception, and no other version quite matches it. But in the F minor middle section the urgency of the music is missing: the legato fluidity of the Taneyev performances doesn't catch the sense of the pressure of events, and the contrast between the two sections is thereby diminished.

But then there's the finale, in which the lusty sweep and the impetus of the Russians make a strong case. The Juilliard and the Amadeus are tighter and more prancing in rhythm; the Budapest is slower and a little more cerebral. The choice, as I said, is not easy, but you will have fun trying to decide. S.F.

STOCKHAUSEN: Stop; Ylem. London Sinfonietta, Karlheinz Stockhausen, cond. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 442, \$7.98.

Stop is an aleatory piece based on a sort of tone row. It derives its title from the fact that it is periodically "stopped by noise-tinging silence." In between the stopping places, Stockhausen draws forth some of the most enthralling orchestral colors and

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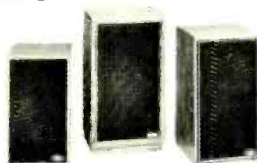
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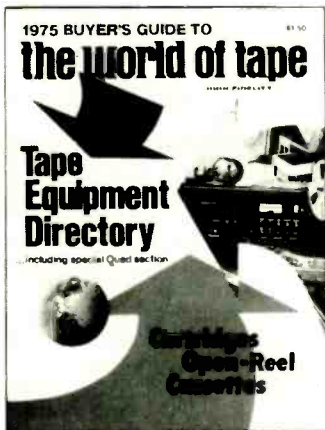
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combinations of color you are ever likely to hear, and his palette of nuance is just as rich, important, and creative. A breathtaking tension suffuses the work, but it is the tension of serenity, if that makes any sense. Anyhow, *Stop* is one of Stockhausen's masterpieces.

Ylem carries the aleatory to its furthest limit. The players perform with their eyes closed, relying upon telepathic communication with each other and with a conductor "who listens with extreme concentration from the middle of the hall but is not outwardly active." There is a lot of marching around by the players, too, and with their eyes closed, yet. It is amazing that there is any coherence in this music at all, but there is, and some of it is mysterious and ethereal to the highest degree. The title, *Ylem*, is a word "used by some people" to denote a periodic explosion of the universe that is supposed by these same unnamed folks to take place every 80 billion years, after which the whole machine "unfolds and draws together again." This concept provides a vague "program" for the work. A.F.



STRAUSS, R.: Ariadne auf Naxos
(complete opera, without prologue).

Ariadne	Viorica Ursuleac (s)
Zerbinetta	Erna Berger (s)
Najade	Miliza Korjus (s)
Echo	Ilonka Hoindonner (s)
Dryade	Gertrude Rüniger (ms)
Bacchus	Helge Roswaenge (t)
Scaramuccio	Benno Arnold (t)
Brighella	Erich Zimmermann (t)
Harlekin	Karl Hammes (b)
Truffaldin	Eugen Fuchs (bs)

Stuttgart Radio Orchestra, Clemens Krauss, cond. BASF KBF 21806, \$9.98 (two discs, mono, manual sequence) [recorded November 6, 1935].

This is the first commercial release of a performance that has been sneaking about on a pirated disc for several years now, the Stuttgart broadcast of November 6, 1935. It cannot be regarded as recommendable for collectors who are looking for a single complete version to own and play, for it does not embrace the prologue, and its sound—though considerably fuller and cleaner than that of the pirate edition—is just middling mid-Thirties mono.

In its documentary function, though, it has the considerable merit of preserving several brilliant individual performances, and its sentimental connection to the composer is matched only by the 1944 Vienna performance under Karl Böhm that commemorated Strauss's eightieth birthday (DG 18850/52: Maria Reining, Alda Noni, Irmgard Seefried, Max Lorenz, Erich Kunz, and Paul Schoeffler—a fine presentation, now unfortunately deleted).

The conductor, Clemens Krauss, was a close friend and musical ally of Strauss, and conductor of most of the later Strauss operatic premieres, beginning with *Arabella*. His way with the score is thus of more than casual interest. Our view is necessarily somewhat clouded by the restricted harmonic and dynamic range of the recording—the woodwind writing, in particular, suffers in this respect, though it also sounds as if the section's playing is relatively unassertive.

It is still possible to discern that Krauss's approach is a settled, mellow one by com-

parison with most of the more modern readings. He does not base his interpretation on contrast, but on consistency, and where many conductors are at pains to differentiate moods and mark off changes—now warm and intimate, now bouncy, now noisy, finally heroic—Krauss seems more interested in a comfortable integration of qualities. Especially indicative, I think, is his treatment of the comedians, which is slower, more lyrical and affectionate, than we have grown accustomed to, with an emphasis on vocal legato and a pleasing trust in the music to make its points without exaggeration. Harlekin's song is given an extremely permissive, *col canto* accompaniment. The intermezzo thus has the effect of a gentle, ironic commentary rather than a brash, "funny" intrusion. The reading is not at all slack or wanting in impetus, but simply less hard-edged and bright, a bit more deeply anchored than most.

Two of the individual performances are superb and inimitable: the Zerbinetta of Erna Berger and the Bacchus of Helge Roswaenge. Berger hasn't quite the utter security and spontaneity of coloratura technique to project all the insouciance, or wantonness, one can imagine in the character—the ascending scales are a little careful, and the final high D ends up dripping slowly off the wall. But the sheer beauty and limpidity of her tone and the warm musicality of her phrasing are unique. Her flirtatiousness is somehow nice and rather homey, and one is sure her Zerbinetta's lovemaking must be very tender. The basic command of line and embellishment give her singing a classical finish, and it's a pity we don't have the prologue for her duet with the Composer, which she must have sung ravishingly.

Roswaenge is distinctly the best Bacchus on records and the best of my experience—the role could scarcely be better sung. The voice is in its finest condition here, with the meaty heft and ring of the ideal *jugendliche Heldentenor* but all the malleability and tonal warmth of a fine Italian spinto tenor. He dominates the role's challenging climactic pages with that sense of full but easy effort, of mobilized energy, that is heard only in great vocalism, and he balances this with a perfectly poised, full-throated mezzavoice on the A natural of "Bist du auch solch' eine Zauberin?" He has some moments of rhythmic instability in the opening bars of his music but thereafter sings with accuracy and sensitivity: it's a most exciting performance.

Of all the musical mysteries of Richard Strauss, none is more impenetrable than his fondness for the singing of Viorica Ursuleac, the Ariadne here. She was the soprano of the premieres of *Arabella*, *Friedenstag*, and *Capriccio*, a leading member of the legendary Strauss ensemble at Salzburg, and the composer's avowed favorite in her roles. She was also Krauss's wife, and a decade or so after this Ariadne she recorded the *Marschallin* and *Senta* complete under his baton. Those performances are thoroughly terrible ("Most reviewers object to Ursuleac's performance," chastely commented the *Myers-Hill Record Ratings* in 1956), and for collectors familiar with them it is only fair to observe that the present recording at least represents Strauss's "made to measure" soprano in her prime.

It is still a bafflement. The voice is clearly a good one in a state of serious technical imbalance, with all the weight crammed into the upper-middle range. Its intonation is frequently in need of upward calibration, and a compass of at least a sixth in the lower-middle area (the very sixth in which most of Ariadne's opening music is written) is jumbled and dry. Toward the top, the tone takes on some spin and clarity, and Ursuleac holds things decently together once the music gets going. If this mediocre vocalism were informed by extraordinary musical or textual insight, the case would be made, but in fact she gums the words about in a mannered way and shapes phrases (even within her vocal means) in a perfectly predictable way. That Strauss could have preferred her to the likes of Siems, Lehmann, Jeritza, or Reining is, on recorded evidence, incomprehensible, but at least we need not take her in lieu of Reining, Schwarzkopf, or Rysanek, among others.

Among the comedians, Fuchs and Zimmermann are well above average; Hammes and Arnold are more ordinary. The nymph trio has its distressing moments—the alto Rüniger is the only really adequate member, and Korjus' hard, constricted tone and poor intonation make for some painful moments when the music becomes ambitious.

The packaging (two discs in a single envelope) and the liner notes (skimpy and euphoric—nothing about the opera) are not added attractions, but the pressings are good. C.L.O.

STRAUSS, R.: Salome: Final Scene—See Berg: Lulu Suite.

STRAUSS, R.: Tod und Verklärung—See Hindemith: Mathis der Maler Symphony.

STRAVINSKY: Concertos: for String Orchestra, in D; for Sixteen Wind Instruments, in E flat (*Dumbarton Oaks*). Dances concertantes. Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Neville Marriner, cond. [John Mordler, prod.] ANGEL S 37081, \$6.98.

<i>Comparisons:</i>	
Stravinsky (Concerto in D; <i>Dances</i>)	Col. M 30516
Stravinsky (<i>Dumbarton Oaks</i>)	Col. M 31729

The most conspicuous comparison here is with the performances directed by the composer himself. Stravinsky insisted throughout his career that his music did not need to be interpreted, and increasingly, as he grew older, that meant that rhythm was to dominate melody, with the propulsive element of the music set ahead of its legato line. Expressive gestures and nuances, even the expansion and contraction of a phrase, met with disapproval, and the paradigm Stravinsky performances were crisp, cleanly articulated, and cool.

That the music works this way is attested by the Stravinsky records. That it responds to a less austere approach is shown by the Marriner disc, where many passages are interpreted to the extent that the natural musical response—to let a fine legato phrase sing out, to accelerate and retard for expression, to let the music warm up and glow whenever possible—is not suppressed.

Given the choice, I would play the Marriner version over the Stravinsky. (It is also

blessed with the newer and more agreeable recorded sound, and a virtuoso orchestra in Marriner's Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, here making its recorded debut.) This does not mean that it is necessarily better (the Stravinsky version is of obvious value), and I hope it does not mean that I am hopelessly ignorant and corrupt in my taste. (Although if I am, Marriner is good company.) Rather it means that important music has many facets, and in this case Marriner emphasizes the ones I find more congenial in these works. R.C.M.

TARTINI: Concertos for Violin, Strings, and Continuo: in G, D. 78; in A, D. 96; in B flat, D. 117. Salvatore Accardo, violin; I Musici. PHILIPS 6500 784, \$7.98.

The fame of Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770) has been better preserved by violin players and specialists than by the general public, with the result that he is most often represented on discs by solo and chamber pieces. His 125 violin concertos are occasionally recorded too, but they tend to go out of print more quickly—a tendency that lends some added, at least temporary, value to the present release. One of its three concertos, the relatively late D. 117, with its characteristically Tartinian blend of baroque and *galant* styles, may be a recorded first (at least I haven't been able to trace any predecessor), while the other two are otherwise currently unavailable. And one of them, the now-wistful, now-jolly D. 78 in G is perhaps the most immediately appealing example of Tartini's concerted works one is ever likely to encounter on records or off.

I wish I could commend the present recorded performances as well worthy of such fine music, but I can't. The strong, clean, rather sharp-edged and overclose recording is at least quite tolerable, and the imported disc has been processed with beautifully quiet surfaces, but the performances are regrettably anachronistic in the stylistic approaches of both the rather thick-toned and sometimes lumbering ensemble and the too slickly deft, rather thinned, and often romantically over-expressive soloist. R.D.D.

VERDI: La Traviata.

Violetta	Mirella Freni (s)
Annina	Gudrun Schafer (s)
Flora	Hania Kovicz (ms)
Alfredo	Franco Bonisolli (t)
Gastone	Peter Bindzus (t)
Germont	Sesto Bruscantini (b)
Baron Douphol	Rudolf Jedlicka (b)
Marquis d'Obigny	Heninz Reeh (bs)
Doctor Grenvil	Hans-Joachim Lukat (bs)

Chorus of the Berlin State Opera; Berlin State Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli, cond. BASF KBL 21644, \$20.98 (three discs, manual sequence).

This is the soundtrack of a *Traviata* television film made in the summer of 1973, and it is an enjoyable performance of the opera, containing many delightful touches and some that are exquisite.

The latter are provided by the Violetta of Mirella Freni. This is possibly the best thing she has put on records, the most favorable account on disc of her limpid, beautiful timbre, her naturally delicate and charming musical instincts, her clarity, her precision of pitch, and her attention to detail. She has



Mirella Freni
Her Violetta is the best performance she has recorded.

the gift of uttering a phrase, even a word, in a way that is very moving. It is one of the gifts a Violetta needs most. When Freni, in the first scene, says "Ohimè! . . . Nulla, nulla!" the timing and the color that she gives to the words make one "see" the moment and feel with her. Other moments that bring particular pleasure are the smoky, passionate intensity of the phrase "*che in lui tutto troverò?*" (in the duet with Germont), where the diminuendo seems to express the feelings that overwhelm her; the phrase to Annina in the last scene, "*Oh, mi saran bastanti!*"—the dropping fourth beautifully joined, suggesting a sad smile of acceptance; and, later in the scene, the urgent thrill in her "*Una gioia!*" (when Annina has returned, to announce an unexpected joy). And many more.

I last heard Miss Freni sing Violetta in the theater on the first night of Visconti's artful Beardsley production at Covent Garden in 1967. The interpretation has since then become much more detailed and far deeper. Yet, on this recording, I feel that Lamberto Gardelli has still not drawn from Freni the very best of which she is capable. There are some disappointing things. "*Addio del passato*" is delivered in short segments, not in one long-spun line. Notes that should be joined are sometimes left disjunct. When this Violetta says to Dr. Grenvil, "*ma tranquilla ho l'anima,*" she does so with a smoothness and beauty of tone that are marvelously affecting; but in the next phrase, the rising sixth of "*Mi confortò ier sera*" is not smoothly spanned. The dropping seventh in the Act II duet at "*unico raggio di bene*" is delivered not only without portamento (how thrilling was Melba's delivery of these notes), but without even the smoothness demanded by Verdi's slur.

No *Traviata* on disc is completely satisfactory. If one could bring together Freni, Alfredo Kraus, and Carlo Maria Giulini, something wonderful might be possible. I feel little doubt that Freni should be its heroine. She has the right voice and very nearly all the technical equipment required. (The florituras are cleanly turned and unlabored, but she must still learn to trill; all those trills in "*Sempre libera*" are simply omitted.) Almost all that is missing is, on occasion, the legato that can give to the music its fullest eloquence. Freni can produce it and often does, and then she is ideal.

For the rest, the performance is of a kind one would happily encounter in the opera house, though it is not of the highest distinction. To convey ardor, the Alfredo, Franco Bonisolli, tends to preface his notes with a little push, a sort of preliminary uh. Sometimes he suggests Gigli mannerisms—but without the beautiful Gigli sound that could disarm criticism. It is a performance with a good deal of honest and likable feeling in it, but a shade provincial in execution.

Sesto Bruscantini's Germont is polished. He does not have the voice to bluster, and an unblustering Germont is welcome, but the voice is in fact not quite commanding enough to invest some phrases with the authority they should have. "*Di Provenza*" (the air that Verdi deemed the most beautiful baritone cantabile he had ever written but that Maria Callas would prefer to cut from performances of the opera) is finely turned, if not always quite perfectly on pitch. The accents of the various servants suggest that both Violetta and Flora employ German staffs and that Violetta's rich protector is German too.

The performance is characterized by an unusual and on the whole very attractive sense of rubato. (Just occasionally, when recitative chords arrive regularly late, there is an effect of voices and orchestra being somehow out of sync.) For example, Gardelli holds the dance music very steady during Violetta's and Alfredo's first conversation, while over it they drop in their remarks freely; the result is effective and natural. The clarinet solo, while Violetta pens her letter in Act II, is also molded with much rubato. (In "*Amami, Alfredo,*" Freni sings four measures at double speed, giving the melody the rhythm that it has in the prelude. This is often done but does not seem to me desirable.)

The recording is smooth and clear but could do with a bigger dynamic range—in the Act II finale, for example. And sometimes there is a hint of "overloading" at Violetta's larger outbursts (for instance, at the repeated "*Che fia? Morir mi sento*"). Played at 33½ rpm, the pitch on the whole is a trifle high—but then, Berlin pitch is high.

A libretto is included, together with the Ruth and Thomas Martin English singing version rather than a translation ("*Ah si, da un anno*" becomes "Since first I saw you").

Everything is shouldered to a single left margin; it is high time there were more protests about this common typographical distortion of librettists' verses. (In a recent publication, the sonnet that opens the last scene of *Falstaff* is broken into twenty-eight short lines!) The booklet text is complete, with passages "traditionally omitted in performance" marked by brackets. The text of this performance, however, is not quite traditional. Violetta does, as usual, skip the second strophes of "Ah, fors'è lui" and "Addio del passato"; Germont omits his cabaletta; and the regular—and regrettable—cut in "Parigi, o cara" is observed. But Alfredo does sing one verse at least of his "O mio rimorso," and the carnival chorus of Act III is complete. The little exchange between Alfredo and Joseph in Act II, Scene 1, is omitted.

The "traditionally omitted" passages amount in all to no more than some twelve minutes; is this not a tradition that—pace Maria Callas—could well be ended? A.P.

Recitals and Miscellany

JANET BAKER: Haydn and Mozart. Janet Baker, mezzo-soprano; Raymond Leppard, piano; English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard, cond.* PHILIPS 6500 660, \$7.98.

HAYDN: Cantatas: Arianna a Naxos*; Berenice che fai.*
MOZART: La Clemenza di Tito: Parto, parto; Deh, per questo istante solo.* Abendempfindung; Das Veilchen.*

This is one of those recordings on which every number but one is a masterpiece, the engineering is faultless, and the quality of the artistry is such that one is entirely absorbed in sensuous and aesthetic pleasure.

Haydn's cantata *Berenice che fai* is a fine dramatic scena, opening with a great accompanied recitative full of surprises, followed by an allegro aria that is in a class with those of the Queen of the Night. The modulations and the thematic configurations in the recitative are pregnant with tension, and in the aria the orchestra fairly seethes. Haydn is so completely master of the grand dramatic manner, and the operatic idiom is so authentic, that one would think he came to Esterháza directly from Naples. There is still much to be learned of his operas, about which we tend to be a little patronizing (and I would like to swallow some of my early indiscretions), but here he is before us as a great dramatic composer.

The second cantata, *Arianna a Naxos*, is a *cantata da camera* with piano accompaniment. It has some nice moments but also many conventional turns and phrases, and the rather extensive piano part does not always give the impression of being organically connected with the voice. As in Haydn's folksong arrangements, the preludes and ritornels often start out as if launching a sonata movement, but when the promise is not followed up a somewhat ambiguous situation is created.

The two arias from Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* return us to great music. The first of these, "Parto, parto, ma tu ben mio," if a little distant in feeling, is a magnificent piece in its utter perfection of setting and texture. It contains coloratura passages set against the bold runs of a concertante clarinet of a glitteringly cool brilliance. The solo clarinet is superbly played by the unnamed artist, and Janet Baker matches its virtuoso figures note for note as accurately as if she too had keys in her throat. "Deh, per questo istante solo" is quite a different composition, a warm aria in Mozart's most expressive and beautifully melodious vein but with sudden flareups and much excitement, here restrained, there given full rein.

The recital ends with Mozart's gentle and ineffable songs, "Abendempfindung" and "Das Veilchen," two gems of the song literature.

Janet Baker is as much at home in the intimate narrative tone of the delightful Mozart songs as in the fiercely dramatic outbursts of the opera arias and recitatives. Her voice is splendidly equalized throughout its entire range, and she manipulates and colors it with a natural grace and warmth. She is always fully involved—a really phenomenal artist.

Raymond Leppard furnishes exemplary accompaniments. Whatever of his customary little tricks he may have done to the scores, there is not one false accent anywhere in this recording. He is equally musical as a piano accompanist. The dynamic range is always in perfect agreement with the requirements of the voice, yet without hiding its relevant features. The piano used appears to be an antique, but Leppard makes it sound just fine.

It is too bad that the notes for this thoroughly rewarding release say hardly a word about the works themselves. The performers' biographies in three languages will scarcely inform us about the Haydn cantatas, which are unknown to almost all listeners who will acquire this fine and warmly recommended disc. Texts are included on an insert. P.H.L.

CAROLE BOGARD: Songs on Verlaine Poems. Carole Bogard, soprano; John Moriarty, piano. CAMBRIDGE CRS 2774, \$6.98.

DEBUSSY: Ariettes oubliées: C'est l'extase; Il pleure dans mon coeur; L'ombre des arbres; Chevaux de bois; Green; Spleen; Fêtes galantes, Series I: En sourdine; Fantoches; Clair de lune. Mandoline. **FAURÉ:** C'est l'extase; Il pleure dans mon coeur; Green; Spleen; En sourdine; Clair de lune; Mandoline. **A Clymène.** **DUPONT:** Mandoline. **SZULC:** Clair de lune.

It was a good idea to bring together various settings of poems by Paul Verlaine. Verlaine (1844-96), the poet of interior landscape, of moods, intuitions, and fleeting visions, inspired some of the most characteristic of Debussy's and Fauré's songs. The difference between the two composers that this recital reveals makes for a fascinating and rewarding listening experience.

The abiding charm of Fauré's "Mandoline" derives from the composer's lyrical elegance, the evocative power of Debussy's version of the same poem from his ability to heighten our awareness of the poet's language. Fauré is the more touching, Debussy the more sensuously vivid. We are fortunate to have both. A third setting, by Ga-

briel Dupont (1878-1914), is attractive indeed and exemplifies the high level of *mélodie*-composing during this period. One is constantly astonished by the sensitivity to poetry that French composers reveal.

Carole Bogard's account of these songs is commendable. Her French is very good—an important point—and she shows full awareness of the dissimilar demands of Fauré and Debussy, the one for melodic grace, the other for verbal illumination. That the results are, in the main, unexciting has nothing to do with her musicianship or intelligence, as the fine performance of Debussy's "Spleen" immediately demonstrates, but simply with the limitations of her voice. In the middle of its compass Bogard commands a fullness of tone that disappears as it rises to the top, or descends to the bottom, of the staff. In the case of Debussy this robs her of the absolutely essential ability to color her voice in response to the varying shades of meaning, and only in the middle register does she communicate vividly. Her performance of the very first Debussy song, "C'est l'extase langoureuse," illustrates the problem clearly: The opening is strong, immediately arresting; thereafter, as the soprano ranges more widely, she loses her hold on the material. In the case of Fauré the same technical problem obtrudes: The melodies need to be more evenly sung to make their proper effect.

John Moriarty plays well, but the recording tends to keep the piano too much in the background. The piano part is a vital ingredient in the success of these songs. With Debussy especially, one needs to be aware of its equality of partnership all the time.

The pressing sent for review was not ideally clean in sound. Texts, translations, and notes—all exemplary in presentation and helpfulness. D.S.H.

THE CANTELLI LEGACY, Vol. 1. For a feature review, see page 78.

CONTEMPORARY STRING QUARTETS. Gaudeamus Quartet. PHILIPS 6500 881, \$7.98.

CRUMB: Black Angels. **RAXACH:** Quartet No. 2. **DE LEEUW:** Quartet No. 2.

All three works on this disc are for string quartet electronically modified in one way or another. The best of them, to my taste, is the one by the little-known Hispano-Dutch composer Enrique Raxach. This is a single, monumentally scaled slow movement making marvelous use of natural string tone plus tone transformed and enriched in numerous indescribable ways. It is a genuinely grand and deeply moving piece, and one that should arouse interest in Raxach; anybody who writes that good a piece doesn't write just one.

The Raxach side is filled out with the more conventional quartet by Ton de Leeuw, which uses less electronics than the others but employs conventional devices of color in original and interesting ways. It also exploits the lyricism of strings quite beautifully.

George Crumb's *Black Angels* fills one entire side and is the only work of his I have not delighted in at first hearing. It is in three movements—"Departure," "Absence," "Return"—which are subdivided into thirteen short sections bearing titles such as "Night of the Electric Insects," "Sounds of Bones

and Flutes," "Lost Bells," "Devil Music," "God Music," and "Ancient Voices." It is all very clever; the string sound becomes eerily metallic, vocal noises and percussion sounds are added, and the spooky treatment of Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" is, well, spooky. But it is all a little affected, overstylized, and transparently calculated to impress. The record sleeve does not give the date of the work; early or late, it suggests that our George had been hearing too much Messiaen. A.F.

DUETS WITH THE SPANISH GUITAR, Vol. 3.

Salli Terri, soprano; Laurindo Almeida, guitar; Martin Ruderman, flute and bass flute; Vincent de Rosa, horn. [Robert E. Myers, prod.] ANGEL S 36076, \$6.98.

A treasured review-copy memento from my "Sound-Fanciers' Guide" column in *Audio-craft*, HIGH FIDELITY's short-lived sister publication in the late Fifties, is a Capitol disc by a then little-known West Coast guitar-soprano-flute team. Apparently I wasn't the only one to relish those delectable performances of imaginatively chosen little songs and pieces, for a sequel followed and eventually Angel reissued both discs as Vols. 1 and 2 (S 36050 and 36051) of something approaching a "cult" series.

If you know those earlier programs, I need only announce Vol. 3. If you don't know them, even a familiarity with Almeida's fine pop recordings and Ms. Terri's solos on Roger Wagner Chorale discs will scarcely prepare you for this musical garden of delights. Again the singing (notably the haunting Ovale "Modinha" and lilting French-Canadian folksong "Au bois du rossignolet"), the rhapsodic or atmospheric flute or bass-flute obbligatos to several songs, and the guitar accompaniments and solos or dubbed duos (especially the Bach Duetto, S. 804) are downright enchanting.

Then, for a series novelty, hornist Vincent da Rosa joins Almeida in the guitarist's arrangement of the Menuets and Gigue from Bach's Harpsichord Partita No. 1—a ridiculous notion that miraculously comes off, thanks in large part to the horn player's almost incredibly light and deft virtuosity.

R.D.D.

HEINZ HOLLIGER: Oboe Recital. Heinz Holliger, oboe and oboe d'amore; Christiane Jacquot, harpsichord; Marçal Cervera, viola da gamba. PHILIPS 6500 618, \$7.98.

BACH: Sonata for Oboe and Harpsichord, in G minor, after Sonata for Flute and Harpsichord, No. 1, in B minor, S. 1030. **F. COUPERIN:** Les Goûts réunis: Concert No. 9, in E (*Il Ritratto dell' amore*). **MARAI:** Couplets sur "Les Folles d'Espagne" (excerpts).

This unlikely "sleeper" release seems certain to be my personal record of the year. It rewards its listeners first of all with oboe and oboe d'amore playing as fine as they're ever likely to hear, on records or off. Better still, its music-making blows through one's mind like a fresh breeze bearing both nostalgically familiar and exhilaratingly novel scents.

Its star, the extravagantly gifted polymath Heinz Holliger, is not only the most active—and most highly esteemed—oboe soloist today, but also an avant-garde composer and a musicologist as well. It's in that last role that he explains (in his fascinating

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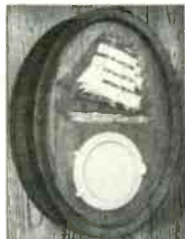
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Robert Sylvester
Casals and Rostropovich combined?

jacket notes) why all three of the works he plays here may legitimately serve as oboe vehicles, although they are not normally associated with reed instruments.

Marin Marais specifically noted that his thirty-two *Folia* variations, published in 1681 (nineteen years before Corelli's now more famous set), were variously suitable for various instruments, each of whose players might choose the variations best suited to his particular instrument. In this instance, Holliger finds nineteen of the thirty-two so apt for the oboe that he soon convinces us of Marais's ability to demonstrate the full technical range of the oboe as successfully as Corelli explored violinistic executant technology in his *Folia*. Holliger also confirms his written claim that Marais's work, previously recorded (to the best of my knowledge) only in a flute version, is outstanding as a "compendium of the baroque art of writing variations."

The Bach sonata, also known hitherto exclusively as a work for flute, is a special case. Rather than invoking the general freedom of instrumental choice common in the baroque era, Holliger bolsters his choice by citing an alternative, earlier manuscript version of this sonata (scored for harpsichord alone and in the key of G minor rather than the B minor of the best-known S. 1030 version), the melody line of which falls exactly within the compass of the baroque-era oboe. But musicologically justified or not, once this reconstruction is heard even the finest flute versions tend to be effaced from one's mind, so ideally matched is the now quirky, now *dolce* music with the piquant lyricism of the oboe.

For the Couperin work, ninth of the ten concerts in the collection *Les Goûts réunis* of 1724, the composer himself cited the oboe as one of several "suitable" instruments. But in this particular concert (a suite of eight movements), the melody line sometimes falls below the range of a normal oboe, whereas it's just right for the alto of the family, the oboe d'amore. Moreover, the slightly darker, more romantically atmospheric timbres of the latter instrument make it seem ideally appropriate for the poetic, even feminine, evocations of the little tone pictures that comprise *Il Ritretto dell'*

amore: tenderly lyrical with titles like "Le Charme," "Les Graces," "La noble Fierté," and "La Douceur"; or sprightly with titles like "L'Enjouement," "La Vivacité," "L'et Coetera ou Menuets," and (most quirkily buoyant of all) "Le je-ne-sçay-quoy."

It scarcely matters that the recording is well-nigh ideally bright and "live" or that the soloist's colleagues are deftly skilled if decidedly overshadowed in personality projection. It's the superb musicianship and inexhaustibly fascinating timbre variety of Holliger, dominating the front and center stage, that holds us ecstatically spellbound!

R.D.D.

KAREN PHILLIPS: *Viola Today*. Karen Phillips, viola. FINNADAR SR 9007, \$6.98.

BEDFORD: *Spillihpnerak*. **BERIO:** *Sequenza VI*. **CAGE:** *Dream*. **MADERNA:** *Viola*.

Four pieces for unaccompanied viola by an artist who possesses a glorious tone and technique to burn. The pieces are good, too—or at least three of them are.

John Cage wrote *Dream* in 1948, when he was really writing music and doing it extremely well. It is a gentle, discursive, chantlike work, placing emphasis on the middle-voice, tenor-alto quality of the viola.

Luciano Berio's *Sequenza VI* is a coldly blazing virtuoso study that is probably more fun to watch than it is to hear; hearing it alone isn't enough.

The last two pieces—Bruno Maderna's appropriately titled *Viola* and David Bedford's *Spillihpnerak* (spell it backwards)—both aim at exploiting every coloristic device of which the viola is capable and, in the case of the Maderna, with the breathtaking dramatic sweep so characteristic of this composer. Bedford goes farther than Maderna in the direction of unusual devices; much of his piece takes place in the stratosphere of the highest harmonics, as if he were out to prove that the viola doesn't belong down there in the alto clef after all.

A.F.

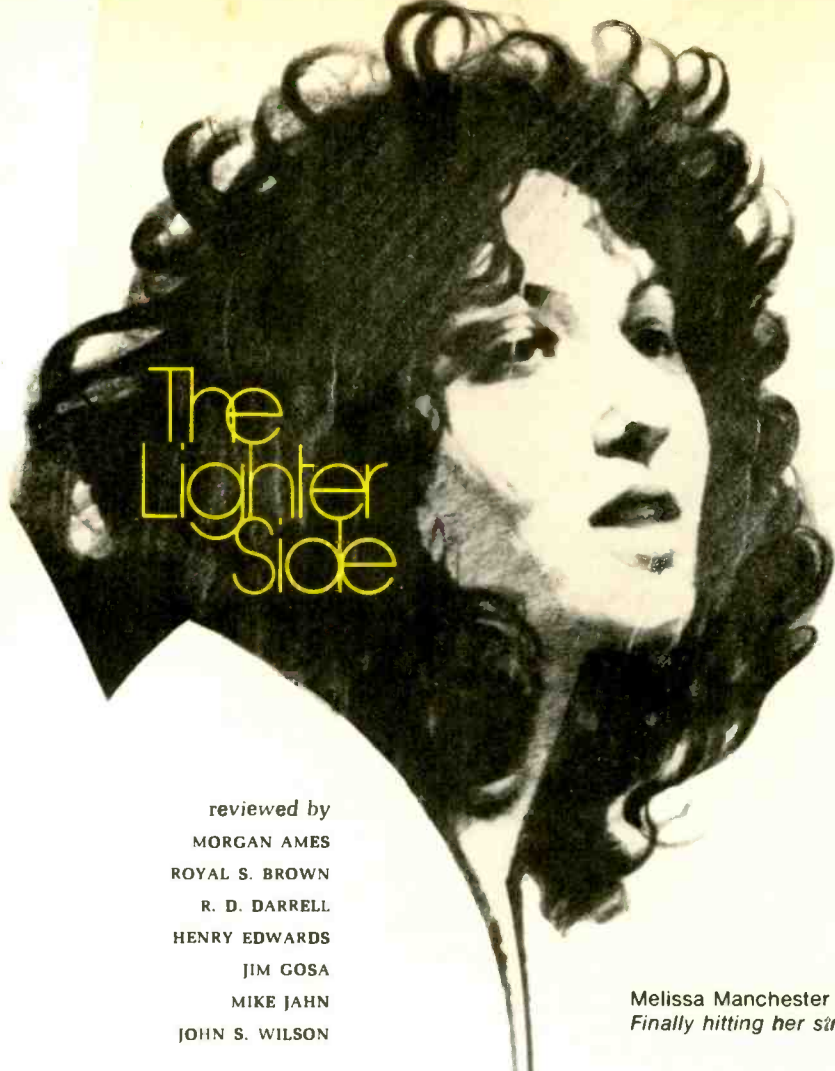
ROBERT SYLVESTER: *Sonatas for Solo Cello*. Robert Sylvester, cello. DESTO DC 7169, \$6.98.

CRUMB: *Sonata*. **HINDEMITH:** *Sonata, Op. 25, No. 3*. **WELLESZ:** *Sonata, Op. 30*. **YSAÏE:** *Sonata, Op. 28*.

Why isn't Robert Sylvester as well-known as Casals or Rostropovich? He sounds like both of them rolled into one on this colossal record. A tremendous tone (marvelously well recorded), an abundance of musicianship, fascinating repertory—it should sell a million copies.

The disc contains four sonatas for unaccompanied cello. The best of them is the broadly scaled, highly dramatic, and totally self-assured work of the late Egon Wellesz, who seems to be coming into his own on records, but the others are excellent too. Despite the brevity of its four movements, the Hindemith is as clearly post-Brahmsian as the Wellesz. The Crumb is a very early work, with none of the exceptional effects for which that composer is especially noted but full of his characteristic lyricism and finesse. The YsaÏe is the flimsiest of the four sonatas, but it is an entertaining period piece—the period of Camille Saint-Saëns—nevertheless.

A.F.



The Lighter Side

reviewed by
 MORGAN AMES
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Melissa Manchester
 Finally hitting her stride.

MELISSA MANCHESTER: Melissa. Melissa Manchester, vocals, piano, and clavinet; strings, rhythm, horns, and vocal accompaniment. *We've Got Time, Party Music; Just Too Many People*; seven more. [Vini Poncia, prod.] ARISTA AL 4031, \$6.98. Tape: ●● H 5301-4031, \$7.95; ● H 8301-4031, \$7.95.

Melissa Manchester was one of Bette Midler's original three female backup singers, the Harlettes. She was also the first member of the Midler operation to set out on her own.

In retrospect, there was no reason why she shouldn't. Manchester, after all, has a rich singing voice, a natural flair for performing, and a gift for composing lilting melody. Nevertheless, Midler's horde of fans did not take kindly to the defection. Their rage was aided and abetted by her first two albums, neither of which displayed any real distinction. Along the way, though, she did collect a few fans of her own. Many others came to the conclusion that, under the correct recording auspices, Manchester could very well establish herself as a composer/performer on her own.

"Melissa," her third LP, confirms that observation. This disc has been personally supervised by controversial Clive Davis, former president of Columbia Records and now president of Arista (formerly Bell) Records. To play Henry Higgins to Melissa's Eliza Dolittle, Davis approached crackerjack producer Richard Perry, who turned the ac-

tual recording chores over to the eminently slick Vini Poncia. The producer, with Manchester's devoted cooperation, has created a progressive easy-listening album flavored with the currently popular admixture of soul and pop that seems to have captured almost everybody's imagination.

The recording includes two standouts: the sultry "We've Got Time" and the emotive "Midnight Blue." Though "Melissa" does not bare Melissa's soul, it is a huge step down the road toward commercial acceptance and success. H.E.

*** STANLEY CLARKE.** Stanley Clarke, electric and acoustic bass and piano; Jan Hammer, keyboards and synthesizer; Bill Connors, guitar; Tony Williams, drums; Michael Gibbs, strings arr. and cond. *Spanish Phases for Strings and Bass; Life Suite*; four more. [Stanley Clarke, prod.] NEMPEROR NE 431, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 431, \$7.97; ● TP 431, \$7.97.

This album is, I think, an excellent representation of contemporary music. Not "rockandroll," not jazz, nor any other convenient category.

It's a result of the confluence of several major musical figures: Clarke, the bass prodigy, and guitarist Connors, who worked together in the Chick Corea group; keyboardist Hammer, from the Mahavishnu Orchestra; Williams, Miles Davis' drummer; and composer Gibbs. Their tal-

ents are augmented by string and brass sections, which add a new dimension to those areas that have been partially explored by the parent groups of these young musicians.

The individual virtuosity of each seems to have dictated that considerable solo space be given to the various principals, though sometimes at the expense of cohesiveness of the group sound. But I don't at all begrudge them that indulgence. Connors' solo on "Power," for instance, might seem a trifle overlong on first hearing, but it's a veritable model of Hendrixian power and electrical excitement. Clarke's own soloing on "Spanish Phases" is simply breathtaking. For my money that one track is worth the price of admission. "Life Suite" incorporates an array of dynamics and dimensions that takes you into some previously unoccupied space.

This is serious music. It deserves attention and appreciation. J.G.

GIL SCOTT-HERON, BRIAN JACKSON, AND THE MIDNIGHT BAND: *The First Minute of a New Day.* Gil Scott-Heron, vocals and electric piano; Brian Jackson, piano, flutes, and bells; rhythm, reeds, strings, and horns accompaniment. *Offering; The Liberation Song; Must Be Something*; six more. [Parpis-Fall Music, prod.] ARISTA A 4030, \$6.98.

Gil Scott-Heron is a novelist and poet as well as the creator of four jazz-oriented albums that deal militantly with the black experience in contemporary America. None of Scott-Heron's discs has achieved anything more than small cult status, even though his "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" has always been an integral part of female soul trio Labelle's concert appearances. However, his latest entry, "The First Minute of a New Day," recorded for the promotion-minded Arista label, finds the writer/musician getting the national exposure he has always craved. After five LPs he is indeed beginning to emerge as a star.

This incipient star is an angry one. His recording—jazz motifs with spoken, semi-sung poetic lines flowing over them—finds Scott-Heron crooning, "The Constitution was a noble piece of paper/with Free Society it struggled but they died in vain," on the "Winter in America" cut. "You alone consider mercy after all you get is pain," he declaims on "Ain't No Such Thing as Superman." Scott-Heron's material obviously can produce empathy and can stir the hearts of radicals and liberals alike.

None of it truly catches fire, however, until the incendiary "Pardon Our Analysis (We Beg Your Pardon)," a spoken piece on which Scott-Heron ridicules both ex-Presi-

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dent Nixon and his Watergate pardon and also dwells upon the shame a nation must feel when it produces a Nixon and a Calley and then does not mete them the justice it automatically hands out to blacks and radicals. This searing track will not be heard on many radio stations; nevertheless, as the popularity of "The First Minute of a New Day" continues to increase, this selection will undoubtedly affect the large number of people who will be exposed to it. A mass-market militant is a phenomenon in popland—that's what makes popland such a fascinating terrain to observe. H.E.

JIMI HENDRIX: Crash Landing. Jimi Hendrix, guitar and vocals; instrumental accompaniment. *Message to Love; Crash Landing; Peace in Mississippi; Captain Coconut*; four more. REPRIS MS 2204, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M 52204, \$7.97; ● M 82204, \$7.97.

This is the first album to be culled from the much publicized "rediscovered" tapes of Jimi Hendrix that purportedly have lain in a New Jersey warehouse for the nearly five years since his death. Hendrix has been depicted as a martyred genius, exploited by crass managers and plaster-casters, who died as much from an overdose of frustration and misunderstanding as from barbiturates. (Charlie Parker, are you listening?)

Because I was never a fan of his guitar-burning and other stage antics, I couldn't get past that image of Hendrix and really get into his music. So I approached this album with some doubt about my ability to be opened up to it. In the here and now, his music does not sound as daring and revolutionary as it once was proclaimed to be.

Most of the vocals in "Crash Landing" are fairly familiar territory of the Hendrix geography. But when it comes to his playing—particularly on "Peace in Mississippi" and "Captain Coconut"—there is tremendous energy and excitement. Here the power of his inspiration and influence in current music becomes clearly apparent. Maybe he did, in fact, bash down the doors for John McLaughlin, Chick Corea, Billy Cobham, et al.

Music historians still argue about the impact of, say, Fats Navarro and Clifford Brown on later players like Miles Davis, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard. What would Coltrane have been without Sonny Rollins and Dexter Gordon before him? Or Charlie Parker without prior knowledge of Johnny Hodges and Benny Carter? Who knows what other unknown, unsung seminal influences were recognized only in the accomplishments of others?

For "Crash Landing" some of the pristine quality of those "rediscovered" tapes has been altered by the addition of new rhythm tracks by musicians who were not in on the original sessions. But the evidence here is certainly strong that, despite the affectations sometimes apparent in his stage performances, Jimi Hendrix was and is a major force in modern music. J.G.

drums; Bruce Barlow, bass; Bill Kirchen and John Tichy, guitars; Andy Stein, fiddle and saxophone; Ernie Hagar, pedal steel guitar; Commander Cody, piano and vocals; Billy C. Farlow, vocals and harmonica; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Southbound; Don't Let Go; California Okie; Willin'; The Boogie-Man Boogie; Hawaii Blues; House of Blue Lights; Four or Five Times; That's What I Like About the South*; two more. [John Boylan, prod.] WARNER BROS. BS 2847, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M 52847, \$7.97; ● M 82847, \$7.97.

Commander Cody's debut LP for Warner Bros. is his best ever. The good-time music band reaches new heights both of exciting playing and of fun, while eliminating the uneven quality that made its previous releases too crude for comfort.

Best, as usual, are the up-tempo tunes, like "The Boogie-Man Boogie," a healthy display of contemporary boogie and rock; "The House of Blue Lights," which sounds like it was written for the group; and "Don't Let Go," an old rock-and-roll tune. There are several good country ballads, such as "Willin'" and the oddly titled "California Okie." "Hawaii Blues," a lighthearted butchery of everything Arthur Godfrey holds sacred, is a lot of fun.

There are no standout performances; the pleasures are in the band's projected joy and its spirited ensemble-playing. M.J.

*** LANI HALL:** Hello It's Me. Lani Hall, vocals; instrumental accompaniment. *Hello It's Me; Peace in the Valley; Time Will Tell; Banquet; Save the Sunlight*; five more. [Herb Alpert, arr. and prod.] A&M SP 4508, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 4508, \$7.98; ● 8T 4508, \$7.98.

Lani Hall is the girl from Chicago who, with the Sergio Mendes group, used to sing those Portuguese tongue twisters with such skill

and vivacity that we all thought she was from Brazil. In Mendes' later leanings toward pop music, her glittering voice rang out with clarity and beauty.

Her subsequent career as a single has not been remarkable. Why that is I don't know. Ms. Hall has all the equipment to be a Streisand: an absolutely gorgeous voice; a vivid, dramatic manner of interpretation; and a taste for material that hasn't been done to death by other performers.

"Hello It's Me" displays these qualities thoroughly. It is not spectacular, measured against the current tendency to record a singer with a cast of thousands of instruments and background singers. The musical support comes from a relatively small but carefully chosen group of the best studio musicians in Los Angeles. The arrangements are wrought with tender loving care, and surprising skill, by none other than Herb Alpert (who also produced the album).

This really is a lovely collection of interesting songs, done with care and simplicity and good taste. It may not be the album that will launch Ms. Hall to superstardom, because it doesn't have anything to appeal to the Top 40 mentality that seems to determine that. But for the discerning listener, there are many rewarding moments. J.G.

*** CAROLE KING:** Really Rosie (original TV soundtrack recording). Music by Carole King; lyrics by Maurice Sendak. *Really Rosie; Alligators All Around; Screaming and Yelling; Chicken Soup with Rice; Such Sufferin'*; six more. [Lou Adler, prod.] ODE SP 77027, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 77027, \$7.98; ● 8T 77027, \$7.98.

Maurice Sendak is one of our more gifted children's artists and writers. His pictures and stories can entertain kids without driving parents bananas. Carole King is one of our most gifted young popular composers

Critics' Choice

The best pop records reviewed in recent months

RUBY BRAFF-GEORGE BARNES QUARTET: Plays Gershwin. CONCORD JAZZ 5. April.

ERIC DIXON SEXTET: Eric's Edge. MJR 8124. March.

JOSÉ FELICIANO: And the Feeling's Good. RCA CPL 1-0407. March.

KEITH JARRETT: Facing You. ECM/POLY. 1017. Death and the Flower. ABC/IMP. ABC 9301. May.

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON AND RITA COOLIDGE: Breakaway. MONU. PZ 33278. May.

JONI MITCHELL AND THE L.A. EXPRESS: Miles of Aisles. ASY. AB 202. March.

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS. CAP. ST 11361. April.

WALTER NORRIS: Drifting. ENJA 2044. May.

MICHAEL OMARTIAN: White Horse. ABC/DUN. DSD 50185. May.

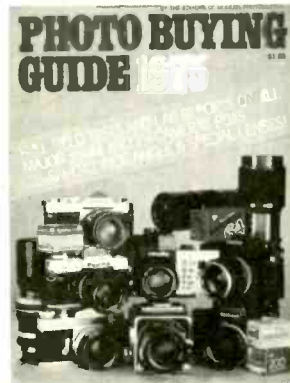
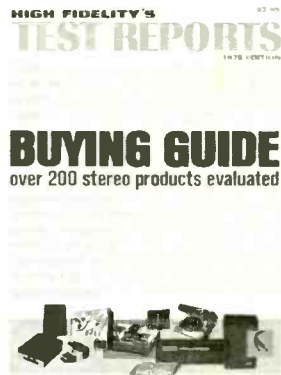
PERSUASIONS: I Just Want to Sing with My Friends. A&M 3656. April.

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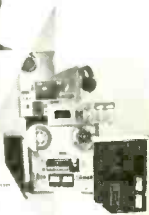
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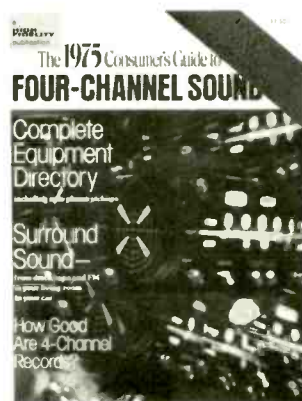


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and a performer to be reckoned with. The collaboration of the two was guaranteed to be fascinating, and it is. "Really Rosie" is a marvelous mélange of simple lessons, observations of day-to-day life in the big city, and nonsense songs.

Ms. King's performance of Sendak's lyrics is flawless; her voice is charming without being sweet or overbearing. Best is "Chicken Soup with Rice," a fabulous song that is half nonsense and half designed to teach the months of the year.

This is technically a children's record. But in this case, youth would definitely be wasted solely on the young. M.J.

JOHN LENNON: Rock 'n' Roll. John Lennon, guitar and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Be-Bop-A-Lula*; *Stand by Me*; *Ain't That a Shame*; *Do You Want to Dance*; *Sweet Little Sixteen*; *You Can't Catch Me*; *Peggy Sue*; seven more. [John Lennon and Phil Spector, prod.] APPLE SK 3419, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 4XW 3419, \$7.98; ●● 8XW 3419, \$7.98.

This release might be called a Legal Fees Special, since Lennon has a lot of those expenses and this disc can have no other purpose than to make money. His run-through of fourteen 1950s rock-and-roll tunes is superficial, unfelt, and at times downright sloppy. The vocals are so far back in the instrumental soup that half the time one can't tell what song he's singing. Phil Spector is known for confused productions, but this is ridiculous.

There are several exceptions. Lennon's version of Fats Domino's "Ain't That a Shame" is quite good. But one or two ample efforts do not a good LP make. M.J.



JESSE COLIN YOUNG: *Songbird*. Jesse Colin Young, vocals, guitar, and mandolin; Scott Lawrence, keyboards; Jeff Myer, drums; Kelly Bryan, bass; Jim Rothermel, flute, saxophone, and clarinet; Ron Stallings, saxophone; Peter Welker, trumpet; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Songbird*; *Before You Came*; *Daniel*; *Josianne*; *Again*; *Slick City*; *'Til You Come Back Home*; *Sugar Babe*; *Motor Home*. [Jesse Colin Young, prod.] WARNER BROS. BS 2846, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M 52846, \$7.97; ●● M 82846, \$7.97.

After years of releasing albums that were adequately pleasant, Jesse Colin Young finally has created a work of monumental proportions. "Songbird" is a magnificent tribute to musical eclecticism and fine performance. He has successfully fused what are basically folk ballads with jazz and light rock, accomplishing what others have barely hinted at.

"Songbird," the title tune, is a perfect example: a rambling, laconic daydream wired with superb singing and a glorious flute performance by Jim Rothermel. "Before You Came" employs an aggressive electric-guitar statement by Young but does it within the context of a song that retains sensitivity.

Young's reedy voice is fine throughout, and Ted Ashford's horn arrangements are



Jesse Colin Young
Eclectically magnificent.

among the most tasteful ever committed to a pop record. The songs are, lyrically, mostly love songs and landscapes, but are written so well that the boredom that so often burdens such material does not appear. In all, "Songbird" is a must for anyone given to the worry that pop music has run out of good ideas and talented performers.

M.J.

THE TEMPTATIONS: *A Song for You*. The Temptations, vocals; keyboards, rhythm, and strings accompaniment. *Happy People*; *Glasshouse*; *Shaky Ground*; six more. [Jeffrey Bowen, prod.] GORDY G6 969, \$6.98. Tape: ●● G 969C, \$7.98; ●● G 969T, \$7.98.

On this disc, one once again finds a soul group belting out Leon Russell's classic pop-rock tune "A Song for You." The result this time around is hackneyed; one cannot find a single original contribution in its performance by the Temptations. Unfortunately, the title tune is the hallmark of this perfunctory soul set.

Though the vocals are as rich and as throbbing as they ever were, this album cries out for stronger material. The tunes ("Shaky Ground," "Firefly," and "Happy People" are three that come to mind) are fillers—the sort of song-writing that crowds the grooves of an album without giving it any style. Only an instrumental version of "Happy People" possesses a smidgeon of creativity. This progressive soul number, however, follows so closely in the footsteps of prior Temptations excursions into the mating of jazz and soul music that it, too, seems like recycling.

Sad to say, "A Song for You" is a clinker. H.E.

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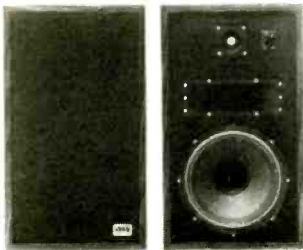
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clavinet, and vocals; Gayle Moran, keyboards and vocals; instrumental accompaniment. *Eternity's Breath, Parts 1 and 2; Can't Stand Your Funk; Cosmic Strut; On the Way Home to Earth*; eight more. [Ken Scott and Mahavishnu John McLaughlin, prod.] COLUMBIA PC 33411, \$6.98. Tape: PCT 33411, \$7.98; PCA 33411, \$7.98.

The weaving together of rock music and "cosmic" thought has always been an endeavor fraught with peril. Usually the artist who dares mix pop religion and pop music ends up making an ass of himself.

Mahavishnu John McLaughlin, an exceptional musician, has avoided the trap by confining his foolishness to his album covers. The listener who does not care to read liner annotations is thereby safe from the circumlocution of Sri Chimnoy, McLaughlin's guru, whose name one can't help pronouncing as "Three Chimneys." Within the grooves of the actual disc is to be found some splendid playing, especially by McLaughlin on electric guitar and Ponty on electric violin.

Some superficial vocalizing remains unobtrusive, and the songs feature long, tensile instrumental passages of many shades and hues. Best is the opener, the two parts of "Eternity's Breath." M.J.

LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III: Unrequited. Loudon Wainwright III, guitar and vocals, instrumental accompaniment. *The Lowly Tourist; Kings and Queens; Kick in the Head; Whatever Happened to Us; Unrequited to the Nth Degree; Old Friend*; eight more. [Loudon Wainwright III, prod.] COLUMBIA PC 33369, \$6.98. Tape: PCT 33369, \$7.98; PCA 33369, \$7.98.

Loudon Wainwright's new album—half studio recording, half in-concert recording—is one of his best.

Several new songs are outstanding. "Kings and Queens" is a happy little love song. "Kick in the Head" is a devastating portrait of a man confronted by an unfaithful wife. "Whatever Happened to Us" is a marvelously nasty view of a love affair. Thoughtful and sensitive is the new version of "Old Friend," on the second, in-concert side of the LP.

But the best by far is a song called "Unrequited to the Nth Degree," a hysterically funny lyric about a man looking forward to death because it will make his would-be lover feel bad. M.J.

LESLIE WEST: The Great Fatsby. Leslie West, vocals and guitar; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Don't Burn Me; House of the Rising Sun; High Roller; E.S.P.; Honky-Tonk Women; Doctor Love; If I Were a Carpenter*; three more. [Leslie West and Bob d'Orleans, prod.] PHANTOM BPL 1-0954, \$6.98.

Leslie West is the large gentleman who rocked and rolled his way into the hearts of teenage America as guitarist and singer for the group called Mountain. In that capacity, he favored long hard-rock tunes. In this new album, he favors short hard tunes.

Apart from that questionable difference, the sounds are identical. West's raspy blues voice is most enjoyable when he pushes it

to the point of frenzy, and his guitar-playing is suitably bombastic. The addition of superb vocalist Dana Valery on several tracks is a fine touch, as is the variety of material recorded.

Best are the rockier rock tunes, like the Rolling Stones' "Honky-Tonk Women" and Paul Kelly's "Don't Burn Me." For what the information is worth, Rolling Stone Mick Jagger is credited as a guitarist, though on what tracks one can only suppose. M.J.

Theater and Film

MUSIC FROM GREAT SHAKESPEAREAN FILMS. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Herrmann, cond. [Raymond Few, prod.] LONDON PHASE-4 SPC 21132, \$6.98.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Hamlet, Sulte, Op. 116a. **RÓZSA:** Julius Caesar (excerpts). **WALTON:** Richard III: Prelude.

To say that the three scores on this disc represent some of the finest Shakespearean film music ever written hardly suffices. After all, the movies have not exactly been glutted with cinematic transpositions of the Bard's work, which is probably all to the good. But in each of the cases here, the Shakespearean subjects involved seem to have particularly inspired the composers (*Hamlet* is by far the best Shostakovich film music I have heard), whose outstanding scores must be placed in the vanguard of all film music, both in terms of sheer musical quality and in terms of appropriateness to the films.

Shostakovich's 1964 *Hamlet* (not to be confused with his much earlier incidental music for the play), one of the composer's many collaborations with the late Soviet director Grigori Kozintsev, has a special importance. For under Kozintsev's direction, much of the weight of the Shakespearean tragedy is carried by the visual and musical elements of the film; for instance, Hamlet's "The play's the thing" lines are replaced by a shot of the young prince rapping his fingers nervously on a drum.

Shostakovich's score dates from the same period that produced the Thirteenth Symphony and *The Execution of Stepan Razin* and has very much the stark, brittle character that can be heard in those two works. And like those works, especially the symphony, *Hamlet* evokes an immensely powerful feeling of bleakness and tragedy, communicated in its full force in the introduction but underlying every note of the music, from the dramatic and mysterious ghost sequence to the skittish and rather bitter "Ball at the Palace" cut.

It is quite rewarding finally to have a well-recorded version of this important Shostakovich work. The Russian disc (on a ten-inch mono Melodiya, D 17691/3), while



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featuring an excellent performance conducted by Nikolai Rabinovich, simply does not reveal the full breadth of the score's sound, particularly the many intriguing instrumental effects. Furthermore, Bernard Herrmann's taut and intense approach to the music is every bit the match of Rabinovich's. What is somewhat annoying, however, is that Herrmann does not give us the complete suite; the most regrettable omission is the strange, almost disjointed Ophelia Music, recorded on the Russian disc (which also has the "In the Garden" movement lacking here). On the other hand, this recording contains the Players' music not heard in the Rabinovich version. Herrmann also cuts short the finale (thereby destroying some important cyclism in the score), offering only the duel music, while Rabinovich deletes the duel music and performs only the "Death of Hamlet" section of the finale! In other words, the two discs combined present an almost complete score.

Two things make these omissions all the more frustrating. First of all, the *Hamlet* side of the disc lasts only slightly over twenty minutes (as does Side 2, for that matter.) Secondly, the opening ten minutes of the second side are filled with the Walton prelude for Sir Laurence Olivier's *Richard III*, (1954), which has already been beautifully recorded by the composer on a well-engineered Seraphim disc (S 60205). The sin of this duplication is further compounded by Herrmann's terribly slow and deliberate interpretation, which lasts a good two and a half minutes longer than Walton's. Instead, why not some of the splendid moments from the *Hamlet* composed by Walton, including the Players' music, that have never appeared anywhere except the old RCA disc of excerpts from Olivier's *Hamlet* and *Richard III*?

Or Herrmann could have included the overture Rózsa wrote for Joseph L. Mankiewicz's 1953 *Julius Caesar*, also mysteriously absent from RCA's forthcoming Rózsa disc. (The film actually begins with shots of a full symphony orchestra playing the overture, though this sequence has disappeared from many current prints.)

What is presented here of the *Julius Caesar* score has an exceptionally strong impact. Rózsa apparently had the option of either trying to capture a "Roman" flavor, with the danger of numerous genre clichés lurking at every measure, or working with more neutral, concert-oriented music. Fortunately, he chose the latter solution. And if the score nonetheless establishes a perfect atmosphere and dramatic mood for the picture, it does so in a complex, modernistic style that is quite close in flavor to much of the composer's vastly underrated "concert" music. Herrmann again lingers a bit too lovingly over each and every sonic detail, but the performance at least has a much more stirring effect than the dirgelike *Richard III*.

In spite of my reservations for what this record does not contain, it remains an invaluable addition to the film-music discography of the extremely important Rózsa and Shostakovich music that it gives us for the first time in modern sound. (The Rózsa score can be heard—barely—on a deleted MGM disc with excerpts from the dialogue.) R.S.B.

COLE. Original English cast recording. Written by Benny Green and Alan Strachan; Ken Moule, arr.; John Burrows, cond. *Overture; Yale Sequence; Paris Sequence*; five more. [Charles Gerhardt and George Korngold, prod.] RCA CRL 2-5054, \$9.98 (two discs, automatic sequence).

With the success of the English revue *Cowardy Custard*, the same creative personnel has mounted Cole, another musical tribute to one of the world's most distinguished composers of popular music. Recorded live in London's Mermaid Theatre on the evenings of July 14 and 15, 1974, this two-disc set captures not only the performance, but also the audience's wildly enthusiastic response.

Spliced to an intelligently written narrative, which sketches in Cole Porter's life and career, is a series of medleys that deal with his major themes. These forty-five-odd songs are grouped to reflect his school days at Yale, his affection for Paris and New York, his Broadway and Hollywood careers, and his obsession with love. Arranged for a limited number of instruments, the songs—brilliant as they are—sound like any low-budget off-Broadway show. The vocal performances, delivered by a company of ten, are merely competent.

It is the obscure Porter entries that stand out, including "The Bobolink Waltz," his first professional composition; "See America First," the title tune of his first Broadway production; the Coward-ish "Thank You So Much, Mrs. Lowbrough, Goodby," and "Wouldn't It Be Fun," plucked from Porter's only television special, *A'laddin*, produced in 1958. These delights mingle with a horde of Porter standards: "From This Moment On," "Just One of Those Things," "Brush Up Your Shakespeare," and the like.

As this musical cavalcade progresses, Cole's difficulties do diminish; at its conclusion, the roused Mermaid Theatre aggregation goes wild even if this record listener does not. These discs capture the excitement of a group of people who seem genuinely excited and make one hunger for the opportunity to see a performance of this revue. H.E.



*** LOUIS ARMSTRONG:** *On the Road.* Louis Armstrong, trumpet and vocals; Trummy Young, trombone and vocals; Edmond Hall, clarinet; Billy Kyle, piano; Squire Gersh, bass; Barrett Deems, drums; Velma Middleton, vocals. *Ole Miss; Mack the Knife; Tenderly*; fourteen more. FAIRMONT 1005/6, \$13.98 (two discs); Fairmont Records, Box 3392, Santa Monica, Calif. 90403.

There is nothing really new about this recording of what appear to be two Armstrong concert performances in 1957. All of this material has been recorded before. But what makes this set stand out is the feeling



Louis Armstrong
Personally lighting up a set.

of immediacy, of presence, of the reality of the concerts that Armstrong gave during the Fifties. It is his personality as M.C. and performer that lights up the set. And it is complemented by recording that is much closer to studio quality than to the usual concert hall quality.

The group with Armstrong is the best he had after the members of the original All-Stars—with Jack Teagarden, Earl Hines, Barney Bigard, and Cozy Cole—were gradually replaced. Billy Kyle is in marvelous form on his piano solo on "Blue Moon," a rolling, rhythmic performance that is full of punch. Edmond Hall has his solo shots on "Sweet Georgia Brown," and Trummy Young splits "Rockin' Chair" with Louis.

The only weak section is the final side, which is largely given over to some shallow, shrill singing by Velma Middleton.

J.S.W.

* **RON CARTER:** Spanish Blue. Hubert Laws, flute; Roland Hanna, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Jay Berliner, guitar; Leon Pendarvis, electric piano; Billy Cobham, drums; Ralph MacDonald, percussion. *El Noche Sol; So What?; Sabado Sombbrero; Arkansas.* CTI 6051, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CTC 6051, \$7.98; ●● CT8 6051, \$7.98.

Ron Carter's experiences playing with Miles Davis are strongly present in this excellent and evocative set. In mood and style Davis' "Sketches of Spain," recorded in 1960 in Gil Evans' orchestrations, is an obvious antecedent of Carter's "El Noche Sol" and "Sabado Sombbrero." And the modal Miles is present directly in Davis' "So What?"

The important transposition comes in the performances, and for this purpose Carter has a superb group on this disc. Hubert Laws must be the most polished of the flutists who have cropped up in jazz since that instrument became a common double for reed men. He puts his versatility on display here, moving from the flamenco cry of the two Spanish pieces to the bubbling drive of "So What?" and a brilliantly funky style for "Arkansas," another Carter composition. Balancing Laws' flute is Roland Hanna's equally versatile piano, exquisite on "El Noche Sol," swirling and buoyant on "Sa-

bado Sombbrero," but heard with diminished potential on "So What?" when he switches to electric piano.

Despite his position as leader of the group, Carter is obviously more interested in over-all results than in the ego displays of soloing and uses his instrument primarily for rhythm and color. J.S.W.

* **BILL EVANS:** Symbiosis. Bill Evans, piano; Claus Ogerman, composer and cond. MPS/BASF 22094, \$6.98.

As far as I'm concerned, Bill Evans can do no wrong. In any context he combines his extraordinary technical command, his peerless improvisational ability, and what I can only guess is intuition to make unerringly right choices of what to play. Or, equally important, what not to play. Bill has said before—and reiterates on the new album liner—that he is increasingly uninterested in verbiage about the music and would prefer the listener simply to listen.

Confronting the irrefutable logic of that statement, here I am in the ridiculous position of attempting to write about his music.

"Symbiosis" seems to be a contemporary evolution of that Fifties phenomenon, "Third Stream" music, in which Gunther Schuller, John Lewis, Claus Ogerman, and others attempted to fuse classical and jazz disciplines. Third Stream more or less died in its crib, despite its skilled and dedicated midwives. Musicians now are more and more loath to define or categorize their work, an attitude I support. Why should anyone be turned off from this music because it's called "contemporary classical" or "symphonic jazz" or some other equally inaccurate and self-defeating label?

I don't regard this recording as the first ripple of a new wave or as the last utterance of an ill-fated experiment. I find it to be music of a high order, brilliantly conceived and executed, as well as superbly engineered and recorded.

As a person Evans retains an inordinate humility about himself. As an artist he is willing to accept daring challenges continually to explore and expand his music. My admiration for the man and his music are inseparable and absolute. He describes this Claus Ogerman composition as an important work. I think one of the prime factors of its importance is that it gives us another facet of the genius of Bill Evans. J.G.

* **STAN GETZ:** Captain Marvel. Stan Getz, tenor saxophone; Chick Corea, electric piano; Stanley Clarke, bass; Tony Williams, drums; Airtio Moreira, percussion. *La Fiesta; Five Hundred Miles High; Captain Marvel;* three more. COLUMBIA KC 32706, \$5.98. Tape: ●● CT 32706, \$6.98; ●● CA 32706, \$6.98.

After three years, Columbia has finally released this set by what has proved to be a seminal Stan Getz group, a group with which Getz formulated the over-all style on which he has concentrated since then.

The key figure, aside from Getz, is Chick Corea, who wrote all but one of the six pieces and, through them, established settings in which Getz's soaring, razzle-dazzle

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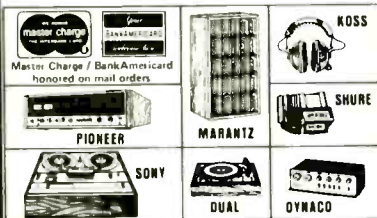
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attack could take off and really fly. With the strong support of Stanley Clarke on bass, Airto Moreira's exultantly imaginative Brazilian percussion, and Tony Williams on drums, Getz builds a high sense of excitement even in pieces that are essentially gentle and dreamy—"Five Hundred Miles High" and "Time Lies," the latter a waltz that boils into a rollicking calypso. Even Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life" takes on a burning urgency in Getz's performance.

But the real showpieces are "La Fiesta" and "Captain Marvel," which are marvelous blends of intense, driving rhythm and Getz's ability to lift himself into what seems to be almost free flight. J.S.W.

*** BENNY GOODMAN:** The Complete Goodman, Vol. 1: 1935. Benny Goodman's Orchestra, vocals by Buddy Clark, Helen Ward, Joe Harris; Benny Goodman Trio (Goodman, clarinet; Teddy Wilson, piano; Gene Krupa, drums). *The Dixieland Band; Ballad in Blue; Goodbye*; twenty-six more. RCA BLUEBIRD AXM 2-5505, \$7.98 (two discs, mono).

As part of its newly reactivated Bluebird label, which will be used for a broad scope of nonclassical reissues, RCA is starting complete chronological reissues of some of its major artists of the Thirties and Forties. This thorough, painstaking kind of release has been done quite a bit in Europe but, aside from Columbia's Bessie Smith series, has never been attempted by an American label. The first performer to be given the "complete" treatment is Benny Goodman. ("Complete" in this context means all of his RCA recordings; the complete Goodman will require the kind of clout—or black magic—the Smithsonian Institution mustered in drawing on the catalogues of a variety of companies for its "Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz," reviewed in May 1974.) Goodman, according to RCA plans, will soon be joined in the "complete" series by Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Artie Shaw, Duke Ellington, and Jelly Roll Morton.

This first Goodman Collection, produced by Frank Driggs, indicates that RCA intends to touch all the proper bases. The album includes complete discographical details: recording dates, personnel, master numbers, original release numbers, composers, and—welcome additions—arrangers, as well as credit for the recording supervisors, Eli Oberstein and Ed Kirkeby. There is also a long background annotation, drawing on new interviews with members of the Goodman band, by Mort Goode.

This first volume starts on May 4, 1935, with "Hunkadola," moves through the sudden success of the band in the summer of 1935 with "King Porter Stomp," and through the first four recordings by the Goodman Trio (including "Body and Soul," which still sounds remarkably fresh and vital), and winds up with "If I Could Be with You," recorded on November 22, 1935, when the band was just settling into a long run at the Congress Hotel in Chicago.

There are several now classic entries in the Goodman repertory—Fletcher Henderson's arrangements of "Blue Skies," "Sometimes I'm Happy," "King Porter Stomp," his brother Horace's "Always,"

"Dear Old Southland," Jimmy Mundy's "Madhouse," and the version of "Basin Street Blues" that Goodman had recorded earlier for Columbia with Jack Teagarden, whose role as singer and trombonist was taken over by Joe Harris for the RCA Victor recording. Helen Ward, fresh and buoyant, is heard all through the set, often assigned such unrewarding pop tunes of the moment as "Yankee Doodle Never Went to Town" and "Eeny Miney Mo" but sailing through them with the same zest that she applied to "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea."

Goodman, of course, is the primary soloist, but there are vitalizing flashes of Bunny Berigan (most notably on "King Porter," which he kicks into life) and of Jess Stacy. It is somewhat surprising, since the band was oriented toward the Casa Loma type of arrangement until the very beginning of its RCA association, to find how quickly the classic Goodman style took shape. In fact, by the time of the second RCA session, the rough outline of the style can be heard emerging on Fletcher Henderson's arrangement of "You're a Heavenly Thing."

The sound of the records is surprisingly good. And, happily, there is no evidence of "enhancement," no reverb, no simulated stereo. These are the records as they were, the genuine article—but, with the help of better production and reproduction equipment, sounding better than they could forty years ago. J.S.W.

*** GEORGE SHEARING:** The Way We Are. George Shearing, piano; Heribert Thusek, vibes; Sigi Schwab, guitar; Andy Simpkins, bass; Rusty Jones, drums; Chino Valdes, conga and bongos; Carmelo Garcia, timbales. *The Way We Were; Do You Know the Way to San Jose; Killing Me Softly*; seven more. MPS/BASF 25351, \$6.98.

The Shearing sound—that blend of vibes, guitar, and piano, later supplemented with Latin percussion—has seemingly worn thin in recent years. And not surprisingly, since George Shearing has been using it for a quarter of a century.

But this record suggests that it was less a matter of the sound wearing thin than of recording situations and materials that simply did not inspire the vitality that was required. The Shearing sound on these pieces is as fresh and colorful as it was when he first stumbled on it. It had dwindled away during his last tired years of recording for Capitol, but, although there was a recrudescence when he was recording for his own label, Sheba, this disc has a charm, an easiness, a beauty that eluded him for many years.

Some of this may be due to the sensitively balanced and brilliantly realized recording, done in Villingen, Germany; some to a provocative choice of material that, in turn, inspired Shearing to provocative approaches; and some to the somewhat unusual group with which he plays—a trio that includes Shearing veterans Rusty Jones and Andy Simpkins, joined by a German guitarist and German vibist and filled out by a pair of Latin percussionists. They have produced a set of Shearing performances that have the true vintage sound and feeling. J.S.W.

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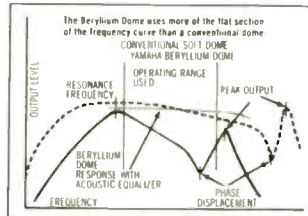
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MURPHY'S LAW: Urban Renewal. ABC DSD 50194, \$6.98. Tape: ● H 8023-50194, \$7.95.

Under the auspices of the hit-making producer Jimmy Ienner. J. F. Murphy, formerly of that much adored but relatively unknown bagpipes-rock band J. F. Murphy and Salt, has created a flowing, witty album that not only features bagpipes and rock, but also offers up "Beer Barrel Polka" and a jazzy medley from *West Side Story*. H.E.

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This blaring trio features vocalist Mike Pinera, one of the spear-carriers in the late-1960s American noise machine called Iron Butterfly. Pinera's new band is just as noisy, but far less interesting. H.E.

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Tchaikovskian summer theater: curtain raisers . . . Tchaikovsky's symphonic "realizations" of poems and plays that particularly fascinated him are variously titled overture-fantasy, fantasia, ballad, etc., but they are all loosely programmatic tone poems. And they all (not only the best-known *Romeo and Juliet*) vividly represent various aspects of his inexhaustible powers of melodic and coloristic invention. It's good to get, especially as played by so empathic and persuasive a conductor as Antal Dorati (who earlier gave us tapings of all six symphonies and all four orchestral suites), the last three of Tchaikovsky's half-dozen tone poems. These include not only the occasionally heard *Francesca da Rimini*, Op. 32, after Dante (1876) and *Hamlet*, Op. 67a (1888), but also the very rarely heard—never before on tape—symphonic ballad of 1890–91, the *Voyevode*, Op. 78, after a Mickiewicz poem that Tchaikovsky read in Pushkin's translation: London/ Ampex E 46841, 7½-ips Dolby-B reel, \$8.95; also O 56841/O 86841, Dolby-B cassette/8-track cartridge, respectively, \$7.95 each.

I still prefer Haitink's *Francesca* of October 1974 for Philips, but if Dorati's National Symphony Orchestra is somewhat outmatched by the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and if in my review copy the channel levels have been a bit lopsidedly processed (in this work only), his reading is more overtly passionate and dramatic than Haitink's. The overside *Hamlet* is even more effective in every respect, including first-rate reel processing, as is the *Voyevode* ballad. This last work immediately proves that its neglect has been unjustified, for it's remarkable for both infectious theatrical excitement and songful flow of its darkly colored love theme, also used in the *Aveu passionné* sketch for solo piano.

. . . and crowd-pleasers. Besides the invaluable tone-poems reel above, I have a small stable of only-too-familiar Tchaikovskian warhorse favorites. Both the Violin and First Piano Concertos are out in exceptionally bravura versions by gifted young stars. The violinist is the skyrocketing Eugene Fodor, backed by the New Philharmonia under Leinsdorf on RCA Red Seal ARK/ARS 1-0781, cassette/cartridge, \$7.95 each; ART 1-0781, Q-8 cartridge, \$7.95. The pianist is that earlier meteor André Watts, with the New York Philharmonic under Bernstein, in Columbia MAQ 33071, Dolby-B Q-8 cartridge, \$7.98; MT/MA 33071, Dolby-B cassette/cartridge, \$7.98 each.

Both these are knock-'em-down,

by R. D. Darrell

The Tape Deck

drag-'em-out spectaculars that to my mind fall just short of their obvious goal of challenging the supremely virtuosic versions of the past. But in the strength and vividness of their recorded sonics they probably do achieve, at least temporarily, top ranking—the piano concerto certainly so in its expansive but unexaggeratedly panoramic quadriphonic edition. That well may be true of the violin concerto too, but I haven't yet had a chance to hear it in quadriphony.

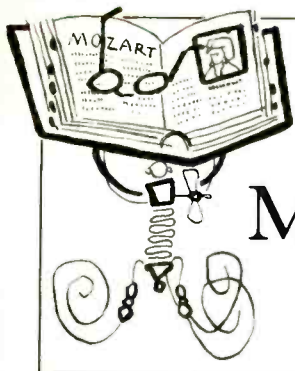
Of the two new *Pathétiques*, I can commend Stokowski's London Symphony version only to the maestro's fervent devotees, for it not only retains most of the idiosyncratic mannerisms of his earlier Tchaikovskysymphony readings, but is further marred by some quite uncharacteristic limp and labored moments. The stereo edition, while admirably rich and warm sonically, is incongruously filled out by a 1961 Symphony-of-the-Air *Rheingold* Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla: RCA Red Seal ARK/ARS 1-0426, cassette/cartridge, \$7.95 each; ART 1-0426, Q-8 cartridge, \$7.95. But the other current Sixth Symphony comes close to, and maybe actually reaches, the top of the preferred tape-choice list. I didn't expect that, since I've been generally lukewarm about Claudio Abbado as a symphonic (as distinct from operatic) conductor and I still don't (on rehearing) share the widespread admiration of his 1972 Tchaikovsky Fifth. But his Sixth, with the Vienna Philharmonic, is immeasurably more tautly controlled, eloquently expressive without sentimentality, very well played, and richly yet lucidly recorded: Deutsche Grammophon 3300 405, Dolby-B cassette, \$7.98.

A new "safe adventure." Ever since Franz Schmidt's Fourth Symphony taping of December 1973, I've been searching for another candidate as apt for my special category of unfamiliar works (even by "unknown" composers) that make an immediate potent appeal. Now, coincidentally, here's another Fourth by the even more obscure, to American listeners, Czech Johann Bohuslav Foerster (1859–1951). Sometimes called a "poor man's Mah-

ler" (as Schmidt is called a "poor man's Bruckner"), Foerster actually reflects a stronger Dvořákian influence to my ears. But he is no carbon copy and has his own individual way of invigorating his work with the piquant freshness of Czech folk spirit. His originally (1905) subtitled *Easter Eve* Symphony speaks delectably for itself, as heart-warmingly voiced here by the Prague Symphony under Smetáček in Supraphon engineers' ungimmicked, robust recording: Nonesuch/Stereotape NST 71267 C, 7½-ips reel, \$7.95.

Liszt—Transcendent. Except for the most hackneyed among them, the works of Liszt have fared badly on tape—which in itself would justify a warm welcome for the first complete taping of his remarkable set of 12 Transcendental Etudes in generally straightforward and dramatically effective, if sometimes a bit heavy-handed (and -footed), performances by New England Conservatory of Music faculty pianist Russell Sherman. But the considerable musical and interpretative attractions here are outshone by the spectacularly realistic recording of both a truly grand piano and (even in stereo only) its authentic NEC Jordan Hall acoustical ambience. For super measure, there is deluxe processing and exceptionally generous length for a budget price: Advent D 1010, Dolby-B cassette, 75 minutes, \$5.95.

Strauss—transfigured. The latest Dolby-B cassette in the Karajan/Berlin Philharmonic Richard Strauss series (DG 3300 421, \$7.98) gives primacy to what probably is the most sumptuously—and slowest—played and recorded version of the early tone poem *Tod und Verklärung*. But I still find the music pretentiously vulgar and the conductor lacking any real personal involvement. The reason I'll treasure this tape as a pearl-beyond-any-price is its coupling, on the dubious excuse of a passing transfiguration-theme quotation: the incomparable *Four Last Songs*. All four, but the final "*Im Abendroth*" in particular, rank with the most poignantly beautiful music Strauss, or anyone else, has ever given us. The Berlin Philharmonic plays just as splendidly, and there is a vital personal involvement—by the ineffably lovely-voiced Gundula Janowitz. For radiantly soaring vocalism, for illuminatingly eloquent musicianship, and for even the cassette-box inclusion of notes and song texts, look no further for a tape worthy of enshrinement in every collection. ●



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"125 watts of continuous power per channel at 0.15% total harmonic distortion, 20 to 20,000 Hz, both channels driven into an 8 ohm load."

In August, 1974, sound engineers and audiophiles were invited to examine and discuss the new Marantz 2325 AM/FM Stereo Receiver. The following comments were taken from that taped discussion.

"The Marantz 2325 receiver has virtually no competition as far as power output is concerned... and it works beautifully with speakers of any impedance from 4 ohms up!"



"Right. It's the most powerful pure-stereo receiver on the market—125 watts of continuous power output per channel at 0.15% total harmonic distortion, 20 to 20,000 Hz, both channels driven into an 8 ohm load!"

"The full complimentary symmetry circuit made up of two NPN's and two paralleled PNP power transistors is identical to the Marantz 250—the same power amplifier that's used separately in professional installations."

"That's important. The amp section really turned me on to this unit."

"This is the only 'stereo only' receiver with a built-in Dolby* Noise Reduction System that can be used on tapes and FM broadcasts, conveniently, by switching on the front panel. This system can also be used on records when records are Dolby encoded!"

"Dolby as such isn't the feature. Dolby is Dolby is Dolby. The feature here is the way it's applied, the ease of use!"

"Just the fact that it's in the receiver and it's versatile. You can switch over to FM Dolby. You have separate internal, pre-calibrated controls for that. FM Dolby is going pretty good now. I read that a hundred stations now have Dolby broadcasts. It's going to be more and more important!"

"A lot easier to use than a separate tuner and separate Dolby. Fact is, separate Dolby is a pain in the neck to use, and really expensive. Marantz is the only one that has this feature. It's built-in and it's standard!"

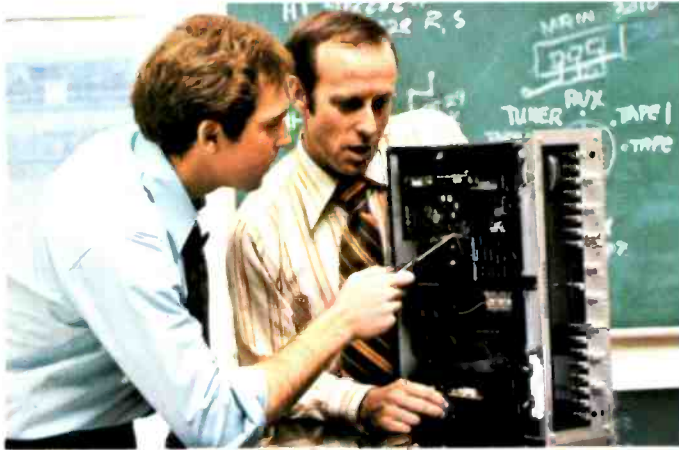
"Another thing, the Dolby system is effective as a dynamic noise filter. It removes a lot of noise from non-Dolbyized material during low level passages, but doesn't attenuate all the high frequencies at high levels like a filter would!"



"The tuner circuitry of the 2325 approaches the performance of the 150—Marantz' top-of-the-line component tuner. That alone says a lot for the unit!"

"Biggest tuner advantage in my estimation is the ease of tuning. Of course, there's built-in phase lock loop!"

"In stereo for almost all conditions FM distortion is under 0.3%. In mono it's around 0.15%."



"The 2325 has three tone controls for each channel: bass, mid and treble. The bass and mid each have two selectable turnover frequencies. That's total flexibility over the whole tone range"

"You can adjust for your speakers, the room and your listening tastes. Do a wide variety of things."

"I think the big thing is that it will provide a lower turnover point. The guy with a good system can boost the extremes without bringing up the lower middle and lower highs. What this will do is bring up the string bass and leave the viola alone, essentially."

"Marantz also has a feature they've had on preamps before, but never on a receiver. That is, you can flip the tone controls completely out and have it flat. This will drop some of the distortion, too."

"The Marantz 2325 has by far more control flexibility than any receiver in the past."

The Marantz 2325 Receiver is just part of the exciting new Marantz AM/FM stereo receiver line. There are four new Marantz receivers in all, starting as low as \$299.95. Each of them reflects the kind of technical expertise and engineering excellence that has made Marantz the choice of professionals worldwide. Stop by your local Marantz dealer and see the exciting Marantz line featuring an exclusive three-year guarantee** on parts, labor and performance specifications.

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This is all we want to do. But perfectly.

The engineering of high-fidelity turntables is a technical and controversial subject.

But the concept of a perfect turntable is perfectly simple.

Since a perfect turntable is what we at Garrard have been striving to make, we'd like to communicate this concept to you as unequivocally as possible. Then all the claims and counterclaims you hear will fall into place.

Think of it this way:

A phonograph record doesn't know and doesn't care what kind of mechanism is spinning it,



as long as it's spinning properly. If your hand could turn it at exactly $33\frac{1}{3}$ RPM, without the slightest fluctuations in speed, and keep it moving in the horizontal plane only, without the slightest jiggling or vibrations up-and-down or sideways, you could expect perfect reproduction.

Similarly, a phono cartridge has no idea what's holding it in the groove, as long as it's properly held. If your other hand were holding it, correctly aligned, with the right amount of downward force and without resisting its movement across the record, it would perform faultlessly.

That's really all there is to it.

The basic point is that the turntable and tonearm have exceedingly simple and purely mechanical functions, just like a chemist's analytical balance or a gyroscope. That's why turntable manufacturing is, above all, a matter of precision and integrity, with the emphasis on perfect operation rather than hi-fi pizzazz or features for features' sake.

Of course, theoretical perfection in an actual mechanical device is an unrealizable ideal. But even though 100% is impossible, there's a big difference between 99.9% and 98%.

It's in this most fundamental sense, we feel, that Garrard turntables are in a class by themselves.

For example, in the case of the Zero 100c changer and the Zero 100SB single-play automatic, tracking error has been reduced to a virtually unmeasurable quantity (in effect, zero) by the geometry of the tonearm design. Rumble, wow and flutter figures are also coming ever closer to theoretical perfection in these and other top Garrard models. (The Zero 100c and the Zero 100SB are both priced at \$209.95.)

To a less spectacular degree, the lower-priced models, from \$49.95 up, also come quite close to the theoretical ideal because of this emphasis on fundamentals.

Remember: all we want is to make your record revolve perfectly and to position your phono cartridge perfectly.

And we're almost there.

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