

HIGH FIDELITY

JULY 1975 \$1.00

08398

LAB TEST REPORTS

Sony power amp model TAN-8550 VFET

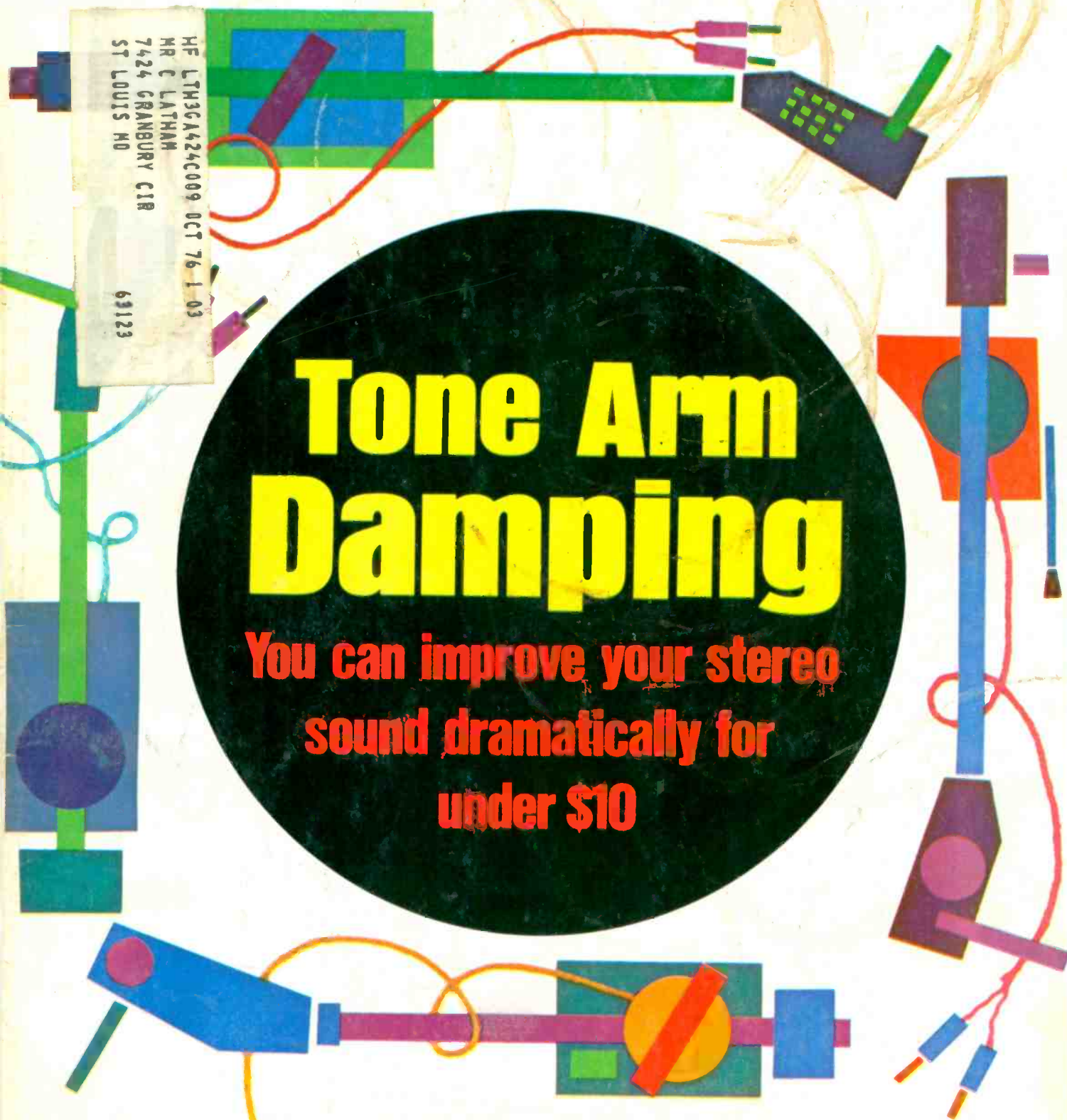
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Sansui four-channel receiver QRX-7001

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Speakers	3	3	3
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Noise reduction	1	1	1
4-channel MPX	1	1	1

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SX-535

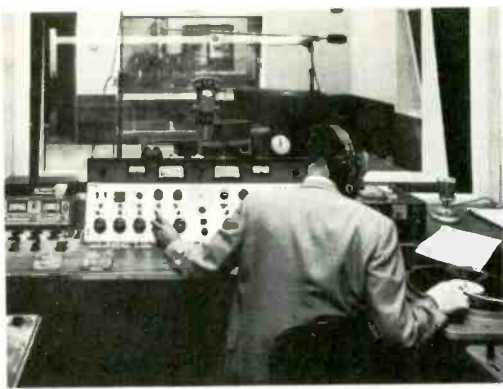


SX-636



SX-737





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CIRCLE 32 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



HIGH FIDELITY

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Coming Next Month

A special issue for the tape fancier. **HOW TO FALSIFY EVIDENCE AND OTHER DIVERSIONS** is a guide to editing your tape so that it sounds like a perfect take; **THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER ON THE OUTTAKES** reports the surprising results of a test conducted by Glenn Gould to see whether musicians, technicians, or laymen can detect splices best; **SYMPHONIC CONCERTS ON THE AIR** shows how transcription services tape programs by our major orchestras for broadcast. The equipment report section analyzes six tape-related products. In addition, the issue reviews RCA's six-album collection of Heifetz recordings from 1917-55 together with **MEMORIES OF HEIFETZ** by editor Leonard Marcus.

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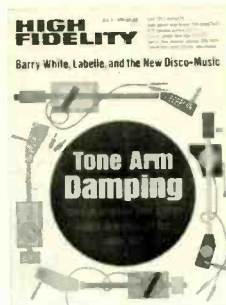
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SOLUTION TO HIFI-CROSTIC NO. 1 (JUNE 1975)

HANS FANTEL: *The True Sound of Music*

The term "high fidelity," not being legally define, has been used so loosely to promote inferior products that it soon became meaningless to distinguish quality components from mere pretenders. The buyer had to acquire some personal expertise.



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Is it live or is it Memorex? Who knows?



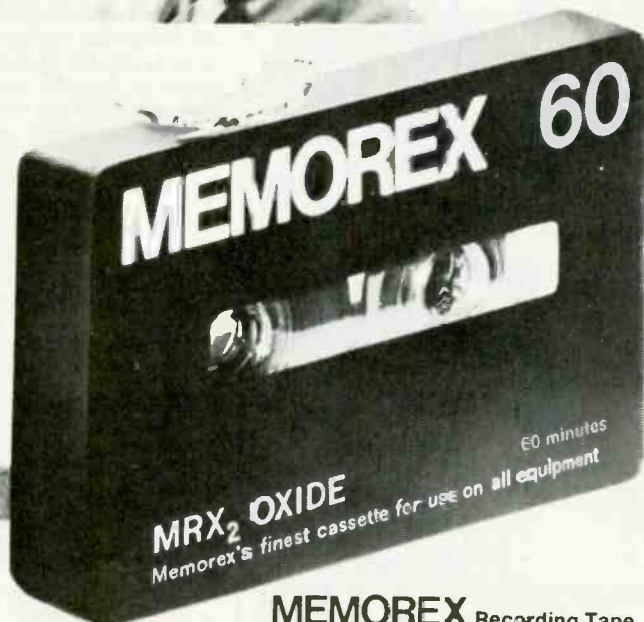
In our most recent test, we asked Ella Fitzgerald's old friend and longtime jazz arranger, Nelson Riddle, if he was listening to Ella live, or Ella as recorded on a Memorex cassette.

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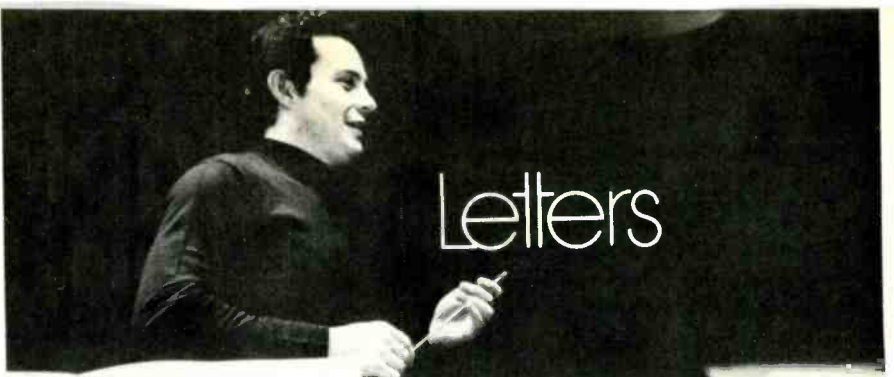
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WHEN LISTENING BECOMES AN ART
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Jorge Mester—a series deserving support from everywhere.

Vanishing Louisvilles

Gabrielle Mattingly's April article on "The Vanishing Louisvilles" was much needed: as an early subscriber to the Louisville Orchestra series, as well as a recipient of a commission, I found it especially interesting.

Working with Jim Hicks on the business side and the multitalented Jorge Mester on the creative end, I can attest to the fact that any composer involved with the Louisville Orchestra is fortunate indeed. In addition, over the years the records I have received from the series have nearly always amazed and pleased me. As a good example, the first time I ever heard of Peggy Glanville-Hicks was when I received a Louisville disc devoted to her work. To my knowledge the LO commissions and recordings are the only ones of their kind in America. As such they deserve the support of not only the people of Louisville, but lovers of good music everywhere.

Rod McKuen
Beverly Hills, Calif.

Delighted to see Gabrielle Mattingly's article. My brother and I have been avid collectors of the marvelous Louisville recordings for many years, and we both have substantial collections, including—believe it or not—duplicates of some of those rare deleted items mentioned in the article. Thank heavens for such blessings as the Louisville releases, the long-defunct American Recording Society (re-released on the Desto label), the Musical Heritage Society, Music in America—and all the organizations that have the courage to make these neglected treasures available to serious lovers of music!

H. Jack Adams
Westboro, Mass.

I am a music teacher living in the Louisville metropolitan area and have been a subscriber to the Louisville Orchestra's series for years. I was glad to see that someone has finally told the Louisville story in its true context. Ms. Mattingly grasped the situation as the natives of Louisville know it, but somewhere along the way she failed to give us Louisvillians credit for our continuing support of our orchestra—even if and when we don't approve of some of the music we're forced to listen to.

Also, it's nice to see someone get the facts straight. (The chapter on Louisville records in Philip Hart's *Orpheus in the New World* is full of inaccuracies and assumptions that aren't quite right.) I would like to point out, however, that Howard Scott is no longer

the producer of First Edition Records: it's likely your article was written before this change in personnel took place.

[Andrew Kazdin, formerly of Columbia Records, is now the producer.—Ed.]

Another point I would like to make is that, although it's true the Louisville critics have been negative about the recording series over the years, they and their paper—the *Courier Journal*—have always supported the orchestra.

Mary M. Sullivan
Jeffersonville, Ind.

More Russian Operas

Conrad L. Osborne's two-part article on Russian opera was quite fascinating. It would be helpful to the readers, however, if the criteria used for exclusion of recorded works were explained. Not only are works by listed composers (e.g., Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa*) not mentioned, but works and their composers (e.g., Shaporin's *The Decembrists*) are missing.

Stanley E. Babb Jr.
Norman, Okla.

Regarding Mr. Osborne's Division of Records and Statistics: The range of four octaves and a semitone that he effuses over is matched in any recording of *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Scaramuccio's low E flat to Zerbinetta's high E). It is surpassed in any complete recording of *Abduction from the Seraglio* (Osmin's low D to Blondchen's high E). Indeed the Richmond recording conducted by Krips has Osmin interpolate a low C (in the middle of the duet with Blondchen), making an impressive total range of four octaves and a major third.

Carl Salogo
East Lansing, Mich.

Mr. Osborne replies: First, I must express my appreciation to everyone who has written. I wish I had time to reply individually, but the response has been very heavy, and it's not possible. Personal note: I do hope the record dealer (I believe in Indiana) who so kindly sent me a copy of the Westminster *The Marriage will drop a line*, as I have misplaced his address and would like to personally thank him.

Now to the specific questions raised. Mr. Salogo and several other correspondents have entered *Entführung* in the vocal long-distance event, and in my capacity as official statistician and sole arbiter in such matters I accept the candidate—noting, though, that the criterion is "sustained singing tone." I haven't the energy at the

Before you buy a manual turntable, consider what "manual" really means.

"Manual" means more than just "single play." Every time you play a record, you must pick up the tonearm and move it to the record. And at the end of play, you must stop whatever you're doing, go to the turntable and return the tonearm to its resting post. All by hand.

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moment to refresh my memory as to which Osmins and Blondchens actually do either sustain or sing their low Ds and high Es.

No one, Mr. Saloga, accuses me of "effusing over" anything, especially if they have their facts wrong. Scaramuccio is a tenor role and of course does not include a low E flat or anything near it. Truffaldin does have a low F, but it is on a sixteenth note in an ensemble, and in any case it falls short of the four-octave mark and thus flunks the qualifying heat.

Mr. Babb raises a legitimate point, for which I have the following shameless answer: We included all those recordings whose existence we were able to deter-

mine, which had at some point circulated outside Eastern Europe, and on copies of which we were able to lay our mitts, up through the final copy deadline. I am grateful to the many writers who have pointed to the existence of other sets, several of which are obviously important. I especially regret the omission of Mazeppa, which I knew had circulated in England but whose domestic incarnation somehow escaped me, and a mono Khovanshchina that used an edition different from Rimsky's.

The discography grew far beyond our original planned limits, and as it is the publisher has been indulgent in not billing me for paper and ink.



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CIRCLE 9 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Brandenburg Travesty

Recordings of the Brandenburg Concertos that I made for the old Unicorn label in 1956 have recently appeared as a reissue on the Olympic label. I would like all record collectors to know that the performances of Nos. 1, 2, and 3, which appear on Sides 1 and 2, are complete travesties of my original recordings. For some reason, which I am trying to ascertain, the speeds of all the movements have been altered—some, believe it or not, by as much as three minutes—but strange to say the pitch has been correctly retained. The result sounds rather like P.D.Q. Bach. I would not have thought this possible, but the experts tell me that such a thing can now be done on the very latest apparatus. I have tried to get an explanation from Olympic but have as yet heard nothing from them.

In order to defend my reputation as an artist, I have no recourse but to write to you so that your readers can be aware of the facts. Anyone playing the Olympic version of these three concertos would think that I had completely lost my senses. Some of the tempos are much faster and some much slower, but all have been altered. It seems to me a strange thing that such travesties can be issued to the record-buying public while the artist can do nothing in self-defense.

The strangest thing of all is that the second record (Sides 3 and 4) has not been tampered with in the least.

Boyd Neel
Toronto, Ont.

Film Music Collection

I read with a great deal of interest and a great deal of disappointment Royal S. Brown's April review of the first release from the Elmer Bernstein Film Music Collection. Max Steiner's *Helen of Troy* and *A Summer Place*. I am a member of the Film Music Collection, and, while I agree that neither of the scores represents Steiner at his finest or even near-finest, they were apparently consensus choices.

It may interest readers who are not members to know that the first notification we received from Mr. Bernstein was that the first album was to be Steiner's *King Kong* and Bernstein's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I protested this vigorously. I thought it altogether fitting that the first record(s) represent the work of Steiner (after all, he is the "father of film music") and Bernstein (it was through his efforts that we film-music buffs were to receive this opportunity), but I failed to understand those particular choices. Apparently a lot of other members protested too. *The Miracle*, however, was one of my first choices and, as it has never before been available, I am thrilled that we will soon have it.

I agree with Mr. Brown's complaints about the annotations and the absence of selection listings (a serious shortcoming of many commercial soundtrack releases too). But the Film Music Collection is a new undertaking, and one hopes it will improve as it matures. It seems to me unfair to chop it to shreds on the basis of the first release.

Stephen L. Richey
Durham, N.C.

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The Lees Side

Mancini at Fifty—Mr. Lucky

ABOUT FORTY YEARS ago, a small boy, the son of an immigrant steelworker, played flute in a Sons of Italy band in West Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, and dreamed, as most boys do. He dreamed of writing arrangements for big bands, of being a successful and famous composer of movie music, and of living happily ever after with a beautiful girl.

All of Henry Mancini's dreams came true. And that is something very rare.

He has a beautiful blonde wife, Ginnie, who sang with the Tex Benecke band when Mancini was its arranger and pianist. (She still works as a studio singer and vocal contractor.) Their three children are grown, healthy, and on their way into their own lives. The couple have houses in Beverly Hills and at Malibu, and they are at the top of Hollywood's rather subtly delineated social order. The name of one of their daughters sums it up: Felice. It means "happy."

I first became conscious of Mancini, no doubt like most people, through

the scores of the *Peter Gunn* and *Mr. Lucky* television shows. (He had already worked on the scores of more than a hundred pictures, but anonymously, for the most part.) *Peter Gunn* was that one stroke of pure luck that every career seems to need. As Mancini was leaving a barbershop one day, he encountered producer/writer/director Blake Edwards, who said he was doing a TV series about a private eye and, on that moment's impulse, asked Mancini if he would be interested in writing the music. "I've since wondered," the composer has said, "what would have happened if I hadn't needed a haircut that day." Music from the *Gunn* scores not only became a best-selling album, but led to a number of films with Edwards, including *The Pink Panther*, one of Mancini's most melodic scores.

He is one of the few film composers to be a successful recording artist, and his forty-seven albums for RCA Victor have won twenty Grammy awards. His film scores, which have won him three Academy Awards,

have produced such songs as "Moon River," "Charade," "Two for the Road," and "Days of Wine and Roses" that mark him as one of the great melodists in American popular music. He has literally changed the style of movie music.

He's fifty now, but his career shows no signs of slowing: In fact, his fifty-first year has turned out to be one of his busiest yet, during which he scored seven films while working a grueling schedule of concerts. He loves work. ("I don't really enjoy the work process," says fellow composer Johnny Mandel, "but Hank does.")

"I thought you were supposed to slow up when you got a little older," Mancini said with a sigh in an interview. "I've never worked so much. I'm tired." He had played a concert the night before in San Francisco; next morning he was leaving for London to conduct the score for *The Return of the Pink Panther*, which he had written in two weeks on an electric piano in his room at the Sherry-Netherland in New York while performing in the evenings with Anthony Newley at the Uris Theater. That was after he had flown to London to see a print of the picture and "spot" it—that is, time the sequences and select the appropriate places for music. And he had made that trip the day after he conducted his score for *Once Is Not Enough* at Paramount Studios in Hollywood.

"The only concern I have is that I won't do everything that I want," Mancini said when asked about reaching that age plateau. "Time starts to get short. . . . But it's not physically that I'm worried. I'm just worried about trying to keep doing what I'm doing and yet not fall too hard into a mold.

"And I'm in a mold now. I'm definitely a product of my own creation and everything that's gone before me. . . . I'm trapped by my own education and environment.

"I'd like to meet another Blake Edwards and have something of that kind happen. . . . Maybe I'd go out and do something for the concert stage or Broadway. I'd love to break the style and just do something that isn't me."

"Fortunately, I'm still at the point where the next assignment is very exciting for me," Mancini continued. "I'm doing all different things. Like *The White Dawn*. In a way I can shed my musical identity in some of these assignments. In a modern score, of course, I can give them the flutes and the French horns and the harmonic progressions that are me. But when I

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do *The White Dawn*, which is set in 1890 up in Baffin Bay, I can't do that. They didn't know what a flute was. If they saw one, they'd start to dig snow with it. All they had were some bones and a skin and their own voices. So that was a big challenge, and that was a score you would never know. . . . And that's one way I have of breaking out."

"You once told me you never really wanted to do anything but write film music," I said.

"Yes, as far back as I can remember," Mancini replied. "The thing that started me on this road, if there was ever one thing, was a movie called *The Crusaders*, with Henry Wilcoxon. It had a score, boy! It was an epic of major proportions, and I saw it many times, because I couldn't believe what was happening. Long lines of the Crusaders going forth and back, and that music. . . . There was magic coming from the screen, and it wouldn't have happened without the music."

Obviously, he thinks about other young people who might get bitten by the same bug. He wrote a book, *Sounds and Scores*, which is one of the best available practical guides to recording orchestration. And he has set up scholarship funds for young composers at Juilliard and UCLA. The Juilliard grant is for classical composers; that at UCLA is for those aspiring to film composition. When the UCLA scholarship committee finished its selections last year, it submitted to Mancini the works of two students, a young man and woman, both very talented. Mancini couldn't turn down either one, so he awarded two scholarships.

"I got into a stupid argument about you the other night," I told Mancini, mentioning a mutual acquaintance, a lady of strong mystical persuasions. "She said you were the reincarnation of Verdi. And I said, 'Nonsense. If he's the reincarnation of anybody, it would be Puccini.'"

He laughed. "She was right. I was regressed once, and that's what they said. It was in '45, in Nice, after the Air Force bands broke up. . . . This Swiss fellow . . . was very into mysticism and reincarnation and all that. He put me back, and one of the most recent lives we figured to be Verdi. But I wouldn't believe me under those circumstances."

"You were born in 1924, right? That was the year Puccini died," I said, still arguing my case.

Hank laughed again. "Yeah, well, I'll take him too. I was in Montezuma's court, and in another life I had a hand in building the great pyramid, so you can see, I've had pretty active lives."

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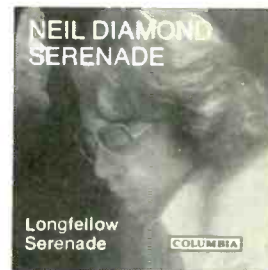
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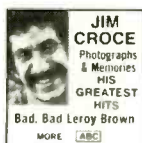
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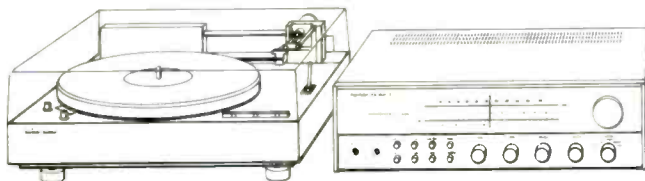
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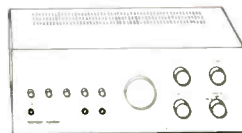
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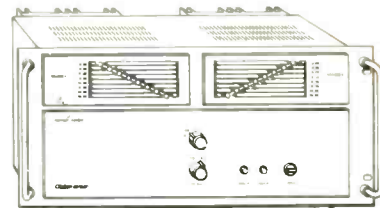


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And finally, Len Feldman, writing in *Tape Deck Quarterly*, summed it up with, "...it has become a bit of a cliché on the part of many top quality cassette deck manufacturers to compare their product's capability with that of the finest open reel decks. Conservative Nakamichi refrains from making that statement... though if anyone comes close to justifying (it), they certainly do."

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Behind the Scenes

Guns of Navarraise. Last month we reported RCA's plans to record Massenet's little-known *La Navarraise* in London this summer with Marilyn Horne, Plácido Domingo, and Sherrill Milnes, Henry Lewis conducting the LSO. Well, the opera may not be little known for long. Edward Greenfield reports from London that CBS got off the first shot by recording that opera, in that city (at EMI No. 1 Studio), with that orchestra, last spring.

"Antonio de Almeida, fresh from troubled Lisbon," writes Greenfield, "conducted with passion. On the first day at least (when I attended), producer Paul Myers' main concern was whether all the soloists would arrive on time from late engagements all over Europe. Fortunately they did: Lucia Popp as the heroine, Richard Cassilly as the hero, Gérard Souzay as his father, with Michel Sénéchal, Vicente Sardinero, and Claude Meloni making up the rest of the cast." The work, "obviously designed to cream off the *Carmen* public with its atmospheric Spanish dances and melodramatic story of the Carlist war of 1874," takes two acts, but it is so compact it will be easily contained on a single disc.

A pair of suits. Two items about legal squabbles caught our eye in the April 12 issue of *Billboard*. One we'd been aware of, the other was news to us, but we thought we'd pass the stories along to you for whatever benefit you might find in them.

RCA and Toscanini's heirs are suing the Arturo Toscanini Society to prevent the latter from distributing any more of the Maestro's recorded performances. Plaintiffs claim that RCA has exclusive, contractual rights. (The ATS's records are generally taken from broadcasts.) The Society, by the way, has been in business for years, primarily as a small mail-order distributor of material otherwise unavailable, and RCA had been treating it as a sleeping dog. During the past year, however, we had been noticing these records turning up in record stores, blatantly competing with RCA's own. At that point, we suspect, RCA changed proverbs to *cave canem!*

Also named in the suit were Everest Records, whose Olympic label has a set of Beethoven symphonies, and Vox, which has issued the Brahms symphonies and the Verdi Requiem under the Society's aegis. (Both Olympic's and Vox's sets came from the Society.)

We remember the late Walter Toscanini in the mid-1960s waxing enthusiastically over the ATS's enthusiasm, but apparently he later signed a contract giving RCA exclusive rights for five years to any noncommercial recordings of his father that he edited or otherwise "improved," generally for radio broadcasts. That contract, we understand, has expired. At any rate, in March Vox voluntarily withdrew its Toscanini records for two weeks, and in April a restraining order put a damper on both Vox and Olympic until the matter is straightened out.

Muddying the waters still further is the fact that the Brahms set, emanating from 1949, is played by the New Philharmonia Orchestra. In 1949 the Philharmonia had an exclusive contract with EMI!

The other *Billboard* item noted that Peter Blair Noone was suing Anthony Green, Derek Leckenby, and Jan Barry Whitwam to prevent their using the appellation they jointly went under when all four were as friendly as 1965 Beatles. The three suees were the "Hermits." Peter Blair Noone was "Herman."

In case you hadn't noticed. Bette Midler, pop record superduperstar, hasn't had a recording out in nearly two years. Not that she hasn't been working in the studios, with producers Paul Simon of Columbia and Hal Davis of Motown, and she has at least planned some sessions with independent hit-maker Tony Sylvester. But in each instance production was held up by some problem or other—Midler's contract with Atlantic, for example. Currently in a smash one-woman Broadway show, she is hesitant to record it before she takes it on tour, insiders say, because she is afraid a recording will rob it of its "spontaneous surprises."

Informal Israelis. The Israel Philharmonic has signed a new contract with Decca/London, the first fruits of which were what one observer called "the wackiest sessions in years." Zubin Mehta was in charge of the orchestra for recordings of Schubert's "Great" C major Symphony and Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*. While the Decca/London team has recorded the Israelis before, this time they were

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taken aback by the musicians' sublime unawareness of time schedules. Israel may be a socialist country, but there is no question of union restrictions inhibiting the orchestra. Recording breaks just happened when people thought they might. And as if to evoke a hoary local joke ("Put three Israelis together and you get four political parties"), each player voiced a different opinion as often as he could about how the music should go ("twenty players, twenty opinions." was one comment). At one point, Mehta asked, "Can I have a note?" He got fifty. But at the end everyone seemed

happy. Decca's chief producer Ray Minshull is a very patient man.

Marching through the Bicentennial. Nonesuch's long-standing interest in Americana has already produced such notable items as a disc of Stephen Foster songs, the various piano ragtime records, and Joan Morris' "After the Ball" collection with William Bolcom. So when Nonesuch director Tracey Sterne says she's onto someone whose name is going to become big, we listen.

The name in question is Henry Clay Work (1832-84), who doesn't even rate

a mention in Grove's. But Baker's describes him as "a printer by trade; entirely self-taught in music; his first success was *We are coming, Sister Mary*. . . ." Among his other songs: "Grandfather's Clock" and "Marching through Georgia." The Morris-Bolcom "After the Ball" team will be joined by chorus.

It's quite a jump from "We are coming, Sister Mary" to Milhaud, but that doesn't faze Nonesuch's renaissance man Bill Bolcom, who has a disc of his onetime teacher's piano works in the works.

Berman coming. It has been thirteen years since Harris Goldsmith reviewed in these pages an Artia-MK recital recording by a "titanic" Russian pianist with "a big, assertive style similar to Rachmaninoff's," whose Debussy "eight-finger" etude "leaves all rivals far behind," whose Chopin "is brilliantly headlong" and "grandly inflected," and whose Scriabin is "superbly done." The titan's name? Lazar Berman, and that was the only recording of his that we ever found generally available in the U.S. What ever happened to him? In Russia, he's a major concert attraction and has made a few other Melodiya recordings, but here he has been known to only a few piano aficionados, to whom he has become a sort of cult figure.

Next January, Berman, now forty-five, will make his first American tour, and he is expected to return the following fall. Plans are also afoot for him to cut his first Western-made discs.

The electrifying Stoky. Ninety-three-year-old Leopold Stokowski is still going strong. You may recall that it was only a few years ago that he left the U.S. for his native England because there wasn't enough recording activity going on here. At any rate, he is still making records, although he reportedly has "only now given up the idea of conducting live concerts."

Our reporter, Edward Greenfield again, attended Stoky's latest session, a *Scheherazade* with the Royal Philharmonic for RCA.

He reports: "Normally the visitor to recording sessions has to swallow the frustration of never hearing a work complete, or at least hearing it only in chopped-up form. Imagine my delight when Stokowski launched into the four movements in sequence. The night before, the RPO had played this very work under its principal conductor, Rudolf Kempe (about to move to the BBC Symphony, to be succeeded by Antal Dorati [who is relinquishing his post at the National Symphony in

CONDUCTS Levine Mahler

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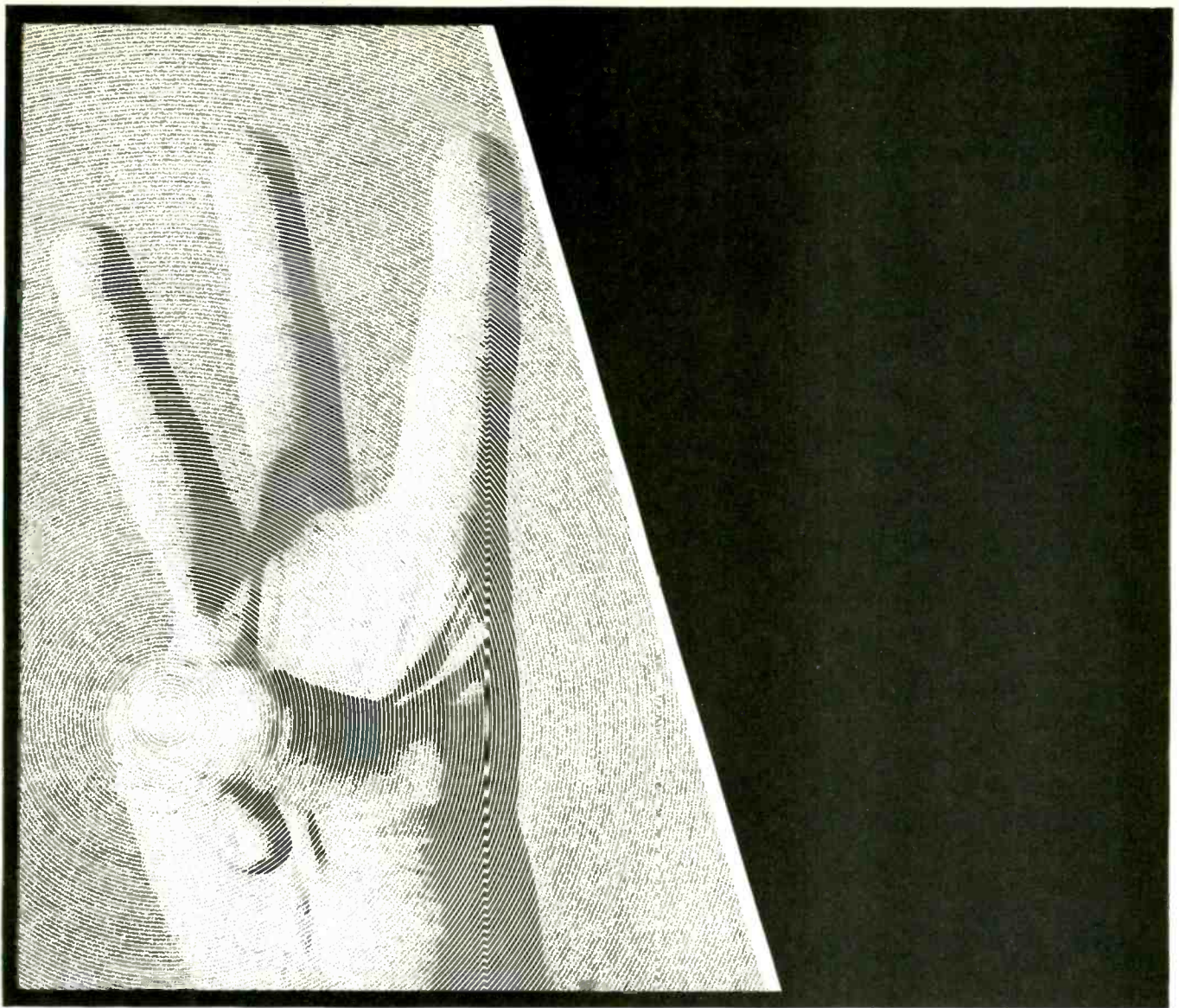
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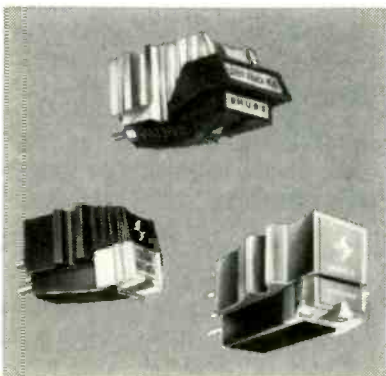


RCA Records and Tapes

CIRCLE 20 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



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Fact: the lowest cost way to improve your whole high fidelity system is simply to upgrade the source—the cartridge! If you're on a temporary austerity program, the Shure M44E can make a significant difference in sound over the cartridges supplied with many budget component systems. If your budget is a trifle more flexible, an M91ED can bring you into the area of high trackability (with performance second only to the V-15 Type III). And for those who can be satisfied with nothing less than state-of-the-art playback perfection, Shure offers the widely acclaimed V-15 Type III, the recognized number one cartridge in the industry, which, in truth, costs less than a single middle-of-the-road loudspeaker. To read about what a Shure cartridge could do for your system, write:

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



In comparing your report on the Sequerra FM tuner [January 1975] with that on the Yamaha CT-7000 [March 1975] I get the impression that the Sequerra is better, although the measurements don't seem to confirm this. Is it true?—R. Baboushkin, Forest Hills, N.Y.

No. Both are extremely fine performers, and the Yamaha, in fact, has some refinements (notably the IF-bandwidth switch) that can be quite useful under certain conditions and that aren't included in the Sequerra. The Sequerra has an oscilloscope system that—if you include the optional RF-scan feature—is unique and utterly fascinating. As a result, it not only has unusual capabilities, but is, perhaps, the most enjoyable to use of any tuner we've ever tested. The scope contributes only indirectly to performance, however; and on the basis of reception quality alone we feel that these two models represent performance seldom approached and never significantly bettered in FM equipment.

I have a Sony TC-165 cassette deck that I now use with the Dolby circuitry in a Marantz 4270 receiver. What brand of chromium dioxide tape would be best suited to this combination? I have been using Ampex, Memorex, and Advent, but in making the Dolby adjustments for some of the Ampex cassettes the two sides of the cassette seem to require different settings. Is this possible?—Larry Bronfman, Neshanic, N.J.

Most brands of chromium dioxide (including the three you mention) are so similar electromagnetically that they can be considered interchangeable in this respect. We can think of one exception: BASF, which seems to have less sensitivity than average and therefore may require that the Dolby controls be re-adjusted for good tracking. But the mechanical construction of the cassette can alter performance too. For example, if the pressure pad is slightly askew, it can produce better tape-to-head contact (and therefore higher output) on one side of the tape than the other. Something of this sort may be the explanation of your problem with some Ampex samples.

The turntables article in the April issue states that the Rabco ST-4 has "simplified the means by which the arm is moved across the record [vis-à-vis the servo drive system in the SL-8], but only by adding complications elsewhere in the design." I am a satisfied owner of a Rabco ST-4 and have been using it for approximately four years with great pleasure. Have I been living in a fool's paradise?—Edward J. Sack, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Obviously not, if it has given you that much pleasure for four years—and we were pleased with it when we tested it (for the April 1971

issue). The design does require more bearings, more motion, and more positive drive (to turn the shaft on which the arm rides) than a conventional arm, and it has not been universally received with as much enthusiasm as you (and we) felt for it.

Since that article appeared, Harman-Kardon has corrected some information it gave us about both the old and the new Rabco models. It has discontinued the SL-8E servo arm (not the ST-4 turntable/arm ensemble, as stated in the article), and it calls the new ensemble the ST-7 (not the SL-7). At this writing we have seen only prototypes of the ST-7; but however exciting the new model may be when it appears, we'd urge you not to think of replacing a model you're delighted with just because somebody else isn't.

I'm trying to choose between the Teac 2300S (open-reel deck) and the Dokorder 7100. Is the Teac worth the extra \$100?—Albert Pesot, Brooklyn, N.Y.

We haven't tested the 7100 specifically and therefore can give you only a generalized answer. In examining construction of the two lines we have found Teac decks to be exceptionally sturdy, the Dokorders only average in this respect. Dokorder, on the other hand, packs a surprising number of features and capabilities into its equipment of any given price class. Presumably you don't need any "extras" that the Dokorder may offer or you wouldn't be considering the Teac. In that case, and assuming that you plan to give your deck heavy use and want long-term reliability, the construction of the Teac probably will be worth the extra \$100 to you.

The DBX 117 Dynamic Range Enhancer [HF test reports, November 1972] is, I gather, a two-way noise-reduction system just like Dolby B. But can it also be used with programs that were not originally encoded with the DBX system? If not, what is the difference between using the DBX in playback alone and not using it at all, in terms of the sound coming from the speakers?—Pongsak Srisa-an, Stillwater, Okla.

The DBX 117 is similar to Dolby B in that it can be used to compress the program during recording and then re-expand it during playback to reduce the audibility of noise picked up in the process. But it is not "just like" Dolby B, since it operates over the full frequency range, while Dolby B action is specifically tailored to the suppression of the noise in the high frequencies where it is most troublesome in tape recordings.

The DBX expander can be used in playback alone to increase the music's dynamic range. That is, it increases the difference in level between the loudest passages and the quiet ones, including any noise that is au-

dible in the quiet passages. Set for a moderate amount of expansion, it will give the music somewhat more impact and make the recording seem somewhat more noise-free; set for extreme expansion, it will make dynamic contrasts seem exaggerated and may produce some audible "pumping"—particularly if the noise levels in the recording are very high.

Could you please tell me whether my Dual 1218 turntable equipped with a Grado FTR + 1 cartridge and a Marantz CD-400 demodulator is capable of playing CD-4 Quadradiscs? I've been told that the Dual's capacitance is too high. Listening tests certainly reveal a lack of separation with the present setup.—Don Mullis, address unspecified.

We doubt that your problem is due to lead capacitance. We've used the older Duals (that is, the pre-"Q" models, whose leads were not designed for particularly low capacitance) successfully with regular CD-4 pickups, and Grado claims that its cartridge is uniquely insensitive to this factor—and hence that it will provide good carrier recovery even with leads of relatively high capacitance. We have tested neither the cartridge nor the demodulator, however. If the separation sounds poor to you, it could be because of one or the other, or because you're expecting more obvious separation than is "built into" the recordings you're using in your listening tests. And since you do not complain of distortion (another result of poor carrier recovery), we suspect the recordings rather than the equipment.

Is it always best to set the vertical tracking force of a tone arm to the lowest value possible? The Miracord 45 allows adjustment to as low as ½ gram. Will this result in good tracking?—Walter Laning, Garden Grove, Calif.

To reiterate the oft-repeated rule: You should never set the tracking force lower than the minimum recommended by the pickup manufacturer. If, for example, the pickup spec calls for a tracking force of 1 to 2 grams, you might start at 2 grams and gradually reduce the setting until you encounter mistracking or audible distortion attributable to poor stylus-to-groove contact, then raise it slightly (perhaps by ¼ gram). If you cannot get good tracking within the pickup's specified range, you have a problem: The pickup is a poor choice for the arm, you are trying to track excessively warped records, etc. A setting that is a little too low is worse (both sonically and in terms of record damage) than one that is a little too high. An extremely low minimum setting on the arm simply allows for a wider range of cartridges than an arm whose settings start at, say, 1 gram; but just because the low settings are there is no reason you should attempt to use them.

I recently purchased a Sony TC-161SD Dolby cassette deck, with which I am very pleased. Could I use the Dolby circuitry, with some minor surgery, to receive Dolby FM broadcasts on my Dynaco FM-5?—Neil K. Disney, Annapolis, Md.

We wouldn't advise it. The surgery will void your warranty and might compromise performance of the deck. And if a repairman should later try to service your altered deck following an unaltered service manual, it could be disastrous.

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Scuttlebutt in the Video Pressroom

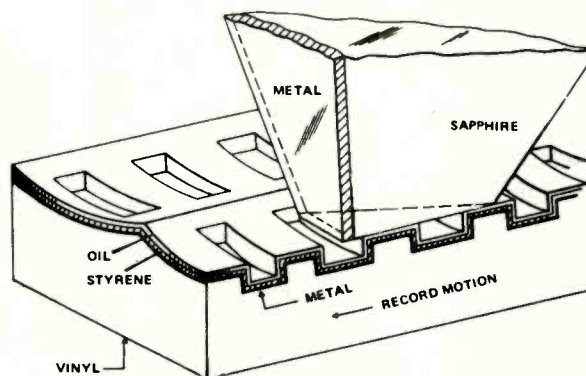
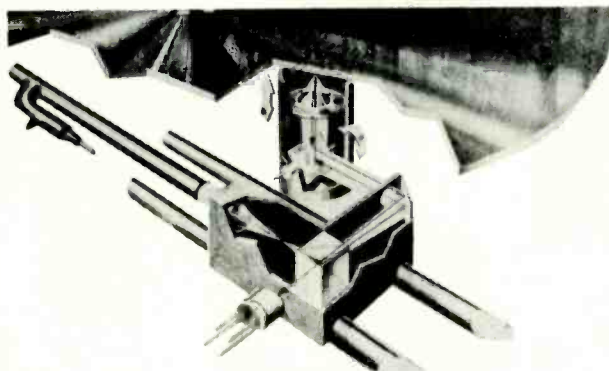
Following the almost-simultaneous demonstrations of the Philips/MCA and RCA video disc systems (see "News and Views," June), there naturally has been a good deal of off-the-cuff comparison of the two. Our man on the scene attests that both worked satisfactorily but adds that the Philips/MCA demonstrations were more impressive simply because of the quality of the program material available for the video/cinema software business.

One observer with years of experience in the television industry tells us that in his opinion RCA seems to have a significant edge in terms of player manufacture and wonders whether the laser scanner that the Philips people talk of so confidently may not prove far more difficult to pro-

duce than the RCA capacitance transducer—particularly if Philips and MCA plan to stick to the announced selling prices. But he and others have some doubts about how RCA may handle its product, however viable. One slyly suggested it might be called DynaVision instead of SelectaVision—a reference to the disappointments to which RCA's marketing subjected the basically good Dynagroove concept of disc cutting.

Recently, Philips/MCA has announced that Magnavox will market its optical scan Videodisc system. Test marketing will begin in 1976; the formal on-sale date is tentatively set for 1977.

Two years away. In that time anything can happen.



Philips Videodisc system (left) requires relatively complex player that uses both a laser (far left in drawing) for photoelectric "reading" of coded "pits" in underside of disc and a servo system to keep laser beam correctly aligned to pits. Alignment in RCA SelectaVision disc (right) is achieved by shallow groove. It has transverse pits; capacitance between metallic element of pickup and that embedded in disc varies with distance between them to create output signal representing pits as electrical pulses.

New Cassette Tapes in Town...

One is called Super Avilyn and is made by TDK, the other is called UDXL and is made by Maxell, and both really are different. Each is a cobalt formulation. TDK says that Super Avilyn contains an "entirely new magnetic particle" using ferric oxide plus cobalt (although not in the familiar "doping" manner) plus other "proprietary elements." Maxell claims to have developed "a unified crystal growth with ferric oxide inside and cobalt ferrite outside" so that "the dispersion of the two substances becomes absolutely complete and uniform." Each contends that its tape surpasses

chromium dioxide in performance and head-wear characteristics.

Super Avilyn requires the bias and equalization characteristics of chromium dioxide and comes in cassettes having the CrO₂ key well for automatic switching in decks so equipped. To this extent, then, it appears to be interchangeable with chromium dioxide. There is, however, one difference that shows up among the highly encouraging data being given out by TDK: sensitivity 1½ dB or more above that of popular CrO₂ brands. That is, a signal recorded at the same level on both will reproduce more than 1½ dB higher from Super Avilyn than from the chromes. This suggests that Dolby tracking of the chrome setting

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At Bang & Olufsen, we understand that many listeners seeking high specification audio equipment are comforted by the sight of an array of knobs and levers, topped off by an impressive counterbalance.

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\$300 price. As well as the base and dust cover.

A simple activator-disc controls most of the turntable operations. It starts the platter at the correct speed, lowers, cues, suspends and returns the tonearm.

Design that grows out of such logic has placed eight Bang & Olufsen products in the permanent design collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

We've made it all quite simple for this simple reason: since you can't hear knobs and levers, why should you see them? (Or bother with them?) What you will hear is the uncompromising reproduction of sound. Swiftly and effortlessly.

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Product shown is available in carefully matched, real wood veneers affixed to particle board.

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HF-1

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Occupation

should be readjusted for optimum use with Super Avilyn.

UDXL needs no special biasing, and Maxell's figures—which are not directly comparable with TDK's—show that its new tape, at 1,000 Hz, has 5 dB greater dynamic range than "conventional high quality cassettes," with an "improved output level of 4 dB at low and mid frequencies and 6 dB at high frequencies." As a bonus, the leader at each end is five seconds of head-cleaning tape. And Maxell is making a big point of the fine tolerances and precision of UDXL's new cassette shell itself.

The C-60 size of Super Avilyn sells for \$3.59, of UDXL for \$4.89. UDXL's C-90 costs \$6.89; Super Avilyn's is still to come.

... And More on the Way

Fuji tapes are expected on the American market this summer. These tapes, which are made by the same company as Fuji films, are considered a quality line in Japan but have been available here only in limited quantities and marketed under other brand names.

And yet another new tape may be in the offing from TDK. Following its announcement of Super Avilyn (above), it circulated samples of an experimental formulation that—like Maxell's UDXL (also above), to which it seems comparable—is supposed to outperform conventional ferrics without the need for special biasing and/or equal-

ization. No type designation (other than a factory lot number) has been assigned to it yet though a TDK spokesman referred to it (unofficially) as a "super-ED."

High Fidelity Goes to the Movies

Sansui's QS quadriphonic matrixing has shown up in an unexpected place: the movie theater. More unexpected, perhaps, is that it's part of a five-channel sound system.

The soundtrack of the screen version of *Tommy* (the rock opera written by Peter Townshend and The Who), released by Columbia Pictures, consists of three tracks, two of which are QS-matrixed so that they can be reproduced like home quadriphonics; the third track feeds speakers behind the screen for the fifth channel. To further enhance the sonics, the recording uses DBX noise reduction—partly to free the sound from the heavy compression that traditionally has been considered necessary in cinemaphonics and has stifled the impact of many a movie score.

Speaking of noise reduction, the first "Dolby movie" we know of is *Steppenwolf*, starring Max von Sydow and Dominique Sanda, which was released last December.

Meanwhile the *Earthquake* soundtrack, which is reproduced via loudspeakers built by Cerwin-Vega and BGW amplifiers, has won an Oscar. High fidelity seems to be going Hollywood—or vice versa.

Equipment in the News



ESS introduces high-efficiency Tempest series

There is a fresh group of Heil Air Motion Transformer loudspeakers available from ESS through its new Tempest Division. Even the most ambitious, the Tempest Lab Series 1, is said to require little more than 10 watts (per channel) in the driving amplifier, though it is rated to handle 60 watts (continuous). That model is rated for a response of 30 Hz to 25 kHz and has a 12-inch woofer. Three other systems are somewhat smaller, but all use the new "power ring" tweeter and are rated for 120 degrees of horizontal dispersion, 40 degrees vertical. Prices start at \$99.

Audio signal processing center from Bozak

The latest in Bozak's recently introduced line of home electronics is the Model 919, an unusually flexible stereo preamp-control unit that includes mike input with pan pot, mixing of up to three inputs (phono 1, mike, and one other: phono 2, tuner, aux, or either of two tape inputs), three-range (base, mid, treble) tone equalizers for each channel, and a blend control that can be varied continuously from mono to augmented stereo. In addition, a "cue selector" allows previewing one input via the monitor system while another is selected—and, for example, being recorded via the tape outputs. The Model 919 costs \$797; the walnut case is optional.



CIRCLE 150 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Are we really number three?



A recent survey by the leading audio magazine found Sherwood in third place among all stereo receivers, in terms of the "brand bought most last year."

This report both pleased and confused us. Since we barely showed up in previous annual tallies, the evidence of sudden fame and popularity was certainly welcome.

Unfortunately, it didn't make any statistical sense. After all, we're the people who make this gear, and we ought to know how many units we put together in a year's time, and we promise you that the total doesn't even approach what the giants are doing.

Maybe there was another message in that score.

So we reviewed the survey a little more closely, and

remembered that it was a *subscriber* survey, meaning that it automatically did not include the large general mass market for high fidelity equipment, where most of the big volume is.

In other words, the survey was biased, in favor of the sophisticated, expert, deeply involved audio enthusiast: the man who takes his listening seriously.

Among *this* specialized group, Sherwood registered a third place position.

Which would make sense statistically, since the numbers are smaller.

And on a performance-per-dollar basis as well, since the standards are higher.

S7210

Minimum RMS power output @ 0.8% maximum total harmonic

distortion, both channels driven: 26 watts per channel @ 8 ohms, 20-20,000 Hz.

Solid-state Ceramic FM IF filters. 1.9 μ V FM Sensitivity.

Hermetically sealed microcircuits, FET circuitry.

Front panel switching of 4-channel decoder [doubles as second tape monitor].

Price: \$299.95



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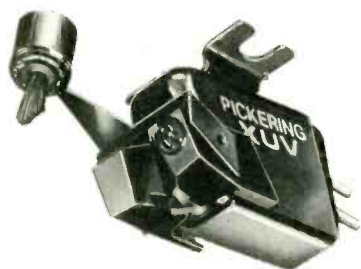
SHERWOOD

The word is getting around.

New Thorens features electronic shutoff

The latest Thorens turntable, the TD-145C, incorporates an electronic sensing system that responds to rapid arm motion at the leadout groove, or when the arm is accidentally knocked out of position, by raising the arm and shutting off the unit's slow-speed hysteresis drive motor. The two-speed (33 and 45) belt-drive system has dual shock suspension; the arm is equipped with a magnetic antiskating device. The price is \$299.95 from Elpa Marketing, which imports all Thorens products.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Pickering's "second-generation" CD-4 pickup

The XUV/4500Q phono cartridge from Pickering, unlike many models capable of playing CD-4 Quadradiscs, will track in the vicinity of 1 gram VTF, according to the company. Pickering adds that experience with its first round of CD-4 pickups has led to new design approaches and hence to an entirely new design. The Quadrahedral stylus-tip configuration has been retained. The pickup retails for \$139.95.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Medium-priced receiver added by Harman-Kardon

The 430 is the newest stereo FM/AM receiver in the Harman-Kardon line. Its amplifier section is rated at 25 watts per channel at 0.5% THD with a power bandwidth of 10 Hz to 40 kHz and response from 4 Hz to 140 kHz and excellent square-wave response. FM sensitivity is rated at 1.9 microvolts and capture ratio at 1.7 dB. Ultimate signal-to-noise ratio is said to be 77 dB, and tuner THD 0.7% even in stereo. The 430 is priced at \$319.95.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



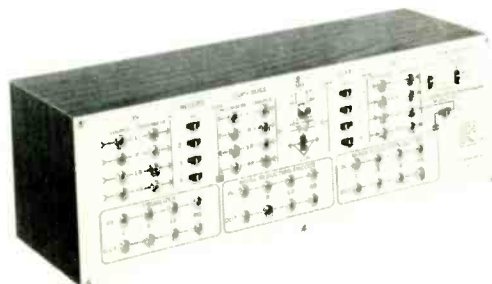
Advent makes a mono radio—FM, of course

The newest model from Advent is the 400, an extremely compact two-piece FM radio designed specifically for optimum mono performance. By taking this approach, Advent claims, it has been able to achieve performance beyond that to be expected in circuitry that makes compromises between the demands of stereo and those of mono. The sleek ensemble, housed in matching white molded cases, retails for \$125.

AKG designs a "bio-acoustic" headset

In introducing the AKG K-140 headphones, Philips Audio Products points to the joining of the lightweight self-adjusting headband and the specially designed transducers as features that make the model uniquely adapted to the anatomic and physiological needs of its users. Bass response, for example, is said to be unaffected by the shape of the wearer's ears. The new model is priced at \$34.50.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Russound announces its superswitcher

We knew this one was on the way many months ago, but now that it's finally here we're still startled by it. Russound calls it the QT-1 Master Audio Control Center and Patchbay: a quadriphonic signal-switching box with provision for equalizer, noise reduction (encode/decode or single-ended), matrix decoder, or CD-4 demodulator—any sort of signal-processing device. It can be switched for mixing, dubbing, playing, recording—whatever. It costs \$249.95.

CIRCLE 151 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,

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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.

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M	67	D	68	H	69	J	70	N	71	ZZ	72	R	73		P	74	Q	75	C	76	S	77	I	78		V	79	YY	80	
A	81	M	82	D	83		J	84	H	85	S	86	K	87		T	88	Z	89	F	90	G	91	U	92	V	93			
I	94	Q	95		X	96	D	97	N	98	F	99		P	100	I	101	B	102		T	103	ZZ	104		V	105			
S	106	C	107	E	108		O	109	A	110	B	111		D	112	H	113	J	114		R	115	Q	116	P	117				
U	118	F	119	E	120	G	121	S	122		O	123	J	124	K	125	Z	126	I	127	H	128	E	129		D	130	B	131	
L	132		V	133	G	134	D	135		E	136	C	137	YY	138		H	139	T	140	W	141	F	142	G	143				
Q	144	I	145	D	146		S	147	J	148	ZZ	149	P	150	R	151		N	152	E	153	S	154		H	155	R	156		
V	157	G	158	S	159	D	160	Y	161		E	162	O	163	Z	164	F	165	J	168		M	167	E	168	G	169	I	170	
		Y	171	G	172	H	173	E	174	L	175	P	176	N	177		T	178	M	179	S	180	E	181	U	182		H	183	
G	184		V	185	F	186	W	187	S	188	N	189		H	190	J	191	L	192		S	193	Q	194		G	195			
E	196	X	197	Z	198		V	199	I	200	E	201	L	202	H	203	B	204	S	205	D	206	G	207	M	208				

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. 2 will appear in next month's issue of HIGH FIDELITY.

INPUT

- A. American actor (b. 1892); costarred with his wife in many plays
- B. See Word C. (2 wds.)
- C. With Word B., Cole Porter song written to fit the limited voice range of Fred Astaire
- D. A N.Y. Times music critic (full name)
- E. Italian composer (1879-1936); *The Birds* (full name)
- F. Drowsy
- G. American composer and music critic (b. 1896) (full name)
- H. Israeli-American violinist (full name)
- I. A hyper-resonant enclosure (2 wds.)
- J. Jazz style (2 wds.)
- K. Piece of ebony or ivory on the bow of a stringed instrument
- L. "The Wizard of Menlo Park"
- M. German scholar (1848-1936); author of a two-volume work on the psychology of music

OUTPUT

- 16 81 110 65
- 45 131 111 204 10 102
- 107 55 76 137 23
- 9 68 160 112 135 206 83 146
- 97 32 130 43
- 30 174 136 66 168 3 120 153
- 196 52 129 18 181 108 162
- 201
- 90 24 165 99 119 186 142
- 158 58 172 121 207 134 195 35
- 184 11 143 169 91
- 173 183 69 85 53 139 155 33
- 128 113 190 17 203
- 145 60 44 127 78 26 101 170
- 94 12 200
- 166 124 84 148 34 114 191 70
- 8 59
- 125 7 87
- E D I Z O N
- 202 132 175 63 36 192
- 49 82 179 67 208 167

INPUT

- N. American oboist and composer (b. 1914); *Variations on a Cowboy Tune*
- O. Dramatic work for voices and orchestra
- P. Belgian organist and composer (1823-81); author of *L'Ecole d'orgue*
- Q. Hymn of praise
- R. Well-constructed stringed instrument (slang)
- S. Bass singer in Angel's *Così fan tutte* (full name)
- T. Pertaining to verse with a short-long rhythm
- U. Familiar name of Haydn's Symphony No. 101
- V. Of a movement or passage, with feeling (It.)
- W. Swedish soprano (1820-87)
- X. A cesspool
- Y. After *The*, a novel by William Faulkner
- Z. Irish poet (1865-1939); his poems were set to music by Barber, Elgar, Ireland, etc.
- YY. Stringed instrument whose frame consists of a sound box, two arms, and a yoke
- ZZ. One of Chopin's Op. 25

OUTPUT

- 189 40 6 98 152 177 27 71
- 123 163 13 54 21 31 109
- 150 64 100 74 117 176 5
- 75 194 25 116 95 144
- 73 115 156 15 151
- 122 159 205 154 62 28 51 106
- 180 147 86 2 188 193 48
- 77
- 140 42 178 103 1 88
- 50 22 92 182 118
- 133 79 199 157 14 93 185 56
- 105 37
- 61 187 141 38
- 96 197 41 19
- 161 39 171 57
- 164 198 89 4 126
- 80 46 29 138
- 20 72 149 47 104

Solution to last month's HiFi-Croctic appears on page 4.

Today, underdog. Tomorrow, topdog.

We make receivers, tape recorders and speakers.

We're good at it.

Because we've been putting most of our energy into our products. Not our advertising.

After all, if our products weren't any good then you wouldn't want them.

No matter how big our name was.

But the fact remains someone can make the best components in the world

and still not sell many of them because not enough people know about them.

That doesn't mean we're going to tell you our components are the best in the world. No one can say that.

What we're saying is this:

We're going to start telling you more about them. But there's going to be no false promises, no empty claims.

We're going to tell you exactly what we make. And how to get the most out of it.

We're going to prove that a sale doesn't end when you walk out of the store.

We're going to do some things to shake up this business. And turn a few heads.

We have some big names to compete with.

You know who they are.

So from now on the underdog is going to look more and more like the topdog.

Because that's exactly what we intend to be.

If you're going to get big, you gotta be good.

We're good.



AKAI

An open and shut case for owning this incredible new \$125 cartridge.

Designed for only the most sophisticated stereo and CD-4 equipment.



U.S. PAT. NO. 3294405

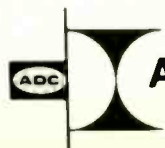
Our new Super XLM MK II is the finest cartridge you can own. It was engineered solely for the true audiophile and the serious music listener who own the very finest components.

It embodies principles found in no other cartridges, as evidenced by our U.S. Patent. It features a unique "induced magnet" whereby the magnet is fixed and the magnetism is induced into a tiny hollow soft-iron collar. This collar in turn moves between the pole pieces thereby allowing for a major reduction in the mass of the moving system. This LOW MASS permits the Shibata type stylus to trace the most intricate modulations of stereo and CD-4

record grooves with a feather-light tracking force—as low as $\frac{3}{4}$ of a gram.

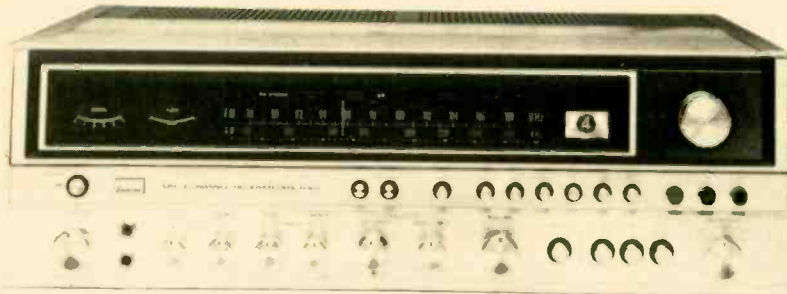
This results in super-linear pick up especially at the higher frequencies of the audible spectrum, which other cartridges either distort or fail to pick up at all. This low tracking force also assures minimal erosion and a longer playing life for the records. This family of LOW MASS Cartridges is also offered with elliptical diamond stylus for stereo play exclusively—the XLM MK II (\$100) and VLM MK II (\$75).

Audition the ADC MK II cartridges at your hi-fi dealer and hear the incredible improvement. For specifications, write ADC.



AUDIO DYNAMICS CORPORATION

A BSR Company • New Milford, Conn. 06776



Sansui's Vario-Matrix Receiver: the QRX-7001

The Equipment: Sansui Model QRX-7001, a four-channel stereo FM/AM receiver, including QS and SQ matrix decoding and CD-4 demodulation, in metal case with wood top. Dimensions: 21¼ by 6¾ inches (front panel); 15¾ inches deep plus allowance for controls and connections. Price: \$879. Warranty: two years for parts, one year for labor (exterior styling elements excepted), shipping not included. Manufacturer: Sansui Electric Co., Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Sansui Electronics Corp., 55-11 Queens Blvd., Woodside, N.Y. 11377.

Comment: We've been waiting for this one for quite some time. It includes Sansui's Vario-Matrix circuitry, which is similar in intent (though not in operation) to "logic" in matrix decoders. The logic circuits lean heavily on what is known as "gain riding"—electronics that automatically adjust levels in the four channels from moment to moment to achieve a psychoacoustic effect of increased separation; Vario-Matrix varies the blend coefficients of the matrix circuitry instead, also for the purpose of giving an impression of greater separation in the perceived sound of complex quadraphonic placements. The present Vario-Matrix system evidently is the result of some refinement by Sansui and its semiconductor suppliers. Interim versions have been used in demonstrations for many months and appear to have been built without benefit of the full integrated-circuit complement or the precise circuitry incorporated in the QRX-7001.

It's not just a matrix decoder unit, of course, but an exceptionally versatile receiver. The FM scale (with Sansui's usual equidistant spacing between channels) and that for AM are below a series of lighting indicators, one for stereo FM reception and the remainder for operation mode, including one that lights up on detection of a CD-4 carrier. At the left of the dial are signal-strength and channel-centering meters; to the right are a 2-/4-channel indicator and the tuning knob.

Immediately below the dial are power on/off switch, high and low filter buttons, mode buttons (CD-4/discrete, SQ, QS, surround synthesizer, hall synthesizer, 2-channel front-only, and a back-on switch for stereo use), and three coin-slot rotary controls for adjusting CD-4 performance (carrier level, left separation, right separation).

Across the bottom are the remaining controls. The speaker switch has positions for two sets (separately or together) and off. Stereo headphone jacks are provided for front and back signal pairs. There are separate calibrated bass and treble controls for front and back signal pairs, ganged front and back left/right balance controls, and a

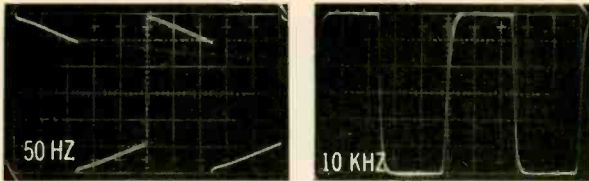
separate front/back balance. The remaining knobs are for volume and selector (phono, FM auto, FM mono with no muting, AM). Between them are pushbuttons for loudness compensation, tape monitors 1 and 2, and aux input selection.

The aux and both tape inputs are quadraphonic sets, as are both tape outputs; the phono input is, of course, stereo only. All are pin jacks. There is a DIN input/output jack as an alternate for the tape-2 front connections. An FM discriminator output (another pin jack) is provided for a quadraphonic broadcast adapter, should a discrete method be approved by the FCC. Antenna connections for 300-ohm FM lead-in or long-wire AM are knurled binding posts that accept bared wires or spade lugs; a screw-and-clamp connector is provided for 75-ohm FM antennas. The speaker terminals are the spring-loaded type intended for bared-wire leads. There are two AC convenience outlets, one of which is switched by the QRX-7001's on/off button.

In the lab the electronics with which the receiver accomplishes all its basic tasks turn out to be better than the specifications in all but a few particulars. The amplifier section, for example, is rated at 35 watts per channel (a good deal of muscle as 4-channel receivers go) at 0.4% THD. It meets these specs with room to spare at all test frequencies and output levels. Intermodulation, too, is well below the 0.4% spec, and response is both more linear and broader in range than the specs suggest.

In the FM section the mono performance exceeds the specs (although capture ratio, at 2.3 dB, proved a little poorer than the claimed 1.5 dB) and the mono quieting curve is exemplary for a product of this type. Stereo performance is not as good. Response and separation both are excellent. But distortion in our test sample, even at 1 kHz, measures a little higher than the under-0.5% specified and presumably contributes to the unimpressive stereo quieting curve, which shows that fairly strong (55-microvolt) signals are needed to receive stereo at all and that noise and distortion remain somewhat higher than

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Square-wave response

ideal (50 dB of quieting constitutes fine performance; our test sample measures about 40 dB) even at high signal strengths.

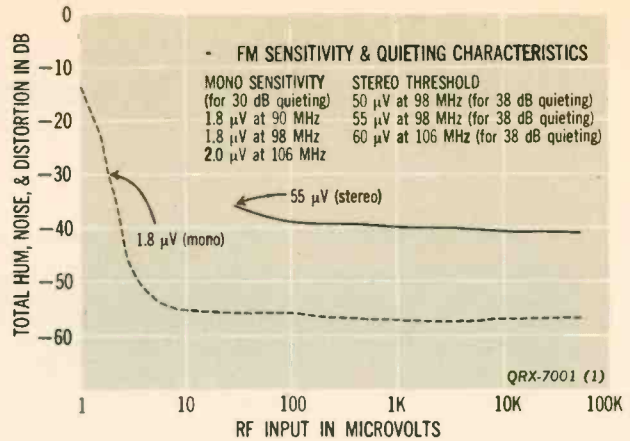
The proof of this particular pudding is in its quadriphonic performance, however. The Vario-Matrix is certainly among the most satisfactory matrix decoders we have worked with. It does enhance apparent separation and closely approximates the unequivocal placements of discrete quadriphonics. But like even the best SQ logic systems, it is not without some audible side effects; specifically, there are times when one can hear the Vario-Matrix "action" working. We have yet to encounter an enhanced matrix playback system about which we have not—in some setup and with some program material—found this to be true. But we have heard none demonstrably superior to Vario-Matrix.

The data for QS performance most vividly suggest what Vario-Matrix will do. Those for SQ are not as good, though in theory (and assuming equally well designed basic matrix circuits) the system should enhance both equally. The limiting factor here appears to be the SQ matrix section itself, rather than the Vario-Matrix enhancement applied to it.

In QS, then, Vario-Matrix achieves approximately Sansui's talked-about design goal of 20 dB of separation among all four channels at 1kHz. In testing with "center" signals (equal signals recorded in adjacent pairs of channels) the separation measures about 20 dB or better front-to-back and back-to-front, in the neighborhood of 10 dB side-to-side. Separation figures in this latter test measure only about half as good in SQ. Noise and distortion measurements also are not quite as good in SQ as in QS.

A comparison of response and separation figures measured through the QRX-7001 show good linearity: better than ± 3 dB in all channels but right front for QS, and all but left back in SQ. Note that phono signals do not reach the matrix section via the CD-4 demodulator in the 7001 (unlike some quadriphonic receivers) and hence suffer no CD-4 band-limiting or level-adjustment attenuation. Mid-range separation, too, confirms the fine 20-dB figure. "Midrange" here (and in both QS and SQ) should be taken as the range between about 400 and 6,000 Hz. Beyond these points the separation dissolves quite rapidly in most of the measurements—as it does in other quadriphonic equipment (including CD-4) we've measured. (As we've pointed out before, it is the midrange in which the primary aural localization clues take place; separation outside this range is far less important for that reason.) The midband separation figures shown under "Additional Data" are, of course, all "worst-case." For example the 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ dB of QS separation shown in the LF channel was measured at 6 kHz with an LB input; other separation figures with this input, and those with the RF input, were approximately twice as high, while those with the RB input all were above 29 dB.

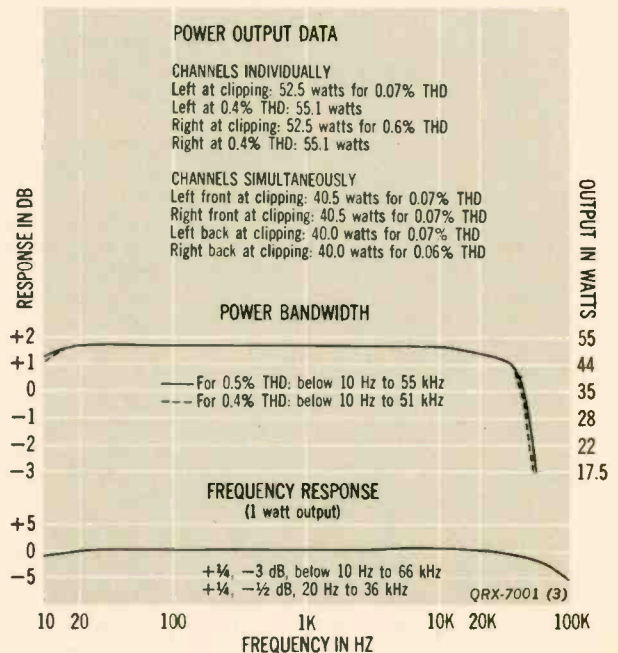
The CD-4 demodulator section of the QRX-7001 is unlike any we've tested before. Using our "standard" JVC pickup and the setup disc supplied with the receiver (and cut for Sansui by JVC) as a reference, we had difficulty achieving optimum settings of the subcarrier and separation adjustments. With one sample we lost subcarrier lock



altogether in trying to adjust separation with Sansui's disc. But with regular Quadradiscs, we have used two samples for satisfactory playback with a variety of cartridges. In one instance we found we were getting adequate quadriphonic reproduction with a regular stereo cartridge, though the demodulator had been preset for a different (CD-4) pickup! And curiously, poor settings of the CD-4 adjustments for the cartridge in use made themselves felt more as a loss of clear separation than as the gross distortion that we have experienced with other demodulators. Hence Quadradisc reproduction with a poorly adjusted setup seems less likely to be aurally offensive with the QRX-7001.

The data shown in the curves and under "Additional Data" were measured by setting up the unit using our own test record (rather than the supplied record) and a certain amount of cut-and-try. We ended up with the carrier adjustment set three calibration points below full clockwise rotation and the separation controls full clockwise. The optimum setting will, of course, vary with the cartridge used; those having a higher output should be easier to set up for that reason.

We had been highly impressed with past Vario-Matrix descriptions and public demonstrations and had hoped to



Sansui QRX-7001 Additional Data

Tuner Section							
Capture ratio	2.3 dB						
Alternate-channel selectivity	70 dB						
S/N ratio	73 dB						
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch				
80 Hz	0.13%	0.69%	0.81%				
1 kHz	0.22%	0.68%	0.70%				
10 kHz	0.18%	1.3%	1.6%				
IM distortion	0.16%						
19-kHz pilot	-65 dB						
38-kHz subcarrier	below -67 dB						
Frequency response							
mono	± 1 dB, 25 Hz to 15 kHz						
L ch	± 1½ dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz						
R ch	+ 1, -1½ dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz						
Channel separation	>40 dB, 130 Hz to 3.8 kHz						
	>30 dB, 36 Hz to 10 kHz						
Amplifier Section							
Damping factor	23						
Input characteristics (for 35 watts output)							
	Sensitivity	S/N ratio					
phono	2.25 mV	67 dB					
aux	95 mV	86 dB					
tape 1 & 2	95 mV	86 dB					
Total harmonic distortion							
35 watts output	<0.17%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz						
17.5 watts output	<0.11%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz						
Intermodulation distortion							
8-ohm load	<0.18% to 50.4 watts						
4-ohm load	<0.20% to 66.5 watts						
16-ohm load	<0.17% to 35.6 watts						
RIAA equalization accuracy	+ 1, -¾ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz						
QS Decoder Section							
Relative response at 1 kHz							
	LF ch	RF ch	LB ch	RB ch			
LF signal	0 dB	-21 dB	-23 dB	-25½ dB			
RF signal	-16½ dB	0 dB	-25½ dB	-28 dB			
LB signal	-19 dB	-39 dB	0 dB	-24½ dB			
RB signal	-45 dB	-21 dB	-23 dB	0 dB			
Frequency response							
LF ch:	± 2½ dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz						
RF ch:	± 3½ dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz						
LB ch:	± 2½ dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz						
RB ch:	± 3 dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz						
Simultaneous-tone "crosstalk"							
LF ch:	-4 dB	RF ch:	-3½ dB				
LB ch:	-3½ dB	RB ch:	-3 dB				
Channel separation, 400 Hz to 6 kHz ¹							
LF ch:	>7½ dB	RF ch:	>6½ dB				
LB ch:	>13½ dB	RB ch:	>14½ dB				
Harmonic distortion							
LF ch:	1.2%	RF ch:	1.2%				
LB ch:	1.5%	RB ch:	1.5%				
S/N ratio (re 1 kHz 0 dB; preamp, decoder, & power amp)²							
LF ch:	59 dB	RF ch:	59 dB				
LB ch:	57 dB	RB ch:	57½ dB				
SQ Decoder Section							
Relative response at 1 kHz							
	LF ch	RF ch	LB ch	RB ch			
LF signal	0 dB	-20½ dB	-6¼ dB	-4 dB			
RF signal	-15 dB	0 dB	-6¼ dB	-8¼ dB			
LB signal	-3 dB	-2½ dB	0 dB	-13¼ dB			
RB signal	-3½ dB	-3½ dB	-16 dB	0 dB			
Frequency response							
LF ch:	± 1½ dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz						
RF ch:	± 1½ dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz						
LB ch:	± 3¼ dB, 70 Hz to 15 kHz						
RB ch:	± 1½ dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz						
Simultaneous-tone "crosstalk"							
LF ch:	-2 dB	RF ch:	-3½ dB				
LB ch:	-3¼ dB	RB ch:	-2½ dB				
Channel separation, 400 Hz to 6 kHz ¹							
LF ch:	>1½ dB	RF ch:	>1¼ dB				
LB ch:	>3¼ dB	RB ch:	>2½ dB				
Harmonic distortion							
LF ch:	1.7%	RF ch:	1.7%				
LB ch:	1.5%	RB ch:	1.5%				
S/N ratio (re 1 kHz 0 dB; preamp, decoder, & power amp)²							
LF ch:	55½ dB	RF ch:	55 dB				
LB ch:	55 dB	RB ch:	55 dB				
CD-4 Demodulator Section							
Relative response at 1 kHz							
	LF ch	RF ch	LB ch	RB ch			
LF signal	0 dB	-34 dB	-21¼ dB	-35½ dB			
RF signal	-24½ dB	0 dB	-21 dB	-31½ dB			
LB signal	-14 dB	-25¼ dB	0 dB	-38 dB			
RB signal	-26½ dB	-18¼ dB	-20 dB	0 dB			
Frequency response							
LF ch:	± 4 dB, 70 Hz to 10 kHz						
RF ch:	± 5½ dB, 70 Hz to 10 kHz						
LB ch:	± 4½ dB, 70 Hz to 10 kHz						
RB ch:	± 7 dB, 70 Hz to 10 kHz						
Simultaneous-tone "crosstalk"							
LF ch:	-10½ dB	RF ch:	-18 dB				
LB ch:	-10 dB	RB ch:	-10 dB				
Channel separation, 400 Hz to 6 kHz ¹							
LF ch:	>3 dB	RF ch:	>10¼ dB				
LB ch:	>5½ dB	RB ch:	>4½ dB				
Harmonic distortion							
LF ch:	2%	RF ch:	2.5%				
LB ch:	2.3%	RB ch:	2.5%				
S/N ratio (re 1 kHz 0 dB; preamp, demodulator, & amp)²							
LF ch:	52 dB	RF ch:	42 dB				
LB ch:	53 dB	RB ch:	43½ dB				

¹Figures shown are "worst-case"; average separation within the specified range is much better. See text for example.

²S/N measurements are unweighted. When hum was filtered out, the two matrix-decoder sections measured about 1 to 2 dB better in all channels; the

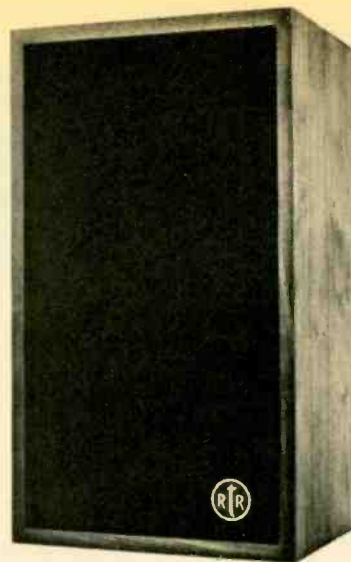
CD-4 demodulator measured considerably better (by 3 to 4 dB in the left channels, 11 dB in both right channels), indicating that hum is a relatively large component of the total noise—though, because of its low frequency, not necessarily of the audible noise—in the demodulator.

find this receiver the best all-around quadriphonic model to date. In working with specific samples we can say unequivocally that the QRX-7001 easily has the finest QS section around, and its simulation section (the hall and surround effects) is probably the most versatile and useful of

any on the market. But our reservations about the CD-4 and SQ sections prevent declaring this model a clear winner. It represents, rather, one important development in the current state of the quadriphonic art.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

A Moderately Priced Bookshelf Speaker from RTR



The Equipment: RTR EXP-12, a full-range speaker system in wood enclosure. Dimensions: 25½ by 14¼ inches (front); 11½ inches deep. Price: \$139. Warranty: three years parts and labor; shipping paid one way. Manufacturer: RTR Industries, Inc., 8116 Deering Ave., Canoga Park, Calif. 91304.

Comment: The RTR EXP-12 is a recent entry in the "middle price" range of air-suspension speaker systems. It uses a 12-inch woofer and a 4-inch tweeter. (RTR also offers an 8-inch version, the EXP-8 at \$89.) The unit is fairly conventional in appearance, but a novel feature is the inclusion of a circuit breaker at the rear as a safety device against possible overload. The rear also contains the connections (red and black colored binding posts) and a continuously variable tweeter level control. The EXP-12 may be positioned horizontally or vertically.

Rated for 8 ohms impedance, the EXP-12's measured nominal impedance (just above the bass rise) is 7 ohms. Above the rating point the impedance increases gradually across the band. Efficiency is moderately low, though not as low as in some air-suspension systems. The EXP-12 needs 3 watts of input to produce the standard output test level of 94 dB (at 1 meter on axis). It can handle steady-state power to 32 watts, for an output of 105 dB, before distorting excessively. The circuit breaker trips short of 100 watts in this test. With pulsed input the speaker handles up to 193 watts (average), to produce an output of 116 dB, before excessive distortion. The data here, in sum, indicates good dynamic range. The manufacturer recommends driving the unit with amplifiers or receivers rated for 20 to 80 watts per channel, and the lab measurements confirm this as an appropriate rating.

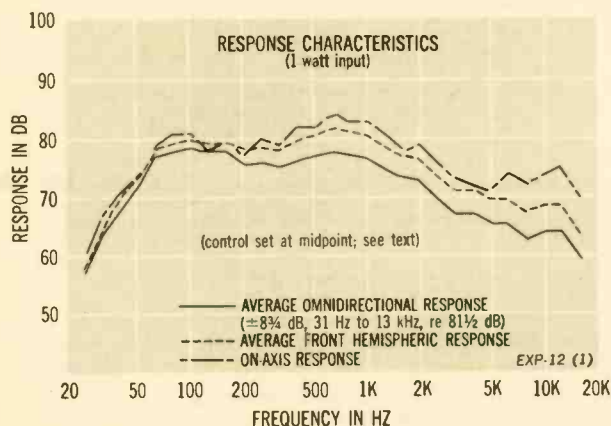
The measured frequency response—for which CBS Labs sets any controls at their midposition when, as here, no specific recommendation is supplied with the product—shows a gradually rolled off high end that can be brought up somewhat (about 5 dB in on-axis measurements) by rotating the rear balance control to its maximum (number 10) position. This control's effect starts with a 1-dB difference (between minimum and maximum rotation) at about 1,000 Hz and increases up the scale, with maximum effect

(8 dB) between 6,000 and 10,000 Hz. There are approximately 5-dB differences from 3 to 5.5 kHz and from 11 to 20 kHz. An instruction sheet furnished with other samples of the speaker, however, recommends leaving this control at or near the maximum (10) position for average listening conditions, and we agree. In this position the EXP-12 "listens" far better than the curves look.

The output generally is well dispersed. At about 4 kHz a moderate amount of directivity becomes evident, but it doesn't increase significantly as you move up the scale. A 10-kHz tone is clearly audible well off axis of the system; so is a 12-kHz tone, but within a narrower angle. Tones above 12 kHz are audible primarily on axis, with an apparent dip to inaudibility beginning at about 14.5 kHz.

At the low end of the response band, doubling begins at about 50 Hz and continues increasingly as frequency is lowered. Deep bass response is, of course, affected by speaker placement. With the unit on a shelf and near a corner, we judged it clean and firm (above average perhaps, for the price class); with floor placement, some listeners found it on the weak side and output below about 40 Hz to be mostly doubling.

The RTR EXP-12 precipitated sharply divergent opinions in our listening panel. Some listeners found the treble entirely adequate; others felt that it could use a little more brightness even in the maximum position. The latter group tended to complain of some "boxiness," while others commented on the speaker's freedom from boxiness. A/B comparisons between the EXP-12 and another (three-way) system at a somewhat higher price seemed especially revealing. One listener in particular found the EXP-12 wanting in highs by comparison but commented that he believed it to be the "more musical" and the one he would



RTR EXP-12 Harmonic Distortion*

Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	1.2	1.6	0.8	0.9
75	1.2	1.5	0.8	0.9
80	1.3	1.6	0.8	0.9
85	1.4	1.6	0.8	0.9
90	1.4	1.7	0.8	0.9
95	1.6	1.8	0.8	0.9
100	1.8	2.1	0.8	0.9
105	1.8	2.1	1.0	0.9

*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.

prefer to "live with." The explanation seems to lie in its freedom from midrange coloration—which, subjectively, makes the sound seem to have "less highs"—and from midrange ("presence") emphasis.

Obviously we can't tell, on the basis of our tests, how

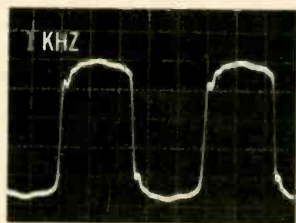
Stanton Makes Its Best Better

The Equipment: Stanton 681EEE, a stereo phono cartridge with elliptical stylus. Price: \$82. Warranty: guaranteed against defects in materials and/or workmanship. Manufacturer: Stanton Magnetics, Inc., Terminal Drive, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

Comment: There can be no doubt that the latest 681, the "Triple E," is the best stereo pickup offered by Stanton and certainly one of the very best we have ever tested. It is the most recent model in Stanton's "calibration standard" series, which for some time has designated the company's top-of-the-line stereo pickups. Each one is tested individually by Stanton, and the performance data is enclosed with the unit. The deluxe packaging includes a screwdriver that is uniquely stylish, plus a small pillbox for holding extra styli (the 681 body accepts conical and 78-rpm styli, also made by Stanton) and mounting hardware. The cartridge comes with Stanton's "long hair" brush that sweeps the record groove ahead of the stylus. The stylus itself is a true elliptical with, in the words of CBS Labs, "excellent geometry" and measures 0.8 by 0.3 mils.

The manufacturer recommends a vertical tracking force range of $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ grams. In the SME arm (used in all CBS Labs pickup tests), the 681EEE was found to perform optimally near the middle of that range, at 1 gram, although it needed only 0.6 gram to negotiate the "torture test" bands of test records STR-120 and STR-100. Measurements were made using the 47,000-ohm load and 275-picoFarad cable capacitance specified by Stanton. The results show unusually linear frequency response across the audio band, very close channel balance, and stereo separation consistently averaging better than 25 dB to beyond 10 kHz.

Output voltage (for a recorded velocity of 5 cm/sec peak) measures 3.3 and 3.2 millivolts on left and right



Square-wave response

good a value individual listeners will deem the EXP-12 to represent: It can vary from excellent to fair with your sonic tastes. We do, emphatically, recommend that you listen to it.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

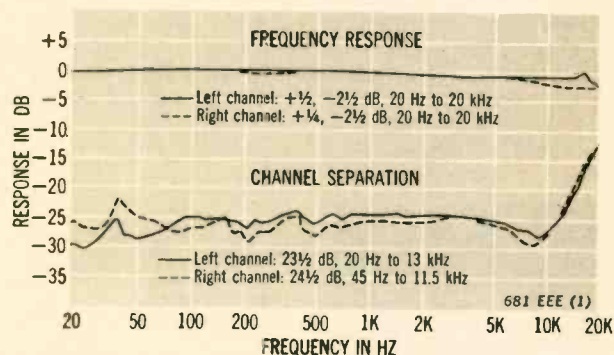


channels, respectively—values that are well balanced and well suited for typical magnetic phono inputs on today's high-quality amplifiers or receivers. Vertical angle measures 18 degrees, and low-frequency resonance in the SME arm is adequately low at 7 Hz. Distortion measurements—both harmonic and IM—are lower than average. In maximum tracking level tests, the 681EEE handles signals of up to +12 dB (RIAA) at 300 Hz and at 1 kHz, and better than -5 dB in the 10-to-20-kHz region, with no signs of mistracking in this difficult high-frequency area.

In direct comparison with its predecessor, the 681EE, the Triple E exhibits definite improvement over an already very good pickup. In the newer model, response is smoother and separation more consistent, while such characteristics as distortion and groove-tracing ability are at least as good.

As may be expected, the cartridge "listens" as beautifully as it measures. The manufacturer states that it is designed for "critical listening," and we agree. It strikes us as a truly neutral pickup that can elicit the full range of sound engraved on a disc, and without faltering at the most demanding of groove modulations. It is the kind of pickup a sound enthusiast will want to try on such sonic blockbusters as the Solti/Chicago Symphony Orchestra recording of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (London CS 6885) or, for a different kind of sonic satisfaction with equal felicity, the demanding piano work in Beethoven sonatas recorded by Claudio Arrau (Philips 6599 308).

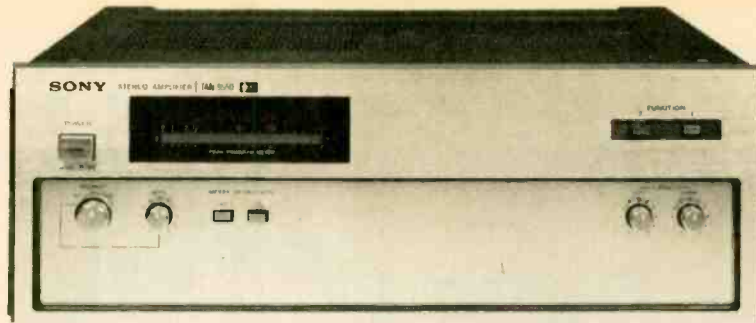
CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Sony's Luxurious Vertical-FET Power Amp—A First

The Equipment: Sony Model TAN-8550, a basic stereo power amplifier in metal case with wood ends. Dimen-

sions: 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ by 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (front); 15 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches deep plus allowance for controls and connections. Price: \$1,000. War-



warranty: two years, parts and labor. Manufacturer: Sony Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Sony Corp. of America, 9 W. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

Comment: FETs, long the darlings of preamp and FM-tuner design, now are making it in power amplifiers thanks to the so-called vertical FET, which can handle far more current than conventional FETs. Sony was not the first (nor the last) company to announce an FET amp for high fidelity purposes, but to our knowledge it was the first to produce one. There are, in fact, two: the present model and the TA-4650 integrated amp.

The basic claim made for FETs and VFETs vs. bipolar transistors is basically similar to that frequently made for tubes vs. transistors (which, until now, has meant strictly bipolar transistors in power circuits): that their broad area of linear response makes possible circuitry of extremely low inherent distortion without massive "corrective" feedback and that their wide dynamic range passes instantaneous peak "overloads" with less trouble.

The distortion in the TAN-8550 is indeed extremely low—so low that it puts a severe premium on the quality of the test equipment used to document it. CBS Labs measured nothing higher than 0.03% THD at the rated 100-watt output and at any frequency! At 1% of rated power the measured distortion (which in many amps is driven up at low power by noise content in the output) is virtually identical to that at full power; at half power midrange distortion is lower still. IM, too, is extremely low. With an 8-ohm load it remains below 0.02% over the entire operating range and actually drops to half this figure at the minimum output tested by the lab (0.125 watt). As usual in solid-state amps, IM is a little higher with a 4-ohm load, a little lower into 16 ohms; but *all* of the IM measurements made by the lab are below 0.1%!

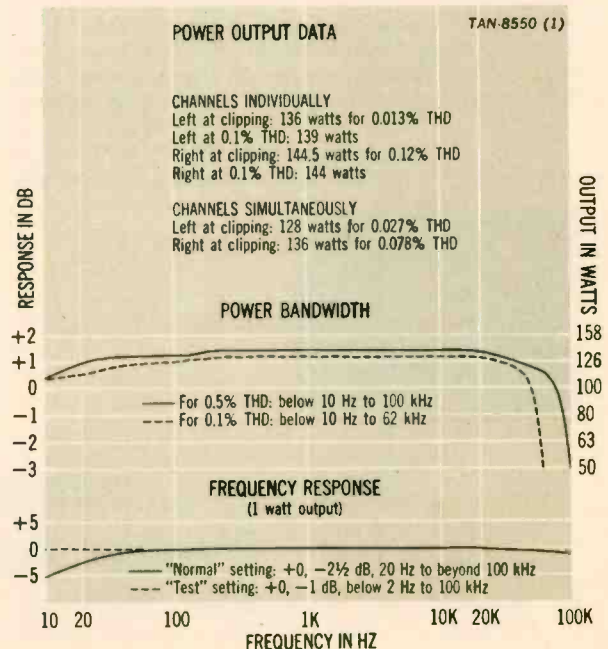
The operating controls are somewhat unconventional. The front panel has an on/off pushbutton with a built-in pilot light. Near it is a peak-reading light-beam metering system similar to that of the TAE-8450 preamp (HF test report, March 1975), but without its multiple-mode (including peak-hold) options. Below, in a recessed section of the

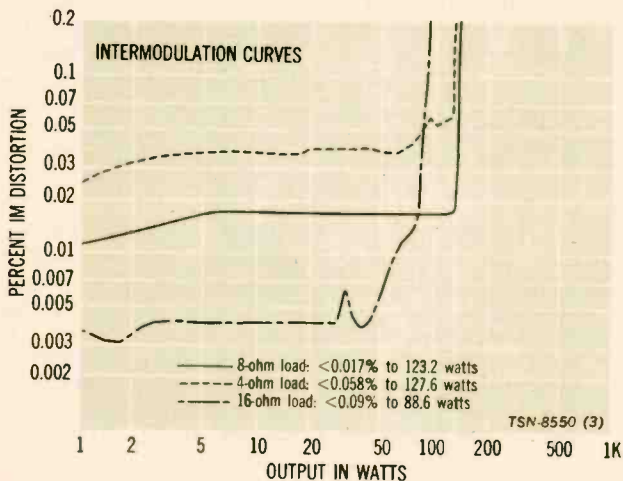
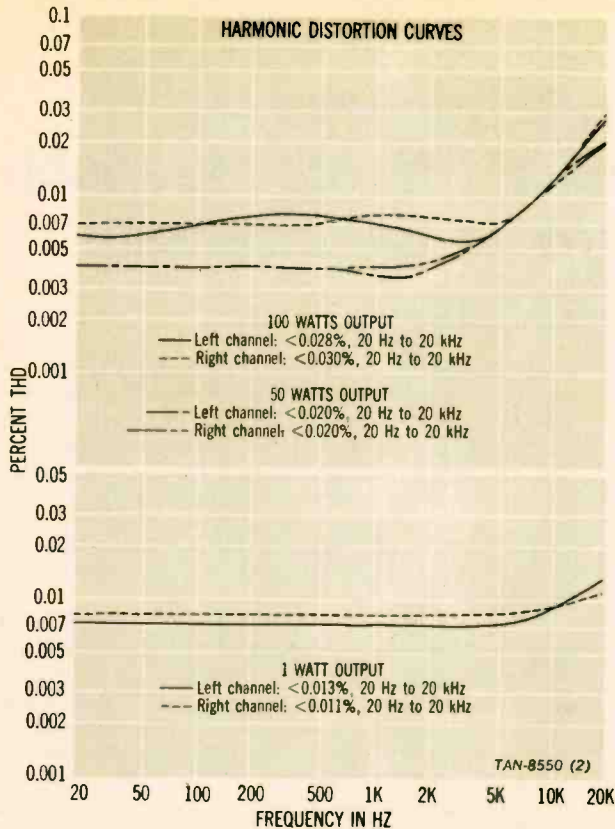
front panel, are a rotary speaker selector (B/off/A/A + B), a level control that is used only for the B output when it is used alone, meter-sensitivity buttons: "X 1," which shows output-level values from 1 to 200 watts, and "X 1/10" for use at lower levels and measuring outputs between 0.1 and 20 watts. Meter calibration is for 8-ohm loads. Since the meter essentially responds to output voltage, rather than to power itself, correction must be made for other load impedances, as explained in the exceptionally good owner's manual. At the right are separate level knobs for each channel and affecting all positions of the front-panel selector. That is, the knob for the B output is in series with these separate knobs; when it is at full rotation the B output still is attenuated by the separate knobs.

Actually, however, there are three sets of speaker terminals (a positive-latching design, suitable for bare-wire leads, that we had not seen before) on the back panel: A, B, and "direct." The direct feed is live at all positions of the front-panel selector switch (even "off"); when that switch is in the B position the direct feed, like that for the B speaker pair, is affected by the B-speaker level control. Thus if you want to disable all speakers (perhaps for headphone listening) you can use the A and B connections alone; if you always have your main speakers on you can connect them to the direct output and run extensions off A and B; if you're such a purist you need two pairs of speakers for either/or use (depending on the type of music), you can connect the less efficient pair to A and use B for the more efficient pair, compensating for the efficiency difference at the B level control. The direct connection, because



Square-wave response. Upper 50-Hz photo made in "normal" mode, lower one in "test."





Sony TAN-8550 Amp Additional Data

Damping factor	157 ("direct")	
	80 ("A" output)	
Input characteristics (for 100 watts output)		
	Sensitivity	S/N ratio
	1.0 V	105 dB

it bypasses the inherent resistance of the speaker-switch contacts, yields a slightly higher damping factor (see "Additional Data") than the other outputs; but, at 80, even their damping factor is ample. (Anything above, say, 40 is considered high.) If, however, you plan to use all connections simultaneously—or even two sets—be warned: The combined impedance should not be below 4 ohms—mean-

The "head amp" that isn't: The Sony TAE-8450 Preamp Revisited

Last March, in reviewing the preamp from the new premium Sony separates line (which also includes the power amplifier reviewed here), we commented on what Sony calls the preamp's "head amplifier" and which for that reason we took to be designed for use with direct feed from a tape deck's playback head. It is not.

It is intended as what is variously called a pre-preamplifier or a microamp—an amplification device for use ahead of the normal phono preamplifier with phono pickups of ultralow output. Unless given the extra boost—which may, alternatively, be supplied by a matching transformer—these signals are insufficient to drive the preamp (and hence the power amplifier) to rated output. They are, in other words, below the sensitivity rating of a normally-designed preamp.

A few companies (notably Ortofon) have offered such pickups over the years, and Sony evidently felt that a complete state-of-the-art preamp should allow—via built-in electronics—for their use. Hence its provision of the extra gain and the switchable input impedance to encompass the needs of virtually any such pickup. To repeat: The feature is not intended for use with tape heads, and our statements based on the assumption that it was are incorrect.

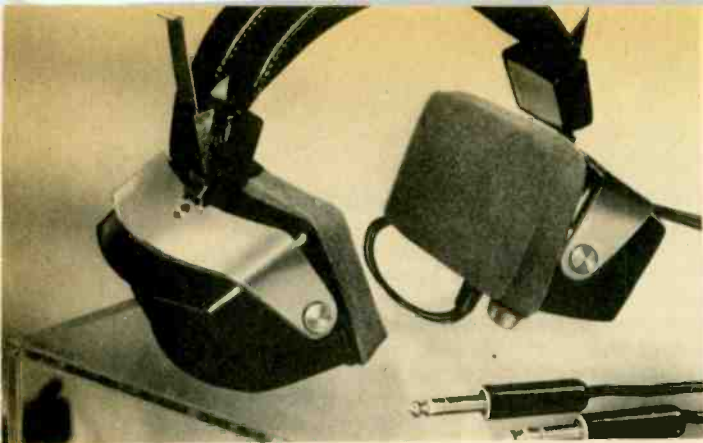
ing that even three 8-ohm pairs are out since that combination results (as the owner's manual explains) in a net of 2.7 ohms.

The back panel has an unswitched convenience outlet. Because of the power levels of which the TAN-8550 is capable and its current drain, Sony says it should be plugged directly into a wall outlet—not into a convenience outlet on another component. But any component powered via the amp must have its own on/off switch, of course.

Also on the back panel are two pairs of inputs ("1" and "2"), each with its own "normal"/"test" switch. Pushbuttons at the upper right of the front panel select between the two inputs. In the normal positions a subsonic filter is inserted into the input circuit; the test position delivers flat subsonic response. At 2 Hz the lab still found the 1-watt response to be dead on the 0 dB mark! Obviously such phenomenal subsonic response can be dangerous to your speakers if your preamp is capable of delivering (for example) RIAA-boosted rumble and warp information in that range; hence the "normal" designation for the filtered position—which the lab used for all measurements not specified as made in the "test" mode.

No two ways about it: This is a superb amplifier. It can be driven into clipping if your speakers and your ears will handle that much power (128 watts was the lowest clipping figure the lab clocked). And a comparison between the 0.1% and 0.5% (THD) bandwidth curves shows that distortion is rising fairly rapidly as the ultimate power of the amplifier is reached—but not quite as fast as it is in many superamps, meaning that the Sony has a hair more overload toleration. In this class of equipment, of course, HIGH FIDELITY's standard 0.5% distortion point represents outright abuse. As a practical matter, using typical ancillary equipment and reasonable (if loud) playback levels, we could find nothing whatever to fault in the sound. It is exemplary. We assume the VFET to contribute materially to this quality; if that assumption is justified by future product developments, we have a lot of good listening to look forward to.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



The Telephonics “Fixler Effect” Headset— And Its Quadramate Simulator

The Equipment: Telephonics Model TEL-101F quadriphonic headphone with 10-foot cord terminated in dual stereo headphone plugs; Model TEL-101A Quadramate four-channel simulation control accessory, with approx. 6½-foot cord terminated in stereo headphone plug. Price: TEL-101F, \$59.95; TEL-101A, \$26.95. Warranty: one year parts and labor, shipping paid one way. Manufacturer: Telephonics (a division of ISC), 770 Park Ave., Huntington, N.Y. 11743.

Comment: We have been very unimpressed with the quadriphonics in most of the four-channel headsets we've tried and, frankly, approached the present model with a good deal of skepticism. Telephonics' statements implying that the TEL-101F would produce a four-channel effect closely comparable to that obtainable from loudspeakers seemed to invite faultfinding. Indeed, we found some faults; but in spite of them we're prepared to report, after testing the headset with a wide variety of quadriphonics both real and simulated, that it is the most satisfactory model we have worked with to date.

The element that seems to set the Telephonics apart is its Fixler Effect design, named after Jon Fixler (who had much to do with early breakthroughs in matrixed quadriphonics) and specifying a combination of driver placement within the earpieces and blending electronics. Each over-size earpiece contains two drivers—one toward the front and one toward the back of the shell. They are literally “front and back speakers on each side” like those of a quadriphonic speaker setup except that the headset's electronics must be relied on as a substitute for the acoustic blending that takes place in loudspeaker listening. A knob at the bottom of the left earpiece controls the degree of blend.

The Quadramate accessory is used where true quadriphonic sources are not available. It has a “perspective” slider that has much the same function as the headset's blend control plus a “focus” slider that controls relative separation in the quasi-quadriphonic output. At the left-hand position the slider reduces side-to-side separation and emphasizes front-to-back effects. As you move it to the right the left-to-right spacing opens up and even becomes somewhat exaggerated (apparently due to a phase difference introduced between channels) at the extreme right position.

The only other control on the Quadramate is a two-channel/four-channel switch. The input is, of course, stereo, and the effect remains similar to that of conventional stereo headphones with the switch in the two-channel position. When the switch is moved, the circuitry introduces front-to-back differentiation in the signals coming from the Quadramate's dual output headphone jacks.

Some of our test listeners confirmed that they heard sound that seemed to come from all around them—as in loudspeaker listening. Some found that they could hear sounds at the back but that front-centered soloists, for ex-

ample, emerged toward the top of the head, rather than at the front. Others had a little difficulty with back-center sounds as well. The consensus was, however, that the imaging was superior to that from any quadriphonic headphone we have tried so far, though not always equal to that with loudspeakers. Certain sounds (in the original Chase record, for example) that are supposed to fly in a circle around the room, while fairly convincing in loudspeaker listening, proved difficult to image as a full circle via the headphones.

We have found before that subjective evaluations of headphones vary over a wider span than, perhaps, those for any other component. Some listeners seem basically to dislike the headphone experience; others prefer headphones to speakers. Our experience with the Fixler Effect phones carries this divergence of individual response into new areas, with the differences between the way various listeners heard the quadriphonic placements both striking and fascinating. Opinions about the Quadramate, too, were divergent. There seemed to be agreement that it is about on a par with other simulation devices, but opinions tended to be colored by how satisfactory each listener found the basic experience of headset quadriphonics. One dissenter says he prefers “to move around in” the four-channel image instead of having it “move with my head”—as it must with headphones. Another listener points out that headphones keep him at “optimum position” wherever he moves—which speakers don't.

The sound of the TEL-101F is good, considering the \$60 price and the double driver complement, but we found it somewhat wanting in deep-bass response. With a strong bass boost (about 10 dB at 50 Hz) at the tone controls we were more satisfied with the sound; the high end, which is quite smooth, open, and extended, needed no touchup. So by contrast to comparably priced (say, about \$35) stereo-only headsets we found the bass a little below average, the treble better than average. Though the TEL-101F is relatively bulky, it is light (just over 1 pound, less cord) and reasonably comfortable. The foam cushion that rests on the ears produces some earmuff effect, but none of our listeners made serious complaint of overheated ears. The four-channel effect is, however, what this model is all about; and in that respect the Fixler Effect proves the biggest winner so far.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Reports in progress:

Nakamichi 550 battery-portable stereo cassette deck

Dual auto-reverse stereo cassette deck

Marantz 2325 Dolby-B stereo receiver

Heath TM-1626 stereo mixer kit

Tone Arm Damping

The Overlooked Feature

Proper damping means better tracking, cleaner reproduction, reduced distortion, and clearer stereo.

by James Brinton

FOR MOST OF US, half the fun of buying a new component is boning up on terms and specifications. Most audiophiles are steeped in "effective mass," "pivot friction," "skating force," and other tone-arm terms but have heard little about arm damping. Yet given a good design to start with—that is, one with low effective mass and low pivot friction—damping could contribute more to playback performance at less additional cost than almost any other tone-arm feature.

A properly damped tone arm and cartridge, compared with an otherwise identical combination, has these advantages: better tracking of warped records, cleaner reproduction of low-frequency information, greater immunity to shock and vibration, reduced high-frequency playback distortion, and—particularly with some of today's very-high-compliance phono cartridges—a dramatically solidified stereo image. In addition, because damping reduces or nearly eliminates the subsonic resonances characteristic of most arm-cartridge combinations, the once irksome task of matching an arm to a cartridge becomes simpler.

Damping appears under several labels. Pivot damping and viscous damping generally mean the same thing. There also is a related approach called "counterweight decoupling," which is far more common than viscous damping.

If damping is known to audio designers, and if it has all these advantages, why haven't manufacturers adopted it before? They have, in fact, and have been using it since the 1950s and perhaps before then, although never very widely.

Mr. Brinton, a specialist in science and technology, has been Boston bureau manager for the journal Electronics and is president of the Boston Audio Society.

Early examples of damped arms would be the 1960-vintage Weathers and ESL models; the Weathers unit (now reincarnated by Win Laboratories) was viscous damped while the ESL used a decoupled counterweight. Today, a list of damped tone arms would include British designs like the Decca, the KMAL, and the Audio and Design arms—all with viscous damping in one form or another. Arms with decoupled counterweights are widely available today on record changers and single-play units (Dual and Lenco, for example, have applied the idea with considerable success), and separate arms with this form of damping include the SME, the Audio-Technica, and the Connoisseur.

This is far from a complete list, since damping isn't one of those characteristics raved about in advertisements. Even if the engineering department realizes its value, the fact that damping is part of a design often gets lost somewhere in the sales and advertising departments. Thus, a feature that might help sell a tone arm can become a well-kept secret.

There is, to the sales-oriented executive or retailer, a rationale for ignoring viscous damping. It can be difficult to manage in shipment; perhaps worse, the inexpert audiophile might mistake the "feel" of an arm with viscous damping for that of one with high mass or friction, with the possible result being a lost sale.

How Arm Damping Works

Because counterweight decoupling is easier to manage in the factory, during shipment, and in the store, it is employed more often than viscous damping. It usually consists of a flexible coupling

between the counterweight and the body of a tone arm—perhaps a sleeve or rod or doughnut of rubber or plastic. This allows the arm and the counterweight to vibrate independently to some extent. In practice, with a simple decoupled counterweight, an arm-cartridge combination will have two lower-amplitude resonant peaks instead of the single higher-amplitude peak that would have appeared without decoupling. So decoupling ameliorates, but does not fully eliminate, the problem of subsonic resonances.

Harder to implement, and less convenient for maker and retailer, viscous damping can do a much more thorough job of solving the resonance problem. In its simplest form, viscous damping, or pivot damping, consists of a drop or two of very thick fluid—heavy petroleum or one of the ubiquitous silicones perhaps—placed in the tone arm's bearings. The fluid serves two purposes: First, it reduces whatever friction there is in the pivot; and second, it drastically reduces the effect of sudden or large movements on the motion of the arm. But the smaller, slower movements necessary for accurate tracking even of warped records are not interfered with. This selectivity is pivot damping's most desirable feature. Shock, vibration, and resonances are damped out quickly; the desirable arm movements actually become smoother and less encumbered by friction.

Thus, viscous damping has the same relationship to the vibrations and movements of your tone arm that shock absorbers do to those of your automobile.

Anything mechanical vibrates. Obviously, if the tone arm vibrates while you are playing a record, the vibration is going to be coupled to the stylus cantilever of the phono cartridge. Think of the stylus tip as analogous to a wheel on an automobile and the semi-elastic cantilever suspension as an automobile spring. Shock can be transmitted both from the road to the auto body and from the body to the wheel via the spring.

Any stylus cantilever motion not due to groove modulations is—or becomes—distortion in the cartridge's output. The cartridge, after all, can't be expected to tell the difference between motion caused by the groove and that caused by the movements of the arm alone. Now while it is just about impossible to keep a mechanical system like an arm and cartridge assembly from vibrating, viscous damping can be used not only to keep the level of the vibration low, but also to make the arm-cartridge system stop vibrating sooner than it ordinarily would have. With today's very-low-friction arms, this is important.

When an arm-cartridge combination is "excited" into vibration by acoustical feedback, a warp, or a shock, it continues to move up and down or from side to side about its pivots at its

resonant frequency—say, anywhere from about 15 Hz down, depending on the cartridge used, the mass of the arm, and other factors. The length of time it will continue bouncing will be inversely related to pivot friction. With current low-friction designs, a single shock can engender movements that might take minutes to die away naturally. Something else is needed, like a shock absorber, to stop the bounce quickly. Viscous damping does the job. Because it does, the cartridge will convert far less of the arm's movement into unwanted electrical output. And that means less distortion.

Some Practical Tests

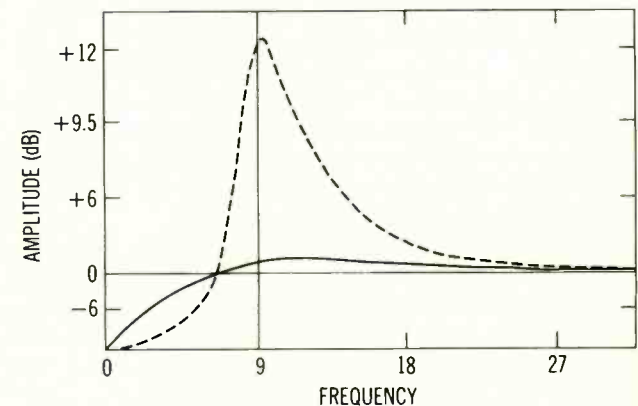
How important is this? After all, you can't hear "sounds" below 20 Hz. True, but you can hear their effects—and enjoy their absence.

Lately the Boston Audio Society, with the guidance and encouragement of Dr. S. L. Phoenix of Cornell University's Department of Mechanical Engineering, has been experimenting with viscous damping. The results have been exciting.

Usually damping was added to existing tone arms, since it is a rare audiophile who has enough know-how to build his own arm. This was a sometimes sticky job (see the box for do-it-yourselfers), but the payoffs often were dramatic.

Some members of the group had experienced difficulties using the ADC XLM cartridge, for example. The cartridge got rave reviews and turned into something of an audio cult symbol. But its users had found that in some arms it could bottom out on warps, mistrack, or otherwise disappoint. With the tone arm damped, however, the XLM sailed unperturbed over warps and traced grooves with less distortion than ever.

Similarly, some members had complained that the Shure V-15 Type III (which also has plenty of admirers so appreciative as to represent something of a cult) produced "a somewhat vague



Theoretical curves compare bass resonance in a damped arm (solid line) with that of same arm minus damping (dashed). Actual values will of course depend on mass and compliance values.

stereo image." Directionality and placement of instruments weren't as sharp as with some other cartridges, they had felt. But when it was mounted in a damped tone arm, the Shure gave what its users now felt was near-pinpoint localization.

There were other experiences with other cartridges. Some experimenters reported cleaner, tighter bass reproduction. Some appeared to suffer less preamplifier overload in critical pickup-input combinations. A few reported no striking difference in performance, but almost all of these

either had outdated tone arms with high mass or friction, or were using low-compliance phono cartridges.

The most demanding audiophiles—those with the most advanced arms and most compliant cartridges—noticed the most improvement. Could it be that the better the record-playing equipment, the greater the need for damping?

There was another side to these admittedly informal tests. Some of the group used good cartridges in marginal arms, added damping, and no-

Do-It-Yourself Tone-Arm Damping

If you are the adventurous sort—and handy—you can duplicate the experiments mentioned in the body of this article. They involve little investment in either time or money and can pay large dividends in improved phono reproduction.

Although several approaches were tried, the easiest to manage is the one described here. Not only is it simple to apply, but it also allows the user to vary the amount of damping and thus approach the optimum amount for his arm and cartridge. It was developed by Robert Graham of the MIT-Lincoln Laboratory.

The parts required are a nylon cable clamp, a nylon nut and bolt, some stiff brass wire, and a small amount of brass sheet stock. Lighter metal could be used and would, in fact, be preferable. Also necessary is a small trough—say, 1 inch in both depth and width and about 2½ inches long—capable of holding about half a cup of STP motor-oil additive.

The figure shows how these elements go together to form a tone-arm "damper." Note that the amount of damping can be varied by pushing the clamp closer to, or farther away from, the arm's pivots. In practice, the distance of the damping paddle from the pivots will be decided by the space between the turntable and the arm's vertical shaft; the paddle must move freely with the arm as it tracks to the inner grooves of a record—it shouldn't touch anything but the STP damping fluid.

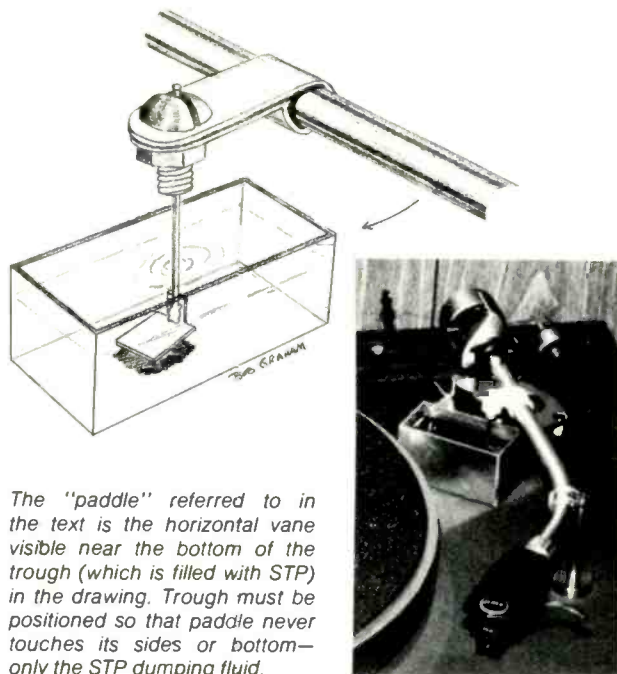
Horizontal damping appears to be a bit less critical than vertical damping, so begin your experiments by epoxying a paddle at right angles to the wire and making it about ½ inch square. Attach the damping assembly to your arm and—carefully—pour the STP in the trough, covering the paddle. Leave room below the lip of the trough so that the fluid won't lap over when you move the arm. (This is the messy part of homemade damping; but if you don't spill, you won't have to clean up.)

Now check for improved tracking of warped discs; with near-optimum damping, no movement of the

stylus cantilever should be visible. The stylus cantilever and the cartridge body should appear to move as a unit. Increase or decrease the paddle area until you achieve this condition. If you have a set of test records, you might go further and optimize the paddle area for best low-frequency tracking or square-wave response.

Chances are that you will slightly over- or under-damp your arm, but your approximation will be close enough. After obtaining the correct amount of horizontal damping, add a vertical paddle and experiment with it until there is as little side-to-side cantilever movement as possible when playing warped or off-center records.

If all this seems a little bit *ad hoc*, bear in mind that it will give good results cheaply. But be warned: The experiment may convert you to an avid arm-damping enthusiast (as, obviously, it did me).—J.B.



The "paddle" referred to in the text is the horizontal vane visible near the bottom of the trough (which is filled with STP) in the drawing. Trough must be positioned so that paddle never touches its sides or bottom—only the STP damping fluid.

ticed improved performance. Does this make damping a cure for so-so tone-arm design? No, but it might indicate that the movement of the past few years toward ever lower masses and friction may have reached a point of diminishing returns: Some resistance to arm motion may be desirable.

But why did things sound different? The group still is trying to answer this to its satisfaction, but there are some pretty fair guesses.

There are no absolutely flat records; arms and cartridges are continually being forced into resonance by nearly invisible warps. Higher-quality arms and cartridges, especially, respond readily to them. And there is no such thing as perfect acoustic isolation for any record player. Again the result is resonant vibration, this time triggered by shock, room vibration, and acoustic feedback.

Just getting these resonance products out of the cartridge's output should have cleaned up the sound, and seemingly did. After all, there was now less subsonic material and consequently less audible intermodulation between the resonances, their harmonics, and the music.

This freedom from subsonics may be especially important to owners of some super-preamps with response reaching almost to DC. Unless they are removed by damping, or filtered out electronically, signals due to arm-cartridge resonances not only could enter the preamp at levels several times as high as midrange musical signals, but also could be boosted by as much as 60 dB by RIAA equalization that (incorrectly) continues its rising bass characteristic into the subsonic region. Some of the better preamps offer a switchable subsonic filter as a preventive for the severe overloading that resonance-rumble interaction can cause in phono preamp stages—even those that have plenty of headroom at higher frequencies.

There are other, less obvious payoffs, some still being explored, such as damping's effect on tracking-force variations. Among the advantages that may emerge is reduced record wear due to the suppression of instantaneous tracking-force extremes.

Like other electromagnetic transducers, a magnetic phono cartridge has a region of best performance—its so-called linear region—within which it accurately transforms the movements of its stylus cantilever into an electronic equivalent of the groove modulations. Tracking forces are specified not only to assure decent groove tracing, but also to place the stylus cantilever in about the center of its linear range of motion (that is, of vertical flexing) with respect to the cartridge body. But tracking force is a static specification, and record playing is a dynamic situation; when a rising warp is encountered the effective tracking force will be increased as the arm is forced upward and/or the cantilever spring flexed toward the cartridge body. As the record surface descends, the effect is

reversed. Thus begins the so-called Pogo-stick effect that, particularly in an undamped arm, can cause continuing variations in instantaneous tracking force and even make the stylus hop out of the groove altogether.

Incorrect tracking force, whether it is too low or too high, momentarily moves the cantilever out of its optimum location. Either way, tracing suffers. There may be repeated, if momentary, losses of contact with either or both groove walls and repeated instants at which tracking force exceeds the bearing strength of the groove walls. And the angular flexing of the cantilever will produce what is aptly known as "warp wow"—a change in relative stylus-groove velocity and hence a waver in the music's pitch. With damping, this sort of abuse seems to be greatly reduced because the stylus more consistently is in good contact with the groove walls and its cantilever less often is deflected outside its optimum range of movement.

One listener felt that, simply because the stylus no longer was being subjected to as much unwanted movement at resonant frequencies, the effect was as if someone had stopped fiddling with his system's volume and balance controls. It was, to him, similar to switching from a turntable with flutter to one without—only the difference was not in pitch, but in space. The feeling of "uncertainty" was gone.

Another reason for apparently cleaner sound may be that, because of improved tracing, there is less of the high-frequency "chatter" usually caused by the stylus rattling about in the groove. Although mostly above 20,000 Hz, this chatter could be indirectly responsible for some audible distortion.

On the basis of these experiments, then, the desirable properties of arm damping seem amply confirmed. But, like most techniques, it can be abused. Too much damping, for example, can make a tone arm respond arthritically to warps and shocks and (though it might make for a nearly nonresonant arm-cartridge combination) reintroduces excessive cantilever flexing and hence some tracking problems. It's a question of finding optimum values.

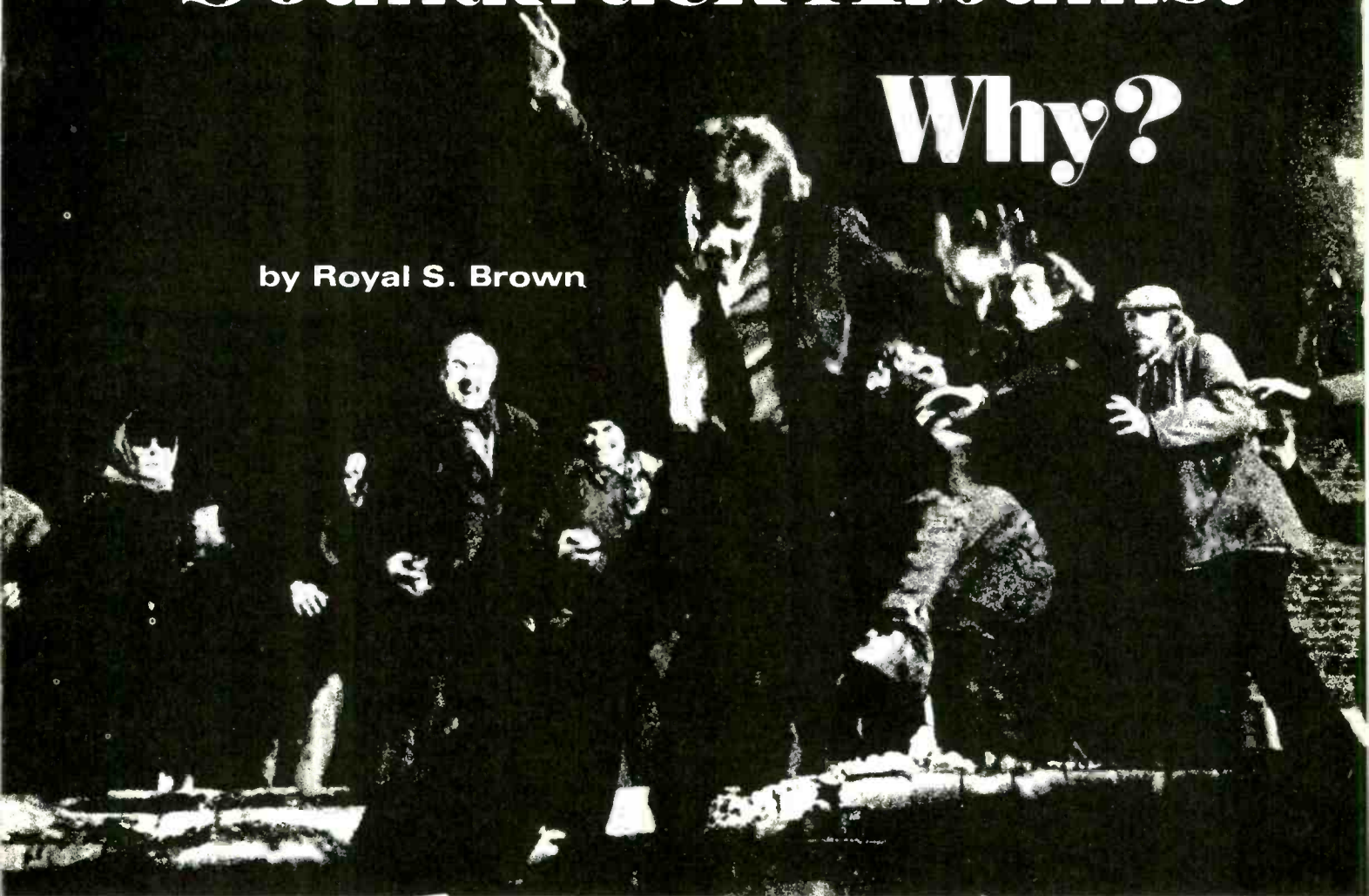
In practice, the buyer of a damped tone arm needn't worry about overdamping. The arm designers have taken the problem into account and generally will have picked an amount of damping that will fill the needs of a wide variety of cartridges. The arm may overdamp or underdamp slightly without causing problems, while still obtaining nearly all of damping's advantages.

If there's no viscous-damped arm available for your particular needs, you can compromise by selecting one of the many good designs using counterweight decoupling. But bear in mind that, while decoupling lessens resonance difficulties, it may not be as complete a solution as viscous damping. ●

Soundtrack Albums:

Why?

by Royal S. Brown



Accompanied by Alan Price's sardonic rock score, Malcolm McDowell makes his escape from the mob in *O Lucky Man*.

"Film music cannot be fully appreciated until it is separated from its movie."

IT STOOD TO REASON that sooner or later the special group of music lovers devoted to the harmonies and melodies coming from behind the movie screen would have their day. After years of putting up with overpriced cutouts, often dismal sound quality, and tapes made from TV showings of films whose music could not be heard in any other form, film music aficionados in the past few years have suddenly had the luxury of important reissues (especially from Angel and United Artists), some of the best recorded sound to be heard anywhere (in the RCA Classic Film Scores series and, less spectacularly, on some London Phase-4 issues), and offerings of previously unavailable but absolutely vintage wine in new bottles (RCA and Phase-4 again, plus United Artists, which is

beginning a series conducted by Leroy Holmes that will offer, among other things, a complete Max Steiner *King Kong*).

In addition to this, the Entr'acte Recording Society and Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Collection* are making available film scores both old and new and are accompanying their efforts with informative quarterly periodicals. I could also mention some rather hair-raising piratings, at least one of which—of Bernard Herrmann's score for Alfred Hitchcock's *Marnie* (on clear red vinyl, yet!)—is taken from the actual studio music track for the film.

*For information, write to Entr'acte Recording Society, P. O. Box 2319, Chicago, Illinois 60690; and Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Collection, P.O. Box 281, Calabasas, California 91302.

But in spite of the generally more enlightened attitude shown toward film music these days, the art has yet to be taken seriously by most critics and by a large portion of the movie industry—Hollywood continues to show unflinching skill for bestowing its Oscars on the most mediocre scores. (This year was no exception; four out of five of the original scores nominated were worthy of the award; Hollywood chose the fifth.*) Why, people ask, would anyone risk apoplexy, as many film music buffs seem to do, over music written for a specific function from which, as many (including some film composers) have suggested, it has no business being separated? And how, the detractors continue, can music that is often composed to split-second timing be expected to represent anything but pure hack work? For many, the old argument that film music should be seen but not heard, so to speak, still holds. One particularly uninformed editorial recently offered as proof of film music's lack of artistic viability the fact that the author had never seen a film review that mentioned the score.

Of course, the film critics' general snubbing of the musical scores is nothing to be proud of. As it happens, most critics don't talk very much about camera work either; but this in no way detracts from the often exceptional artistic quality of much cinematography, and it is just as unfortunate for us not to have stills from some of Laszlo Kovacs' fine efforts as it is not to have a recording of a major movie score by Erich Korngold. The cinema is certainly the most composite of all arts, and if the actors and directors get the lion's share of the credit (which suits the socio-theatrical proclivities of most film critics) this does not mean that the cinematographers and composers should be reduced to the rank of mere artisans working in the orbit of an artistic giant. If passive "enjoyment" of a movie seems to involve not "noticing" the music or the camera work, there is no excuse for those more deeply involved in the medium not to take into full account the separate arts, each viable in its own right, that go into making up the composite work.

Film Music as Art

Although it rarely tries to break any new ground (a criterion of questionable validity in the first place), film music at its best—and often at its less than best—is a perfectly viable art form that often cannot be fully appreciated until it is separated from its movie. Certainly nobody has ever complained about the separation of incidental music from the plays it was written for. But then, most plays were not originally conceived to take musical accompaniment; most incidental music was written by composers much more famous for their

concert compositions; and most incidental music has been arranged into a series of formally organized pieces.

Such is rarely the case for film scores; indeed, when they are arranged into a suite, much of the pure background music most film-music buffs wait in frustration to hear frequently is excluded. For example, as good as it was, the lamented Mercury album (MG 20384) of Herrmann's *Vertigo* included none of the moody, droning passages that accompanied the scenes in which Jimmy Stewart followed Kim Novak in his car. Nor did Mercury record any of the ominous passages that included an organ in the instrumentation. Not one note of Henry Mancini's suspenseful background music for *Charade* is contained in the RCA recording (LSP 2755, out of print), which, apart from the excellent title theme, is filled up with mindless, pop-tune Parisiana schlock.

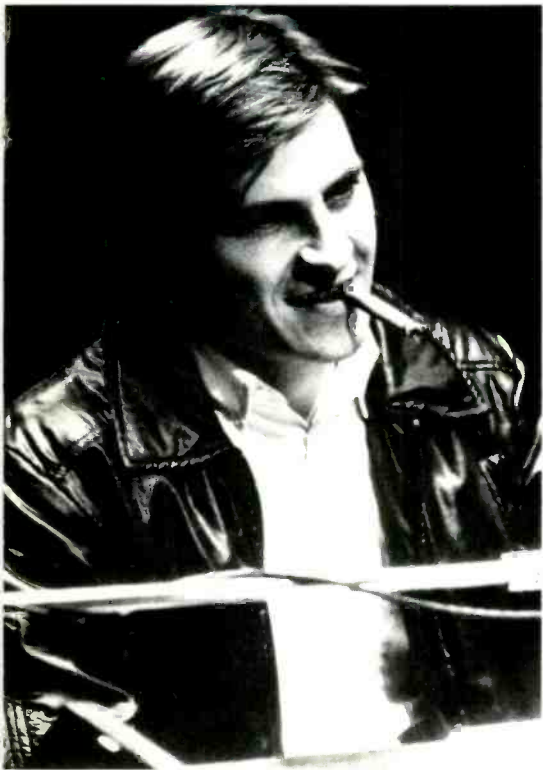
In a film score, even a so-called bridge can have a druglike ability to give reality a certain color, a certain inevitability found in almost any work of art but rarely with such deliberate immediacy. The film score is ordinarily expected to create just the proper ambience at just the right time, and rarely is it given anything resembling normal musical temporality to establish it.

While most incidental music fills empty spaces (such as between scenes) or accompanies specific scenes where music would be "realistically" present, movie music comes much closer to the function that can be performed by the orchestral accompaniment of an opera, where the over-all dramatic effect frequently arises from the juxtaposition of the developmental movement with the accumulation of diverse musical episodes. The musical unity tends to be created motivically, a technique many film composers have adopted as their own, but within a frighteningly choppy framework. Most films have long sections without any music; when it is used, it is sometimes keyed down to the split second to fit a specific action, only to be abruptly cut off or faded out without the benefit of anything like a cadence. In fact, when cadences are added to a film-score suite, they often sound ludicrously out of place.

Creating an Atmosphere

But can such fractionalized music stand on its own? Is it true, as one composer has suggested, that you can't make an LP out of forty-nine bridges? Well, perhaps not forty-nine. But I think it is naive to assume that today's listeners are looking only for attractive themes in sustained, "coherent" musical structures. Musical temporality, harmony, rhythm, and instrumentation have by now been expanded (or annihilated) in so many different ways that I don't find it unreasonable to

*Rota/Coppola: *The Godfather, Part II*. The other nominated scores were Goldsmith's *Chinatown*, North's *Shanks*, Williams' *The Towering Inferno*, and Bennett's *Murder on the Orient Express*.



Alan Price



Elmer Bernstein



Jerry Goldsmith

presume the existence of an audience capable of listening to a bridge—particularly a well-built one—for the sheer joy of its sound combinations or for its concentrated core of feeling. And certainly, composing for a specific time period is no more of a restriction than other limitations, of form, structure, harmony, etc., that great composers have always been able to turn to their own advantage. Furthermore, I know of few film scores that do not contain a number of passages, even if they are eventually cut up, of a more extended nature intended to communicate more generally a particular mood or ambience rather than to punctuate the action.

Add to all this the capital importance played by instrumentation, and you have another strong justification for the recording of film scores. Once again, it is the use of the device very much for its own sake that helps create the film-ambience immediacy. Take the type of violin glissandos heard in the scherzo of Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto, spread them out through an entire string orchestra, repeat them over and over again, and you have the gruesome background accompaniment for murder scenes in Hitchcock's *Psycho*. (Imagine the same sequences to the tune of, say, one of Maurice Jarre's anodyne concoctions.) And when you have the mixed-genre delights of Nino Rota's part circus, part pop, part classical, and generally surrealistic scores for Federico Fellini's *8½* or *Juliet of the Spirits*, there is matter for a high fidelity feast

you'll rarely hear in its full splendor in the movie theater. But even if it is the simple piano solo or flute and harp combinations of Elmer Bernstein's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the isolation of these sounds on a recording, combined with the child-like beauty of the themes they orchestrate, can recreate the entire emotional atmosphere of the film.

This atmosphere counts. Most film-music lovers I know are also movie buffs. Even if fans of a certain composer are delighted to hear scores by him for movies they have never seen, love for film music usually begins in the movie theater or before the TV screen. Besides eliciting a general feeling for the cinematic pace and modes of presentation, the score in fact implies the voice of a Bette Davis, it is the psychological anguish of a man seeking the incarnation of a dream within a labyrinthian San Francisco. A snippet of film music can in many cases jolt the listener into reliving all or part of the picture associated with the music, affording him a kind of instant emotional replay. Because of the immediacy involved, I doubt that even the advent of ready access to films in the home will ever destroy the desire for soundtrack recordings.

With this in mind, I would like to propose that one of the best places to sell film-music records and tapes would be in the theaters. There are, no doubt, solid commercial reasons why, in our various culture emporiums (cinema and concert halls alike), we are glutted with overpriced candy and drinks, programs written by fashion designers,

and souvenir Empire State Buildings rather than relevant recordings, scores, and printed information dealing with the works presented. But it strikes me that offering discs and tapes containing music an audience has just heard and very possibly liked, along with or even in spite of the film, could not only supplement profits, but also represent good public relations, particularly if sold with some kind of program material giving full credits (often cut off by curtain-closing, light-raising management) and anecdotal information on how, when, where, and why the film was made.

If not enough different musical segments have been written to justify an entire LP, the producers could take advantage of the 45 single or the EP, even for non-pop, non-title-theme scores. This is still done frequently in Europe and has been responsible for some real treasures, including Antoine Duhamel's *Pierrot le fou*, Georges Delerue's *Le Mépris* (*Contempt*), and Ennio Morricone's *Sans mobile apparent* (*Without Apparent Motive*). An alternative or supplement to 45 releases would be multiple soundtrack recordings such as Capitol used to make. Two Michael Winner films—*Scorpio* and *The Mechanic*—that played recently as a double feature contained excellent Jerry Fielding scores that would make an attractive coupling. (And why was none of Fielding's music for Sam Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs* ever recorded?)

In any format—full LP, split LP, or 45—I would hope that, instead of several perhaps varied repetitions of two or three principal themes, soundtrack releases of the future could include at least a few of the bridges. Their lack is sorely missed in some of the recent RCA projects, in which we never really hear, for instance, the full breadth of Erich Korngold's instrumental inventiveness or the complete spectrum of the dramatic moods created so skillfully by a Franz Waxman or a Miklós Rózsa. Their presence, however, is one of the beauties of the Entr'acte Recording Society's release of Bernard Herrmann's score for the Brian de Palma film *Sisters*. To such "complete" recordings could be added sequences written for but not used in the movie, as is the case on the Stanyan reissue of Rózsa's *Spellbound* score (SRQ 4021).

One reason for the commercial failure of many film-music recordings is that they generally tend to get marketed with pop-music releases and promoted by people with little or no idea of what they are selling. Nor should they be sold and listed as "classical" music. It is just as ludicrous to group John Lewis and the Modern Jazz Quartet with Beethoven as it is to lump together William Walton and the Rolling Stones. Parceling out film music among the pop, classical, and jazz categories would only make matters worse, particularly since there is a lot of overlapping. (How would you classify André Previn's *Two for the Seesaw*, Alex

Alex North



North's *Streetcar Named Desire*, or Nino Rota's 8½, for instance?) Film music needs to be considered as an entity unto itself.

Finally, I would like to make a plea to film-music buffs to stop bad-mouthing just about everything that is being written today. Every generation creates its own excesses. I shiver to think how much more overpowering two Hitchcock masterpieces—*I Confess* and, especially, *Strangers on a Train*—would be if they were not polluted by the "old school" schlock written by Dimitri Tiomkin. And a great symphonic score can be horribly misused by a director, as was the case with Herrmann's music for François Truffaut's *The Bride Wore Black*.

Granted, the era of Max Steiner and Erich Korngold has passed, but then, so has the era of the fresh and relatively unjaded romanticism and heroism that justified their sumptuously romantic and heroic scores. Actors now frequently play, not Philip Marlowe, but Humphrey Bogart—either that or they give us an anti-Philip Marlowe, as in Altman's *The Long Goodbye*. And scores taking themselves completely seriously have no place within this new and often cynical perspective.

But the partial demise of symphonic film music—and even some second-generation composers such as Rózsa and Herrmann are still producing excellent scores—has not left a vacuum. If anything, the opening up of the variety of musical genres accepted within the cinematic medium can bring about a more nearly perfect marriage of artistic styles than was possible in the past. Try to imagine a film such as Alan J. Pakula's *Klute* without the excellent score (once scheduled for release by Warner Bros. and then dropped) by Michael Small, who deployed everything from rock to a haunting love theme and weird, icy filigrees and ostinatos to heighten the film's suspense and emotional content. Furthermore, there is at least one new film composer, Richard Rodney Bennett, who has taken the symphonic film score in extremely fruitful directions in such works as *Far from the Madding Crowd* (MGM S1E 11ST, out of print), *Lady Caroline Lamb* (Angel S 36940), and *Murder on the Orient Express* (Capitol ST 11361).

The Current Generation

The following extremely selective list of composers offers examples, presented in no particular order, of relatively recent movie music that I feel is especially successful in both the film and the disc media. I would like to stress that my omission of most of the "classic" composers, who have had numerous articles devoted to them in recent years, in no way implies anything resembling disdain.

In most, but not all, cases, I have singled out scores that have made their way to recordings at one time or another. But as everybody knows, film-music albums go out of print faster than yesterday's Top Forty, and what is \$5.98 today may cost \$50 tomorrow. More and more stores, however, are tending to hang onto cutouts, and in many places—particularly in New York City and Los Angeles—you are just as apt to find a sought-after deletion at half price or less as you are to discover it as an overpriced collector's item. Out-of-print (as of April 1975) recordings are indicated with an asterisk, while foreign LPs, which are still poorly distributed on these shores but can usually be obtained from such outfits as Peters International in New York, are indicated with a double asterisk.

Ennio Morricone. Few recent film composers have been as prolific or have shown the inventiveness of Morricone, who studied composition with Goffredo Petrassi. Characteristic Morricone scores seem to synthesize the Italy of the past, as heard in his frequent churchlike chorales, with the Italy of the present, as heard in the often weird and highly inventive instrumentation, the obsessive ostinato beats or jazz rhythms, and the sometimes jarring harmonies.

Morricone had particularly good success with director Sergio Leone—the collaboration has produced one of the best film scores of the last few years, *Duck, You Sucker* (United Artists LA 302-G), along with *Once Upon a Time in the West* (RCA LSP 4736) and *A Fistful of Dollars* (RCA LSO 1135). Another masterpiece is *Sacco and Vanzetti* (*RCA LSP 4612), while Morricone can be heard in a more



Ennio Morricone

lighthearted, bossa-nova vein in *Metti, Una Sera a Cena* (The Love Circle, **Cinevox MDF 3316). Also strongly recommended are three recent United Artists releases, *Burn* (LA 303-G), *The Battle of Algiers* (LA 293-G), and *The Big Gundown* (LA 297-G). *The Red Tent* (*Paramount 6019), on the other hand, is much too slushy for my taste. A marvelous sampling from twenty-six of his scores can be heard on a two-disc RCA Italiana set (**DPSL 10599[2]) entitled "Ennio Morricone, *Un Film una Musica*," which contains such themes as *Metti . . . Violent City*, *The Battle of Algiers*, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, and *The Sicilian Clan*. The latter, one of his best efforts, once was available on 20th Century-Fox (*TFS 4209).

John Barry. Barry is probably best known for his brassy, frenetically paced James Bond scores. Perhaps his best composition for the movies, however, is his subtle, night-jazz music for Richard Lester's *Petulia*, once available on Warner Bros. (*WS 1755).

The James Bond flicks would not have been the same without the Barry scores, and such United Artists albums as *Goldfinger* (5117), *Thunderball*, with its gloomy underwater music (*5132; now available only on eight-track cartridge, UA 3012), *From Russia with Love* (5114), and *You Only Live Twice* (LA 289-G) create enough atmosphere to keep you on a 007 jag for months. And United Artists now has a two-disc set offering extensive selections of Bond music (UXS 91), including the Monty Norman theme.

In a totally different vein, Barry can be heard in the dramatic score for *A Lion in Winter* (exceptionally well recorded on Columbia OS 3250), which makes excellent use of an "instrument" rarely heard on soundtracks: a chorus. (David Snell's entirely a cappella choral score for Robert Montgomery's *Lady in the Lake* should certainly be included on an album sometime—say, one devoted to Philip Marlowe scores.)

Barry's *Ipcress File* (*Decca DL 79124) and *Deadfall* (*20th Century-Fox S 4208) definitely deserve re-release. The latter, the result of one of his frequent collaborations with director Bryan Forbes, contains *Romance for Guitar and Orchestra* written for a concert hall sequence in the film.

Nino Rota. The Rota-Fellini combination produced some extraordinary music, and both *8½* (*RCA FSO 6) and *Juliet of the Spirits* (*Mainstream 56062) should have remained in the catalogue if for no other reason than to document the fertility and vitality of the Italian new wave. Still available is the weird score for Fellini's *Satyricon* (United Artists 5208), which offers some of the strangest, most intriguing, nonstop sounds you're apt to hear from a soundtrack album. Likewise worth the listening are *The Clowns* (*Columbia S



Francis Lai



Vince Guaraldi

30772), *Fellini's Roma* (United Artists LA 052F), and *Amarcord* (RCA ARL 1-0907).

Avoid at all costs Rota's gooey music for Franco Zeffirelli's even gooier *Romeo and Juliet* (Capitol ST 400). On the other hand, *The Godfather* (Paramount 1003) has some good moments.

Three Pop-Oriented Scores. To me, one of the best rock scores ever done for a film is Pink Floyd's often hypnotic and psychedelic soundtrack for Barbet Schroeder's *More* (Harvest SW 11178). The recording of Alan Price's sardonic musical commentary for Lindsay Anderson's *O Lucky Man* (Warner Bros. 2710) documents an extremely original incorporation of music into a film. And besides John Barry's poignant harmonica theme for *Midnight Cowboy*, the United Artists (5198) album contains his perfect selections of existing pop material for the film, including Nilsson's "Everybody's Talkin'" and the Elephants Memory's psychedelic "Old Man Willow."

Jerry Goldsmith. Some of Goldsmith's best scores—*The General with the Cockeyed Id* and *Seconds*—have never been recorded. Others, such as *The Blue Max* (*Mainstream 56081), are out of print. But *The Planet of the Apes* (Project 3, S 5023), with its eerie wind and percussion combinations, certainly stands as one of the most inventive and appropriate scores of the last decade, and *Papillon* (Capitol ST 11260) has both a beautiful title theme and a good measure of vintage Goldsmith sounds, as does *Chinatown* (ABC 848). The *Patton* disc (20th Century-Fox 902) offers another good Goldsmith score and George C. Scott's famous opening speech in the film.

Vince Guaraldi. The best of Guaraldi's bouncy, nostalgic, jazzy, and otherwise delightful music for the *Peanuts* animations can be heard in the Warner Bros. album entitled "Oh Good Grief" (1747). It contains music for the original television series, much of which has been reused, along with a good deal of new material, in the feature-length films.



Lalo Schifrin

Alex North. Most film-score nuts I know would trade in their amplifiers for a chance to hear the music never used by Kubrick for *2001* (North's score was not the only one rejected), which North has apparently incorporated into his *Third Symphony*. Considering the excellence of his output, we should be given the chance to hear this score in one form or another. Another loss is North's music for *Cheyenne Autumn*, once planned but never released by Warner Bros.

Of what's available, the *Spartacus* album (Decca 79097) represents a milestone in the Roman-spectacular genre, although there is much more *Spartacus* music never recorded. And by all means get the partly jazz *Streetcar Named Desire* on the Angel re-release (36068), coupled with three Max Steiner suites. United Artists has just reissued North's score for *The Misfits* (LA 273-G).

Francis Lai. It is difficult to forgive Lai for *Love Story* (Paramount 6002). But I must admit a weakness for the smooth, flowing sounds of *A Man and a Woman* (United Artists 5147), and for the more neurotic, mysterious *Rider on the Rain* (*Capitol ST 584), and United Artists has just reissued the *Man-and-Woman Live for Life* (LA 291-G).

Henry Mancini. A lot of what's wrong with recent film scoring has been blamed on Mancini; and there is certainly no denying that the bass-ostinato-under-jazz-theme genre established by the Peter Gunn TV music set is an overworked trend. This takes nothing away from the fact that not only is Mancini capable of writing some of the best melodies being turned out for any medium these days, but he has also been responsible, via his scores, for much of the mood and atmosphere of pictures ranging from the tragedy of *Days of Wine and Roses* and *Soldier in the Rain* to the wit and irony of *Shot in the Dark* and the suaveness of *The Pink Panther*. (The more or less complete soundtrack of the latter is available on RCA LSP 2795.)

An excellent selection of many of Mancini's finest movie and TV themes, if not the "background" music, can be heard on the two "Best of Henry Mancini" albums put out by RCA (LSP 2693 and 3557). Relatively complete scores currently available include *The Thief Who Came to Dinner* (Warner Bros. 2700) and *Visions of 8* (RCA ABL 1-0231). And then there is the apparently Herrmannesque score Hitchcock rejected for *Frenzy*...

Some Jazz Soundtracks. Elmer Bernstein's ominous *Man with the Golden Arm*, one of the first jazz soundtracks to receive wide recognition, is still available on Decca (78257). A pioneering and utterly successful experiment was done in 1958 by Louis Malle for his first film *L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* (*Frantic*), for which Miles Davis and four other musicians improvised a taut, bluesy score during a screening (Columbia Special Products JCL 1268). Another classic is the strange, bleak music written by John Lewis for Robert Wise's *Odds Against Tomorrow* (*United Artists 5061), which should certainly be reissued along with Lewis' score for Vadim's *Sait-on jamais?* (*No Sun in Venice*, Atlantic 1284).

The vogue for jazz is definitely dying out in the cinema, and when it is used these days, such as in the Charlie Parker-Sidney Bechet score for Malle's *Murmur of the Heart* (Roulette 3006), it tends to be "source" music. Most of the best jazz or jazz-oriented movie music on disc—including Ellington's *Anatomy of a Murder* (*Columbia CS 8166), Previn's *Two for the Seesaw* (*United Artists 5108), Art Blakey's *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (*Epic 16022), Bernstein's *Walk on the Wild Side* (*Mainstream 6083), and Leith Stevens' *The Wild One* (*Decca 8349)—has been long deleted from the catalogues. But United Artists has just revived Johnny Mandel's searing score for *I Want to Live!* (LA 271-G).

Elmer Bernstein. One of the greatest of the many sins committed in the name of the Academy Awards took place when the pseudo-Arabian pomp and bombast written by Maurice Jarre for

Lawrence of Arabia, still in print on disc (Bell S-1205), beat out Bernstein's beautifully simple *To Kill a Mockingbird* (*ava, AS-20). Currently in-print Bernstein scores include the exciting *The Great Escape* (United Artists 5107), with its delightful title theme, and *Return of the Seven* (United Artists 5146); a recording of the original *Magnificent Seven* was scheduled but never released.

One can only regret that another Bernstein (Leonard) has written just one film score—for Kazan's *On the Waterfront*—a symphonic suite from which can be heard on Columbia (MS 6251).

Lalo Schifrin. Along with Morricone, Schifrin has proven to be one of the most innovative instrumentators for recent film scores. This combined with his often striking themes has helped him create some of the most intriguing and attractive movie and TV scores done in the Sixties, the best of which include *The Fox* (*Warner Bros. 1738) and *Cool Hand Luke* (*Dot 25833), not to mention the popular music for the TV series *Mission: Impossible* (*Dot 25831). Unfortunately, the only Schifrin soundtrack currently in print is *Enter the Dragon* (Warner Bros. 2727)—mediocre, but good clean fun.

Pierre Jansen. Of the many other composers I could mention to conclude this all-too-brief listing, I would like to single out a French artist who has worked almost exclusively with one director, Claude Chabrol, for whom he has scored over twenty films since 1960. Jansen's music demonstrates that the so-called "classical" film score is neither dead nor doomed to eternal self-mimicry. Working in a style that generally falls somewhere between chamber and symphonic music, he has ranged from the subtle atonality of *La Femme infidèle* to the neurotic disjointedness of *La Rupture* (which features an ondes martenot in the instrumentation). He has produced some first-class cloak-and-dagger music as well for Chabrol's middle-period films. In the U.S., perhaps only Leonard Rosenman, in the first twelve-tone Hollywood score, *The Cobweb* (*MGM E 3501 ST), has written film music with a similarly sophisticated "classical" orientation.

If Jansen's name remains obscure, it is because, incredibly, not a single note he has written has been recorded, as far as I know, and because Chabrol's beautifully crafted and often brilliantly original films have, like many European movies, been getting rotten distribution, although the situation seems to be improving. So deeply is director Chabrol committed to music (he once said that, if he hadn't become a film director, he would have been a conductor), plans apparently exist for a Jansen opera based on a Chabrol libretto. I can't wait!



R&b has taken on a slicker, sweeter sound as disco soul, which is churning up dance fans in discotheques across the country. Tops on the circuit are, from left, Love Unlimited founder Barry White, who does it all, Queen of the Discos Gloria Gaynor, and the flamboyant trio Labelle.

by Henry Edwards

The Street People Have

THE MUSIC BLARES! The lights flash! And the packed room pulsates with energy and excitement. Crunched into Le Jardin, the trendish, funky basement disco club on Manhattan's West Side are thousands of happy, sweating, gyrating disco dance fans, sharing in common a passion for fancy stepping and a keen sense of anticipation about this evening's particular highlights. The polyglot assortment, even by sophisticated urban standards, consists of young whites and an equal number of blacks and Latinos as well as many gays representing all three groups. Television crews from each of New York City's major networks and a



horde of photographers and reporters are also present to document the festivities.

Tonight, after all, twenty-four-year-old rhythm-and-blues songstress Gloria Gaynor will be crowned the nation's first Queen of the Discos by the National Association of Disco Disc Jockeys. And after her coronation she will please her adoring subjects by performing a disco-soul set highlighted by her rendition of "Never Can Say Good-bye." This pulsating "crossover" superhit made its first impact not with black rhythm-and-blues fans, but with the white-oriented "easy-listening" audience. From there it scaled the national popular-



*And have created
new stars and hits*

this unknown record to local radio stations. The stations began to play it. Its popularity then began to spread across the nation; another major disco-soul hit had been born.

Time and time again, for the past two years, this pattern has been repeated. And it has not only launched the most potent pop-music trend of the 1970s, but also created a galaxy of new stars and a thirty-one-city disco circuit, each with a disco to feature these stars in concert, paying them the same fees they would command in a concert hall or a more conventional rock club.

Besides Gaynor, the new disco-soul stars include twenty-nine-year-old, six-foot-three-inch, two-hundred-seventy-pound Barry White, a composer, performer, arranger, and producer. White established himself as the sultan of disco soul, when his lilting "Love's Theme" became the first disco-soul hit. The multit talented musician then went on to form the Love Unlimited Orchestra and a female rhythm-and-blues trio, Love Unlimited. Five discs featuring White as soloist or the LUO or LU have been certified "gold," each having sold more than a million dollar's worth of copies. And it all started in the tiny, palpitating discos. Credit these clubs for also establishing the female r&b trio, Labelle, formerly the 1960s "girl's group" Patti LaBelle and the Bluebelles. This trio is currently enjoying the nation's most popular record, the bawdy, energized, witty portrait of a hooker, "Lady Marmalade." With them are a host of other new disco stars. They include soloist Carol Douglas as well as the soul groups B.T. Express, Shirley and Company, Ecstasy, Passion & Pain, and the re-emergence of that madcap hairdresser of the 1960s, Monti Rock III, now a disco-fave-rave

Taken Over the Discotheques!

ity charts and then, finally, conquered the black music market.

It is one of the many current superhits discovered first by the disco DJ's who spin the records in these clubs. They liked "Never Can Say Goodbye," and played it six or seven times a night for weeks on end. And when their dancing-dervish-patrons had become thoroughly intoxicated with the song, these dance-o-maniacs converged on their local record stores to purchase the record for home play. (Disco play in the New York City area alone can result in the sale of 75,000 copies of a record.) The record stores then reported the popularity of

under his new moniker, Disco Tex and the Sex-olettes.

Each has created one or more disco hits. Each is a major exponent of disco soul. All have created music that shares common characteristics. Their tunes have hypnotic melodic hooks. Essentially r&b, they also possess devilish, persistent, danceable, repetitive rhythms. However the gritty, more soulful components of traditional r&b singing and production have been replaced by a smoother, silkier, slicker sound. This slickness is encouraged by globs of musical whipped cream—soaring strings, mellifluous horns—that amplify

the rhythm, emphasize the musical hooks, and are attractive enough to woo white fans without alienating blacks. The result: lightweight soul-pop possessing enough rhythmic fervor to get anybody's toes a-tapping while dealing attractively with the traditional and sentimental themes of loving, losing, and loving again.

This formula is exactly the one by which Queen of the Discos Gloria Gaynor conquered the pop, easy-listening, and r&b markets with the same tune. Indeed, the entire first side of her LP "Never Can Say Goodbye" is nonstop disco dance music, an innovation that wowed the nation's growing horde of disco dance fans.

Gaynor herself, after her coronation, tried to put her thoughts together about the musical phenomenon she was helping spearhead. She had sung in small clubs and had made an album for Columbia Records that had been a minor success. It was not until the discos picked up on her, however, that she found the means to achieve authentic pop stardom.

"The discos release a lot of tension," she observes. "They give you a chance to work off your anxiety and forget about the disquieting economy. The best disco records are motion-motivated. They have lyrics dealing with finding or losing love and they also deal with sex, but the main concern of all of them is to get you moving."

When asked about the fact that both blacks and whites were enjoying her records, she comments, "It was inevitable. With integration taking place in the big cities, it was only a matter of time before blacks and whites exchanged backgrounds, heritages, and tastes. I was surprised the same as you probably were when whites were the first to pick up on "Never Can Say Goodbye." I've just finished a nationwide tour of the discos and all the audiences are integrated, sharing equally in the pleasure of music that you can enjoy listening to and are also happy to dance to."

Of the discos themselves, she remarks revealingly, "They're mostly gay clubs and I enjoy playing them. The audience is more responsive, more receptive. They yell and scream and don't mind letting you know that they dig you."

Patti LaBelle, Labelle's fiercely energized lead singer, shares Gaynor's feelings and opinions. In the early 1960s, she had led her Bluebelles to triumph by singing soulful versions of tunes like "Over the Rainbow" as well as such novelties as "I Sold My Heart to the Junkman." Known as The Sweethearts of the Apollo because the group was a much-beloved attraction at that venerable New York City black variety house, it was considered washed up as rock became increasingly more complicated, intellectual, and articulate. The trio would not give up, however. It transformed itself into a contemporary soul-rock unit singing and writing tunes packed with drama and insight. As

contemporary-sounding as a brand-new act, the trio still could not find success either on the Warner Bros. or RCA label. They decided to play the Continental Baths—the Manhattan gay bathhouse that had launched Bette Midler—where they were an instant smash. They developed a devoted national gay following. When Epic Records picked them up, they were booked into the Metropolitan Opera House, the first soul act ever to play this bastion of high culture. Appearing as three spacewomen dressed in gleaming silver costumes, they received roars of approval from an audience consisting of gay men in makeup, wigs, and beards sprinkled with glitter, "golden-oldies" fans who remembered them from their first musical existence, soul freaks, and many, many disco cultists. The sold-out house cheered them as spacewomen and went berserk when they re-emerged as wildly plumed nightbirds. This audience, cutting across all traditional boundaries, has supported the trio, enabling it to climb to the top of the popularity charts with a record that received its first and substantial play in the discos.

"We bring feeling to our music, tell stories of what life is like and can be," Patti told me. "You can feel us and you can dance to us. Audiences need more feeling than they've ever needed before. They need theater. We played gay clubs and we loved it because gays are into theater. And now we're breaking big because we've learned how to put on a show. Our audiences are a spectacle themselves. And we give them a spectacle in return!"

Summing it all up is Barry White, the astounding one-man disco-soul industry. The gravel-voiced spokesman for "love" has crooned his way to superfame and superfortune with hit after hit.

"It's not black music for black people, baby," he explains. "It's love music for everybody. My message is love. I've found a new way to tell you about love and my music can be soaked up by your system. And you can dance to it, but more important, you can dig it."

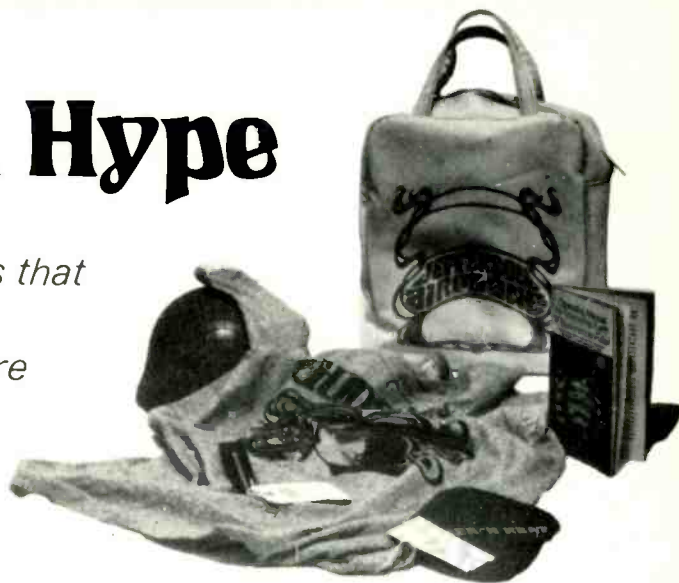
"If it weren't for the discos, the message would have taken much longer to get out. They found the message before the radio stations did. They're hip and bright, and they're the ones who make things happen."

They certainly are. Proof can be found on radio, in the record stores which have established huge "disco" sections, in the music trade papers, which now survey the discos to find out what the hits are before they become hits, in the club scene where every day another club "goes disco." In the mid-1960s discos like Arthur, that Manhattan trendsetter, were the homes of the international jet set. In the mid-1970s, the new discos are the homes of people from the streets who have energy to spare and have found a throbbing, twitching, shoulder-shaking release. ●

At Home with Hype

The promotional giveaways that accompany the release of a pop recording are often more interesting than the disc itself.

by David Dachs



IN MY BOY Joshua's room, there's a pale green GI plastic helmet covered with ominous jungle-type netting, hanging on a Colonial ladder-back chair. It's from a rock group called War.

When I'm in doubt about postal regulations concerning first-class, bulk-rate, certified mail (which unfortunately keep changing), I can consult a handy card once put out by ingenious publicity people ballyhooing the Ace Trucking Company.

When my wife, Julie, makes shopping lists, she makes them on memo paper mailed to me by United Artists in behalf of the Family. The group's name is lettered in gilt on the stippled leatherette cover.

In a drawer is a blue rubbery noisemaker sent out to publicize a Polydor LP, "And That's the Truth," which featured Lily Tomlin as the cheeky little girl of *Laugh-In* fame who sat on a rocking chair and cast an unruly eye on things, ending her monologues with a rude Bronx raspberry.

These promotional giveaways brighten up the world of pop publicity. As a writer on pop music, I receive press releases, biographies, and 8- by 10-inch glossy photos that pour out of the public relations departments of record companies as unceasingly as coffee from an espresso machine in a prosperous coffeehouse. But I like it best when the press agents turn Santa Claus and send out playful things.

Souvenirs, one press agent says, "hang around the house and cause talk." To whoop it up for new records and pop artists, press agents frequently resort to this materialist technique that appeals to the child in all of us. Atlantic once mailed me a genuine working zipper. It was to trumpet the news that the company was now distributing records in the U.S. of the best-selling British expatriate group, the Rolling Stones. But why the zip-

David Dachs, former publicist in the music and recording industries, has written several books on the pop scene.

per? Anxious to make a big splash, Atlantic, famed for its excellent graphics, commissioned Andy Warhol to design the cover of the first release. The Audubon of the sexual wilderness conceived a unique cover for "Sticky Fingers." It consisted of a close-up of the crotch of a pair of slacks. And right there, where it should have been, was a zipper, an actual zipper.

Liberty/UA sent some marvelous blue denim patching cloth. The idea was to create talk about the album "Hooker 'n' Heat." The PR people wanted to project an image of earthy blues roots, and they did so by packaging a "promo kit" (press releases, bios, photos) in a portfolio whose cover depicted blue denim work clothes. My wife is waiting for Josh to rip his jeans.

A popular standby that arrives with the advent of each school year are glossy, attractive book jackets decorated with photographs of performers being promoted by the record manufacturers.

The souvenir publicity gimmick goes way back in pop music, further than polyethylene-wrapped LPs. In the 1950s, veteran press agents Sid Ascher and Paul Brown would give away roses on opening days to girls attending Tony Bennett's stage shows at the now-defunct New York Paramount. "We also used to give away handkerchiefs printed with the words, 'This Was Borrowed from Tony Bennett,'" says Brown, currently a college radio promotion specialist.

While some of the giveaways fell into the hands of pop fans, most were aimed at those who could play a record on radio or write a story about an artist. Through the years Brown has given away a virtual John's Bargain Store of items—key chains, combs, sewing needles and thimbles—all with the name of the artist who employed him.

"Everyone likes something for nothing," he says. "You look at those things and you think so-and-so is a nice person. Also people talk about it."

When *Godspell* was just an off-Broadway rock musical, Brown gave away 600 gray sweatshirts with the name of the show printed across the chest. "I sent them out to 600 college radio stations along with the album," he says. "It had a great response. . . . And the thing paid off. The kids at the stations wrote, saying, 'Naturally, I'm playing *Godspell*.'" "

Such promotional campaigns can be done economically, or they can mount up to \$5,000 or more. Years ago, for example, a press agent thriftily sent along 25-cent mirrors with copies of a Frank de Vol album, "Portrait of Yourself." The promotion cost about \$100, less than an organic meal for four. However, the *Godspell* campaign, financed by Bell, cost a princely sum. According to Paul Brown, a review copy of the musical based on the *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, cost about \$1. The sweatshirt cost about 75 cents. To mail the package involved special packaging that ran about 10½ cents. The postage totaled 20 cents. The complete mailing, including press releases, ran about \$2. Not much. But sent to countless college and commercial stations and similar pop tastemakers, the costs add up.

Pop PR woos the mass media with an ardor that would do credit to an honors student at a group-grope seminar. Even the counterculture artists resort to hype, for they know they are in a hotly competitive field where perhaps 90% of the records do not earn enough to cover their production costs. So the record companies, PR firms, the artists, the talent managers, the music publishers—everybody who has a stake in a particular artist, group, record, or song—try everything in the publicity handbook: print publicity, radio and TV guest shots, phone interviews with disc jockeys, and the ritualized press parties where they serve bacon wrapped around prunes, Baskin-Robbins ice cream, and champagne. And, of course, there's the mailing of what some call "advertising specialties."

Sol Handwerger, skilled MGM Records promotion executive who has done everything in pop publicity but send *Leo the Lion* around to radio stations with new releases, is a great believer in imprinted specialty items. He has employed balloons, ballpoint pens, cufflinks, and cigarette lighters to sell pop artists. And buttons—lots of buttons. These change from "I LOVE THE COWSILLS" to "I LOVE THE OSMONDS" to whatever group is currently trying to make it. In the world of pop PR, love is as transferable as a decal.

"Once I had a key chain made up in the shape of a piano to publicize Erroll Garner," Handwerger says. "And for another group, the Four Coins, I had a key chain made up attached to four new pennies."

Years ago I received a paper gun to publicize a comedy tune, "O.K. Louie, Drop the Gun." And I still have a souvenir of the '50s sent me by the Kingston Trio. It is a rather fancy English morocco leather wallet, inset with a Swiss watch that has seldom kept accurate time, and embossed with the words, "Gratefully—The Kingston Trio."

Some time ago, Bell Records, which has really been ringing the tocsin with promotional items, created a mammoth collection of goodies to promote a comedy album, "The Jewish-American Princess." Along with a record that was described as a "comical look at the life-style of the typical American housewife, be she Jewish, Irish, Italian, Negro, or W.A.S.P.," this is what came in the mail, neatly packaged in a miniature shopping bag: a menu from the Stage Delicatessen, a brochure from Grossinger's, Jewish-American fortune cookies, a map of Fire Island (along with the Fire Island ferry schedule), clothing labels from famed designers and stores, and a shopping bag from Lord and Taylor's.

Of course, promotional giveaways are generally part of a thought-out publicity game plan. Take the plastic war helmets referred to earlier. A story issued by United Artists Records bore the headline:

UNITED ARTISTS DECLARES WAR ON THE RECORD INDUSTRY

Merchandising and Promotional Campaign
One of the Most Extensive in Company's History

The helmets—10,000 of them—were part of a campaign that included saturation of trade and underground press with "War Is Coming" ads and stickers on all mail originating at the company.

This is par for the course, since there is much at stake as record companies vie for the consumer dollar. Sales of records and tapes covering pop, rock, jazz, shows, classical, country, total in the billions of dollars. That's a lot of money, and a lot rides on competition for air play and print publicity.

A word must be said about record press agents. Having been one myself, I am most sympathetic to them. The disc companies couldn't function without PR people, who are frequently clever and resourceful. Operating with penny-candy budgets compared to GM or the Pentagon, they create quite a stir. And they are generally unappreciated. When an artist reaches the Top Ten it's on his talents, not the PR man's. But when he does not sell, it's the fault of poor publicity.

Unmistakably, the world of records would be pretty bleak if it weren't for the countless PR men and women and their catchy, inexpensive publicity placebos. ●



The New Releases

Herbert von Karajan—a finely crafted first encounter with the Second Vienna School.

The Second Vienna School Eases into the Repertory

Karajan's four-disc set of works by Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern represents a distinct upgrading of their general level of performance.

by David Hamilton

NEARLY EVERY MONTH now, we confront a significant contribution to the recorded Schoenberg literature—a marked contrast to the Ives situation, where the big hurrahs preceded the centennial. Since the Schoenberg anniversary, we have been treated to Gielen's admirable *Moses und Aron*, the Fires of London's brilliant *Pierrot lunaire*, and Paul Jacobs' superb traversal of the piano music. Still to come are the *Gurre-Lieder* and *Moses* that Boulez recorded in London, the Juilliard Quartet's remake of the quartets (worth waiting for, if the stunning concert performance of Nos. 1 and 3 that I recently heard is a fair sample of what will go on the discs), and perhaps the London Sinfonietta's box of chamber works, containing several previously unrecorded items.

This month's largesse comprises Herbert von Karajan's first recorded encounter with the Second Vienna School: Schoenberg's *Pelleas* (also available separately as DG 2530 485), *Verklärte Nacht*, and Or-

chestral Variations, and a disc each of Berg and Webern. Nearly all of this is valuable, even if it does not make up anything like a "complete" set of these composers' orchestral works—the most obvious omissions being Schoenberg's two Chamber Symphonies and the Op. 16 Orchestral Pieces, and Webern's Variations, Op. 30. Karajan and his superior orchestra obviously have much to bring to this music, especially in the realm of precision and polish; with the exception of the late Hans Rosbaud's now unavailable performances (and, in the case of *Verklärte Nacht*, several others), hardly any recordings of this music have been so finely crafted, have offered so much sheer tonal allure.

This is important. For all that the men of the Second Vienna School are thought of primarily as "brainy" composers, all three had piercingly imaginative ears for orchestral sound. Their music is full of timbral wizardry—much of it devilishly difficult to



Anton Webern



Alban Berg



Arnold Schoenberg

bring off—involving unconventional playing techniques, extremes of register and dynamics, complex balancing of multiple lines, and asymmetrical, at-war-with-the-barline rhythms.

Given this, and the still scanty performance history of the works, it is impossible not to admire what Karajan and the Berlin orchestra have achieved here. In the case of Schoenberg's *Pelleas*, one has no reservations at all: The enormously long line of the piece is sustained, the climaxes finely judged, the extraordinary density of texture brilliantly realized. This is a symphonic poem as long as *Ein Heldenleben* and many times as dense. Here, for once, it sounds like a million dollars: expansive, lush, dramatic, mercurial, and always utterly entralling to ear and mind. *Verklärte Nacht*, a much-trodden path, also comes off well—a committed, beautifully played performance, rendered just slightly overripe by the recorded sound's tendency to exaggerate a degree of swoopiness in the string playing.

The *Variations* are a tougher nut to crack and, for all its virtuosity, this performance doesn't quite convince. Surprisingly, it is not the finale that is problematic, for Karajan keeps a viable momentum going through the numerous tempo changes. Rather, the individual variations sometimes become so self-absorbed that the piece doesn't quite hang together. Contributory to this may have been the circumstances of recording: In order to achieve optimum balances of these tricky ensembles, each variation was recorded with a special orchestral seating (and, no doubt, microphone setup), yielding some disconcerting Phase-4-ish effects. (For all I know, the separate parts of the finale were also recorded in independently seated takes, but the same problem of line and urgency has not resulted.) Still, this is in many ways the best recording we have of this piece, the twentieth century's answer to Brahms's *Haydn Variations*; Hans Rosbaud's live-performance version (last seen on Heliodor 2549 008) was more stylish and impulsive but also suffered various minor disasters of execution.

Stylistically, in fact, Schoenberg is the most problematic of these three composers, for he is more

Janus-faced than either of his students. Karajan is clearly more comfortable with the still-retrospective aesthetic of Berg (and early Schoenberg) than with that of the *Variations* or of the later Webern. Given the variables of recorded balance as well as those of execution and interpretation, I am reluctant to assign a clear first place among the three current recordings of Berg's orchestral pieces (Boulez and Abbado are the other two). All of them score valid points and, after studying them in some detail, I can imagine a recording still better than any of them (or the now-deleted Rosbaud, Craft, and Dorati versions). And the three very difficult transcriptions from the *Lyric Suite* are strikingly played, if recorded with less than ideal focus; there is at present no other available version, but a Boulez/Philharmonic performance is awaiting release at Columbia.

Boulez must be mentioned in connection with Webern too, for his recordings of all these works have been in the can for some time now. Karajan achieves a particularly powerful effect with the early *Passacaglia*, but by the time we get to the *Op. 21 Symphony* he seems at sea: All the notes are there, but none of the music.

A mixed bag, then, but well worth hearing—and at least the single disc of *Pelleas* is worth hearing often. These are almost all instructive, thoughtful performances, and you will not fail to be impressed by them, even if you have heard this music many times.

The program booklet includes sketchy notes by H. H. Stuckenschmidt and a biographical note on the conductor, by the same author, that deserves a place of honor in the annals of euphemistic disingenuousness: We read that Karajan's "successes between 1937 and 1945 caused him to be banned for conducting for a time." Just think about that.

SCHOENBERG, BERG, AND WEBERN: *Orchestral Works*. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Hans Weber and Hans Hirsch, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2711 014, \$31.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

SCHOENBERG: *Pelleas und Melisande*, Op. 5 (also available separately on 2530 485); *Verklärte Nacht*, Op. 4; *Variations for Orchestra*, Op. 31. **BERG:** *Three Orchestral Pieces*, Op. 6; *Three Pieces from the Lyric Suite*. **WEBERN:** *Passacaglia*, Op. 1; *Five Movements*, Op. 5 (version for string orchestra); *Six Pieces for Orchestra*, Op. 6; *Symphony*, Op. 21.



Maurice Abravanel

Tchaikovsky Overdone, Underdone, and Done In



Gennady Rozhdestvensky

Abravanel and Rozhdestvensky orchestral cycles highlight recent additions to a discography longer on quantity than on quality.

by Philip Hart

IN HIS ADMIRABLE NOTES for Vox's collection of virtually all of Tchaikovsky's symphonic music, Richard Freed recognizes that, despite the indifference or hostility of critics, Tchaikovsky's most popular music retains its firm hold on public affection. Some ten months of listening to more than a hundred recorded performances of the symphonies and symphonic poems has left me sympathetic to my jaded colleagues—and yet still admiring of the composer's strongest qualities.

Much of the ennui can be blamed, I suspect, not so much on Tchaikovsky as on his interpreters. The proportion of truly sympathetic and musically effective readings on records is distressingly low. There are a good number of simply dull performances, even by internationally renowned conductors and orchestras, and all too many in which the conductor seems to be using Tchaikovsky for his own meretricious ends.

As a symphonist, Tchaikovsky started out in the Germanic tradition, especially influenced by Mendelssohn in his first three symphonies. At the same time, he was writing symphonic poems, often called fantasies, in which the influence of Berlioz is very strong, both in orchestral technique and in his conception of program music. Finally, in *Manfred* and the last three symphonies, he found his own very characteristic fusion of these two influences. Berlioz, possibly because of his well-received visits to Russia,

had a very strong impact on all the major Russian composers of the time, but Tchaikovsky developed an orchestral style that was considerably simpler than that of Berlioz or of his Russian contemporaries. Moreover, in using symphonic music as a vehicle for descriptive or emotional expression, he was much more naive and direct than Berlioz.

Tchaikovsky was sentimental, often to the point of banality, but this has often been worked to death by his interpreters. His simplicity of expression and musical technique has unquestionably tempted conductors to narcissistic excess: His most popular pieces are all too easy vehicles for arousing audience response and conductor worship. Some conductors have resisted this temptation by going to the opposite extreme: playing the music so straight as to drain its essential emotional expression. The vast Tchaikovsky discography offers a wide variety of approaches between these extremes.

The Abravanel and Rozhdestvensky cycles

The immediate occasion for my intensive survey of Tchaikovsky's symphonic music has been the release of extensive collections by Maurice Abravanel (Vox) and Gennady Rozhdestvensky (Melodiya/Angel).

Abravanel's three three-disc boxes include the six symphonies, *Manfred*, the *1812 Overture*, *Marche slave*, and three symphonic poems, the most compre-

hensive collection ever issued. Rozhdestvensky's cycle comprises only the six symphonies plus *Manfred*, issued only as single discs. (In addition, a large number of individual performances have appeared in the time I have been listening to these works; they are reviewed in the discussions of separate works below.)

For the past quarter-century, Abravanel has devoted himself to one of this country's finest "provincial" orchestras, retaining all the while his stature as one of the foremost musicians of today's conductors. On strictly musical grounds, these performances show an extraordinary understanding of Tchaikovsky and achieve an exceptionally satisfying result throughout.

The Utah Symphony is not in the same class, quantitatively or qualitatively, with our major orchestras of international stature. Even so, Abravanel has developed it into a very cohesive ensemble, obviously responsive to his interpretive demands. The orchestra plays exceedingly well, within its personnel limitations. The shortcomings are unfortunately emphasized by a rather dry recording acoustic; more resonance and "air" around the orchestra would have produced a warmer and richer sound, closer to what one hears in concerts in the Mormon Tabernacle. The price of the Vox sets is an undeniable attraction—and they might well be recommended as supplementary recordings of these works.

Rozhdestvensky's demonstrated musicianship and flair certainly arouse considerable interest in his new cycle, which contrasts interestingly with the work of his current Russian colleagues. He is less wayward than Svetlanov (in *Melodiya*/Angel's previous series of the six symphonies plus *Manfred*) but not nearly as individually sensitive as Mravinsky (in his early-stereo DG versions of the last three symphonies). In fact, his Tchaikovsky is basically cool and straight, with interpretive liberties that at times seem anachronous.

Unfortunately Rozhdestvensky, like Abravanel, has an orchestra of less than top quality. He is, however, a superb disciplinarian, and he gets his Moscow Radio Symphony to play together better than other Moscow orchestras (better, in fact, than they have often played before on records), although intonation is sometimes a problem. But the players simply do not measure up to those of Mravinsky's Leningrad Philharmonic, not to mention the many top-line international ensembles represented in the Tchaikovsky discography.

The Moscow recording ambience has improved in recent years, being less "boxy" and wider in frequency and dynamic range. Nevertheless, stereo effect is minimal by current standards. I am afraid that this cycle really is not competitive at full price, either as a whole or singly. If you want a good sample, Rozhdestvensky's approach seems most consistently thought-out in the later symphonies and *Manfred*, but then that's where the competition becomes keenest.

The other symphony cycles

I find Lorin Maazel's performances for London (available singly or as a set) rather cold and lacking

in musical sensitivity, though the Vienna Philharmonic plays superbly. Antal Dorati's Mercury series with the London Symphony (formerly available as a six-disc set, now gradually being replaced by single-disc issues in Mercury's Golden Imports series) is also well played, but it suffers even more from the conductor's insensitivity to the music.

Leonard Bernstein's Columbia performances with the New York Philharmonic (available singly or in reduced-price boxes of the first three and last three symphonies) are typically strong ones, though occasionally oversentimentalized and theatrical. (Bernstein, by the way, has re-recorded Nos. 4 and 6.) Yevgeny Svetlanov is very expressive and often has interesting ideas, but his U.S.S.R. Symphony is no better than Abravanel's Utah Symphony, and Abravanel is a better musician—not to mention less expensive.

The individual symphonies

Symphony No. 1. Rehearing Michael Tilson Thomas' performance with the Boston Symphony (DG 2530 078) only reinforces my previous opinion that his is an utterly delightful account, superbly played and recorded, with just the right combination of vitality and sentiment.

Symphony No. 2. Igor Markevitch (Philips 835 390) has some interesting if unconventional ideas about phrasing here, and the London Symphony plays very well. André Previn's recently deleted RCA reading with the same orchestra is more conventional and somewhat better recorded. The New Philharmonia plays very well for Claudio Abbado (DG 139 381), but his Karajan-style suavity deprives this score of some of its punch. Bernstein is a bit brash, an approach that suits this symphony better than it does the First or Third.

Symphony No. 3. This has always impressed me as Tchaikovsky's weakest symphony. His effort to expand into larger areas lacks the substance to support it. Moshe Atzmon's recent DG version with the Vienna Symphony has much to recommend it, as he emphasizes the lyric element, but the acoustic ambience is excessively resonant. Though not as good as his Second, Bernstein's strikes me as the best all-around Third. Abravanel finds more gentle beauties in this score than he does.

The "Big Three." So far as the general public is concerned, the last three are the Tchaikovsky symphonies, and they provide a field day for conductors. In them he consolidated the purely traditional elements of Mendelssohn and Schumann with the descriptive features of Berlioz. Though they lack overt programmatic reference, they are all really highly personal symphonic poems. Such is their popularity that a number of conductors have recorded all three for release singly or in sets.

Though Eugene Ormandy's approach to Tchaikovsky has been rather consistent over a period of years, if not decades, I find his new RCA versions of the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies musically inferior to those recorded some years ago for Columbia and still available in a variety of packages. The crucial first movement of the Fourth is now very labored and at times structurally disjointed. The Fifth

is a better performance, more like the earlier recording. Of course, the Philadelphia Orchestra plays beautifully, with a smoothness that no other matches, but RCA's recording is downright brash—brassier than this orchestra sounds in the Academy of Music and occasionally harsh in the treble. However, these are better recorded than RCA's earlier effort with the *Pathétique* (LSC 3058), which was very poorly focused.

To many, Otto Klemperer's Tchaikovsky readings are unyielding and lacking in tonal warmth, but I find his Fourth (Angel S 36134) one of the most satisfying on records. Herbert von Karajan's two series, on DG and Angel, are completely typical of his style—superbly controlled playing by the great Berlin Philharmonic but rather too subtly blended in tone and lacking, for my taste at least, in rhythmic impact. His more recent Angel versions are more brilliantly recorded.

I would not recommend any of the conductors listed in Schwann for all three symphonies. However, the classic Mravinsky/Leningrad Philharmonic performances have just been reissued domestically by the International Preview Society (175 Community Drive, Great Neck, New York 11025), and all three of those readings are competitive with the best.

Symphony No. 4. This strongly personal but structurally conventional symphony calls forth, as noted, the best of Klemperer's performances. However, my favorite current version is an older Pierre Monteux record with the Boston Symphony (RCA LSC 2369), which succeeds in purely musical terms as no other does.

Symphony No. 5. Despite its audience appeal, the obvious sentimentality and empty grandiosity of the Fifth plunge me into boredom more easily than any of Tchaikovsky's major works. George Szell's straightforward and superbly played reading with the Cleveland Orchestra (Odyssey Y 30670) makes more of this score musically than any other I have heard. At the opposite extreme is Stokowski's Phase-4 performance (London SPC 21017), which reaches heights—or depths—of lurid interpretation and sonic detail. At present, Yevgeny Mravinsky's fine performance is available only on eight-track cartridge and, as noted, in the International Preview Society set. A more overtly "expressive" performance, it ranks for me alongside Szell's. RCA would do well to reissue Serge Koussevitzky's uniquely compelling Fifth.

Symphony No. 6. There are two unique and indispensable discographic documents here, dating thirty-six years apart—Wilhelm Furtwängler's legendary 1938 performance with the Berlin Philharmonic and Leopold Stokowski's most recent recording with

the LSO for RCA. Seraphim's reissue of the Furtwängler is a better transfer than the previous COLH version on Angel, and it is offered at a budget price. Despite its age, this unique performance deserves a place in every record collection, even of those who don't particularly like Tchaikovsky. Furtwängler seemed to have rethought this work in every detail and came up with a reading that is extraordinarily responsive to the composer's emotion-laden expression without indulging in excessive sentimentality.

Stokowski's new RCA version is completely typical of this remarkable nonagenarian: In a sense, it epitomizes his whole approach to music-making for more than six decades. All his wonted emotional excess, oversentimentalization, flamboyant theatricality, and incredible use of orchestral color for expressive effect are summed up in a performance of fascinating impact. Stokowski's treatment of the soaring second subject of the first movement is only one instance of many in this reading that provide an example of a completely unique Tchaikovsky style. In its integral unity of conception and performance, this is a far better representation of this conductor's legendary mastery than his other Tchaikovsky records currently available. Not to everyone's taste, to be sure, but completely spellbinding.

Carlo Maria Giulini's performance with the Philharmonia (Seraphim S 60031) matches Furtwängler's in basic musicianship, producing an equally probing, but quite different, interpretation. Abbado's new DG version with the Vienna Philharmonic is very good, but Karajan does a more complete job with the same sort of approach; in fact Karajan's *Pathétiques* are for me the best of his Tchaikovsky recordings. For those who prefer a more straightforward reading with emphasis on structure rather than sentiment, Fritz Reiner's Chicago Symphony performance (RCA LSC 3296) is very good and much more sympathetic than Arturo Toscanini's brittle reading (Victrola VIC 1268, mono).

Seiji Ozawa's new *Pathétique* just misses placement in the top rank of currently available versions—ranking, in other words, just below Bernstein, Haitink (Philips 6500 081), Karajan, and Reiner, and well short of the exceptional Furtwängler, Stokowski, and Giulini versions.

The first movement of Ozawa's new reading starts very well, with very fine atmosphere, and its individual sections are well conceived, but in the end I did not sense a really integral over-all statement. Of the two middle movements, the Allegro con grazia is rather stiff in its handling of the 5/4 meter, but Ozawa is at his best with fine detail and control in the oft-abused Allegro molto vivace. The finale does not convey the necessary sense of desperate exhaustion, partly because it is played or recorded too loudly and partly because the string tone is too rich.

The Ormandy Fourth and Fifth in quadriphony: The Quadri-disc editions, like other Philadelphia Orchestra recordings, use the back channels to capture "hall sound." The Fourth is a little more distant in perspective, though the focus and clarity of texture are slightly better than in the Fifth, which is recorded with relatively high levels in the back channels so that instrumental placements sometimes seem to "bleed" in that direction. In terms of extraneous noise and distortion, however, one review sample of the Fourth was only fair and another was very poor.

ROBERT LONG

The Stokowski Sixth in quadriphony: RCA—or more probably Stokowski—treats the orchestra to a wraparound perspective relatively new for RCA's quadriphonic symphonic recordings. Though the seating is unconventional (how often has Stokowski's been otherwise?), it works well, with a fine sense of space, balance, and detail.

ROBERT LONG

This new Philips record is of course more vividly reproduced than my preferred interpretations. Though beautifully balanced in recording and performance, the Orchestre de Paris still shows some weak spots in its playing and the trumpets are especially coarse in the climaxes.

The symphonic poems

Manfred is a genuine symphony in the Berliozian tradition. Coming between the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, it is a full-scaled four-movement work of considerably greater merit than the Fifth, more diffuse formally than the Fourth, and less original in structure than the Sixth. Abravanel's version, available separately, is very much worth acquiring. Both Maazel and Svetlanov suffer from the deficiencies noted in connection with their symphony cycles.

Romeo and Juliet. The choices approach infinity here, and the listener may be influenced by couplings. My favorite is Charles Munch's version with *Francesca da Rimini* (Victrola VICS 1197), both superbly played in the best Romantic style.

Francesca da Rimini. Dorati's recent version with the National Symphony is rather bleak—hardly in a class with Munch's, interpretively or orchestrally.

Hamlet. None of the performances of this admittedly lesser work strikes me as compelling. Aside from Abravanel's very musical reading, Svetlanov's more dramatic performance would be the best choice. Dorati's recent record suffers from the same defects as his *Francesca*.

The Voyevode. Since this is not in the Abravanel set, Dorati and the National Symphony have the field pretty much to themselves. (I have not heard Janos Fürst's new Turnabout version.)

The Tempest. This is currently available only in Svetlanov's coupling with *Romeo and Juliet*, both rather melodramatically interpreted with an inferior orchestra.

1812 Overture. Reiner's (RCA Victrola VICS 1025) is a very impressive performance but without additional brass band, used by both Bernard Haitink (Philips 6500 643) and Previn (Angel S 36890).

by Royal S. Brown

Ravel in Minnesota: The Real Thing

Conductor Skrowaczewski
and Vox's recording team combine
to produce a sensitive and beautifully
registered set of the orchestral works.

Marche slave. Chances are that this will be bought as a filler on some other Tchaikovsky record, but if the reader's choice will be determined by this piece, he can't go far wrong with Reiner, Previn, or Haitink.

B **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Orchestral Works*. Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel, cond. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] Vox QSVBX 5129/31, \$10.98 each three-disc set.

QSVBX 5129: Symphonies: No. 1, in G minor, Op. 13 (*Winter Dreams*); No. 3, in D, Op. 29 (*Polish*); No. 5, in E minor, Op. 64. **QSVBX 5130:** Symphonies: No. 2, in C minor, Op. 17 (*Little Russian*); No. 4, in F minor, Op. 36; No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (*Pathétique*). *Marche slave*, Op. 31. **QSVBX 5131:** *Manfred Symphony*, Op. 58; *Francesca da Rimini*, Op. 32; *Romeo and Juliet*; *Hamlet*, Op. 67a; *1812 Overture*, Op. 49. **Available separately:** *Manfred Symphony* (CANOIDE QCE 31079, \$4.98); *Romeo and Juliet*, *1812 Overture* (TURNABOUT QTV-S 34554, \$3.98).

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphonies (6); *Manfred Symphony*, Op. 58. Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. [Severin Pazukhin, prod.] MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40261/7, \$6.98 each.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 3, in D, Op. 29 (Polish)*. Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Moshe Atzmon, cond. [Gerd Ploebtsch, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 401, \$7.98.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphonies: No. 4, in F minor, Op. 36; No. 5, in E minor, Op. 64. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. [Max Wilcox, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0665 and 1-0664, \$6.98 each. Tape: ●● ARK 1-0665 and 1-0664, \$7.95 each; ●● ARS 1-0665 and 1-0664, \$7.95 each. Quadriphonic: ARD 1-0665 and 1-0664 (Quadradiscs), \$7.98 each; ART 1-0665 and 1-0664 (Q-8 cartridges), \$7.95 each.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique)*. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 350, \$7.98.

B **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique)*. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. SERAPHIM 60231, \$3.98 (mono) [recorded 1938; from ANGEL COLH 21, 1961].

H **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique)*. Orchestre de Paris, Seiji Ozawa, cond. PHILIPS 6500 850, \$7.98.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique)*. London Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, cond. [Richard Mohr, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0426, \$6.98. Tape: ●● ARK 1-0426, \$7.95; ●● ARS 1-0426, \$7.95. Quadriphonic: ARD 1-0426 (Quadradisc), \$7.98; ART 1-0426 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.95.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Francesca da Rimini*, Op. 32; *Hamlet*, Op. 67a; *The Voyevode*, Op. 78. National Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. LONDON CS 6841, \$6.98.

ONE OF THE DELIGHTS of Vox's splendid new collection of Ravel orchestral works, which contains four records for the already low price of the usual three, is the sound quality, not just from the standpoint of the engineering, but also in the manner conductor Stanislaw Skrowaczewski has managed for the most part to create a perfect Ravelian orchestral ambience. On the one hand, this ambience involves a certain largeness, a certain expansiveness that grows from an atmospheric quality of deep, frequently dark-woody resonance the composer has created (and the truly superlative string section of the Minnesota Orchestra must be singled out for its contributions here). On the other hand, Ravel constantly deploys solo instruments or small groupings that stand out against the velvety, large orchestral effects, and it is the lines and motives played by these individualized instruments that give the music much of



Stanislaw Skrowaczewski
Creating a perfect Ravelian
orchestral ambience with
the Minnesota Orchestra.

its contour. Skrowaczewski generally maintains a delicate equilibrium between these two extremes, marvelously backed up in his efforts by the recorded sound, which produces a superb sense of depth, spaciousness, and detail.

Here and there, I would have liked a bit more presence from a solo instrument (such as the oboe in the "Petit Poucet" section of *Ma Mère l'Oye*) and some additional bass. Furthermore, the exceptional pianissimos Skrowaczewski gets at the openings of *Bolero*, *La Valse*, and *Rapsodie espagnole* are all but obliterated by the struggle between the low recording level and the ambient noise. All in all, however, this is some of the best Ravel sound I have heard in some time. (Sampling the sound quadraphonically, I found the result less satisfactory than in regular stereo, at least with a Lafayette LR 4000a receiver. Occasional rear-emanating percussion instruments merely distracted me.)

But the quality of this set goes well beyond its fine sonics. Skrowaczewski's thoughtful, frequently intense, and exceptionally well-rounded interpretations consistently complement and highlight each subtle direction taken by the Ravelian idiom. Only in his somewhat perfunctory *Barque sur l'océan* and in some strangely deliberate sections of the *Valses nobles et sentimentales* does he seem to miss the point. And even in the latter, there is an obvious intent to bring out the episodic, almost interrupted side of the piece that is not altogether inappropriate, even though the essential waltz pace all but disappears much of the time.

Skrowaczewski does not, however, make a philosophy of slow tempos. In Ravel's other major vision of the waltz, *La Valse*, the conductor establishes a marvelous Viennese buoyancy that nonetheless never loses the colors imparted by the composer's dream filters. In other of the dance-oriented works as well, particularly parts of the *Ma Mère l'Oye* ballet, the warmly lilting, occasionally wistful *Tombeau de Couperin*, and the multihued "Feria" from the *Rapsodie espagnole*, Skrowaczewski's rhythmic vitality quite simply seems to demand dance and movement.

Furthermore, taking full advantage of extremely broad dynamic contrasts, and shaping the melodic

motives into full, supple lyrical phrases, he communicates more of the music's dormant passion than any conductor has done in quite some time. Indeed, this is perhaps the most original touch Skrowaczewski brings to the music. His Suite No. 1 from *Daphnis et Chloé*, for instance, ranges from a sumptuously evocative, ultra-misterioso "Nocturne" to a frenetic, quickly paced "Danse guerrière" that has an almost disjointed quality to it. (But why in the world does the chorus use a syllable that sounds like "loo" in the "Interlude"?) In *Bolero* as well, he molds the slow, Dionysiac buildup into a gradual accumulation of tension that is never guilty, as are so many interpretations of the work, of a premature climax.

My one screaming objection is the omission of the first third of *Daphnis et Chloé*. I could not agree less with Roland-Manuel's appraisal (quoted in Richard Freed's excellent and thoroughly informative program booklet) that the two concert suites "contain . . . the essential and best-written part of the work." Even if this were true, there is no excuse for an album claiming to contain *all* Ravel's works for orchestra to exclude a major portion of a major work. (There is, of course, an unpublished *Shéhérazade* Overture that was recently premiered in the U.S.) On the other hand, this set includes the only currently available version of the fanfare for the collective ballet *L'Eventail de Jeanne (Jeanne's Fan)*, written in 1927 as a musical offering of sorts for Madame René Dubost.

With so many excellent performances and interpretations, and with the outstanding sound quality, this Vox Box offers an enticing and convenient solution for those who are putting together a more or less complete Ravel discography. I can only hope that the Minnesota Orchestra and Vox will continue in what promises to be an eminently fruitful direction.

B RAVEL: *Orchestral Works*. Minnesota Orchestra, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, cond. [Joanna Nickrenz and Marc J. Aubort, prod.] Vox SVBX 5133, \$10.98 (four QS-encoded discs, manual sequence).

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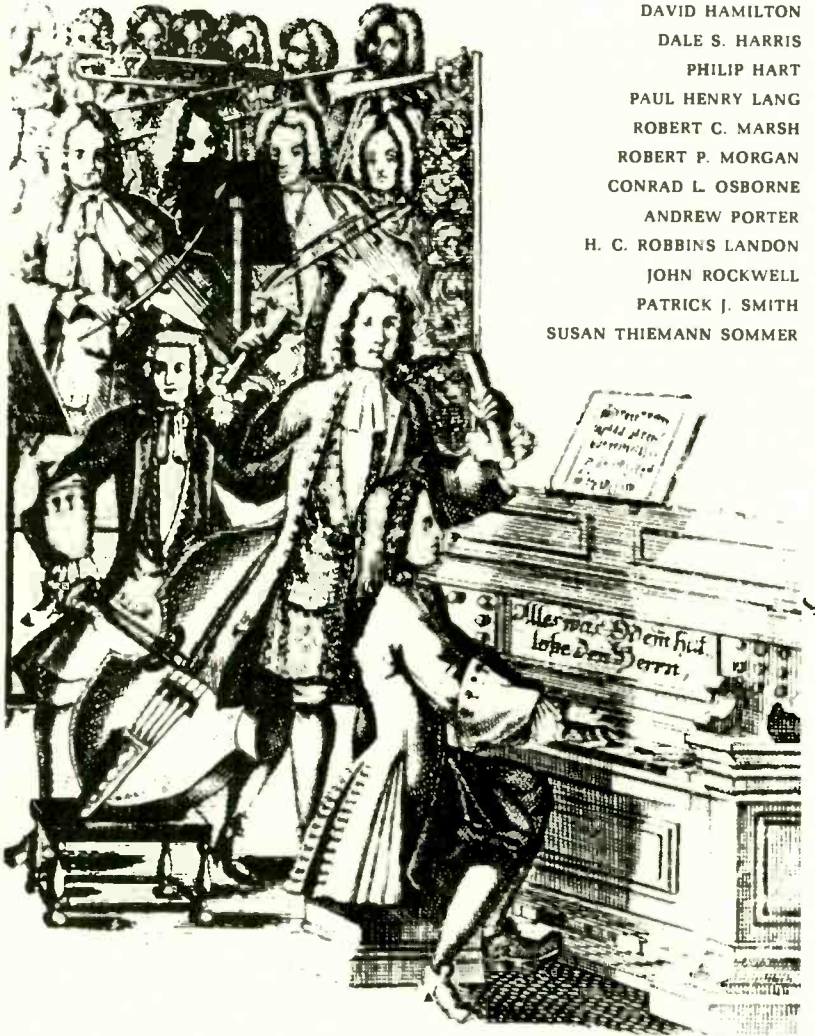
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sometimes slightly laborious drive of the second.

The listener who takes these eight cantatas more or less at one sitting will find most of the pulse-quickenning music in the first set: The triumphant spirit of trumpets-and-timpani scoring occurs in Nos. 31 and 34. For the rest, the soul-searching timbre of strings and/or oboes prevails, encompassing texts that dwell on themes of sorrow and suffering. Various movements of high individuality stand out: the second tenor aria of No. 36, where the soloist has his work cut out for him vis-à-vis a pair of busy oboes over which he must prevail (and does); the soprano/alto canon of No. 37; the anguished chromaticism of the fugal chorus opening No. 38; the terzetto (soprano, alto, bass) of the same cantata, curiously gripping in the peculiar timbre of these combined voices.

The cantatas cover a broad compositional time span, from Weimar of 1715 (No. 31) through three Leipzig cycles of the mid-1720s to the reworking in the early 1740s of No. 34, first written as a wedding cantata in 1726. S.F.

BACH: Concertos for Three Harpsichords and Strings: in D minor, S. 1063; in C, S. 1064. Concerto for Four Harpsichords and Strings, in A minor, S. 1065. Karl Richter, Hedwig Bilgram, Iwona Fütterer, and Ulrike Schott, harpsichords; Munich Bach Orchestra, Karl Richter, cond. [Gerd Ploebusch, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 171, \$7.98.

Richter's new recording of the Bach concertos for three and four harpsichords is among the best available but not, it seems to me, up to his own standards.

Ensemble playing is polished and assured; tempos are appropriately brisk. However, that dramatic intensity for which Richter has long been famous has been drastically subdued here in favor of rich, luscious string sound. It is a very attractive sound, and some listeners may actually prefer it to the leaner textures of the Leonhardt performances (in his five-disc set of all the harpsichord concertos, Telefunken SCA 25); I prefer the more incisive playing of Leonhardt's group and miss the intensity of many of Richter's earlier Bach recordings. Still, this is a welcome addition to the catalogue. C.F.G.

BACH: Cantatas, Vol. 9. Boy soprano and alto from the Vienna Choir Boys; Paul Esswood, countertenor; Kurt Equiluz, tenor; Siegmund Nimsgern, baritone; Vienna Choir Boys, Chorus Viennensis; Vienna Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond.* Walter Gampert, boy soprano; René Jacobs, countertenor; Marius van Altena, tenor; Max van Egmond, baritone; Hannover Boys Choir; Leonhardt Consort, Gustav Leonhardt, cond.* TELEFUNKEN SKW 9, \$13.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

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Vol. 9: Cantatas: No. 31. Der Himmel lacht, die Erde jubiliert*; No. 32. Liebster Jesu, mein Verlangen*; No. 33. Allein zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ*; No. 34. O ewiges Feuer, o Ursprung der Liebe*. Vol. 10: Cantatas: No. 35. Geist und Seele wird verwirret; No. 36. Schwingt freudig euch empor; No. 37. Wer da läubet und getauft wird; No. 38. Aus tiefer Not schrei' ich zu dir.

The latest installments of Telefunken's Bach cantata series keep its high standards intact. Vol. 9 is divided between performances of Harnoncourt's Vienna Concentus Musicus and the Leonhardt Consort, providing certain stimulating comparisons between Harnoncourt's robust baritone soloist (Siegmund Nimsgern) and Leonhardt's sweet-toned, less assertive one (Max van Egmond, who collaborates marvelously with the boy soprano in the jubilant "Gone Is Sorrow" duet in No. 32), and between the smoother rhythmic flow of the first group and the more heavily accented,

BACH: Flute Works. Jean-Pierre Rampal, flute; Robert Veyron-Lacroix, harpsichord; Jordi Savall, viola da gamba.

Explanation of symbols

Classical:

-  Budget
-  Historical
-  Reissue

Recorded tape:

-  Open Reel
-  8-Track Cartridge
-  Cassette

RCA RED SEAL CRL 3-5820, \$13.98 (three discs, automatic sequence).

Sonatas for Flute and Harpsichord: No. 1, in B minor, S. 1030; No. 2, in E flat, S. 1031; No. 3, in A, S. 1032. Sonatas for Flute and Continuo: No. 1, in C, S. 1033; No. 2, in E minor, S. 1034; No. 3, in E, S. 1035. Sonata for Violin or Flute and Harpsichord, in G minor, S. 1020. Sonata for Solo Flute, in A minor, S. 1013. Sonata for Flute, Violin, and Continuo, in G, S. 1038 (with Robert Gendreau, violin). Sonata for Two Flutes and Continuo, in G, S. 1039 (with Alain Marion, flute). Partita for Lute, in C minor, S. 997.

The basic Bach solo-flute repertory of the six sonatas S. 1030/5 usually is augmented by the unaccompanied sonata (or partita) S. 1013 and sometimes also by the very early (c. 1703) S. 1020 sonata for flute or violin and continuo. Over the years, there have been several first-rate recorded collections, notably the 1955 mono set by Wummer and Valenti for Westminster and the still in-print 1965-66 Shaffer/Malcolm stereo set for Angel. But those by Rampal and Veyron-Lacroix (first in mono for La Boîte à Musique and London/Ducetret-Thomson, later in stereo for Epic in 1963, currently reissued as Odyssey Y2 31925) always have been ranked close to if not at the top.

Their latest version has the added attractions not only of gleamingly clean, up-to-date, not oppressively close recording and an acoustical ambience more expansively open than is usual for chamber music, but also three works more than the standard eight. These are the somewhat meandering S. 1038 sonata for intertwined flute and violin (quite possibly the composition of a Bach student rather than the master himself) and the more distinctive, now plaintive, now bubbling S. 1039 sonata for two flutes, plus the more debatably pertinent, but delectable in its own right, S. 997 partita usually considered to have been intended

either for lute or harpsichord solo.

A rich feast indeed—and everything is done with the familiar Rampal/Veyron-Lacroix mastery of phrasing and tonal-coloring techniques. The deftly collaborating violinist in S. 1038 and flutist in S. 1039 are perhaps just a bit too modest in unobtrusively blending their parts with Rampal's, but violist Savall is more outspoken than most continuo gamba players. My only (quite minor) adverse criticisms are of some lack of personal involvement on Rampal's part and that the playing—in both style and smoothly contoured tonal coloring—is more characteristic of today's highest standards than those, undoubtedly less "perfect," of Bach's own time. Compare, for example, this beautifully restrained and polished performance of the greatest of all the flute works, S. 1030, with the recent more boldly personal and eloquently outspoken Holliger performance of the same music in a reconstructed oboe version. (Philips 6500 618). R.D.D.



Robert Veyron-Lacroix

BACH: Organ Works. Michael Murray, organ (Von Beckerath organ of the First Congregational Church, Columbus, Ohio). ADVENT 5010, \$6.98.

Preludes and Fugues: in D, S. 532; in B minor, S. 544. Toccata and Fugue in D minor, S. 565. Concerto No. 2, in A minor, S. 593. Cantata No. 29: Sinfonia.

Michael Murray arrived on the scene some months back with two superb records of French Romantic organ music [December 1974], played with surefire and exciting technique and a very attractive, no-nonsense approach to the music. I find his first Bach record irresistible too, despite various

reservations. Murray does not search for profound "inner meanings"; he seems equally unconcerned with Bach's ceaseless architectural master strokes and with the intricate matter of baroque performance practices. Nevertheless, his Bach renditions have tremendous surface appeal: His technique is dazzling, and he plays with wonderful energy and excitement, clean articulation, and an abundance of rhythmic drive.

The best performances are on Side 1: the famous D minor Toccata and Fugue and the A minor Vivaldi-Bach concerto. In both Murray sets very fast tempos and keeps them going without a suggestion of difficulty. There's scarcely any rhythmic inflection, even in the free fantasy sections of the toccata, but he uses the rhythmic regularity to build a tremendous amount of tension and excitement.

The D major Prelude and Fugue, taken somewhat less briskly, is only a bit above the ordinary. The B minor Prelude and Fugue has in common with Bach's other very late works the most profound emotional content expressed in the most complex musical structure. The music itself has great depth and comparatively little surface appeal, and Murray's style, at least at present, is the opposite.

All but one of the works here were recorded on a 1972 Von Beckerath tracker organ in Columbus, Ohio, with which Murray seems somewhat uncomfortable. He plays it with the surface touch of a player accustomed only to electric actions, seemingly insensitive to the more subtle possibilities of a mechanical action. The three-manual instrument has forty-six stops, dominated by two ranks of *en chamade* Spanish trumpets. The basically German classic design has cornets added to all three manual divisions, giving it a great deal of flexibility. It is not, however, a particularly distinguished instrument. Specifically, it has several badly scaled (or poorly regulated) ranks of high-pitched pipes, which destroy the cohesion of the full ensemble

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.
CHOPIN: Scherzos. Barbosa. CONN. Soc. CSQ 2071, March.
FRANCK: Symphonic Variations; **LISZT:** Totentanz. Watts. COL. M 33072, April.
HANDEL: Cantata Lucretia; Arias. Baker. PHI. 6500 523, March.
MAHLER: Symphony No. 4. Blegen, Levine. RCA ARL 1-0895, June.
MOZART: Concertos Nos. 14-19. P. Serkin. RCA ARL 3-0732 (3), May.
PRAETORIUS: Dances and Motets. Munrow. ANG. S 37091, June.
RAVEL: Piano Works. Simon. Vox SVBX 5473 (3), April.
SCHOENBERG: Piano Works. Jacobs. NONE. H 71309, June.
SCHOENBERG: Pierrot Lunaire. Maxwell Davies. UNI. RHS 319, May.
SCHUBERT: Piano Trios. Szeryng, Fournier, Rubinstein. RCA ARL 2-0731 (2), June.
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.
AFTER THE BALL. Morris, Bolcom. NONE. H 71304, March.
CELLO SONATAS. Sylvester. DESTO DC 7169, June.
ENGLISH HARPSICHORD. Kipnis. ANG. SB 3816 (2), April.
OBOE RECITAL. Holliger. PHI. 6500 618, June.



and Jean-Pierre Rampal—a rich feast of Bach flute works.

and give it a raucous, unrefined sound.

Murray also gives an ebullient reading of an organ transcription of the Sinfonia to Cantata No. 29 (complete with gradual closing and re-opening of the swell shutters, à la Virgil Fox). That performance is on the organ of St. Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana, the same instrument he used on his Franck disc. C.F.C.

BEETHOVEN: Sonatas for Violin and Piano: No. 2, in A, Op. 12, No. 2; No. 9, in A, Op. 47 (*Kreutzer*). Itzhak Perlman, violin; Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano. LONDON CS 6845. \$6.98.

This disc, the first installment in a complete cycle of the Beethoven violin sonatas, leaves the subtle but unmistakable impression of a piano-dominant partnership. It is not really a matter of loudness; the recorded balance is very considerate of both instruments. Rather Ashkenazy exerts an added measure of authority through minute control of musical character, delineation of phrases, articulation, and texture. He is completely responsive to sudden mood changes, to shifts among staccato, legato, and portamento. His incisive playing displays a constantly probing mind aware of all sorts of fine points often passed over in the average—or even above average—performance. For example, in the variation movement of the *Kreutzer*, the beginning of the coda is made more effective by the astute observance of both the sforzando and the forte that follows it in the reliable Henle urtext edition (some versions print only the *sf*)—a seemingly small point that nonetheless has a revelatory impact.

Perlman is a substantial virtuoso, but his playing is in the main just that bit more generalized than Ashkenazy's. The violin playing is muscular, musically, and straightforward, but overly reliant on a constant, plushy vibrato—lacking, in other words, the variety of color and intensity needed to match the incisiveness of the piano part.

Op. 12, No. 2, is beautifully worked out from an ensemble standpoint. The first movement, such an exciting scramble in the old Szigeti/Arrau version, is spectacularly together here. This is clean, direct, completely unpretentious music-making.

In the *Kreutzer*, I would welcome more fervor. (How many works, after all, have two Presto movements?) Even so, the Perlman/Ashkenazy version is anything but slow-footed and Brahmsian. There is bite to the sonority and ample vigor and classical contouring. Perlman and Ashkenazy also shun many of the bad habits of generations and generations of performers; they don't, for instance, anticipate the ritards in the third movement's second theme.

So if there must be a tinge of disappointment, it is at the highest level; I can imagine a Milstein or Kyung-Wha Chung matching Ashkenazy phrase for phrase. Still, this should be a fine series indeed. H.G.

BERG: Quartet for Strings, Op. 3; Lyric Suite. Alban Berg Quartet. TELEFUNKEN SAT 22549. \$6.98.

Comparison:
LaSalle Quartet

DG 2530 283

The Alban Berg Quartet was founded in 1970 by four professors at the Vienna Hochschule für Musik; the first and second fiddles were former concertmasters of, respectively, the Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. They resolved to perform in every recital a piece by Berg, Schoenberg, Webern, or a contemporary composer. And for a year, according to a note on the sleeve of this record, these Viennese players went to Cincinnati to study interpretation and execution of the Second Vienna School with the LaSalle Quartet. The LaSalle's splendid album of the complete string-quartet works of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern, for Deutsche Grammophon, was welcomed in these pages by David Hamilton, in March 1972. Some of it is also available separately;

and one of the separate discs (2530 283) presents the same coupling—Berg's string quartet and *Lyric Suite*—as the Berg Quartet's record under review. The sleeve remarks that "it would be presumptuous to claim that at this stage the musicians from Cincinnati have already been surpassed." Nevertheless, I think perhaps they have been, in the performance of the string quartet. But not in the *Lyric Suite*. So neither disc is clearly preferable to the other. Both are first-rate recordings of first-rate performances.

Anyone who owns the *Lyric Suite* already in, say, the (recently deleted) Juilliard Quartet version may like to head for the Telefunken version of the quartet. The timbre of the LaSalle playing is bewitching—four beautifully matched musicians playing four beautifully matched Amati instruments, aristocrats in sound, in delicacy and finesse of phrasing, in the polish of their discourse. But in the Berg Quartet's interpretation of the work, the bones of the structure are somewhat nearer the surface, and that, it seems to me, is what the piece needs. Schoenberg, in the famous "testimonial" to his former pupil, wrote of "the fullness and unconstraint of the string quartet's musical language, the strength and sureness of its presentation, its careful working and significant originality." The slightly more robust, slightly more emphatic, slightly more vigorously rhythmical performance by the Viennese players emphasizes these qualities. Neither quartet, by the way, gives full romantic value to the portamento swoops asked for in the *sehr ruhig und massig* section of the finale.

And neither quartet, it seems to me, plays the first *tenebroso* section in the fifth movement of the *Lyric Suite* with quite the magical effect suggested by the score. The chords here are lapped like shadows cast upon shadows; the marking for each is *ppp* with a poco crescendo to *p*, but the players make rather bigger crescendos than that marking would suggest. Otherwise, I prefer the LaSalle version for its uncannily beautiful performance of the Allegro misterioso with its string writing that Elliott Carter would mark *scorrevole* (the Berg Quartet produces a slightly more sibilant rustle), and for the serenity and evenness of those wonderful final pages that succeed the big climax (the beauty of the LaSalle sound here is surely unsurpassable). Other small points of difference: The LaSalle's cellist, Jack Kirstein, begins the Adagio appassionato rather more expressively, but the Berg's cellist, Valentin Erben, begins the last movement, the Largo desolato, with a slightly heavier, and slightly more affecting, pianissimo tread.

It is interesting to note that, after the first performance of the *Lyric Suite*, Berg wrote to Schoenberg reporting, with pleasure, that there had been applause after each movement from the second on. Audience habits have changed. In the same letter, Berg gives the duration of his work as 30-35 minutes; the score suggests about 32; in both the recorded versions, the timing is about 26 minutes. A.P.

BERG: Three Orchestral Pieces, Op. 6; Three Pieces from the *Lyric Suite*. For a feature review, see page 61.

B **BERG: Wozzeck.**

Marie	Eileen Farrell (s)
Margret	Edwina Eustis (a)
Marie's Child	Bess Ann Herdt (s)
Wozzeck	Mack Harrell (b)
Drum Major	Frederick Jagel (t)
Captain; Soldier; Idiot	Joseph Mordino (t)
Andres	David Lloyd (t)
Doctor	Ralph Herbert (b)
1st Apprentice	Adolph Anderson (bs)
2nd Apprentice	Hubert Norville (b)

High School of Music and Art Chorus; Schola Cantorum; New York Philharmonic, Dimitri Mitropoulos, cond. ODYSSEY Y2 33126, \$6.98 (two discs, mono, automatic sequence) [from COLUMBIA SL 118, recorded at concert performances, April 1951].

Among the various operatic recordings on the Odyssey label that bear the rubric "Legendary Performances," this, I venture to say, is virtually the only one to deserve such an accolade. It wasn't the first American performance of *Wozzeck*: Stokowski did that back in 1931, a fully staged production in Philadelphia and New York, but the Depression and the war forestalled any significant consequences. The Mitropoulos concert performances twenty years later started a new cycle of appreciation for the work, especially when Columbia arranged to issue a recording, with the proceeds to benefit the orchestra's pension fund. For over a decade, this remained the only recording of *Wozzeck*, and can still be heard with pleasure and profit.

Most importantly, it is a "real performance"—that is, it conveys the presence of something really happening, with compelling force and immediacy. Mitropoulos certainly grasped the shape of the opera as well as any conductor ever to undertake it, and he drew from the Philharmonic much brilliant and remarkably accurate playing.

Mack Harrell, though short of voice for the lower notes of the title role, is thoroughly convincing in all its other phases, becoming more of a presence as the opera goes along and *Wozzeck's* agony tears apart his earlier mute suffering. Except for David Lloyd, a brilliant Andres, the others are all problematic in one way or another, with strong and weak points. Miss Farrell is often impressive, but frequently misses a comfortable and convincing articulation of her lines; she commits some decidedly approximate pitching here and there, including—rather endearingly—a couple of overly enthusiastic high Bs that top the mark by a semitone or more. In the upper part of the Captain's range, Joseph Mordino is almost fantastic, but he must compromise with the lower material, while Ralph Herbert has to do the opposite for the Doctor; what with these problems and some rough ensemble, the second scene of Act II (*Wozzeck* taunted by the Captain and Doctor) is perhaps the least successful stretch of the performance.

But most of its goes with a galvanizing urgency that even the recording's limited dynamic range and sometimes awkward balances cannot dampen seriously. You will, naturally, hear much more detail on either of the full-priced stereo recordings (of which the Boulez is particularly notable for its extraordinary orchestral clarity and balancing, although the singers are equally notable for their laissez-faire approach to the notes). At half-price, though, the Mitropoulos makes a valuable supplement—or



Mitropoulos, Farrell, Jagel, and Lloyd—a legendary *Wozzeck*.

even, I think, a good introduction to *Wozzeck* for the timid. Its value for the latter is enhanced by the inclusion of a complete libretto and translation (which the original full-priced issue eschewed), along with as much of the late Herbert F. Peyser's Philharmonic program notes as were (unacknowledgedly) pillaged for use in the Boulez set. D.H.

BONONCINI, GIOVANNI: Divertimenti da Camera. Hans-Martin Linde, alto recorder; Eduard Müller, harpsichord; Konrad Ragossnig, lute; Josef Ulsamer, viola da gamba. [Klaus Scheibe and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 167, \$7.98.

This is the Bononcini, often erroneously identified as Giovanni Battista (as even the usually reliable Archiv labels do here), who was born in 1670 and died in 1755 and who should not be confused with either his father, Giovanni Maria (1642-78), or brother, Antonio Maria (1675-1726). Perhaps most distinctively he is the man whose rivalry with Handel in London in the 1720s, one of the great feuds in music history, has been memorialized in a famous epigram by the contemporary Jacobite poet John Byrom:

Some say, that Signor Bononcini,
Compar'd to Handel's a mere ninny;
Others aver, to him, that Handel
Is scarcely fit to hold a candle
Strange! that such high dispute shou'd be
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Today's discophiles never have been given a fair chance to decide for themselves whether Byrom was as unfair to Bononcini as we know he was to Handel. Except for a few opera airs and a couple of suites plus No. 7 of the present divertimentos (the last three once included in a Montreal Trio collection, "Music of the Italian Baroque," for Vox), the Archiv release is the first substantial representation of Giovanni's work I know. The music was published in London in 1722, only a couple of years after Bononcini had arrived in England following his operatic triumphs in Rome, Berlin, and especially Vienna. Not surprisingly, these works, more like *sonate da camera* than the suite-like divertimentos of later years, have considerable stylistic kinship with Handel's music—and in the Lento movement of No. 5 even a decidedly Handelian lyrical pathos. Nevertheless, there's a dis-

tinctive individuality evident here, scarcely boasting a protean genius comparable to Handel's, of course, but surely a music-maker of notably high talent with a gift not only for often genuinely eloquent Italian lyricism, but also for both ceremonial nobility and lilting vivacity.

But the varied delectabilities of Bononcini's music here owe a considerable debt to the zest and grace of the performances. In beautifully pure and natural recording, Hans-Martin Linde's playing is well-nigh ideal both tonally and interpretatively. He is admirably accompanied too, with the continuo parts effectively varied from the usual harpsichord/gamba combination to lute/gamba (in Nos. 2 and 4) and for one work (No. 7) to harpsichord/lute/gamba.

R.D.D.

BRAHMS: Ballades, Op. 10— See Schumann: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra.

BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 5, in B flat (ed. Nowak). Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, cond. LONDON CS 2238, \$13.96 (two discs, automatic sequence).

Comparisons:
Haitink/Concertgebouw Phi. 6700 055
Klemperer/New Philharmonia Ang. SB 3709

Even for a conductor of Maazel's unflappable professionalism, the Fifth is a pretty fearsome choice for a first Bruckner recording. Quite aside from the length, matched only by a slow performance of the Eighth, this score offers the conductor such challenges as smoothly integrating the alternate adagio and allegro speeds of the opening movement; managing the frequent four-against-six rhythm in the slow movement; gauging the Scherzo's now sudden, now gradual pickups of tempo between the two principal themes; holding a rock-steady beat in the finale, while making sure that all the permutations of scoring within which the two fugue subjects embed themselves are clearly heard.

Maazel's concert performances last season with the Cleveland Orchestra, technically polished though they were, somehow failed to mesmerize, which made me all the more curious about the recording. I must begin by stating that, in its general level of musicianship and executant competence, it is far more satisfactory than London's ear-

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* Recorded by Melodiya in the U.S.S.R.



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lier effort with the Vienna Philharmonic—Knappertsbusch's (Stereo Treasury STS 15121/2), which is in any case disqualified by its use of the Schalk brothers' butchery of the score. Furtwängler's VPO concert performance (Rococo 2034) is intriguing for its uncharacteristic driving dynamism and many expressive moments, but it is ragged and undisciplined and the sound is atrocious. Jochum's Fifth (DG 2707 020) is romantic and atmospheric, but it too is disjointed—in a work that depends on rigorous formal cohesion.

That leaves, in addition to Maazel, the quite different but magnificently played and recorded versions of Haitink and Klemperer. The London recording, to begin with, offers a more generalized orchestral perspective than the other two: Though wide in range and clean enough, the sound here does not allow the trombones and tubas to emerge with the crisp, snarling edge they have with Klemperer or to maintain individual timbre as they do in the tighter and more backward ambience of the Haitink version. Actual problems of execution and intonation are minor enough, and the string tone is perhaps the warmest and loveliest of all, but I find over and over that the Concertgebouw performance is more attentive to nuances of phrasing, dynamics, and articulation, while the New Philharmonia has been captured by EMI's engineers with more presence and transparency.

Maazel takes the first movement at a moderate pace. The changes from adagio to allegro are less mercurial and exciting than Haitink's. I'm sorry that Maazel overlooks the *ritardando* at bar 387, and I don't care for the *crescendo* he introduces from bars 45 to 50. At least he avoids the slowdown for the *pizzicato* theme, a trap into which Klemperer falls, leaving nowhere to go when *ritards* are called for.

In the slow movement, Maazel begins at nearly Klemperer's vigorous, *andantelike* tempo. But unlike Klemperer, who kept up that pace, he broadens at letter B, where Bruckner marks *sehr kräftig*. He winds up taking almost as long as Haitink, with his broader basic tempo. Maazel is generally the most flexible of the three in this movement, coordinating the duple-against-triple meter as smoothly as Haitink and better than Klemperer. Unlike the others, Maazel phrases the ornamental turns that first occur at measure 47 as long notes rather than *appoggiaturas*.

In the Scherzo, he fails really to slow down for the second theme, missing the inimitable parodistic quality Klemperer achieves. Haitink doesn't leave himself room here to get back to the main tempo without speeding up drastically.

In the finale, Maazel overdoes a gearshift here, underplays one there. The brass introduction to the second (chorale) fugue subject is less steady and majestic than with Haitink and Klemperer. And the softening of detail is a particular problem in the big climax. Haitink's virtuosity remains unmatched, though he almost runs away with himself in the contrapuntally developed passages. Klemperer, at a broad but inexorable clip, achieves enormous cumulative power to match his richly detailed texture: that is one of the most roof-raising climaxes I know of on an orchestral recording. A.C.



Martha Argerich
Completely musical.

CHOPIN: Sonata for Piano, No. 2, in B flat minor, Op. 35; Scherzo No. 2, in B flat minor, Op. 31; Andante spianato and Grande polonaise brillante, Op. 22. Martha Argerich, piano. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 530, \$7.98.

Martha Argerich's tempestuous, even rashly aggressive recording of the Chopin B minor Sonata (DG 139 317) prepared me for a similar approach to the far more dramatic B flat minor. And yet she sounds relatively cool and collected this time!

The over-all effect calls to my mind the venerable recordings of Rachmaninoff (Victrola VIC 1534 or RCA ARM 3-0294) and Cortot (his earlier, better one, never transferred to LP), though the treatment of detail is different and of course the approach is thoroughly modern in its respect for the composer's written indications. It is largely a matter of timing and pedaling: In the "wind over the grave" finale, Argerich's command is fantastic, giving a large, spanning conception with individual notes bound together into screaming siren wails. A certain spookiness pervades the first three movements too, but never to the detriment of poetry or structure. The leaps in the scherzo are unfailingly strong and accurate. This is definitely one of the most absorbing (and masterfully played) readings of this demanding sonata to come my way recently. Argerich, incidentally, takes the famous funeral march rather swiftly and begins the return of the first section at the prescribed soft dynamic.

The *Andante spianato* and *Grande polonaise* gets a rather angular, deliberate reading. The pedaling is spare, the colors sober; again structural articulation is uppermost. I have heard brighter, more rippling performances of this early work, but Argerich, by underplaying the salonish qualities, manages to endow the piece with impressive intellectual weight and stature.

The B flat minor Scherzo is one of the most Beethovenesque of Chopin's works: it tends to be built up with motivic figurations and dynamic contrasts. Argerich navigates a rather severe course in the

middle section, where many players broaden out rhetorically, but conversely she could have kept the line of the opening melody longer and more urgently directional. For me she doesn't fully project the magnificent power and severity of this scherzo.

Argerich plainly has her own view of these oft-played works, and her assured, completely natural pianistic command, her lyrical instinct, her glistening passagework are completely musical and a pleasure to hear. H.G.

DVOŘÁK: Mass in D (original version). Neil Ritchie, boy soprano; Andrew Giles, boy alto; Alan Byers, tenor; Robert Morton, bass; Nicholas Cleobury, organ; Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford; Simon Preston, cond. [Michael Bremner, prod.] ARGO ZRG 781, \$6.98.

Comparison:
Smetáček / Prague Sym.

Supr. 1 12 0981/2

Dvořák composed this Mass for the consecration of a private chapel, where it was premiered in 1887 in the organ-accompanied form here recorded by Argo. For its publication in 1892, Dvořák orchestrated the Mass, and that version can be heard on Smetáček's Supraphon recording (which features the same conductor, chorus, and orchestra as, but different soloists from, an earlier *Musica Sacra* recording).

Both versions have staunch adherents. I find that the orchestration adds little to the Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, while some of the woodwind writing in the Kyrie and the brass effects there and in the Credo are impressive and touching. But that's not the only difference between the two recordings. Argo uses boy soloists for the soprano and alto parts, yielding a more celestial and sweet sound, with occasional pitch imprecision, in contrast with the lustier and more professionally polished quality of Supraphon's female soloists.

Each reading is devoted and stylish in its own way, and both have spacious sonics, with Argo's perhaps more close up and translucent. There is no dearth of bass response in either, the organ registering quite imposingly in both (it still has a part to play in the orchestral version).

The work itself is by and large rather sober and austere. The Dvořák of the symphonies and *Slavonic Dances*, the tone poems and concertos, even the mature chamber masterpieces, rarely emerges. Many of Dvořák's other sacred works are more characteristic: the *Stabat Mater* and Requiem, with their vein of heartrending lyricism; the *Te Deum*, with its supercharged vitality and abandon; the enormously dramatic oratorio *St. Ludmila*, with its expressive range and grandeur. The Smetáček reading of this Mass shares a two-disc set with the *Te Deum*, Psalm 149, and the five *Biblical Songs*. That album and Supraphon's *St. Ludmila* (SUAST 50585/7) deserve highest consideration for domestic release by Vanguard. A.C.

GESUALDO: Nine responsories and other chants marking Holy Saturday. Prague Madrigal Singers, Miroslav Venhoda, cond. TELEFUNKEN SAWT 9613, \$6.98.



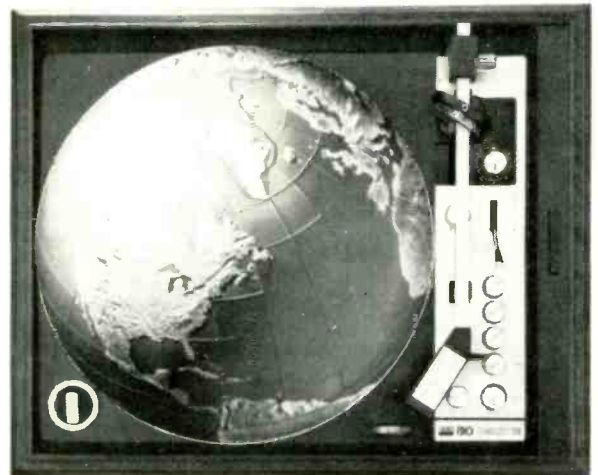
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Don Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa (c. 1560-1613), is best known for his six books of five-voice madrigals (147 in number) and especially for the later ones in which he experimented with unique, bold, and—even today—startling chromatic phrases. Besides these secular works, he also published two books of *Sacrae Cantiones* in 1603 (one of the books survives only in incomplete form) and a book of *Responsoria et alia ad Officium Hebdomadae Sanctae Spectantia* in 1611, the same year that saw the publication of the fifth and sixth books of madrigals.

The twenty-seven six-voice responsories, plus a psalm and a canticle, contained in this late publication have a strictly liturgical function. On certain of the more important church holy days, for which the daily liturgy has retained its full form, the Office of Matins is divided into three nocturnes. Each of the nocturnes includes three readings or scriptural lessons, and each of these lessons is followed by a sung responsory, the text of which is partly Biblical and partly free verse. The texts of Gesualdo's twenty-seven responsories are those for the three nocturnes of Matins in *Tenebrae* (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday). This new Valois/Telefunken disc makes available for the first time the third group of nine, proper to the three nocturnes of Matins of Holy Saturday, plus the psalm and the canticle.

The Gregorian responsories all consist of two sections, the respond (sung by the choir) and the verse (soloist or soloists), after which the respond is repeated either complete or, more often, from some midpoint. Gesualdo followed this structure precisely in each of his polyphonic settings, even frequently reducing the normal six-voice texture of the respond to fewer voices in the verse. The boldly expressive chromaticism of his late madrigals is employed in the same manner and to about the same degree in these works, the expressiveness here illustrating the story of Christ's Passion, with which these three most solemn days of the Christian year are concerned.

As a kind of addendum to the publication, Gesualdo included six-voice polyphonic settings of *Psalm 50* (*Miserere mei*) and a canticle (*Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*). Both are proper to the Office Hour of Laudes on all three days in *Tenebrae*. In both cases Gesualdo has followed the tradition of setting only the odd-numbered verses, leaving the alternate verses to be chanted to the appropriate psalm tone. The two pieces are performed in that manner on this recording, and the proper antiphons are even included before and after the psalm and canticle (*O mors* with *Miserere*, and *Mulieres sedentes* with *Benedictus*).

I wish I could be as enthusiastic about the actual performances here as about the music and the over-all production. The Prague Madrigal Singers number twenty-one singers on this recording. Their conductor, Miroslav Venhoda, obviously has good ideas and a good understanding of the music, but his vocalists simply can't deliver what he is calling for. The group is a collection of "mature" voices, to say the least, and, while we can't accuse them of having wobbles, we can complain that they sing with too much vibrato and too much portamento, leaving the pitch frequently vague

and imprecise. In any polyphonic music this can be harmful, but in Gesualdo's chromatic music, which is so difficult to tune anyway, the ambiguous intonation is disastrous. The ensemble of the group is also less than precise.

In view of the excellence and interest of the music and the unlikelihood of another recording in the near future, I will recommend this one anyway. We need recordings of the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday segments before we ask for a new recording of this group.

The recorded sound is fairly good, though individual singers with unattractive voices are miked rather too closely. The jacket notes include complete Latin texts but no translations. C.F.G.

LEKEU: Sonata for Violin and Piano, in G.
VIEUXTEMPS: Ballade et Polonaise, Op. 38.
YSAÏE: Rêve d'enfant, Op. 14. Arthur Grumiaux, violin; Dinorah Varsi, piano. PHILIPS 6500 814, \$7.98.

There was a good idea behind the programming of this recital: three Belgian composers performed by a Belgian violinist. The composers, moreover, are related to each other in hierarchical fashion, Vieuxtemps having taught YsaÏe, who in turn was a mentor of Guillaume Lekeu (1870-1894). The trouble is, three-quarters of the disc is consumed by the Lekeu sonata, an arch-Romantic piece awash in luxuriant melody that never seems to get anywhere, fulsomely scored in the piano part, broad, rhetorical, and interminable. Lekeu, who wrote the sonata at twenty-two and died of typhoid at twenty-four, might have tightened up his style eventually; but the piece made me feel as if I were swimming in oatmeal.

The YsaÏe is short, gentle, and slightly Debussy-ish; the Vieuxtemps, thank heavens, is first lean and spare, then (in the *Polonaise*) genuinely brilliant, diverting, and direct in its grandstand gestures. Vieuxtemps knew just where he was going.

Grumiaux performs the works in a rich and generous manner, as is his wont, and Miss Varsi is thoroughly up to the demands made on her, which are considerable. S.F.

B LISZT: Dante Symphony. Psallete de Lorraine Vocal Ensemble; Luxemburg Radio Orchestra, Pierre Cao, cond. CANDIDE OCE 31082, \$4.98 (QS-encoded disc).

Liszt's two symphonies were written in the same period, with the composition of the *Dante* score falling between the beginning and the final revision of the more familiar *Faust* Symphony. Those who admire that work should find much to please them in this one, for they are very much alike: robustly Romantic scores, more tone poems than symphonies on classical models, that are alternately dramatic, erotic, pious, and exotic in the Lisztian manner (with occasional Wagnerian overtones). In any well-conducted Romantic revival the *Dante* Symphony would return to the repertory, and this recording may assist that process since it puts the work in the catalogue in a thoroughly effective and sympathetic statement that is enhanced by good use of four-channel techniques. (My, what a splash Liszt's orchestration makes when you have



Murray Perahia
Subtle and precise Mendelssohn.

drum rolls ominously replying to low brass across the room!)

The first movement ("Inferno") might well have been the model for Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini*. In tripartite form, it places an extended outpouring of Lisztian love music between two statements of the hell-fire and brimstone themes. The "Purgatory" music is quite sentimental and very pretty in a manner of cultivated prettiness. (Hell is really more interesting.) The final "Magnificat" recalls Liszt's other religious music. Heaven reveals itself in carefully graded shades of mauve and puce. There is a large satin cushion on the divine throne, and the saints and martyrs have all become beautiful people. Still, it's done with a flair.

If you want to know what the nineteenth century was all about, this record helps a great deal. R.C.M.

LISZT: Sonata for Piano, in B minor; Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6, in D flat. Alexander Slobodyanik, piano. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M 33119, \$6.98.

Slobodyanik gives very freewheeling performances, with plenty of technique and aristocratic phrasing. He never abuses his instrument: He pedals sparingly and refuses to batter dramatic passages senseless. Nevertheless, there is something slightly monochromatic about the (very good) sonority he draws from his piano. Melodic strands are clear enough, but rarely do they spring to life with the vivifying impact of the Richter, Arrau, Curzon, and Cortot performances of the sonata. Nor does the rhapsody, played with grace and velocity, produce the awesome, massive impact of Horowitz's touched-up reading (RCA LM 2584, mono).

Still, my chief complaint has nothing to do with Slobodyanik. I find it difficult at this late date to recommend an edition of the continuous Liszt sonata with a side break. The sonata could easily have been offered complete on Side 1, with the rhapsody plus additional material on Side 2. Columbia's layout is musically damaging (is that what the LP is for?) as well as poor value. H.G.

B **MASSENET: Manon.**

Manon
Des Grieux
Lescaut
Coun: des Grieux

Janine Micheau (s)
Libero de Luca (t)
Roger Bourdin (b)
Julien Giovanetti (bs)

Opéra-Comique Chorus and Orchestra, Albert Wolff, cond. RICHMOND RS 63023, \$10.47 (three discs, mono, automatic sequence) [from LONDON LLA 7, 1952, and A 4305, 1957].

Comparisons:
Sills, Gedda, Rudel ABC ATS 20007
De los Angeles, Legay, Monteux Sera. ID 6057

It's hard to see to whom this reissue is addressed. Those whose primary interest is the opera itself will gravitate to the Rudel recording, which is well cast, sonically up to date, and uncut. Those who are attracted to elegance (or are budget-minded) will opt for the Monteux.

Perhaps the Richmond set is designed to appeal to those with a nostalgia for European broadcasts of a quarter-century ago. Not that this *Manon* derives from a broadcast. It simply sounds like one, having been furnished with the sort of benign commentator who once upon a time used to mediate between listeners and performance by setting the scene and explaining the action—particularly during those passages when the orchestra alone was playing. (It is possibly to accommodate this additional role that the score has been so heavily cut.)

The performance itself is pleasing enough; it achieves the level you might have encountered on a good night at the Opéra-Comique around 1950. Albert Wolff keeps everything deft. Janine Micheau lacks allure, but she is an affecting Manon and is more idiomatic than either Sills (ABC) or De los Angeles (Seraphim). The Swiss tenor Libero de Luca has a decent enough voice but is off pitch a lot of the time. Roger Bourdin, however, is a first-rate Lescaut. The small roles are convincingly done, and the orchestra and chorus are creditable. Text and translation, including the narrator's role. D.S.H.

MENDELSSOHN: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 1, in G minor, Op. 25; No. 2, in D minor, Op. 40. Murray Perahia, piano; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 33207, \$6.98. Quadriphonic: MQ 33207 (SQ-encoded disc), \$7.98; MAQ 33207 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.98.

Comparison:
Serkin, Ormandy/Philadelphia Col. MS 6128

It is often noted that Mendelssohn's famous E minor Violin Concerto (1844), by dispensing with the opening tutti exposition and presenting the initial theme straightaway on the violin, helped revitalize the concertante idiom, which had been faltering since the days of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto (1809) and, to a lesser extent, the diverse concertante works of Weber. Yet the Mendelssohn piano concertos are in most ways every bit as innovative.

The G minor begins, after a short, nervous introduction in the orchestra, with an immediate statement on the piano of the opening thematic material, and it is likewise the piano that introduces the calmer and more unified second theme. While the orchestra has a more important role at the

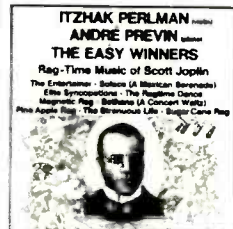
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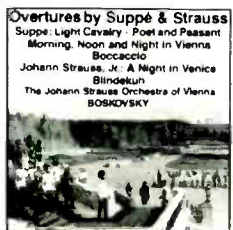
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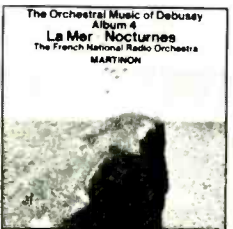
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beginning of the D minor Concerto, it by no means gives a complete statement of the main themes before the piano returns. Both concertos feature a fairly equal interplay between piano and orchestra in the first-movement expositions, in which repetition is an element of the thematic structure and development (notice how many of Mendelssohn's melodic fragments are repeated immediately, either literally or in sequence) and not of the form. Furthermore, in both works Mendelssohn solves the cadenza problem by simply eliminating it altogether.

But the amputation of the cadenza is by no means a copout. Perhaps because of the innate difference between the piano sound and that of the instruments of the classical orchestra, Mendelssohn tends to use the solo instrument as a different element of the orchestral sound, thereby integrating it with the orchestra in a much more thorough fashion than perhaps had ever been done before; a cadenza would have tended to unbalance the works. And one is struck, in listening to these concertos (especially in the outer movements), by surprisingly frequent changes in configuration in the solo instrument-vs-orchestra relationship. Compare this with the style of the two Chopin piano concertos, written slightly earlier (in 1829 and 1830).

Perhaps as a consequence of this piano-orchestra integration, these works often lack that solid, lyrical flow one comes to expect from the Romantic concerto. But it seems to me that the composer more than makes up for this by the exhilarating sense of drama and movement he creates not only through the soloist-orchestra structures, but also in his harmonic language, which constantly establishes an atmosphere of expectation. What the listener finally ends up with is the impression of an integral, highly dynamic, rather non-Romantic structure particularly resistant to the isolation of its individual parts.

I have heard no performer capture the drama and tension of these concertos as thoroughly as Rudolf Serkin, whose recording is marked by strikingly brisk pacing and by an exceptionally full and rich accompaniment by the Philadelphia Orchestra. Yet, as Harris Goldsmith once pointed out, the Serkin renditions lack—although not entirely, to my mind—an essential Mendelssohnian lightness and grace. And while I would not be without his interpretations, there is certainly room for the much more idiomatic approach of Murray Perahia and Neville Marriner, who sacrifice little to Serkin in terms of pacing and briskness but do clear up the storm clouds from time to time and allow milder breezes to blow.

Compare, for instance, the simple, unobtrusive way Marriner and his excellent orchestra present the opening theme of the D minor Concerto's second movement with the almost overwhelmingly *dolce* pose of Ormandy and the Philadelphians. Or compare the definition and leaflike softness of Perahia's figuration to Serkin's magnificently phrased, all-in-one-piece runs. In the present recording, both soloist and conductor seem to make a constant effort to avoid overstatement and to maintain a structurally reasonable dynamic relationship both between the piano and the orchestra and between the diverse episodes

of the musical development.

Occasionally, Marriner becomes a bit too dry as in parts of the G minor's first movement. And I am less than fond of the lifeless impression left by Perahia's playing of those ever-so-typical Mendelssohn scherzando chords used in the opening theme of the D minor's finale. But, considering the fine recorded sound and the subtlety, precision, and idiomatic transparency of the performances, Columbia's second round with the Mendelssohn piano concertos makes a perfect complement to its Serkin/Ormandy Round 1. R.S.B.

MOZART: Concertos for Horn and Orchestra. Hermann Baumann, valveless horn; Vienna Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond. TELEFUNKEN SAWT 9627, \$6.98.

Concertos: No. 1, in D, K. 412; No. 2, in E flat, K. 417; No. 3, in E flat, K. 447; No. 4, in E flat, K. 495.

Most Mozarteans who share my conviction that the horn concertos are the most rousing invigorating of all his "occasional" works probably have been won over by the now nearly legendary recordings starring that prodigally gifted, tragically short-lived virtuoso Dennis Brain, still in print as Angel 35092. (A few veterans among us go back a couple of decades earlier, making their delighted first acquaintance with a Mozart horn concerto as played by Dennis' father, Aubrey Brain.) But there have been many other worthy recordings in recent years of the standard four works, sometimes augmented by one or two additional fragments. The Brain/Karajan version aside, the preferred choice today is a tossup between the 1972 Tuckwell/Marriner set (Angel S 36840) and the 1973 Civil/Marriner set (Philips 6500 325); but not far behind are earlier versions by Tuckwell and Civil (with, respectively, Maag and Klemperer, London CS 6403 and Angel S 35689), and also the 1965 Jones/Ormandy (Columbia MS 6785) and 1961 Linder/Swarowsky (Vanguard Everyman SRV 173 SD) versions.

One thing none of these gives us (except Mason Jones, but only in the Rondo of K. 412) is the sound of the instrument Mozart actually wrote for: the natural (i.e., unvalved) horn. And while no one is likely to claim that the older instrument is preferable to its successor, no one can deny that it was tonally different, partly as a result of the crook changes required for every key change, but mostly because of the compass limitations and the necessity for bringing certain notes into tune by the adroit use of the player's hand in the horn bell, inevitably involving some tone-muffling. Hence it's a matter of considerable interest to Mozarteans to hear what these concertos sound like not only from a specialist virtuoso playing a c. 1800 natural horn, but also as accompanied by an appropriately small orchestra (fourteen strings, eight winds) made up entirely of period-instrument players.

The results are arrestingly successful as far as soloist Hermann Baumann is concerned: He's master of fine big, boomy horn-tone qualities; he's amazingly skilled at achieving as homogeneous a blend of open and stopped tones as is humanly pos-



Victoria de los Angeles
Povera Butterfly

sible; and he brings an infectious bluff, swaggering, personal relish to his performances. His own cadenzas for the Third and Fourth Concertos are admirably in keeping except for the anachronistic introduction of a double-note chord or two—or did any player of Mozart's time, such as his friend Leutgeb, know this trick of playing one note while singing another into the horn?

Apart from the solos, cleanly open recording, and smooth-surfaced disc processing, however, there is more here to repel than to attract nonhistorically minded listeners. The old string instruments tend to sound wiry-toned or even shrill-toned in loud upper-register passages. Worse, conductor Harnoncourt is nervously tense throughout, "leaning" too heavily on accents, too often pressing tempos, too often jerkily or surgily expressive. Too bad—Baumann, to say nothing of Mozart, deserves better. R.D.D.



PUCCINI: Madama Butterfly.

Cio-Cio-San
Suzuki
Pinkerton
Goro
Sharpless

Victoria de los Angeles (s)
Anna Maria Canali (ms)
Giuseppe di Stefano (t)
Renato Ercolani (b)
Tito Gobbi (b)

Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, cond. SERAPHIM IC 6090, \$11.94 (three discs, mono, automatic sequence) [from RCA VICTOR LM 6121, 1955, and CAPITOL GCR 7137, 1959].

Time does odd things to one's ears. Listening to this *Butterfly* after more than a decade, I find that the singing of Victoria de los Angeles, which once seemed exceptionally beautiful to me, begins to sound unnervingly mannered. I can only suppose that, bemused by the glorious quality of the soprano's middle register—uniquely caressing in timbre, rich, wonderfully liquid—one did not in those days notice so quickly the tricky use of slightly flat intonation, a device also much employed at the time by Viennese singers like Irmgard Seefried, to create dramatic emphasis. Today, unfortunately, the effect smacks less of vivid characterization than of coyness and sentimentality. The result is that De los Angeles' *Butterfly* fails to convince one of its sincerity. Matters are not helped by the soprano's

hard-driven top register, a constant technical problem throughout her career, or by her rather placid temperament, which prevents her from committing herself to the full emotionalism of the final scene.

Tito Gobbi, too, is very disappointing. Like De los Angeles, he falls back far too readily on the device of flatness, and a lot of his vocal acting brings him dangerously close to parlando. His characterization of Sharpless, moreover, is singularly unattractive in its loud, monotonous sternness, especially in the scene with Butterfly in Act II, where a certain amount of tenderness and delicacy is surely called for.

Giuseppe di Stefano, on the other hand, sounds splendid. Time has done nothing to diminish the mastery of this Pinkerton: vocally golden, spontaneous, and youthful, thoroughly and convincingly characterized. The minor parts are idiomatically done. Gianandrea Gavazzeni leads a competent, unardent performance.

Text and translation, the latter a "singing" version and therefore only approximate. D.S.H.

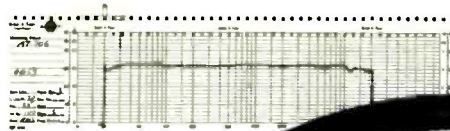
RACHMANINOFF: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in C minor, Op. 18; Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43; Prelude in C sharp minor, Op. 3, No. 2. Ilana Vered, piano; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Andrew Davis, cond. (in the concerto); London Symphony Orchestra, Hans Vonk, cond. (in the *Rhapsody*). [Tony D'Amato, prod.] LONDON PHASE-4 SPC 21099, \$6.98.

The biggest question here is technological: Unlikely as it would seem, especially for so sound-conscious a label, the 37:35 Rachmaninoff Second Concerto has been accommodated on a single side.

A little proviso says that although there is "no loss of sound quality . . . you may find it necessary to increase your volume control slightly." Even if the claim is not entirely fulfilled, the results are pretty tolerable. The piano is sonorous enough and the signal-to-noise ratio good enough to withstand the necessary decibel boost. Nonetheless one has only to sample the overside *Paganini Rhapsody* to hear the ill effects of London's overcrowding. The concerto lacks the *Rhapsody's* finely etched detail, the spacious expansiveness, the comfortably wide dynamic range. Some of the blame undoubtedly traces back to the original recording and mixing, for the recorded balance has the piano far to the front with the orchestra relegated to painted-backdrop generality.

Vered is not the most disciplined of pianists, and certain notorious "hot spots" in the concerto sound either a shade overextended (the first-movement development) or simplified (the third movement's first theme). She also tends toward percussiveness in forte passages and favors a rather garish type of rubato phrasing. The concerto's *alla marcia* first-movement reprise, for example, is subjected to an overemphasized hauling about, and more than a few of the best-known melodic bits are rather lavishly smeared with strawberry jam.

On the whole, however, I rather enjoyed Ms. Vered's approach to all three works. She has flair, communicativeness, a truly atmospheric pianissimo (which she em-



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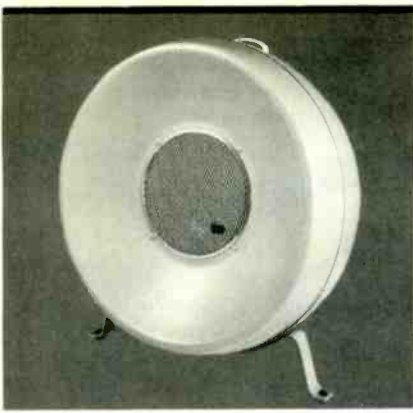
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ploy at least as frequently as, and to far better purpose than, her unpleasant fortissimo). The early C sharp minor Prelude is especially finely conceived. I found the ending, with its simulated tolling of bells, particularly affecting.

Both young conductors provide impressive, controlled, and unpretentiously detailed frameworks. Rachmaninoff's sentiment and tonal coloration receive their due, but of meretricious, soupy flamboyance there is none. H.G.

RACHMANINOFF: Symphony No. 2, in E minor, Op. 27. Bolshoi Theater Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov, cond. [Yuri Kokzhayann, prod.] COLUMBIA/MELODYA M 33121, \$6.98.

It is something of a mystery why Angel, which issued Svetlanov's Rachmaninoff First and Third Symphonies, shied away from this Second, but here it is, even if on a different label.

Those who must have a bargain price are directed to Wallenstein (Seraphim S 60133). Nor does Svetlanov offer either textual completeness or the most up-to-date sound, both of which are provided by Previn (Angel S 36954) and Kletzki (London CS 6569)—neither, it happens, any disgrace as a performance. Even for a "Russian"-style performance there is the option of Sanderling (see my September 1974 review of his three-disc Everest symphony cycle), less conveniently accessible and a poorer recording, but with a greater orchestra (the Leningrad Philharmonic) and a bolder, more sweeping conception of the music. Svetlanov seems to be following a similar "heart-on-sleeve" approach, but with more tentative commitment.

Still, taken absolutely by itself, Svetlanov's is a more than satisfactory Rachmaninoff E minor. There is plenty of warmth, sensitivity, "give" in the handling of lyrical lines, and bracing energy. The fairly good Bolshoi orchestra plays idiomatically, and the engineering—which must date back about a decade—is a good example of Soviet technology of its vintage. The cuts in the first three movements are opened, but the finale is conventionally truncated (with the composer's authorization, of course). A.C.

RAVEL: Orchestral Works. For a feature review, see page 66.

SAINT-SAËNS: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 2, in G minor, Op. 22; No. 5, in F, Op. 103. Gabriel Tacchino, piano; Luxemburg Radio Orchestra, Louis de Froment, cond. CANDIDE QCE 31080, \$4.98 (QS-encoded disc).

Comparisons:
Ciccolini, Baudo/Orch. de Paris (Nos. 1-5) Sera. SIC 6081
Rubinstein, Ormandy/Philadelphia (No. 2) RCA LSC 3165

These excellent performances are rather similar in style to those in the Seraphim album of all five Saint-Saëns piano concertos by Aldo Ciccolini and Serge Baudo. In other words, Tacchino and Froment apply patrician rhythm, nimble dexterity, phraseological symmetry, and other prerequisites of the "French" style in place of the

more headstrong bravura that, say, Artur Rubinstein brings to his account of the G minor Concerto (the recording with Ormandy is the better of his two).

Tacchino and Froment, like Ciccolini and Baudo, fill out the bones of the "traditional" Conservatoire manner with coloristic nuance and tonal beauty, happily avoiding the often heard karate-chop brittleness. So in the end we have the best of both worlds: The warm-blooded lyricism of the Romantic manner fuses ideally with the logic and grace of classicism. In terms of refinement of playing and crispness of reproduction, the beautifully processed Candide disc surpasses the admirable Seraphim, which in any case is available only as a set. H.G.

R SAINT-SAËNS: Samson et Dalila.

Dalila	Christa Ludwig (ms)
Samson	James King (t)
High Priest	Bernd Weikl (b)
Abimelech	Alexander Malta (bs)
An Old Hebrew	Richard Kogel (bs)
Messenger	Heinrich Weber (t)
First Philistine	Albert Gassner (t)
Second Philistine	Peter Schraner (bs)

Bavarian Radio Chorus and Orchestra, Giuseppe Patané, cond. [Theodor Holzinger and Oskar Waldeck, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 3-0662, \$20.98 (three discs, automatic sequence) [from Eurodisc 86 977, 1974].

Comparisons:
Gorr, Vickers, Blanc, Prêtre Ang. SCL 3639
Bouvier, Luccioni, Cabanel, Fourestier
Odeon C 053 10617/9

It's about time somebody said straight out that Saint-Saëns's Samson is one terrific opera. Even its defenders praise it with condescension. Martin Sokol, in his otherwise reasonable liner note for RCA's issue of the recent Eurodisc Samson, reopens the silly opera-or-oratorio argument and winds up with a definition of oratorio that would embrace at least half the operatic repertory.

No, there will be no apologies for the opera here. It would be nice, though, to have a recording that fully projects its grandeur. All it takes is a great French contralto and heroic tenor, a potent and mellifluous baritone, a couple of sonorous basses, a first-rate chorus, and of course a conductor who has the sensitivity to pulse and the sheer authority and conviction to make the thing go.

I'm afraid I can't quite share the admiration P.G.D. expressed for this set in his July 1974 review of the original issue. It is competent or better in nearly every department, but not really right in any. The basic sonic character (and I don't mean just the engineering) is soft-grained and strained. Christa Ludwig does much lovely singing, but it doesn't, for me, add up to Dalila—the lower part of the voice in particular isn't capable of the voluptuous expansion that Rita Gorr, for one, could deploy (on the complete Angel set with Prêtre). James King is an adequate Samson, which counts for something, yet he can manage neither power nor delicacy.

For an opera of Samson's quality, the discography is pretty skimpy. This recording might serve aptly for those who don't much like the piece, but it seems to me farther off the mark than the Romanian recording on Electrecord, which is sound in conception and merely uneven in execution. That

leaves the two French recordings, which have quite a lot to offer. The Angel stereo set, conducted with a solid sense of shape, has an altogether grand Dalila (Gorr) and High Priest (Ernest Blanc) and a good bass (Anton Diakov) doubling Abimelech and the Old Hebrew. Its most conspicuous weakness, the slurping Samson of Jon Vickers (who at least had the voice for the part), is admirably complemented on the 1946 Fougere set by the strong, cleanly focused work of José Luccioni. That set, though necessarily constricted in sound, has a fine sense of style and a strong and idiomatic cast.

If anyone is contemplating a new recording, I would point out that the most problematic role, Samson, currently has one of its ablest exponents in James McCracken.

The sound on the RCA version is much the same as the Eurodisc, for better or worse. Complete texts are included. K.F.

SCHOENBERG: Pelleas und Melisande; Verklärte Nacht; Variations for Orchestra. For a feature review, see page 61.

SCHUMANN: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 54; Introduction and Allegro appassionato, in G, Op. 92. Wilhelm Kempff, piano; Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik, cond. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 484, \$7.98.

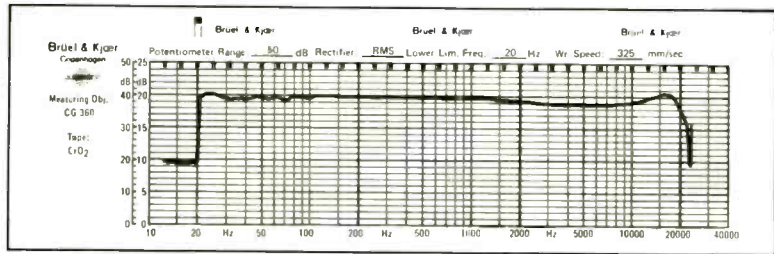
BRAHMS: Ballades (4), Op. 10. **SCHUMANN:** Piano Works. Wilhelm Kempff, piano. [Rudolf Werner and Cord Garben, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 321, \$7.98.

SCHUMANN: Arabeske, Op. 18; Romances (3), Op. 28; Waldszenen, Op. 82; No. 7, Vogel als Prophet; Bunte Blätter, Op. 99; No. 9, Novelette.

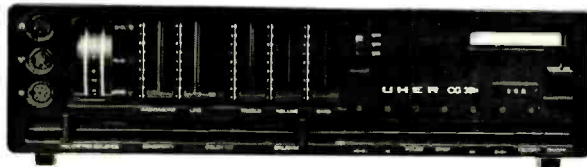
Even in his eighties, Kempff remains capable of great performances. These can, alas, be separated by considerable lapses from grace. Like some of his great predecessors—Cortot, for example—this distinguished artist can be perplexingly schizophrenic. Even on his first New York visit in 1964, I heard him follow up horrendous, brutal accounts of the Schubert D. 845 Sonata and Schumann *Davidbündler* with as perfect an account of the Brahms Op. 5 Sonata as I expect ever to hear.

Something of the same sort happens on these two, presumably contemporaneous, records. The Kempff/Kubelik Schumann concerto is, to put it bluntly, awful. It is not so much Kempff's square, idiosyncratic treatment of phrasing and rubato as the labored, unsupple playing, the lack of any fluidity and grace in the passagework. Kubelik supports in a clear, cautious, ostensibly sympathetic fashion, but surely the conductor must have been on pins and needles, scarcely knowing what would happen next. Such expressive details as the cellos in the second movement are throttled and inexpressive. Moreover, the balance between piano and tutti sounds precarious at times (especially in the first movement), with the solo a bit too distant in relation to accompanying instruments. Certain orchestral passages, like the fugato in the third movement, are magnificently clarified by the engineering, but the piano throughout sounds pingy and harsh.

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Aksel Schiøtz (1906-1975)

by Paul Moor

OCCASIONALLY—very infrequently—a musical performer appears who for one reason or another establishes himself in a category apart from almost all his colleagues. Thanks to his voice, his musicality, his intelligence, and to the medium of phonographic recording, the great Danish tenor Aksel Schiøtz, whom leukemia and an intestinal cancer finally vanquished in Copenhagen on April 19 at the age of 68, belonged in such a category. Admirers who knew his recorded repertoire regarded him, to put it simply, as unique. Relatively few, though, knew the details of the tragic episodes that restricted that great singing largely to recordings.

And what records! When they were imported to New York in 1946 or 1947, they caused—especially two breathtaking *Messiah* arias—a true sensation among collectors, repeating an earlier sensation in England. Fortunately, before illness abruptly canceled his public career soon after the war, HMV in Denmark and England had recorded a lengthy repertoire, including two complete major Lieder cycles, Schubert's *Schöne Müllerin* and Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, with Gerald Moore at the piano.

Outrageous fortune surely has plagued few artists—few human beings—as it repeatedly did Aksel Schiøtz. Starting adulthood as a provincial schoolteacher, he had a rich tenor voice full of vibrato but free of tremolo, with an uncanny baritone timbre throughout its range. Many admirers thought that voice justified a full-time professional career, but the three children Schiøtz and his admirable, stalwart wife, Gerd, had to feed and clothe made him hesitate. (And later, twins made their responsibilities even more sobering.) Finally, however, he took the plunge.

The morning after his professional debut in Copenhagen, Danes woke up to find their little country occupied by Hitler's Wehrmacht. With foreign appearances now impossible, Schiøtz set about using his art for the comfort and reassurance of his countrymen. As a patriot, he dropped his entire German repertoire for the duration—a crippling sacrifice for a Lieder specialist. To fill that void he revived much very worthwhile but neglected, or even forgotten, Danish music. He sang everywhere—in schools, in churches—

sometimes defiantly, such as at the funeral of the patriotic writer Kai Munk, whom the Germans had killed. After the war the king of Denmark awarded Schiøtz the country's equivalent of a knighthood. Literally everyone in Denmark knew him, admired him, and loved him.

Wartime broadcasts of Schiøtz's early recordings had caused important ears to prick up in England. As soon as possible, HMV brought him to London for extensive recording, and at Glyndebourne's world premiere of *The Rape of Lucretia*, which had dual casting in all roles, he alternated with Peter Pears as the Male Chorus. That summer began lifelong friendships with Benjamin Britten, Kathleen Ferrier, and Pears. It also brought the first symptom—double vision—of a *tumor acusticus*, the same type of growth behind the ear that had killed George Gershwin.

Schiøtz survived the operation he had in Stockholm, but the surgeon's unavoidable severing of a nerve cable affected his body as if a guillotine had sliced it in half frontally from head to toe, leaving the right half blind, deaf, and lame. The surgeon said that Schiøtz would never sing again but that, with luck, he might walk again.

In 1948, after months of recuperation during a tramp-steamer voyage, indomitable Aksel Schiøtz gave a comeback recital in Copenhagen. He was brought to New York soon thereafter for three Town Hall recitals. The first sold out immediately, the second attracted about half capacity, the third drew virtually no one who had paid for his ticket. Some years later, Schiøtz attempted another comeback as a baritone. Tapes he made then in America (where he taught) of Schubert's *Winterreise* cycle—never, unfortunately, released on discs—proved that nothing had affected that great artistry. He called the book he wrote simply *The Art of Singing*, and he could lay more legitimate claim to that title than could, or can, the vast majority of his colleagues.

And now at least we have those magical, those unique recordings made almost thirty years ago. As long as people set stylus to disc, they will remain treasures beyond price, inimitable examples of what the human voice, in very rare instances, can communicate.

The overside *Introduction and Allegro appassionato* is altogether better. Kubelik is more assertive; Kempff, though still rather square-cut, plays with greater energy; and the total balance is more convincing. Yet even here, I suspect that Kempff would have given a better account of himself fifteen years ago. This will not supplant the magnificent Serkin/Ormandy performance (Columbia MS 6688, also coupled with the concerto).

But from the very first phrase of the Brahms Op. 10, No. 1 Ballade, Kempff sounds like his old self. He gives the "Edward" piece a grim, assertive rendering—full of dynamism and energy. His approach to phrasing is again rather square, but in early Brahms this Germanic way is all to the music's good. In the three remaining ballades, some of his tempos are slower than one usually hears, but the symphonic clarity and strength of the playing are incontestable. And within the deceptively inflexible ground plan, Kempff manages all sorts of supple adjustments and caressing nuances. He remains a supreme master of pedaling. This Brahms playing is in the best German tradition, a more poetic counterpart to Backhaus'.

The overside Schumann pieces are done with appropriate fervor. Some might prefer a less metronomic account of the second Op. 28 romance, but Kempff's is broad and expansive even so. He is even more to the point in Op. 28, No. 1, and in the marchlike No. 3 (so very like the first Op. 21 novelette). His "Vogel als Prophet" is presumably excerpted from the recently issued complete *Waldszenen* (I didn't compare them and thus cannot say for sure). Again, the reading is rather spare and plain, yet suitably poetic in the magical harmonic turns of the central section. The little "Novelette" from *Bunte Blätter* gets a more caustic sort of treatment than on the rippling, suavely executed old Gabilowitsch version. In some ways, I like it even better than that classic—in each instance, a great stylist is at work.

The reproduction on the solo disc is splendid, with a welcome return to the solid, spacious type of piano sound heard on Kempff's mono Beethoven-sonata recordings. Both discs are impeccably pressed. H.G.

STRAUSS, J.: Die Fledermaus.

Rosalinde	Gundula Janowitz (s)
Adele	Renate Holm (s)
Orlofsky	Wolfgang Windgassen (t)
Alfred	Waldemar Kmentt (t)
Elsenstein	Eberhard Wachter (b)
Falke	Heinz Holecsek (b)
Frank	Erich Kunz (b)
Dr. Blind; Frosch	Erich Kuchar (t)

Vienna State Opera Chorus; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm, cond. LONDON OSA 1296, \$13.96 (two discs, automatic sequence).

Once again, *Fledermaus* casting turns out to be something of a closed shop. Here we have Renate Holm as Adele for the third time in a row, to which there can be little argument (except perhaps from other coloraturas who may resent her apparent monopoly). Erich Kunz still manages Frank pretty well; what with earlier appearances in this part, as Falke, and twice as Frosch, he retains the Golden Bat trophy.

Hard on Kunz's heels is Eberhard Wächter, once a Frank and a Falke, adding a second Eisenstein to his total—not, it turns out, a very wise move. In fact, I don't think he should get full credit this time, considering how few of Strauss's notes he sings. The part is for tenor, of course, and Wächter's first attempt (on the now-deleted Danon set for RCA) was a calculated risk on his high extension. The risk has now become a distinctly bad one; the only things worse than the innumerable lowered vocal lines for Eisenstein in this recording are the ones left unaltered—and lunged at with rough, ugly tone.

Kmentt's Alfred is somewhat more tolerable, although the tone isn't sweet enough to convince us that he's really the narcissistic Alfred.

There is, however, some new blood. Gundula Janowitz, despite a few phrases of overrefined, almost private singing, does some elegant and stylish work, unleashing a fetching Hungarian accent in the Watch Duet (where, unfortunately, Wächter is most tried and most trying). As Orlofsky, we have the late Wolfgang Windgassen—no, that is not a printer's error—singing well enough to make us wish he were doing Eisenstein: there is nothing like a sound, professional vocal technique for withstanding the onset of age. The Falke and Blind are routine; the latter is also listed for the speaking role of Frosch, but I can detect no iota of his work in that part, for all the spoken dialogue (save Kunz's melodrama in Act III) has been omitted.

Since the other current stereo recordings of *Fledermaus* all include dialogue, this may in itself be a deciding factor for you one way or 'tother. (Also worthy of note, textually, is the substitution of the polka *Unter Donner und Blitz* for Strauss's original ballet music—rather an explosive intrusion after the sentiment of the "Duidu" ensemble. The "standard" musical cuts are also made.)

As you may have gathered, this is vocally a rather uneven affair. Not so the orchestral playing that Böhm elicits from the superb orchestra: beautifully tuned, balanced, blended, and unified at nearly every point. The rhythmic impulse of Orlofsky's couplets has rarely been so well defined, and the tempos of the Watch Duet are very smoothly integrated. On the debit side are a few failures of ensemble and the slightly blary trumpets of the "Duidu" number, plus a slight but pervasive stodginess—it's all very neat and highly refined, but with little of the relaxed warmth that pervades Krauss's mono version (Richmond RS 62006, also lacking dialogue). At any rate, the recorded sound is fine: clean, clear, with a nice tight definition to the bass and unobtrusive, natural balances.

The libretto booklet reprints the essay, plot summary, and relevant parts of the libretto from London's Karajan set (OSA 1319 with the "gala" sequence, OSA 1249 without), vocally a more satisfactory enterprise than this one, if somewhat overgrandly conceived. D.H.

SUPPÉ AND STRAUSS: Overtures. Johann Strauss Orchestra of Vienna, Willi Boskovsky, cond. ANGEL S 37099, \$6.98. Tape: **4XS**

37099, \$7.98; **8XS** 37099, \$7.98.

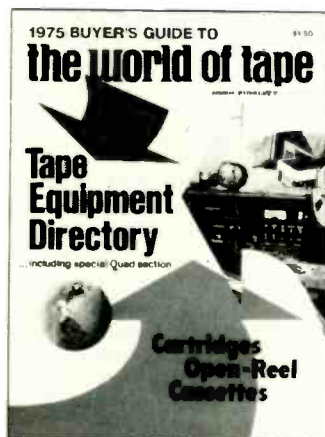
SUPPÉ: Boccaccio (from S 36826, 1971); Light Cavalry (from S 36887, 1972); A Morning, Noon, and Night in Vienna; Poet and Peasant (from S 36956, 1973). **J. STRAUSS II:** A Night in Venice; *Blindekuh*.

If our printers could supply a "½-R" symbol, it would be appropriate here, since three of the Suppé overture performances are reissues from Vols. 1-3 of Boskovsky's "Music of Vienna" series. However, the other recordings are appearing in this country for the first time: the fourth Suppé overture, *Ein Morgen, ein Mittag, ein Abend in Wien*, and the two Strauss overtures, the fine, too seldom heard *Eine Nacht in Venedig* and the almost totally unknown (in this country at least) *Blindekuh*.

The latter, surely a recording first, is less a dramatic curtain-raiser than a potpourri of the 1878 operetta's hit tunes. And while I have no idea what the "story" may be of a theater work whose title translates literally as *Blind Cow*, its now gay, now seductively lyrical tunes and toe-tickling rhythms surely must rank among the most engaging Strauss ever created. If they're characteristic of the whole operetta, I can't imagine why *Blindekuh* has been allowed to fade so deeply into obscurity.

As anyone who has heard the earlier three Suppé overtures might expect, the new performances are just as invigoratingly and catchily vivacious, the recordings just as cleanly bright. The

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present disc surfaces, however, are undeniably rougher. R.D.D.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Orchestral Works*. For a feature review, see page 63.

VIEXTEMPS: *Ballade et Polonaise*—See Lekeu: *Sonata for Violin and Piano*.

IVALDI: *La Stravaganza, Op. 4*. Carmel Kaine and Alan Loveday, violins; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. [Michael Bremner, prod.] ARGO ZRG 800/1, \$13.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

Of Vivaldi's some 300 violin concertos, nearly 200 of them for one rather than two or more violin soloists, the best known are those in the enticingly named collections: first, *Il Cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione, Op. 8* (especially for its leadoff *Four Seasons* concertos); then, *La Cetra, Op. 9*; and, trailing a bit behind, the present *Stravaganza, Op. 4*. Despite this collection's come-on title, which applies more to its extravagant display of harmonic and formal inventiveness than to spectacular virtuosic showmanship, there have been only two previous complete recordings: the pioneering Barchet/Reimhardt/Vox mono version of 1954 (currently available in an "electronic-stereo" reissue, Vox SVBX 531) and the Ayo/Musici/Philips stereo set of 1965, which disappeared with the last of the domestic Philips pressings.

If you're a victim of the old delusion that Vivaldi wrote not 300 violin concertos, but the same concerto 300 times over, all you need for correctional enlightenment is to listen to the present twelve examples of the Red Priest's inexhaustibly imaginative powers of melodic, rhythmic, formalistic, and atmospheric invention. And in doing so, your consistently refreshed relish well may be further enhanced by remembering that this music had the same effect on Vivaldi's own discriminating contemporaries—one of whom, Johann Sebastian Bach himself, greedily appropriated Nos. 1 and 6 to serve as his own unaccompanied clavier "concertos" S. 980 and S. 970, respectively.

Any good modern recording of *Op. 4* in its variegated entirety would be mightily welcome, but we are exceptionally lucky to get one as exuberantly yet sensitively played and as beautifully engineered as this one. The musical variety itself is subtly italicized by the use of two comparably deft but always ensemble-minded soloists (Carmel Kaine in Nos. 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, and 10; Alan Loveday in the others), and by constantly shifting the continuo instruments: organ alone in No. 4, harpsichord alone in No. 8, varying combinations of organ, harpsichord, theorbo, bassoon, and violone in the others. Yet editor Hogwood's and conductor Marriner's mastery of baroque-era stylistic and idiomatic traditions never is a matter of musicological fitness alone—it is fired with the blazing personal involvement of everyone participating. As with the same

artists' Corelli *Op. 6* of last January (ZRG 773/5), these performances almost palpably radiate the players' sheer joy in both the music and their own powers. As with their 1973 set of Vivaldi's *Op. 3 L'Estro armonico* (ZRG 733/4), they "sail into the music [in my colleague S.F.'s apt description] as if it were being presented to the world for the first time." R.D.D.

H WAGNER: *Der fliegende Holländer* (excerpts).

Senta	Viorica Ursuleac (s)
Mary	Luise Willer (a)
Erik	Karl Ostertag (t)
Steersman	Franz Klarwein (t)
Dutchman	Hans Hotter (b)
Daland	Georg Hann (bs)

Bavarian State Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Clemens Krauss, cond. BASF KBF 21538, \$6.98 (mono) [recorded 1944].

The complete *Flying Dutchman* from which these excerpts come has been out of the catalogue for nearly twenty years and deserves to be restored in its entirety. Apart from its fascination as a historical document (the performance comes from a 1944 Munich broadcast), the conducting of Clemens Krauss is superb and there are two classic portrayals, the Daland of Georg Hann and the Dutchman of Hans Hotter.

Krauss gives what is still for me the finest account of the score on disc: swift, taut, colorful, evocative. His handling of the opera's dynamic flow is particularly thrilling: From beginning to end the work moves in one long, unbroken arc. Excerpts, of course, can give no idea of this aspect of his achievement. They tend, on the other hand, to make unduly prominent such momentary lapses as the untidy choral entries in Act II.

The excerpts, in any case, have been poorly chosen. The Steersman's ditty, uningratiatingly sung by Franz Klarwein, and Erik's cavatina, a sturdy but provincial performance by Karl Ostertag, take up space that could have been given to the Daland/Dutchman exchange from Act I. Moreover, I would gladly have sacrificed Ursuleac's clumsy account of Senta's Ballad for the complete Senta/Dutchman duet that closes Act II. As it is, the duet is represented by a fragment that runs from "Wohl kenn' ich, Weibes heil'ge Pflichten" to the end of the act, and this makes neither musical nor psychological sense.

Despite such abbreviations, Hotter's performance is a thing to wonder at. Even in 1944, when he was in his mid-thirties, one discovers that the tone was woolly and unsteady, that his legato was imperfect, and that consonants—syllables, even—got lost in the shuffle. Yet the fervor and intensity of his portrayal sweep all other considerations aside. Every note bespeaks the damned, tragic figure of Wagner's youthful imagination, every phrase is eloquent with meaning.

In Georg Hann, a ripe, shrewd Daland, Hotter has a worthy partner. Viorica Ursuleac is another matter. Though Ursuleac created the leading soprano roles in three of Richard Strauss's later operas (*Arabella, Friedenstag, and Capriccio*), what survives of her work discloses little more than unsteady tone, unattractive timbre, and lack

of technical finish. Her notes above the staff were powerful and bright and she was clearly intelligent, yet she remains an unlovable singer, and a lot of what one hears on this disc comes close to caterwauling.

The recording is what one might expect of a World War II broadcast: rather coarse and congested. There are no texts. Jacket information is unreliable. Luise Willer, a singer much praised in her day by Bruno Walter, is said to have retired from opera with this broadcast, whereas she remained at the Munich opera until 1955, when, with a final performance of Erda, she retired at the age of sixty-seven. D.S.H.

B WAGNER: *Lohengrin*.

Elsa	Leonore Kirschstein (s)
Ortrud	Ruth Hesse (ms)
Lohengrin	Herbert Schachtschneider (t)
Telramund	Heinz Imdahl (b)
The Herald	Hans Helm (bs)
King Henry	Walter Kreppel (bs)

Vienna State Opera Chorus; South German Philharmonic Orchestra, Hans Swarowsky, cond. [Heinz Schürer, prod.] WESTMINSTER GOLD WGSO 8285-4, \$13.96 (four discs, automatic sequence).

If you skip the prelude, which is at once rhythmically square and shapeless, this *Lohengrin* starts out decently enough, for Hans Helm is one of the okayest Heralds on disc (a modest compliment, to be sure). As the King and Telramund make their successive entrances, disaster sets in. Walter Kreppel has some of the ingredients for a King: He can actually sing down to low F, and he pulls himself together nicely for the punishingly high Act I prayer. But the bulk of the role is Wagner's unique brand of declamation (a sort of ring-around-the-break), which seems an irresistible invitation to barking. Kreppel copes as well as he can with the remnants of his once pleasant high bass, and he almost sounds like a bel cantoist next to Heinz Imdahl's Telramund, a dead loss. (The King's "Dann schmäht wohl niemand mehr das deutsche Reich" is almost immediately proved a false prophecy.)

Elsa's entrance brings a measure of professionalism. Leonore Kirschstein has a voice and some notion of what to do with it, but the sound is tremulous and generally unpleasant. Ditto her Ortrud, Ruth Hesse. I suppose they are the class of the cast, but I don't relish the prospect of rehearsing them go at each other in Act II.

Herbert Schachtschneider, the Lohengrin, is probably best known as the Waldemar of Kubelik's *Gurre-Lieder*, and he makes much the same impression here: a singer of such sound musical instincts that one regrets all the more the dry, wobbly quality of the voice.

These people are all very conscientious, and Swarowsky beats the thing out correctly, inexorably. (The orchestra, however, often sounds puzzled.) But *Lohengrin* doesn't survive such treatment well. This is the cheapest version available, but the Keilberth/Bayreuth set (Richmond RS 65003), though it costs \$3.49 more, is in another league altogether—and its mono sound is at least the equal of Westminster's mediocre 1968 stereo. K.F.



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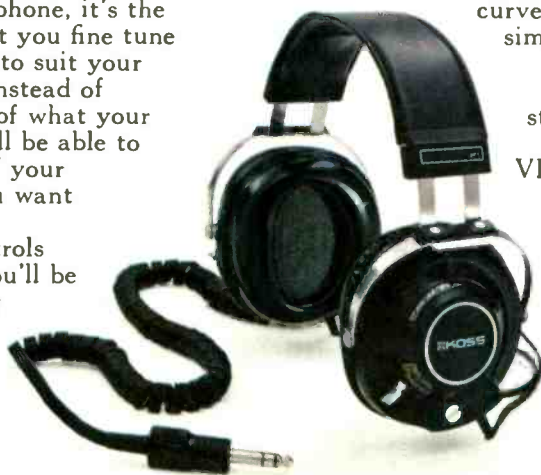
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Ruggiero Ricci
Bringing back Ysaÿe's diverting sonatas.

WEBERN: Passacaglia, Op. 1; Five Movements, Op. 5; Six Pieces, Op. 6; Symphony, Op. 21. For a feature review, see page 61.

YSAÏE: Rêve d'enfant—See Lekeu: Sonata for Violin and Piano.

YSAÏE: Sonatas for Solo Violin (6), Op. 27. Ruggiero Ricci, violin. CANDIDE QCE 31085, \$4.98 (QS-encoded disc).

One of the most diverting discs to come my way lately, this first complete recording of Ysaÿe's six solo sonatas makes me wonder why we don't hear these pieces more often on stage or as part of recorded recital programs. Perhaps taken singly their interest would be diluted; part of their fascination lies in what they reveal, collectively, about Ysaÿe's view of some of his famous younger colleagues. Each sonata is dedicated to a fellow fiddler: Szigeti, Thibaud, Enesco, Kreisler, and two lesser-knowns, Mathieu Crickboom (from Ysaÿe's own town of Liège) and the Spaniard Manuel Quiroga. The composer tailored each sonata to fit its recipient and in the process, of course, showed as much about himself as about any of them.

Every aspect of violin technique is exploited; there is an abundance of Bach-like passagework and counterpoint (and in Thibaud's sonata, No. 2, actual quotation from the Prelude to the Partita in E, an obsessive *idée fixe* that becomes terribly funny, though it isn't supposed to be). There is also an inescapable Frenchness in much of the music, a concern with color and surface shimmer. The gossamer glow that marks the opening of Sonata No. 5 creates some pages of Impressionism that could serve as a classroom text on the subject. Ysaÿe never matches Bach in really extended polyphony—his fugues, or fugatos, peter out quickly—but his aim, as is quickly appar-

ent, was not to imitate Bach in any case. (Paganini is another shadow in the background—vide the footnote on left-hand pizzicato in the score of No. 5.)

Many moods are struck, for some of this music is illustrative: Sonata No. 2 contains a Melanconia and a Dance of the Furies, and No. 5 a Rustic Dance; the Ballade of No. 3 is a masterpiece of contemplative introversion, and many other pages are outright pure "fiddle" music.

Ricci is at his best in the robust, vigorous movements. The more subtle colorations elsewhere might have been handled with greater sensitivity and range of palette, but taken as a whole the recording makes its point. These sonatas are an attractive segment of the violin repertory. Where have they been all this tittle? S.F.

Recitals and Miscellany

VICTORIA DE LOS ANGELES: Five Centuries of Spanish Song. Victoria de los Angeles, soprano; instrumental ensemble. SERAPHIM 60233, \$3.98 (mono) [from RCA VICTOR LM 2144, 1957].

Seraphim has performed a real service by making this attractive recital—originally issued by Victor nearly two decades ago—available once again. The selections range from medieval songs to the Virgin (one preserved in the *Llibre vermell*, a fourteenth-century codex in Montserrat; the other from a mystery play of the same period) to three colorful arias from eighteenth-century tonadillas, a form of theatrical interlude that flourished in the latter half of the century. All in all, the music is both delightful and enlightening.

The accompaniments—arranged for various combinations of instruments—while, strictly speaking, unauthentic, show a welcome sensitivity toward the style of this material. The use of string quartet and harpsichord is particularly attractive in such Renaissance songs as Valderrábano's "De dónde venís amore," which sounds better here than on Teresa Berganza's recent "Canciones Españolas" (DG 2530 504), where it is given guitar accompaniment.

De los Angeles was at the height of her vocal powers when she made this record. High notes give only a minimal sense of strain: All the rest is mellifluousness, commitment, and authenticity. And, I must confess, a certain sameness.

No texts, a serious and limiting omission that, in fairness to Seraphim, dates from the original issue. D.S.H.

THOMAS BEECHAM: Legendary Performances. Royal Philharmonic Chorus* and Orchestra, Thomas Beecham, cond. ODYSSEY Y 33283/8, \$3.98 each (mono) [from various COLUMBIA

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originals, recorded in the 1950s].

Y 33283: **DELIUS**: Appalachia*; North Country Sketches.
Y 33284: **DELIUS**: Paris, Eventyr, Koanga, Closing Scene*.
Y 33285: **HANDEL-BEECHAM**: The Faithful Shepherd Suite.
HAYDN: Symphony No. 93, In D.

Y 33286: **BERLIOZ**: Harold in Italy, Op. 16 (with William Primrose, viola).

Y 33287: **BERLIOZ**: Overtures: Roman Carnival; King Lear; Le Corsaire; Les Francs-Juges; Waverley.

Y 33288: **BERLIOZ**: Les Troyens: Prelude to "Les Troyens à Carthage"; Trojan March. **MASSENET**: La Vierge: Last Sleep of the Virgin. **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV**: The Golden Cockerel: March. **SIBELIUS**: Karelia Suite, Op. 11: No. 3, Alla marcia. The Tempest, Op. 109 (incidental music, excerpts).

Like Bernard Shaw, Sir Thomas Beecham at times appeared to act on the premise that a major English artist would not be taken seriously unless he played the part of an outrageous clown. But that is only part of the Beecham legend, and these six reissues from Odyssey constitute a welcome reminder of the real substance behind the legend.

Many consider Beecham's attitude toward musicologists misguided, yet he had real contempt for them only when their scholarly views conflicted with his own artistic insights or his conception of what the public wanted to hear. (His outrageously inflated last recording of Messiah often causes us to forget that his earlier ones were considerably more "proper" musically.) The Handel-Haydn record (Y 33285) is a case in point. In arranging his suite (mostly) from *Il Pastor fido*, Beecham eschewed what he considered an anemic scoring of oboes and strings, delightedly expanding Handel's orchestration to a nineteenth-century-size ensemble. *Echt Handel* this certainly is not, but it is a vehicle for Beecham at his most extrovertedly original; he must have relished this venture greatly, for he performs the suite with incredible gusto.

His disregard for recent Haydn scholarship was less outrageous; if he ignored textual criticism, he at least did not rescure the symphonies, though his textures are somewhat richer than most musicologists would approve. Nevertheless, his Haydn performances were more perceptive than those of most of his contemporaries—their joy and vitality reveal real sympathy with the composer. No one else, for instance, has performed the Great Bassoon Joke in the slow movement of Symphony No. 93 quite as effectively as Sir Thomas does here: for that we can forgive him many a scholarly sin.

Beecham is well and justly remembered as one of the early and great champions of Berlioz. The *Harold in Italy* on Y 33286, with the fine collaboration of William Primrose, is a truly legendary performance, a milestone in the Berlioz discography. The succession of five overtures on Y 33287 may be an indigestible dose of Berlioz, but they show Beecham's superb grasp of the composer's style, as do the imperial readings of the *Troyens* excerpts on Y 33288.

Y 33288 also represents another composer with whom he was closely associated, Sibelius, and these too are classic recordings, in particular the *Tempest* music. The balance of the record, however, shows primarily how Beecham's obvious joy in music-making vitalized a great deal of second-rate music. Yet another com-

poser whose cause the conductor espoused ardently is well represented here. Through much of his career Sir Thomas fought critical and popular indifference to establish Delius in the repertory, both by polemic and by performance, and Y 33283 and Y 33284 restore to the catalogue his definitive readings of some of the best music Delius wrote.

All of these recordings date from the Fifties, after Beecham had returned to England from his wartime sojourn in America. The Royal Philharmonic was his orchestra (as the London Philharmonic had been before the war), and it responded superbly to him. The sonics were considered good for their time, and in selected comparisons I found the sound of these Odyssey reissues, if anything, slightly better. P.H.

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER. [Nathan Kroll, prod.] CLASSICS RECORD LIBRARY SQM 80-5731, \$12.50 plus 75 cents postage and handling (four SQ-encoded discs; Classics Record Library, 280 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017).

BACH: Concerto for Violin, Oboe, and Strings, in C minor, S. 1060 (Hiroko Yajima, violin; Leonard Arner, oboe; Charles Treger and Romuald Tecco, violins; Walter Trampler, viola; Leslie Parnas, cello; Alvin Brehm, bass; Anthony Newman, harpsichord). **BEETHOVEN**: Trio for Strings, in G, Op. 9, No. 1 (Treger, Trampler, Parnas). **BRAMMS**: Gestillte Sehnsucht; Geistliches Wiegenlied (Maureen Forrester, alto; Trampler, Charles Wadsworth, piano). **CARTER**: Eight Etudes for Woodwind Quartet (Paula Robison, flute; Arner; Gervase de Peyer, clarinet; Loren Glickman, bassoon). **FAURÉ**: Dolly, Op. 56 (John Browning and Wadsworth, piano). **Sicilienne**, Op. 78; *Fantasy*, Op. 79 (Robison, Wadsworth). **HAYDN**: Trio for Strings, in G, Op. 53, No. 1 (Treger, Trampler, Parnas). **MOSKOWSKI**: Suite for Two Violins and Piano, in G minor, Op. 71 (Treger, Jaime Laredo, Wadsworth). **MOZART**: Quartet for Piano and Strings, No. 2, in E flat, K. 493 (Richard Goode, Treger, Trampler, Parnas). **SAINT-SAËNS**: Caprice on Danish and Russian Airs, Op. 79 (Robison, Arner, De Peyer, Wadsworth). **SCHUMANN**: Andante and Variations (Wadsworth, Goode, Parnas and Laurence Lesser, cellos; John Barrows, horn). *Fantasie-stücke*, Op. 73 (De Peyer, Goode).

If composers were more practical in choosing their performing forces, there would be no need for chamber music societies. As it is, how else do we get to hear concert performances of such works as Schumann's *Andante and Variations* in its original (in both senses of the word) scoring for two pianos, two cellos, and horn?

It took the Book of the Month Club's Classics Record Library to give us this first substantial recorded representation of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and at this price it seems to me pretty hard to resist, whatever my reservations. The repertory is large and varied, and the performances maintain a fairly high level.

Since the purpose of a chamber music society is to explore the fringes of the repertory, it is all but inevitable that a sampling of its repertory will result in a fairly random collection. This matters more on records than in concert, where, for the sake of a live performance of a particular work, one may well suffer a wholly unrelated program. On records, how often will one want to hear, say, a Haydn string trio followed by Fauré's *Dolly* suite? And on records one has much readier access to performances of these "oddball" works.

That in turn places an extra burden on the performances themselves. Certainly the

Society's wind soloists meet that challenge. The trio of flutist Paula Robison, oboist Leonard Arner, and clarinetist Gervase de Peyer turns in two of the set's best offerings: Elliott Carter's *Eight Etudes* for woodwind quartet (with bassoonist Loren Glickman) and Saint-Saëns's breezy *Caprice on Danish and Russian Airs* (with the Society's artistic director, Charles Wadsworth, at the piano). I'm not wild about Arner's thick, English-horn-ish tone, but these virtuosos sail through both works with gusto, precision, and sensitivity. But why, oh why, didn't they include the Fantasy that goes with the Carter *Etudes*? The composer *did* provide elaborate instructions for partial performances of the *Eight Etudes* and a *Fantasy*, but a quarter-century later are there still listeners willing to settle for less than a complete Carter work—particularly on records? More's the pity, for the performance is so vital and comprehending that it should have superseded the one by members of the Dorian Quintet (Candide CE 31016), whose slight rhythmic and intonational uncertainties make the work sound forbidding, which it isn't at all. But the Dorian's remains the only recording of the *Fantasy*.

The woodwind trio's string counterpart—violinist Charles Treger, violist Walter Trampler, cellist Leslie Parnas—is less successful. The players aren't especially well matched stylistically, nor do they attend ideally to the stylistic requirements of the classical repertory they are tackling. The performance of the Haydn Op. 53, No. 1 Trio is bigger in sound, with wider contrasts of tempo and dynamics, than the recent one on Archiv 2533 136, and yet the German musicians' more sober treatment works better: The musical materials of this piano-sonata arrangement are too slight to fill out the Americans' more grandiose framework. (The Germans are also far more generous with repeats, which helps them get the proportions right.) The Beethoven Op. 9, No. 1 Trio is efficient, if not particularly distinguished.

The Mozart E flat Piano Quartet, however, goes rather nicely. It's a frantic, knock-em-dead performance, solidly anchored by pianist Richard Goode's splendid rhythmic pulse. The effect is partly spoiled, though, by faulty recording balance, which renders the piano barely audible. (This unfortunately also is true of the other works in which Goode participates, which is a great pity. He's one of the most consistently interesting pianists around, and we have heard all too little of him on records: but I'm afraid we don't get to hear much more of him here.)

Treger makes a more positive impression in the Moszkowski G minor Suite for two violins and piano (with Jaime Laredo and Wadsworth), a delightfully big and sweaty piece of Romantic sound-and-fury. It winds down rather badly in the *Molto vivace* finale, but the performers might have done more to divert attention from the thin musical substance.

The democratic virtues of a chamber music society show to good advantage in the Bach violin-and-oboe concerto and the two Brahms Op. 91 songs. The Bach is pleas-

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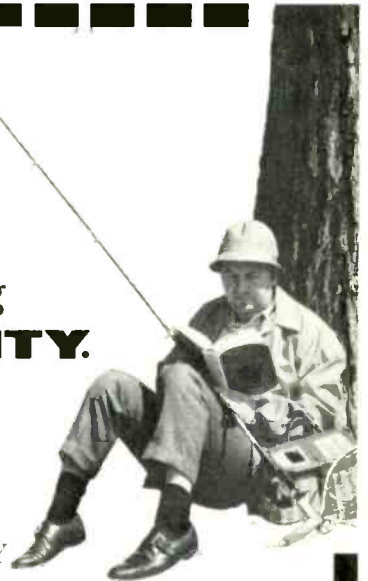
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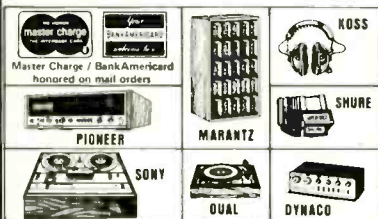
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antly vigorous and robust; most one-player-to-a-part baroque performances use that awful dry "authentic" style. Maureen Forrester has been singing the Brahms songs quite a while now, and her un-self-conscious textual authority, combined with the sumptuous ease of the voice, makes the songs sound less turgid than I have ever heard them. What's more, the viola obbligato for once gets its sonic due, and Trampler makes the most of the opportunity. But here again I sense an opportunity missed: Isn't this kind of collection the ideal place to juxtapose Brahms's "Geistliches Wiegenlied" with Wolf's nervous, intense "Die ihr schwebet"? The songs have nothing in common, except that they happen to be settings of the same poem, a startling instance of two composers responding to a poem in completely different ways. (Do make the comparison, though, with Jan DeGaetani's miraculously precise performance on her disc of *Spanish Songbook* selections. Nonesuch H 71296.)

It is appropriate that Schumann is represented twice in this collection, for unusual combinations of tone colors often characterized his unique flights of musical fancy. The *Fantasy Pieces* for clarinet and piano have never much appealed to me; this seems to me one of those cases where Schumann's fertile imagination lagged behind his coloristic gestures. De Peyer and Goode might well be the pair to convince me otherwise, but not here—De Peyer plays quite beautifully, but with no revelations of purpose or poetry, and Goode, as noted, sounds as if he's playing in the next room.

Unlike the *Fantasy Pieces*, Schumann's *Andante* and *Variations* leaves no doubt of its greatness, even in the composer's "more practical" reworking for two pianos alone. The original version, however, is one of the great Romantic conceptions—the cello and horn parts are integral to Schumann's precisely imagined brooding and soaring. The performance is serviceable but not very vividly characterized; both competing recordings communicate the work more fully.

The double representation of Fauré is less understandable. Robison and Wadsworth give a first-rate account of the pair of flute pieces, but the music seems to me utterly devoid of personality, especially following (as it does here) the Bach concerto. The *Dolly* suite for piano duet, on the other hand, is a thoroughly charming collection of miniatures. But the Browning/Wadsworth performance is the set's one out-and-out failure. The primo player (Browning, I assume from the billing) gives the music no shape whatsoever, and the secondo part, while firmer rhythmically, is leaden. The fast numbers ("Mi-a-ou" and "Pas espagnol") are okay, but the others commit the unpardonable sin of making the music sound uninteresting. (My notes for "Tendresse" read "clunk-clunk-clunk-clunky-clunk-clunk.")

I don't want to leave on that negative note; the set as a whole provides considerable stimulation and enjoyment, at a remarkable price. The sound, except for the balance problems noted, is generally bright and clean. There are notes by Harris Goldsmith, which I haven't seen. K.F.

B LES MENESTRIERS. Yves Audard, recorders, krummhorns, and rackett; Jean-Pierre Batt, viols, gamba, and krummhorn; Daniel Dossmann, pandora, cittern, and percussion; Bernard Pierrot, lute; Julien Skowron, treble viol, vielle, and rebec. VAN GUARD EVERYMAN SRV 316SD, \$3.98.

Last year New York audiences were delighted by a quintet of engaging Frenchmen calling themselves Les Menestriers. The intimacy of their cabaret-style performance, the casual ease with which the twentieth-century minstrels set aside their medieval instruments to join voices for a verse or two, their obvious enjoyment of the music they make, can now be shared by a wider audience in this, their first disc to be released in this country.

Although all the members of Les Menestriers are multitabled, they are primarily an instrumental ensemble specializing in the lighter side of the medieval and renaissance repertory. It takes imaginative scoring to keep this somewhat simple fare interesting, but the musicians present a veritable feast of sweet and spicy delicacies to please the most epicurean listener. The full-bodied resonance of three Praetorius dances contrasts with the bright, scraping sound of the medieval fiddle in the fourteenth-century *rotta* "La Manfredina." An extraordinary effect is made by an ensemble of plucked instruments in the first verse of William Byrd's "My Lord of Oxenford's Mask," followed by a no less fascinating sound in a rendition for broken consort, flute, viol, lute, and cittern. The conflicting rhythmic patterns of fifteenth-century Hayne van Ghizeghem's "Gentil Gallans" are clearly delineated in a particularly sprightly performance.

Les Menestriers sing as well as play, and here too their appeal is immediate and direct, from the innocent delights of a thirteenth-century love song, "Voulez-vous que je vous chante," crooned with the insouciant charm of a Chevalier or a Montand, to the lively close harmony of Jannequin's witty "Il était une fillette." "Ma peine n'est pas grande," by the same composer, is so convincing vocally and instrumentally that one could almost believe Jannequin wrote it particularly for this ensemble. In keeping with the intimate nightclub atmosphere, Les Menestriers conclude the recording with a Weill-like finale, angry flutes and plucked strings snapping at the saucy dissonances of Hans Neusiedler's *Judentanz*.

The only fault one might find with this record lies not in the music or its performance, but with the packaging. There are no texts, and the contents are listed wrongly in the sleeve. Moreover the program itself lasts under thirty-four minutes, short change even for \$3.98. S.T.S.

ANTONY PEEBLES: Piano Recital. Antony Peebles, piano. UNICORN RHS 323, \$7.98.

BARTOK: Etudes (3). Op. 18. **COPLAND:** Fantasy. **DALLAPICOLA:** Quaderno Musicale de Annalibera.

Antony Peebles is a superb British pianist who has won some prizes in Europe and will probably hit the American circuits before long. He has a tremendous tone, a mas-



Von Stade, Blegen, et al.: A Vocal and Musical Delight

by Dale Harris

Columbia here offers us a program of solos and duets that is thoroughly delightful—above all for its intense musicality. Not only have the artists, vocal and instrumental, placed themselves selflessly at the service of the composers, but the choice of material and its ordering bespeak great sensitivity. Except for "Non so più," none of the music is exactly over-familiar, and even the Mozart aria is given new interest by being performed in the composer's version for mezzo-soprano, violin, and piano. There is admirable catholicity in the taste that can recognize the quality of Saint-Saëns's "*Le bonheur est chose légère*" and, moreover, evidence of a fine instinct for programming in placing it between "Non so più" and the Brahms duets. The roughly forty minutes of music on this disc unfolds with commendable variety of style, mood, and texture.

Judith Blegen and Frederica von Stade give great pleasure. They have chosen not a single piece that is beyond their capacity in either vocal stamina or interpretive skill. They command the necessary gifts of nuance and color to bring these songs to life, they clearly understand what the texts are about, and their pronunciation of French, German, and Italian is exemplary. My only reservation is that both artists are sometimes afflicted with excessive vibrato, and on account of this slow, sustained songs like Blegen's "*Die Verschworenen*" and Von Stade's "*Chanson perpetuelle*" lose a portion of their beauty. On the other hand, fast numbers like Blegen's "Se

geloso è il mio core"—an aria from Alessandro Scarlatti's cantata *Endimione e Cintia*, with accompaniment by an instrumental ensemble—and Von Stade's "Non so più" sound splendid, and in all the duets, whether fast or slow, the voices blend beautifully.

One of the great virtues of this recital is the quality of the accompaniments. Charles Wadsworth, on both piano and harpsichord, is particularly fine. There is some sensitive violin playing from Jaime Laredo (whose identity is mysteriously concealed behind the anagram "Joe del Maria") in the Saint-Saëns, and Gerard Schwarz's trumpet is brilliant in the Scarlatti.

There are texts (not very carefully proofread) and translations. The liner notes refer to Schumann's "*Botschaft*," which of course means "Message," as a "boat song"—an identification that leaves me very puzzled.

JUDITH BLEGEN AND FEDERICA VON STADE: Arias and Duets. Judith Blegen, soprano; Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano; Charles Wadsworth, piano and harpsichord. [Thomas Frost, prod.] COLUMBIA M 33307, \$6.98.

BRAHMS: Klänge II; Klosterfräulein; Phänomen; Weg der Liebe I-II; Walpurgisnacht. **CHAUSSON:** Chanson perpetuelle (Von Stade; with "Joe del Maria," violin). **MOZART:** Le Nozze di Figaro: Non so più (arr. Mozart) (Von Stade; with "Joe del Maria"). **SAINT-SAËNS:** Le bonheur est chose légère (Blegen; with "Joe del Maria"). **A. SCARLATTI:** Endimione e Cintia; Vaga Cintia... Se geloso è il mio core (Blegen; with chamber ensemble). **SCHUBERT:** Die Verschworenen (Blegen; with Gervase de Peyer, clarinet). **SCHUMANN:** Botschaft; Das Glück.

tery of shading such as one has not heard since Horowitz was in his heyday, and a sense of rhythm and shape of a profoundly musical variety.

On this record he displays several aspects of his ability. One side is devoted to the huge, epic, sonatalike *Fantasy* by Aaron Copland and the Bartók Op. 18 Etudes, for the fingers-of-steel department. The second side is given over to the *Quadro Musicale di Annalibera* by Luigi Dallapiccola, a work of supreme delicacy and finesse, performed here to perfection. A.F.

ROBERT THOMPSON: The Baroque Bassoon. Robert Thompson, bassoon; Thomas Trobaugh, harpsichord. MUSICAL HERITAGE MHS 1853, \$3.50 (Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

BOISMORTIER: Sonata No. 5, in G minor. **FASCH:** Sonata in C. **GALLIARD:** Sonata No. 3, in F. **SCHÜTZ:** Symphonie Sacrae, Book I: Nos. 16 and 17 (with Elsa Charlston, soprano; Loretta Zien, alto). **TELEMANN:** Sonata for Viola da Gamba, in E minor.

As a onetime (clumsily amateur) bassoonist, I've retained a special affection for what is perhaps more the philosopher of the orchestra than (as popularly dubbed) the clown. And I've always regretted the scarcity of recorded representations of the instrument's solo repertory.

So I have a warm welcome even for a program that should more properly be titled "Bassoon Music of the Baroque Era," since what Thompson plays here is not a period or replica instrument, but a quite modern Heckel. No matter: Thompson, a busy concertizing soloist, once with the Indianapolis Symphony, is not merely a proficient technician, but commander of admirably "fat," robust, and juicily soft-reedy tonal qualities, and he brings an infectious relish to everything he plays. Hence, even though both his continuo harpsichordist and recording engineer make sure that he is given front-stage prominence, prime interest is centered on the inspired choice of music itself.

The now jauntily buoyant, now gravely ceremonial sonata by Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688-1758), the more bravura sonata showpiece by his close contemporary Johann Ernst Galliard (1687-1749), and the lighter-weight but engaging work by the slightly later Frenchman Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (1691-1755) are all characteristic examples of baroque-vital music-making. And as best as I can tell, only the Boismortier has been recorded before, in this country anyway. What are truly outstanding, though (and what I've never heard before, on records or off) are the superbly songful and spirited Telemann sonata and the quite extraordinarily moving Schütz settings of Song of Solomon verses. The former comes from the twenty-four *Esercizii musici* of 1724; the latter from Book I (1629) of the *Symphonice Sacrae*. The Schütz vocalists, a bright but somewhat unsteady soprano and a much-too-reticent alto, scarcely do full justice either to No. 16's poignancy or to No. 17's jubilation, but in both pieces the three-bassoon obbligatos (all by Thompson dubbing?) are as unusual as they are fascinating. R.D.D.

reviewed by
 MORGAN AMES
 ROYAL S. BROWN
 R. D. DARRELL
 HENRY EDWARDS
 JIM GOSA
 MIKE JAHN
 JOHN S. WILSON



* **HOYT AXTON:** *Southbound*. Hoyt Axton, guitar and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I Love to Sing; Southbound; Lion in the Winter; Blind Fiddler; Greensleeves; No No Song; Nashville; Speed Trap*; five more. [Hoyt Axton and Henry Lewy, prod.] A&M SP 4510, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 4510, \$7.98; ●● 8T 4510, \$7.98.

Those who have not had the privilege of attending his concerts may know Hoyt Axton only as the man who wrote several hit records for the pop rock group Three Dog Night, including "Never Been to Spain" and "Joy to the World."

Axton has a deep, resonant voice and a strong feeling for country music and folk, which he blends with élan on this LP. Best are the opening two songs, the gospel-influenced "I Love to Sing" and the jaunty "Southbound." The humorous ballads "Speed Trap" and "No No Song," the latter a hit as recorded by Ringo Starr, are most enjoyable. Axton's sly merging of "Greensleeves" and "The House of the Rising Sun" is handled adroitly; and "Nashville," a fine country song, should give pause to some of the major Nashville figures.

The name of Hoyt Axton is not yet a household item, but, if he keeps producing records of such high quality, it will be. M.J.

* **LONNIE LISTON SMITH AND THE COSMIC ECHOES:** *Expansions*. Lonnie Liston Smith, keyboards and electronics. FLYING DUTCHMAN BDL1 0934, \$5.95.

"Expansions" is a very apt title for this album by a constantly emerging, expanding musician. Smith's use of a vast variety of percussion and electronic instruments gives this music vivid color and a wide range of rhythms and shifting accents.

Lonnie Liston Smith has come through the ranks of mainstream jazz (Art Blakey, Max Roach) to the avant-garde (Miles Davis, Pharoah Sanders, Gato Barbieri) and is finally ready to start making his own statements. He is very much in the flow of such contemporaries as Herbie Hancock and George Duke, who are applying the musicianship of their jazz experience to new channels. J.G.

* **HERB ALPERT & THE TIJUANA BRASS:** *Coney Island*. Herb Alpert and Bob Findley, trumpets; Bob Edmondson, trombone; Dave Frishberg, piano; Steve Schaeffer, drums; Papito Hernandez, bass; instrumental accompaniment. *Coney Island; Sweet Georgia Brown; Ratatouille; Catfish; This Masquerade; Carmine*; six more. [Herb Alpert, prod.] A&M SP 4521, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 4521, \$7.98; ●● 8T 4521, \$7.98.

For a number of years, Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass have provided a great deal of smooth, popular jazz, some of it with Mexican influences, some without.

This newest recording is one of Alpert's best. It mixes easily the flavor of Dixieland with the smoothness of what we have come

Herb Alpert
*Dixieland flavor with cocktail
 jazz smoothness.*

to call cocktail jazz. Especially noteworthy are the piano contributions of Dave Frishberg and the trumpet solos of Alpert and Bob Findley. "Sweet Georgia Brown" and the spunky "Ratatouille" are highlights.M.J.

AMERICA: *Hearts*. America, instruments and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Daisy Jane*; eleven more. [George Martin, prod.] WARNER BROS. BS 2852, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M 52852, \$7.97; ●● M 82852, \$7.97.

America is a pop trio that apparently considers itself so famous it no longer needs to list the names of its members on the album jacket. One is therefore left with several photographs, allowing only the judgment that, though the boys be nameless, they consider themselves terribly cute.

America takes sweet pop folk music of the sort exemplified by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and adds to it an extra dose of confection. That sweetness is about the only distinguishing feature of the music. Melody and lyrics both seem secondary considerations, and the quality of the instrumental performances is only adequate. The songs are all very much alike.

If one succeeds in wading through this LP, one is left with a feeling not unlike that which results from the ingestion of too much marzipan. M.J.

KEITH CHRISTMAS: *Brighter Day*. Keith Christmas, electric guitar, cabasa, tambourine, acoustic guitars, congas, flexitone, and vocals; strings, rhythm, horns, keyboards, and synthesizers accompaniment. *Brighter Day; Foothills; Country Farm*; six more. [Greg Lake and Pete Sinfield, prod.] MANTICORE MA 6 503, \$6.98.

"Brighter Day" was produced by Emerson, Lake, and Palmer's Greg Lake and Pete Sinfield, the perceptive lyricist who has written for both King Crimson and EL&P. Together they have provided subtle, gentle backgrounds for the original compositions of folk-oriented Keith Christmas. The composer, nonetheless, offers up a spotty set of songs ranging from the trite title tune to the haunting "Country Farm," which surges with the restlessness of a wanderer who hopes someday to settle down to a peaceful life of working the earth.

The same theme turns up on "Song of a Drifter." Intermingling sincere observations and clichés, Christmas somehow manages to make the song work. He is equally effective giving a winning reading of the much-loved Smokey Robinson golden-oldie "My Girl."

"Brighter Day" is an enthusiastic crea-

Explanation of symbols

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tion that suffers from lack of variety. Christmas must utilize the brighter colors of his song-writing palette. He, Lake, and Sinfield, seem to be aching to cut loose but denying themselves the opportunity. Bright boys, one and all. One can be sure that Keith Christmas' next LP will be a more energized experience. H.E.

* **BOB JAMES:** Two. Bob James, keyboards and arrangements. *Take Me to the Mardi Gras*; *I Feel a Song*; *Farandole*; *Golden Apple*; two more. [Creed Taylor, prod.] CTI 6057, \$6.98. Tape: ● CTC 6057, \$7.98; ● CT8 6057, \$7.98.

Bob James is a brilliant musician, an arranger/composer/pianist who has quietly and steadily honed his skills for ten or a dozen years. Leaning strongly toward jazz as a pianist, he has been carving out a career primarily as an arranger. His success in that area, particularly for Grover Washington and other CTI stablemates, has been rewarded with two albums of his own. "One" made the charts of national hits, and "Two" cannot be far behind.

This recording has a little something for everybody: Paul Simon's "Take Me to the Mardi Gras," the pop hit "You're as Right as Rain," a nice soulful ballad featuring singer Patti Austin. Even Bizet has his day (pardon me, Les Brown) with James's pop reincarnation of "Farandole" from the second *L'Arlesienne* Suite. There also are two very good Bob James originals, although I must confess that restoring the classics in the image of Eumir Deodato is a device that's beginning to wear thin.

This album is marked by the kind of slickness that is Creed Taylor's trademark. That is to say, details are attended to carefully, everything is scrupulously engineered and mixed for maximum zing. All the records issued by his company have been produced by Taylor virtually single-handedly. They are, on the lowest end of the scale, at least palatable and, on the highest end, superb.

"Two" is a prime example of coolly, skillfully professional production. All the right ingredients have been brought together for a very pleasant musical experience. It's lightweight music, designed to entertain, which it does admirably. J.G.

* **ROY ACUFF:** *Smoky Mountain Memories*. Roy Acuff, vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Smoky Mountain Memories*; *Take Me Home, Country Roads*; *Tennessee Central (Number 9)*; *Rooftop Lullaby*; *Thank God*; six more. [Wesley Rose, prod.] HICKORY H3G 4517, \$5.98.

Roy Acuff, one of the best-known figures in country music, records rarely, and when he does it is always an event. Such is the case with this superb collection of eleven songs. The album is an eclectic one, ranging in material from the old-timey "Tennessee Central (Number 9)" and the lively spiritual "Thank God" to a fine, sensitive reading of John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads."

Throughout, the arrangements are as tasteful as the material. A small country band backs up Acuff, whose thoughtful vo-

Critics' Choice

The best pop records reviewed in recent months

RUBY BRAFF-GEORGE BARNES QUARTET: *Plays Gershwin*. CONCORD JAZZ 5. April.

BENNY GOODMAN: *The Complete Goodman, Vol. 1: 1935*. RCA BLUEBIRD AXM 2-5505. June.

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.

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS. CAP. ST 11361. April.

MUSIC FROM GREAT SHAKESPEAREAN FILMS. LON. SPC 21132. June.

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.

JESSE COLIN YOUNG. *Songbird*. WAR. BS 2846. June.

icals are augmented only by some appropriately ragged background vocalizing, apparently by members of the band. This album contains pure country music of the old style, unfettered by lush strings, vocal choruses, or sweetness of any kind. M.J.

* **SUPERTRAMP:** *Crime of the Century*. Bob C. Benberg, drums and percussion; Roger Hodgson, vocals, guitar, and pianos; John Anthony Helliwell, saxophones, clarinets, and vocals; Dougie Thomson, bass; Richard Davies, vocals, keyboards, and harmonica. *School*; *Bloody Well Right*; *Hide in Your Shell*; five more. [Ken Scott and Supertramp, prod.] A&M SP 3647, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 3647, \$7.98; ● 8T 3647, \$7.98.

This English rock quintet enjoys enormous popularity in its home country. Not only

has "Crime of the Century" topped the English pop charts, but one of its selections, "Dreamer," also became a hit single.

With the American release of the LP, one can readily understand Supertramp's popularity. This music is "art rock," in the tradition of such English bands as Genesis. The album comprises a suite of moody rock songs, each exploring the despair of a dreamer who has difficulty coping with the realities of a mundane life. The concept may be trite, but Supertramp's musicality has enough vitality to overcome the ordinariness of its "theme." Powerful singing, clever writing, and superior musicianship combine to produce a result that on many occasions is legitimately haunting.

Supertramp seems to have the potential to become a major force in the pop-rock arena. Meanwhile, "Crime of the Century" should win the group the solid support of the many American fans of progressive British rock. H.E.



Roy Acuff
Keeping country music pure.

* **AL KOOPER:** *Al's Big Deal/Unclaimed Freight—An Al Kooper Anthology*. Al Kooper, keyboards and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I Can't Quit Her*; *I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know*; *Without Her*; *Season of the Witch*; *the 59th Street Bridge Song*; *The Weight*; *I Stand Alone*; *I Got a Woman*; nine more. [John Simon, Bob Johnston, and Al Kooper, proc.] COLUMBIA PG 33169, \$7.98 (two discs). Tape: ● PGA 33169, \$8.98.

This two-disc set includes a fine selection of previously released recordings, including half of "Child Is Father to the Man," the first *Blood, Sweat, & Tears* album, and one song from a Bob Dylan recording on which Kooper played piano.

Kooper is an exceptionally talented pop keyboard player and songwriter. He ain't a bad singer either, if one is willing to love the sounds that might be heard from an exasperated goat. The tracks on these two discs contain a fair sampling of his recording career since 1967. His *Blood, Sweat, & Tears*

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material contains some of the best pop sounds heard during the 1960s. Kooper's blues-oriented jams, especially "Season of the Witch," are also a treat.

The advantage of this collection over the albums on which the tunes contained herein were previously released is that the new issue eliminates many songs of lesser import. M.J.

MAGGIE BELL: Suicide Sal. Maggie Bell, vocals; rhythm, strings, keyboards, horns, and vocal accompaniment. *Wishing Well; Suicide Sal; I Was in Chains*; seven more. [Mark London, prod.] SWAN SONG SS 8412, \$6.98. Tape: ♡ CS 8412, \$7.97; ♣ TP 8412, \$7.97.

"Queen of the Night," Maggie Bell's debut American solo disc, offered the much-praised British blues-rock singer in the guise of a rhythm-and-blues queen. Valiantly performing a set highlighted by a thumping version of Ringo Starr's "Oh My My," she impressed as a singer with powerful pipes and an awesome sense of dynamics. Nevertheless, that soul extravaganza just did not work.

The singer returned to London and promised an LP that would stress her rock and rock-blues talents. The result, "Suicide Sal," is a definite improvement. With Mark London as producer, Maggie roars her way through ten tunes that include Leo Sayer's "In My Life," the Lennon-McCartney "I Saw Her Standing There," and the title track, a Maggie Bell original. With the ability to produce gravelly low notes and piercing high notes and everything else in between, she can once again be accurately labeled "impressive."

This set has been arranged admirably to dish up rock and blues basics with no frills and plenty of musical honesty. In addition, Maggie supplies a performance that is a model of restraint, and her discipline works exceedingly well in many places. Blues-rock queens have always been notoriously difficult to record. One expects freedom and lack of restraint; one also demands tastefulness. "Suicide Sal" is tasteful. On occasion, however, Maggie should have been allowed to really cut loose. H.E.

Nico: The End. Nico, vocals and harmonium; Phil Manzanera, guitar; Eno, synthesizer; John Cale, bass, xylophone, guitar, synthesizer, organ, marimba, triangles, cabaça, glockenspiel, and piano; Vicki Wood and Annagh Wood, vocals. *The End; Das Lied der Deutschen*; six more. [John Cale, prod.] ISLAND ILPS 9311, \$6.98. Tape: ♣ Y 89311, \$7.98.

Nico is a sometime actress who sometimes sings. Perhaps "vocalizes" would be a more precise word—Nico makes noises that presently come from her mouth, but one hesitates to call these auditory disruptions "singing."

This semantic distinction does not necessarily imply condemnation. In Nico's case, a finely tuned voice would be a detriment. Her wavering, guttural monotone is perfectly adapted to the rather dire nature of the material she sings: all eerie, foreboding,



Maggie Bell
Rock and blues basics with no frills.

and strained. The accompaniment—beatless and heavily laden with synthesized sounds—is reminiscent of the organ at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, played by the Hunchback. Who else but Nico would tackle the late Jim Morrison's epic "The End," as calamitous and gloomy a piece of music as any committed to disc, and then follow it with an equally disconsolate reading of "Das Lied der Deutschen"? Sometimes her approach is unsettling and thought-provoking, an effect one assumes she desired. On "The End" and its Aryan follow-up, the result is merely ludicrous.

Nico's new LP is hardly disco fodder, and that may be its saving grace. At long last, a pop record you can't dance to. M.J.

*** TOM SCOTT AND THE L.A. EXPRESS:**

Tom Cat. Tom Scott, woodwinds and synthesizer; Robben Ford, guitar; Larry Nash, keyboards; Max Bennett, bass; John Guerin, drums. *Rock Island Rocket; Keep On Doin' It; Retried; Mondo; Love Poem; Tom Cat.* ODE SP 77029, \$6.98. Tape: ♡ CS 77029, \$7.98; ♣ BT 77029, \$7.98.

This is the second album by this group, comprising highly talented individuals welded into a tight, cooking band whose sound and "feel" are somewhat derived from the Crusaders.

Leader Tom Scott is a versatile, volatile player, much in demand on studio dates. An alumnus of the Don Ellis band, he has also worked with Oliver Nelson and in the past four or five years led various groups on his own. He has a powerful tenor tone with an incisive, biting edge to it and has come into his own as a ranking soprano-sax player.

The other members are equally outstanding: Larry Nash (replacing Joe Sample) is a veteran jazz pianist; guitarist Robben Ford (in for Larry Carlton) has a

very contemporary blues-rock sound; bassist Max Bennett is another jazz staple; and drummer John Guerin is an energetic, potent percussionist.

L.A. Express is loaded with high energy and seldom cruises at anything less than full speed ahead. There's not much laid back—everybody's cooking all the time. The tunes are pretty much in the same bag, with the exception of "Love Poem," a pretty, reflective piece featuring a vocal obligato by Joni Mitchell. "Mondo" is the one extended performance that has moods and variations not touched upon in the rest of the album.

This is primarily music for fun—funky, groovy, good times all the way to the end.

[J.G.]

*** MICHAEL QUATRO:** In Collaboration with the Gods. Michael Quatro, keyboards, synthesizers, strings, et al.; strings, vocal, and rhythm accompaniment. *In Collaboration with the Gods; Loki's Gloria; Amusement of Bacchus*; eight more. [Stuart Alan Love, prod.] UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA 420G. \$6.98.

This album has been designed to showcase the composing and multifaceted keyboard skills of Michael Quatro. Following Rick Wakeman, who has successfully created a number of keyboards rock opuses based on either classical or literary themes, Quatro has conceived the first side of this disc as a sequence of thirteen musical selections inspired by different classical gods. His tributes to Ram, Pluto, Loki, Ares, Bacchus, Circe, Venus, Mercury, Neptune, Mars, and Thor are each carefully and distinctively composed. The melodies are fresh and attractive and are skillfully amplified by the composer's considerable instrumental abilities.

On the second side of the disc, Quatro offers five somewhat more conventional items—if you consider a rock version of "Ave Maria" conventional. Here, too, there is discipline as well as freewheeling, fanciful imagination.

"In Collaboration with the Gods" is a classy, classically oriented rock LP. If the American public wants a homegrown Rick Wakeman, Quatro's disc is a legitimate bid.

H.E.

WET WILLIE: Dixie Rock. Jimmy Hall, vocals, harmonica, and saxophone; Jack Hall, bass; Ricky Hirsch, guitar; John Anthony, keyboards and guitar; Lewis Ross, drums; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *She's My Lady; Poor Judge of Character*; eight more. [Tom Dowd, prod.] CAPRICORN CP 0149. \$6.98. Tape: **M** 50149, \$7.97; **M** 80149, \$7.97.

When there are already nine million soul musicians playing bad music, music badly, or both, it is beyond me why anyone else would want to join them. But here is Wet Willie doing just that.

There is no best song on this damp turkey. There is, however, a worst. It's called "Poor Judge of Character." I would suggest it be retitled "Poor Choice of Vocation."

M.J.

Theater and Film

*** THE DOVE.** Original film soundtrack recording. Composed and conducted by John Barry. [Tom Mack, prod.] ABC ABDP 852. \$6.98. Tape: **H** 8022-852, \$7.95.

John Barry's music for Charles Jarrott's *The Dove*, a film produced by Gregory Peck, is a typically multifaceted Barry effort that proves to be one of his most attractive—and certainly one of his most amiable—scores. The flowing title theme immediately surprises with an unexpected nonmodulation, and if it tends perhaps to stay too close to the same key (as do many Barry melodies) it nonetheless has an appropriate ingenuousness that can also be felt in the jaunty, pastoral "Hitchhike to Darwin" theme, first heard played on a harmonica. There is also a vocal entitled "Sail the Summer Winds," breathily sung by Lyn Paul, which begins in a vein similar to that of Fred Neal's "Everybody's Talkin'," used by Barry in *Midnight Cowboy*.

In addition to these three themes, several themeless cuts show Barry's ability to sustain mood and tension with motivic devices and ostinatos that are mostly instrumental and rhythmic in character. Particularly disquieting, emotionally, is "Alone on the Wide, Wide Sea," in which a nontonal, five-note figure obsessively affirms its presence against a bleak, tonal canvas punctuated toward the end by the rapid patter of high-pitched drums moving back and forth within this strange seascape. And throughout, familiar Barry sounds—the low brass outbursts, the inevitable xylophone coloration—keep appearing.

It is all performed with flair, if not the last word in precision, and the recording is beautiful though perhaps a bit over-present.

R.S.B.

SPELLBOUND: Classic Film Scores of Miklós Rózsa. Ambrosian Singers; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Gerhardt, cond. [George Korngold, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0911, \$6.98. Tape: **ARK** 1-0911, \$7.95; **ARS** 1-0911, \$7.95. Quadriphonic: ARD 1-0911 (Quadradisc), \$7.98; ART 1-0911 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.95.

The Red House; The Thief of Bagdad; The Lost Weekend; The Four Feathers; Double Indemnity; Knights of the Round Table; The Jungle Book; Spellbound; Ivanhoe.

*** SPELLBOUND.** Original film score by Miklós Rózsa. Conducted by Ray Heindorf. STANYAN SRQ 4021, \$6.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

At the risk of sounding like an ingrate—and RCA's Classic Film Scores series has certainly given us plenty to be grateful for—I must say that I find "Spellbound" fairly unrepresentative of Miklós Rózsa, who along with Bernard Herrmann was one of the first film composers to move away from the nineteenth century toward a more modern-

istic style. Although Rózsa has always been capable of writing a good melody (the opening theme of the violin concerto's second movement, used after the fact by Billy Wilder as the love theme in *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, is one of the most poignant examples of pure lyricism I know of), it seems to me that his indisputable trump card, at least vis-à-vis his film music, lies in the tense and often sweeping dramatic movement he is able to create. Yet, as in the Franz Waxman album ("Sunset Boulevard," ARL 1-0708), conductor Charles Gerhardt and producer George Korngold have exaggerated the composer's romantic side, choosing one of the least substantial sequences from one of Rózsa's most brilliant scores, *The Thief of Bagdad*, which could have stood an entire disc instead of a single, uninspired cut, and over-weighting the skimpy selections from *Double Indemnity* and *Spellbound* so strongly in favor of the romantic as to give an utterly false impression of the scores as a whole and the films they were written for.

The heavy-handed interpretations of the various love and happy-ending themes do not help much. Gerhardt makes Miklós Rózsa sound like Max Steiner (note the *Red House* love theme, for instance), and there is something rather pitiful in this. And rarely have I heard anything as slushy as the violin solo at the end of *Lost Weekend*. Another frustration: Why couldn't an instrument sounding more like a theremin, if not a theremin itself, have been used in the *Red House*, *Lost Weekend*, and *Spellbound* selections? In the latter especially, the dream-sequence theme (played an octave higher than in the film's music track, if memory serves me) loses a great deal of its macabre quality.

On the positive side, some of Rózsa's best film music can be heard in *The Four Feathers*, whose score was destroyed during the war. Fortunately, film-music authority Christopher Palmer was able to reconstruct the parts and instrumentation by listening to the soundtrack. The musical language of the two themes recorded here—"Sunstroke" and "The Conspiracy"—stands in strong contrast to the pseudo-cinematic gloss that tends to give many of the Classic Film Scores selections a sheen of sameness that does little justice to the composers involved.

Also particularly welcome on the RCA album is the music for Delmer Daves' 1947 *The Red House*. Perhaps one reason this selection works so well is that enough of the score is given to communicate the full range of its diverse moods—even though the component parts of a score are often used in piecemeal fashion in the films themselves, they usually are conceived as a unified whole.

Despite an apparent consensus that the RCA series should concentrate on more selections from fewer scores, Gerhardt and Korngold persist in giving us bits and snatches that serve mainly to remind us of what we are missing: the marvelous animal characterizations Rózsa did for the Kordas' *Jungle Book*; what I had thought was the principal theme of *Lost Weekend*; more sequences from *Ivanhoe*, whose rousing and exciting overture is nonetheless one of the high points of this disc. (A mono-only

reissue of a more nearly complete *Ivanhoe* score has been released by MGM in England, coupled with *Madame Bovary* and *Plymouth Adventure*.)

Stanyan's reissue of the *Spellbound* music is another story altogether. I have always felt that the original 1958 Warner Bros. release, which was a new recording of the music beautifully conducted by Ray Heindorf, represented a prototype of sorts for good soundtrack albums. And whatever you may think of what Rózsa's music does or does not do for Hitchcock's "Freud for Moviegoers," *Spellbound* remains one of the most remarked and remarkable of all film scores.

To begin with, much of its schizophrenic orientation is quite subtly communicated by the ingenious similarity between the love theme and the psychosis theme. The latter generally is played on that strange, electronic instrument, the theremin (performed on this recording, as on the original music track, by Dr. Samuel J. Hoffman, although Stanyan gives no credit), while the famous love theme is left to more "normal" instruments. Furthermore, using this thematic material as a point of departure, Rózsa develops an exceptionally intriguing sequence of shifting musical ambiances, some of which are spine-chillingly weird and surrealistic. It is one of the great beauties of this disc that just about all the music is represented, plus some that isn't even used in the film, including a pop arrangement of the title theme and a scherzo that is only hinted at when Gregory Peck and Ingrid Bergman take their first walk in the country.

Stanyan has done a superb, even spectacular, job of remastering the original sound, which was quite decent to begin with. No indication is given as to how the quadriphonic mix was done (I was unable to hear the disc in this mode), but I strongly suspect the existence of a multitrack tape. I sincerely hope this will not be Stanyan's only reissue from the old Warner Bros. discs. R.S.B.



DUKE ELLINGTON: *The World of Duke Ellington*, Vol. 2. Duke Ellington orchestra. *The Clothed Woman; New York City Blues; Let's Go Blues*; seventeen more. COLUMBIA KG 33341, \$6.98 (two discs) [recorded 1947-51].

Vol. 2 continues Columbia's chronological collection of its Ellington recordings. This set starts in December 1947 and moves rapidly—thanks partially to the recording ban of 1948 and to a subsequent lack of interest on Columbia's part in recording Ellington—to May 1951.

Even though the set projects an aura of completeness—to the extent of including several indifferent pieces that seem to be the Duke's attempt at accommodating current popular taste—two recordings from the period with vocals by Al Hibbler are

omitted, as well as four extended versions of the Duke's major standards (originally released on Columbia's Masterworks label). However, it does include three pieces that were not released at the time.

Half of the four-sided set was made by the basic, original Ellington band in its extreme, final stages—that is, after it had lost Cootie Williams, Rex Stewart, Tricky Sam Nanton, Ben Webster, Barney Bigard, and Jimmy Blanton in the early Forties but still had such stalwarts as Lawrence Brown, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, and Sonny Greer, and the more recently arrived Ray Nance, Shorty Baker, Russell Procope, Tyree Glenn, and Quentin Jackson. The most drastic turnover in personnel occurred in 1951, when Brown, Hodges, and Greer—all the remaining veterans except Carney—left, a move countered by the return of Juan Tizol, who brought with him Willie Smith and Louis Bellson, and the arrival of Paul Gonsalves and Britt Woodman. As this collection shows, the band upheld its standards through this change, but it no longer had the personal identification that Brown or Hodges could give it.

J.S.W.

* **MARIAN MCPARTLAND:** Solo Concert at Haverford. Marian McPartland, piano. *Haverford Blues; Pick Yourself Up; I'll Be Around*; six more. HALCYON 111, \$4.98 (Halcyon Records, 302 Clinton St., Bellmore, N.Y. 11710).

Marian McPartland's advance from Dixieland (with then husband Jimmy McPartland) to rather precious modern jazz to a strong, positive personal expression—a development that has been going on for more than twenty-five years—is still in progress. In fact, one of the things that makes Miss McPartland one of the few really exciting jazz musicians playing today is that she continues to grow. When you go to hear her, you can never be sure precisely what will occur. Anyone who has followed her for at least the past ten years knows to expect a high level of quality and, beyond that, new areas, new levels, new challenges.

This record is an interesting example of Miss McPartland's stature as a solid, established pianist who reaches into fresh areas. A good deal of it holds to the high quality that one expects of her—and in an anticipated groove. But then one comes to Stephen Sondheim's "Send in the Clowns," a tune (and song) that has turned out to be a watershed for singers and instrumentalists alike. There are, to my mind, three exemplary interpreters of this piece—vocally, Glynis Johns (its first exponent, in *A Little Night Music*) and Mabel Mercer and, instrumentally, Marian McPartland, as performed on this disc. Like Miss Johns and Miss Mercer, she understands the song and even without Sondheim's excellent lyrics, conveys the feeling of the words. There is also an original by Miss McPartland, "Afterglow," in which she wraps up and throws away the avant-gardists who crawl into the piano woodwork and pluck at the strings, by using their gimmick in a really purposeful fashion.

Over-all, this record leaves the impres-



Freddie Hubbard
There's hardly anyone in his league.

sion that Miss McPartland, having developed an acceptable swing approach as a pianist, is now going well beyond that with her projection of delicate, sensitive nuances. J.S.W.

* **FREDDIE HUBBARD:** Polar AC. Freddie Hubbard, trumpet; Don Sebesky and Bob James, arr. *Polar AC; People Make the World Go Round; Becha by Golly Wow; Naturally; Son of Sky Dive*. CTI 6056, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CTC 6056, \$7.98; ● CT8 6056, \$7.98.

Any new Freddie Hubbard album promises to deliver music of substance, even one such as this, which is somewhat dated. Since "Polar AC" was recorded for CTI, Hubbard has moved on to Columbia and already has a couple of very successful albums there.

This delayed release contains two r&b pop tunes of a few years back, "People" and "Becha by Golly," which would seem to give the recording a commercial orientation. But they're by no means bad performances, with skillfully wrought string arrangements by Bob James. Don Sebesky also contributes two of his fine arrangements on "Naturally," written by Nat Aspinall, and the title track, composed by jazz pianist Cedar Walton.

Most of the stretching out comes on "Son of Sky Dive," which is filled with Hubbard's pyrotechnics. Throughout, such jazz luminaries as Ron Carter, George Benson, Jack DeJohnette, Billy Cobham, Lenny White, George Cables, and Junior Cook not only provide excellent solo and ensemble work, but prod Hubbard into staying on top of his game.

When he's in top form, there's hardly anybody in the same league with Freddie Hubbard. There's an almost athletic excitement to his playing—it's like watching Jim Brown carry the football. Anything the horn is capable of, Hubbard can do. He has

ironclad chops, great inventiveness, and a highly evolved personal style that's projected with élan.

I feel this album is a little confining for Hubbard—with the exception of "Polar AC" and "Son of Sky Dive," where he really gives off sparks from his electrifying skills. All in all, a worthwhile recording. J.G.

GERRY MULLIGAN/CHET BAKER: Carnegie Hall Concert, Vols. 1-2. Gerry Mulligan, baritone saxophone; Chet Baker, trumpet; Bob James, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Harvey Mason, drums; John Scofield, guitar; Dave Samuels, vibes and percussion; Ed Byrne, trombone. CTI 6054 and 6055, \$6.98 each.

The November 24, 1974, Carnegie Hall reunion of Gerry Mulligan and Chet Baker, twenty-two years after they had formed half of the Gerry Mulligan Quartet, the group that launched Baker's career and elevated Mulligan to the stardom he has retained ever since, was the first time the two had played together in ten years. Each performed with his own group before joining forces to re-examine material from their Mulligan Quartet days—"Bernie's Tune," "Line for Lyons," and "My Funny Valentine."

CTI's recording of the event has been jumbled up so that the concert's sense of continuity is lost (and why, in this era of double albums, the two discs should be issued separately is a mystery). The set consists of one piece by Baker's group, three by Mulligan's, and four by the jointly led group (the three nostalgic recollections plus Mulligan's recent piece, "It's Sandy at the Beach").

Not surprisingly, the dominant figure throughout is Mulligan, playing with sheer lyrical beauty, with tremendously invigorating drive, and with a tone that, in recent years, has acquired a magnificence that not only rivals that of the late Harry Carney, but in some respects surpasses it (his warm and gentle solo, for example, on "Song for Strayhorn," one of three excellent Mulligan originals included in the set). Interestingly, Bob James on piano and John Scofield on guitar prove more provocative soloists playing with Mulligan alone than when Baker joins the group.

Baker, for his part, is what he always was—a thin-toned, bloodless, rather shaky trumpet player who occasionally rises to a few crisp passages and, when he is not under the awesome shadow of Mulligan, manages a gracefully flowing solo with his own group on "There Will Never Be Another You," which, unfortunately, he sings. J.S.W.

JIMMY ROWLES: Special Magic. Jimmy Rowles, piano; Rusty Gilder, bass. *Lotus Blossom; Restless; The Peacocks* seven more. HALCYON 110, \$4.98 (302 Clinton St., Bellmore, N.Y. 11710).

Jimmy Rowles's light touch and rhythmic sense of phrasing have made him an accompanist whose only peer is Ellis Larkins. And, like Larkins, he uses these same techniques brilliantly as a soloist. The only problem about Rowles's solo work is get-

ting him in the proper circumstances and with the proper material to bring out the best of his talent. The great merit of this disc is that it offers him in his best light—imaginative, wryly explorative, polished, and relaxed, with bass accompaniment that wraps warmly around his playing.

The essence of Rowles is very neatly summed up in the opening track, Carl Perkins' "Grooveyard," a beautifully floating, swinging piece of jazz that has real substance rather than the wispy puffery that often comes out of such a gentle approach. (The parallel, again, is Larkins.) But that is simply an introduction. Jerome Kern's "Remind Me," a worthy tune, is redesigned by Rowles without losing any of its individual qualities. A pair of Ellington pieces are also put through much the same process: "Cottontail," successfully slowed down from the customary full-cry saxophone attack to take on new colors, and "Rockin' in Rhythm," less successfully adapted, possibly because it does not get quite far enough from the original.

There are also a couple of Rowles's close-up, murmured vocals—"Sunday, Monday" and "Mah Lindy Lou"—which, not surprisingly, show that his vocal thinking is much like his pianistic thinking, even though limited by a less adequate instrument. J.S.W.

*** TOOTS THIELEMANS: Captured Alive.** Toots Thielemans, harmonica; Joanne Brackeen, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Freddie Waits, drums. *Dr. Pretty; Airegin; Snooze;* five more. CHOICE 1007, \$6.98.

Toots Thielemans and Joanne Brackeen are recorded so infrequently that this disc takes on a double value in presenting them together in an atmosphere in which they supplement and complement each other. Toots forgoes his guitar and his whistling to concentrate on the harmonica, possibly the first time that an entire jazz album has focused on that instrument. It may sound like a little too much of even a good thing, but Toots has such taste, imagination, and virtuosity that the fact that his instrument is a harmonica quickly disappears from one's consciousness (especially when one thinks of the innumerable saxophone and trumpet jazz albums that have not contained as much as 1% of the musical creativity that Thielemans offers).

The set gets off to a relatively routine and, therefore, misleading start with "Days of Wine and Roses," which simply brings out the mellow side of Toots, although it serves to introduce the loping, rolling vitality of Miss Brackeen's piano. But with "I Never Told You," a lovely Johnny Mandel melody that might have been another "Wine and Roses," Toots begins to open up, to stretch out, to reveal the capabilities he has found in the harmonica. It is a fascinating performance, and from there on things get better and better.

The second side of the disc is flawless. It includes two Brackeen compositions—a dark, haunting "Images" and (the gem of the disc) "Snooze," a fascinatingly "Caravan"-esque piece—plus a glorious Toots flight on the Ellington-Strayhorn "Day Dream" and a probing, largely unaccompanied, ad lib exploration of Coltrane's

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"Giant Steps" by Toots and Joanne that sets this piece in a completely new and refreshing light. J.S.W.

In Brief

JOE DROUKAS: Shadowboxing. SOUTHWIND SWS 6400, \$6.98.

Joe Droukas writes rambling, personal songs in the style of Bruce Springsteen. Though Springsteen's songs are the epitome of self-indulgence, they demonstrate a flair for quirky observation. Droukas is not as self-indulgent—and not as interesting. H.E.

JUNIE: When We Do. WESTBOUND W 200, \$6.98.

Junie is Walt Morrison, a musician in his early twenties, once a member of a group called the Funky Worm. He also was with the Ohio Players, and his solo LP finds him creating agreeable disco-soul music in that supergroup's style. "When We Do," while no trailblazer, has its engaging moments. H.E.

NILS LOFGREN. A&M SP 4509, \$6.98. Tape: CS 4509, \$7.98; 8T 4509, \$7.98.

Lofgren wrote all but one of the songs on this recording and is also credited with lead vocals, backup vocals, acoustic and electric guitars, piano, and organ. Yet to my ears all

the sound and busyness and overdubbing on the overdubs result in not much. There are some good licks here and there, particularly in Lofgren's guitar playing. But this album doesn't reach out to me in any way. J.G.

HUGO MONTENEGRO: Others by Brothers. RCA APL 1-0784, \$6.98. Tape: APK 1-0784, \$7.95; APS 1-0784, \$7.95. Quadri-phonics: APD 1-0784 (Quadradisc), \$7.98; APT 1-0784 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.95.

What's happenin' here is that popular soul hits by Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Billy Preston, and others (hence the title) have been programmed into a synthesizer, augmented by some good licks from some high-caliber rock and jazz players, with a sort of Percy Faith-ful string section thrown in for good measure. A put-on, perhaps? In any event, Montenegro is a sincere, skillful musician, and it's not altogether unpleasant. J.G.

CHRIS DE BURGH: Far Beyond These Castle Walls. A&M SP 4516, \$6.98. Tape: CS 4516, \$7.98; 8T 4516, \$7.98.

Attractive writing and singing appear often enough on this debut disc. Nevertheless, twenty-six-year-old composer/performer De Burgh has a long way to go before one would consider his work either fresh or inspired. H.E.

SEGUIDA: Love Is. FANIA XSLP 00478, \$6.98. Seguida consists of twenty-nine musicians who create Latin music that is energetic but

not particularly distinctive. "Love Is..." will please those—and only those—who are Latin-music fans. H.E.

HERBIE MANN: Discotheque. ATLANTIC SD 1670, \$6.98. Tape: CS 1670, \$7.97; TP 1670, \$7.97.

Mann is no doubt the most adaptable creature on the face of the earth. Every idiom in modern music interests him, and he has tried his hand at all of them—bop, Afro, Middle Eastern, rock, bossa nova, you name it. He changes bands more often than others change shirts. This latest aspect of Herbie Mann is a finger-popping, hip-shaking collection in the current of glitter pop-rock. What raises it a cut above most of the rest in this genre is the leader's straight-ahead jazz soloing superimposed over the rock beat. It should be a great album for dancing and partying. J.G.

YES: Yesterdays. ATLANTIC SD 18103, \$6.98. Tape: CS 18103, \$7.97; TP 18103, \$7.97.

This album of recycled Yes material, circa 1969-72, includes only one track—an elongated, lackluster version of Paul Simon's touching "America"—of the group with the spectacular Rick Wakeman on keyboards and Steve Howe replacing Peter Banks on guitar. The other tracks are from Yes's first two Atlantic albums, some newly "sweetened." It's stone rock-and-roll, executed with excellent musicianship and constantly interesting because of the group's great variety, both musical and emotional. J.G.

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by R. D. Darrell

The Tape Deck

How—and how not—to sing Handel. It's good to be reminded that it's not essential to have famous performers, actual period instruments, or style-purist musicologist/conductors to achieve thrilling vitalizations of late baroque-era masterpieces. All that is needed is sound musical sensibility enlivened by infectious zest, such as we are prodigally given by Paul Steinitz's apparently young and certainly enthusiastic Bach Society singers and players in the first tapings of a spectacular Handelian showpiece coupled with one of the very earliest, yet best, of Bach cantatas: Nonesuch/Stereotape NST 71294 C, 7½-ips reel, \$7.95. Handel's wedding anthem of 1736, *Sing unto God*, is a dazzler, especially in its opening duo for countertenor (Paul Esswood) and high trumpet, its exhilaratingly buoyant chorus, "Lo, thus shall the man be blessed," and its bring-the-house-down finale for bravura tenor (Neil Jenkins) and chorus.

Bach's Cantata No. 131, *Aus der Tiefe*, is less overtly exciting but far more intimately and profoundly moving. It's particularly fascinating for its movements that fuse verses from the psalm *De profundis* (set as solo airs) with those from a Lutheran chorale. The admirably open recording is notable both for its lovely "floating" of choral tone and for its vivid capturing of delectably piquant obbligatos by an unjustly unaccredited oboist.

That darling of the mass public, the old-fashioned elephantine Handel of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, long has been an object lesson in aesthetic wrongness. Now even the Tabernacle's smaller traveling choir, recording with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, proves that soon-to-retire veteran organist/conductor Richard Condie has learned nothing and forgotten nothing over the years. These "Great Messiah Choruses" are insufferable in stereo (Columbia MT/MA 32935, Dolby-B cassette/cartridge, \$7.98 each) and only sonically a bit more impressive in quadriphony (MAQ 32935, Dolby-B Q-8 cartridge, \$7.98).

Wrong in a different way are the far more—indeed too—energetic performances and ultrareverberant, sharp-edgedly brilliant recordings of "Great Handel Choruses" by the British Handel Opera Chorus and Orchestra

under Charles Farncombe: London/Ampex O 521106/O 821106, Dolby-B cassette/cartridge, \$7.95 each; E 421106, Dolby-B 7½-ips reel, \$8.95. Here familiar *Messiah* excerpts are augmented by less hackneyed ones from *Jephtha*, *Solomon*, *Saul*, etc., but most of them are done unrelievedly fast and loud.

Equal rights for pianistes. The very oddity today of the term pianiste is an indication of some progress in eliminating sex discrimination among keyboard players. Yet only very few female pianists (like Alicia de Larrocha) currently win discographic best-sellerdom. And in the central Chopiniana repertory too many of them seem as steely fingered and sternly nonromantic as their male colleagues. Hence my welcome for a distinctive exception: a relative newcomer, the Israeli-born Ilana Vered, who brings to Chopin's Third Sonata, Fourth Ballade, and four shorter pieces unashamedly feminine warmth and genuinely romantic grace in rubato tempo elasticities, as well as a nowadays-taken-for-granted sure-fingered virtuosity: London/Ampex E 421119, Dolby-B 7½-ips reel, \$8.95; O 521119/O 82119, Dolby-B cassette/cartridge, \$7.95 each.

In glowing personality projection and poetic persuasiveness Vered well may console Novaes devotees for the current recording inactivity of their idol. She stimulates me not only to anticipate what promises to be an extensive series of brightly ringing Phase-4 recordings, but also to dig up her two earlier releases for Connoisseur Records, one of which—the complete Chopin etudes—has been taped by Advent (E 1018, Dolby-B cassette, \$6.95).

Is it discriminatory to tilt just a bit toward one sex or the other as preferable interpreters for certain works? I must confess that for me no man (well, save possibly Giesecking) has ever fully captured the lyric grace and lilt-ing vivacity of Franck's *Symphonic Variations*. Even André Watts and Erich Leinsdorf are no exceptions, although the soloist at least plays with admirable fluidity and éclat. On the other hand, I just can't imagine any woman pianist, no matter how expert, evoking all the grim terror of Liszt's *Totentanz*. But perhaps that's because I've never forgotten my first hearing it as a high school boy mesmerized by the formidable mien as well as technique of the now legendary Alexander Siloti—an experience (I've just realized as I write) that took place, by one of life's unnerving coincidences, fifty-three years ago to the day! Since that time the first performance to

come, for me, even close to Siloti's is this new one by Watts, again with Leinsdorf and the London Symphony, incongruously paired with the Franck *Variations*. It's impressively powerful even in stereo (Columbia MT/MA 33072, Dolby-B cassette/cartridge, \$7.98 each), but it's only in quadriphony that both this ultra-bravura performance and Liszt's apocalyptic music achieve appropriately fearsome panoramic breadth and dramatic impact (MAQ 33072, Q-8, \$7.98).

Gershwin without George's doing it.

Few and poor as the recorded examples (none on tape that I know) of Gershwin's own playing may be, they're enough to prove that it was unique. But at least the very different approach of William Bolcom reminds us of the wealth of melodic and rhythmic invention in the eighteen composer's-own Song Book transcriptions, plus the three preludes and six less-familiar original piano solos. For those who never heard George himself, these hearty but far less elegant performances may be quite satisfactory, and for everyone they're brightly attractive sonically even if quadriphony adds only slightly enhanced airiness: Nonesuch/Stereotape NSTQ 1284 QC, 7½-ips Q-reel, \$8.95.

In the repertory of concerted Gershwiniana I've always liked (despite considerable unevenness) the 1961-62 Earl Wild/Fiedler series. Long out of print in both 7½- and 3¼-ips reel editions, it's now reissued with the earlier *Cuban Overture* replaced by Robert Russell Bennett's "symphonic picture" of *Porgy and Bess*, recorded by the Boston Pops in 1968. Outstanding here is the Concerto in F, in a more magisterial version than any other available today. And the *Porgy and Bess* is surely the best and most idiomatic of Bennett's popular pastiches—which like most Gershwinians I find less satisfactory than the composer's own, far less slickly scored suite, formerly available on tape in Abravanel's 1959 Vanguard recording. The *Rhapsody in Blue*, *An American in Paris*, and *Variations on "I Got Rhythm"*, which are also included, still rank among the better versions around, even if none of them is ideal by my standards.

The recordings themselves, which (except for the later *Porgy* "picture") were among the first to be made on the floor rather than the stage of Boston's Symphony Hall, stand up quite well. But my old *bête noire* tape editor is back with implacable Solomonic shears to break brutally the concerto's first movement midway (RCA Red Seal CRK/CRS 2-0783, double-play cassette/cartridge, \$9.95 each). ●

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