

In **Backbeat**

Billy Joel: Up from Piano Man * The Wizards of Arp

HIGH FIDELITY

JANUARY 1978 \$1.25

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Ten Lab/Listening Reports

Acoustic Research AR-15 speaker
ADC LMF-1 tone arm
Bang & Olufsen U-70 headset
Genesis 3 speaker
Goldring G-900SE pickup
Heath AD-1304 audio processor
Mitsubishi DP-EC1 turntable
Nakamichi 630 tuner/preamp
Pioneer Spec-4 amplifier
Russound SP-1
switching/patching center

The Unknown Recordings of
Vladimir Horowitz

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*35 watts per channel minimum continuous power output at 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.3% total harmonic distortion.

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If you're about to buy a good high fidelity receiver, Pioneer would like to suggest that you follow the advice of a highly select group of experts: music lovers.

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Mainly because this year, for the second year in a row, the SX 650 will offer better features, better sound, and better value than any similarly priced receiver.

PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT MUSIC WANT TO HEAR IT REPRODUCED PERFECTLY.

The goal of every hi fi receiver is to reproduce music with all the excitement and clarity of a live performance.

The SX 650 comes a lot closer to reaching this goal than some hi fi receivers costing hundreds of dollars more.

Take distortion, for example.

With some hi fi receivers, you're simply expected to tolerate a certain amount of distortion.

Not with the SX 650, however.

The 650 comes with an advanced power section designed to limit distortion at high volumes. Plus a pre-amp that features a phono overload level of 200 millivolts—enough to handle the loudest section of one of today's most dynamic records without distorting.

Together, these things work to give the SX 650 a virtually *inaudible* total harmonic distortion level of less than 0.3%, from 20 to 20,000 cycles per second.

Which brings us to the question of frequency response.

Where the average adult ear can *hear* music from approximately 40 to 14,000 cycles per second, the human body can *feel* music at much higher and lower frequencies.

By designing the 650 to reproduce music at these frequencies (20 to 20,000 cycles per second) the 650 can not only reproduce every note of music the human ear can hear, but it can also reproduce the feelings and emotions that until now you could only experience at a live performance.

In other words, the chills that used to run up and down your spine at concerts can now run up and down your spine in the privacy of your own home.

POWER TO SPARE.

When a piece of music reaches a crescendo, it tends to put a tremendous strain on the power section

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Some receivers clip the signal and distort.

The SX 650 merely goes on reproducing beautiful music.

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So a full orchestra will sound just as crisp and undistorted as a single singer.

AN FM SECTION THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE A RADIO.

At Pioneer, we've always believed that the FM section on the SX 650 sounded more lifelike than many \$600 separate tuners.

This opinion was recently confirmed in an article by Julian Hirsch in *Stereo Review Magazine* about our TX 6500 tuner. A tuner that features the same basic front-end as the SX 650's.

"For all practical purposes, the frequency response, channel separation, noise level, and distortion... are the equal of most tuners selling for two or three times its price."

And who are we to argue with one of the leading experts in the hi fi industry?

PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT MUSIC ALSO CARE ABOUT MONEY.

With a price of less than \$325* we think the SX 650 offers an incredible value among today's medium priced hi fi receivers.

Especially when you consider that similar 35 watt receivers by Yamaha or Sony could cost you almost \$100 more.

But don't take our word about any of this.

Go compare the sound and value of the SX 650 to any other medium priced high fidelity receiver at your nearest audio dealer.

We think you'll find it's the perfect receiver for people who appreciate great value as much as they appreciate great sound.

High Fidelity Components
PIONEER
WE BRING IT BACK ALIVE.

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CIRCLE 29 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

THERE'S AT LEAST
ONE THING MUSIC LOVERS
ALL OVER AMERICA
AGREE ON.



STEREO

108

160

MHz

x10kHz



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STEREO

TAPE MONITOR
1 2

ON MONO ON ON

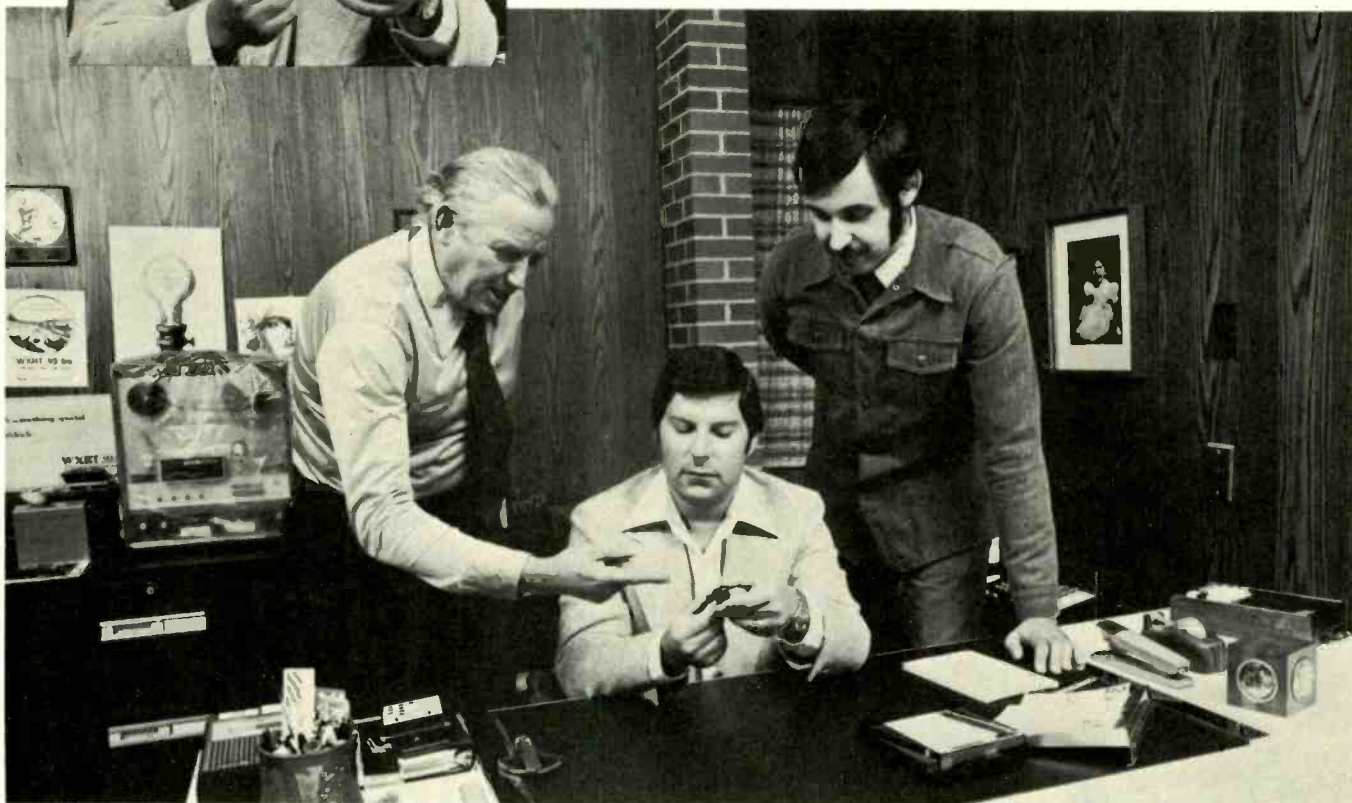
FUNCTION
AM FM PHONO
AUX/MIC

MIC





“Not the loudest sound in town, but the best quality” claims WXRT, Chicago, longtime Stanton user. . .



Daniel Lee, President and General Manager, discussing Stylus Replacement Policy with Howard Williams, Chief Engineer and Ken Rasek, Audio Engineer.

WXRT is a progressive rock, FM station that is unique in many ways. Its whole operation, including Administration, Sales, Engineering, Programming, Broadcasting, Transmitting (even the tower itself), is located in one place . . . a highly unusual set-up for a major market.

In a market crowded with as many radio stations as Chicagoland, the excellence of sound can make or break the station, especially a station like WXRT . . . which plays no tapes . . . has no recorded commercials . . . and goes totally with disc-to-air and live copy.

Since WXRT uses no limiters and no compression to magnify the level of their signal, their turntables and cartridges are absolutely crucial to the quality of their sound.

For over 10 years, the station has used the Stanton product in its turntables. Today, it even uses the 681 Triple-E for disc-to-air playback and, although this stylus was not designed for back-cueing, the engineers and announcers report no problem (they even use them on their AM operation, WSBC).

Leading radio stations around the nation depend on Stanton 681 Calibration series cartridges, because they offer improved tracking at *all* frequencies . . . they achieve perfectly flat frequency response to beyond 20 kHz. Its stylus assembly, even though miniaturized, possesses greater durability than had been thought possible to achieve.

Each 681 Triple-E is guaranteed to meet its specifications within exacting limits, and each one boasts the most meaningful warranty possible . . . an individual calibration test result is packed with each unit.

Whether your usage involves recording, broadcasting or home entertainment, your choice should be the choice of the professionals . . . The Stanton 681.

For further information, write to:
Stanton Magnetics, Terminal Drive,
Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

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John Bell hands new record to Scott McConnell.



Air personality, John Bell prepares to play a record.

CIRCLE 43 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

HIGH FIDELITY

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"Unknown" Recordings

Last October, as we were preparing this month's "The Unknown Recordings of Vladimir Horowitz" for publication, I attended a recital by Lazar Berman. Sitting next to me was the pianist's manager, Jacques Leiser, who had brought along a portable cassette recorder in order to tape the concert for his and Berman's own use. As Leiser was setting up the machine, an usher came along to explain that such activities infringe on the rights of the artist and are therefore prohibited in the hall. After some explanations and identifications, the usher finally decided not to pursue the matter, and thus one more link was added to the chain of "unknown" Lazar Berman recordings, for whatever use any editor of the 1990s might want to make of this bit of information.

This incident, the issues with which I had to grapple upon receiving Caine Alder's "Unknown Recordings" article, and some exchanges of correspondence stimulated last June by Leonard Feist's article on the new copyright law, set me to wondering. Did, in fact, Leiser have the right to tape that performance? You might answer yes, because the taping was made with the performer's agreement, there was no exclusive contract with any record company, and a performance, unlike a recording, is not copyrightable anyway. Did any other member of the audience have the same right? No, you would say, since in entering a concert hall one is in effect entering into an agreement, or contract, not to appropriate or damage any property therein, including musical property.

But could Leiser have taped the performance if other artists had been involved? Could any member of a chorus have made a private recording as a memento of a performance or withheld permission from somebody else who wanted to "appropriate" his or her artistry? In addition, the concert was broadcast. Could a listener have rightfully made a recording in his home for his own use? What if the broadcast had been not live, but from a copyrighted recording?

Further complicating the matter was the inclusion in Berman's recital of some music still in copyright. Was that taped illegally? And how about you? Could you make a recording for your own use in your own home of your own performance of a copyrighted work and play it for your mother? For a dozen guests in your house? Many of these questions still await clarification by the courts.

Meanwhile, we had to make up our own minds, satisfy our own sense of ethics in dealing with the Alder manuscript. When it arrived, it contained two sections that you will not find in the published version: Horowitz broadcasts and live recitals known to have been recorded by members of the audience. An argument could have been made to include them, simply as historical documentation. And the history of the record industry does not lack examples of unauthorized recordings being cleared ex post facto and released commercially, after negotiations with the artists (or their heirs) and reputable record companies. One thinks of Lipatti, Ferrier, some recordings of historic Metropolitan Opera broadcasts.

But after due consideration, we concluded that there was little likelihood of this happening in the case of Horowitz, that we were not an archival, but a consumer publication, and that we could not in good conscience encourage the best in the record industry while simultaneously abetting record piracy. Therefore, what you will find in this month's article are those recordings, in the vaults of record companies and in Horowitz' private collection, that could legitimately someday be released to the public. There certainly are enough of them.

Leonard Marcus



Cover: Roy Lindstrom

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COMING NEXT MONTH

Gimmicks and gizmos vs. grit and gunk—is that the sum and substance of record care? Not at all, Consulting Editor Edward J. Foster shows in February. There are many **Record-Care Products that Really Work**, and his investigation will help you distinguish those that do from those that don't. In a wrapup of new developments on the **Digital Recording** front, Associate Audio-Video Editor Harold A. Rodgers garners evidence that a technological revolution is sneaking up on the audio world bit by bit. Sol London traces the demonic rise and unearthly demise of Paganini in **The Devil in Paris**, and Richard Dyer provides Part II of a **Gilbert and Sullivan Discography**. Plus test reports on products from Harman Kardon, Soundcraftsmen, Dual, Altec, and others; **BACKBEAT's** slant on **Heart and Recording Carly Simon**; regulars Gene Lees, John Culshaw, R. D. Darrrell, and more.

SOLUTION TO HI-FI-CROSTIC NO. 31

ERIK ROUTLEY: *The English Carol*

In any considerable town during the week before Christmas, it would be possible, by assiduous use of the radio and zealous attendance at assemblies, to be singing carols continuously. There never was such a diversity of carol singing as at present.

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New York: ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc., 130 E. 59th St., 15th floor, New York, N.Y. 10022. Seymour Resnick, National Advertising Manager, 212-826-8381. George Dickey, 212-826-8383. Michael Littleford, Classified Advertising Manager, 212-826-8394.

New England: ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc., 137 Newbury St., Boston, Mass. 02116. Telephone: 617-261-3145. Myles Grossman.

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Los Angeles: ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc. ABC Entertainment Center, 2040 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 270, Century City, Calif. 90067. Telephone: 213-553-2000. Andrew Spanberger, Western Advertising Manager; Janet Endrijonas.

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Ol' Blue Eyes

Gene Lees's "The Sinatra Phenomenon" ["The Lees Side," October] was typical of this journalist's expertise in professional reporting of facts and in expressing opinions in the most arresting and intelligent fashion. Frank Sinatra needs no further extravagant publicity about his extracurricular activities, but rather, more observers who understand how to examine and explain the complex artistry of an immensely talented man—possibly a genius.

James F. Hartley
College Park, Fla.

The column on Frank Sinatra renews my faith in musical journalism. For the last couple of years, since Sinatra came out of retirement, we have been flooded with copy on him that is filled with clichés—mostly flattering, yes, but very boring and very repetitious.

Certainly the greatest interpreter of the modern lyric and modern song rates better writing than this, and in Lees we have a serious journalist with an obvious love for his topic.

Scott Sayers, President
Sinatra Society of America
Dallas, Tex.

What a pleasure to read Gene Lees's piece on Frank Sinatra! His gracious reference to my work was good for my soul—not to mention my psyche.

I especially appreciated his comment [on the dilemma of post-Sinatra singers who did not want to seem imitative]: "But what was a singer to do—not phrase for the meaning of the lyric?" Bravo!

Julius LaRosa
Irvine, N.Y.

Automated Radio

Todd Everett's **BACKBEAT** article, "Automated Radio: The Future Is Upon Us" [September], discusses a situation that I, as a former mass communications major, feel is a terrible shame. With its lack of personality and of feeling for relating directly to

the listener, radio is changing for the worse. Our technology is getting too far advanced, and we are forgetting life's simple language, all for the sake of saving money. I have invested much money in broadcasting schools, audition tapes, and producer/DJ shows. But for what? Now I feel that part of me is in danger of becoming a machine in our automated future.

John S. Mitchell
Bronx, N.Y.

Everett makes two statements that are apparently contradictory. On the one hand, he says, "Industry estimates indicate . . . that the average deejay earns less than \$200 a week." Later on, he concludes, "To put it another way, the unions are pricing their members out of the business." How can barely double the present minimum wage be "pricing members out of jobs" when compared to the high cost of the automated equipment?

Beyond that, my experience indicates that union members either set their wages themselves or at least have veto power over any proposed rates—they must vote approval of them. My conclusion would be that the union members are being reasonable with respect to wages in order to keep people working, not machines.

Thomas R. Willey
St. Louis, Mo.

Mr. Everett replies: *The average deejay isn't a union member, and many are lucky to be making the minimum wage from their on-air duties. The unions that are pricing their members out of the business are of two kinds, both chiefly in the larger markets: engineers and AFTRA-member jockeys. Automation, as the article says, cuts down heavily on the number of engineers needed to run a station, and it can also give any station—in a large or small market—big-city air talent at a fraction of the rates they'd pay for these voices on an exclusive basis. And for the small stations that can't afford more than a couple of bucks an hour, that's an important competitive edge.*

Continued on page 11



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The longer you've lived with other kinds of sound, the more you'll appreciate Tannoy.

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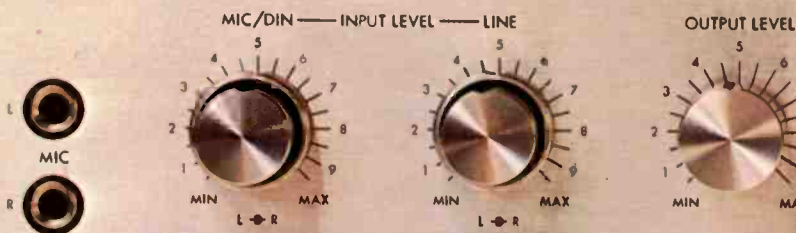
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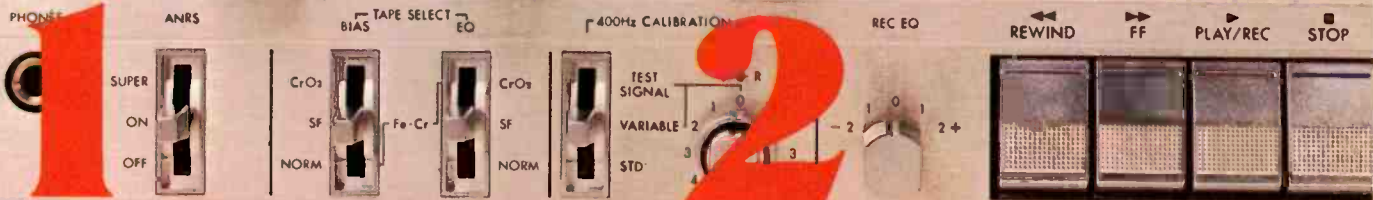
 Super ANRS KD-95 STEREO CASSETTE DECK



3



1



2

KD 95



CD-S200

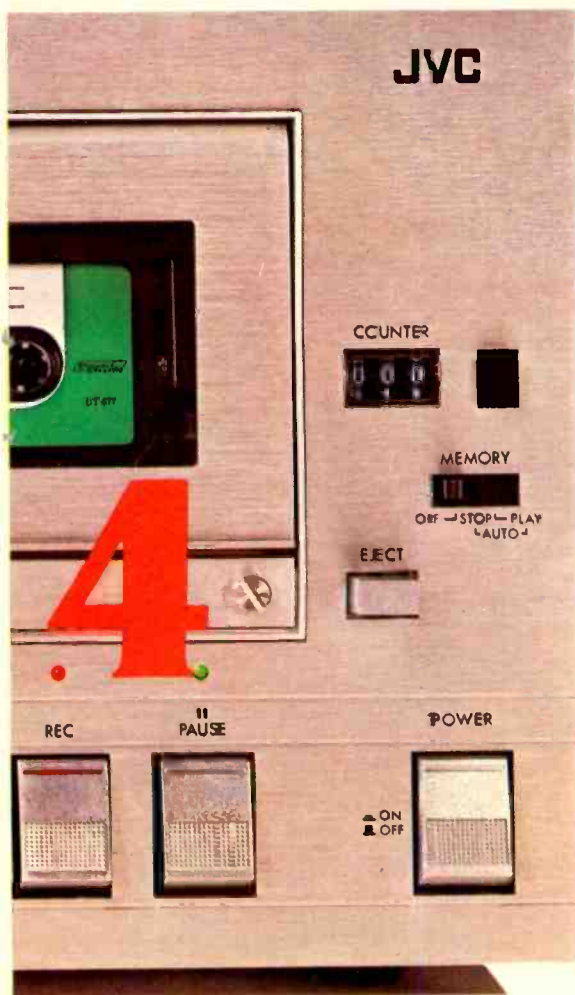


KD-75



KD-35

in what leave out.



Only JVC gives you improved recording with Super ANRS, Recording/EQ switch, 5 Peak Reading LED's and SA heads.*

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1 Our Super ANRS gives you efficient noise reduction, with the added plus of extra-low distortion at high-level high frequencies. And you can switch to our regular ANRS for making recordings to be played using other noise reduction systems. **2** In addition, our extra Recording/EQ switch helps you to precisely adjust the high frequency response of your deck to match any tape you care to use.

3 The entertaining LED's you see on our decks actually help you make better recordings. They're easier to read than VU meters by themselves, so you can record at higher levels without fear of tape saturation.

4 And our SA (Sen-Alloy) heads offer the sensitive performance of permalloy, plus the long life of ferrite in one design. These heads are so excellent in their performance and durability that other manufacturers are buying them from us to use in their decks.

There are a variety of other features to simplify your cassette recording. And our specifications are equal to or better than machines that cost much more.

Once you've seen the things we build in, you'll wonder why the others leave them out.

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CIRCLE 21 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



KD-15



CD-1770



CD-1636



KD-2

JVC

You can record and playback in both directions, fade in and out while you listen and install it six different ways.

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Apply the most demanding musical tests: sustained piano tones for flutter; extreme highs and lows for frequency response; soft passages for signal-to-noise ratio—and you will hear no difference between the original disc and a tape made on the 939. All of which brings to life the 939's impressive specifications for wow and flutter (0.05%), signal-to-noise (65dB) and frequency response (20-17,000 Hz.)

Now we'd like to take you through the 939's astonishing array of design and operating features.

Auto/reverse playback, bi-directional record.

The 939 reverses automatically in playback—a C-90 will play 90 minutes without interruption. There's continuous play too.

Recording is bi-directional. When the tape reaches the end, you just reverse direction.

With any other deck you either live with unwanted sounds on a tape or erase them abruptly—without hearing what you're doing until it's too late.

With the 939's unique fade/edit control, you can fade out those annoyances gradually, smoothly and permanently. And then fade back into the music. While listening. Because it's all done during playback.

LED record-level indicators.

Meter needles can't move fast enough to keep up with musical signals. Which is why the 939 uses instantaneous reacting LED record-level indicators. And they tilt to the best viewing angle.

Still more operating features.

Line/microphone mixing; Dolby™ NR plus Dolby FM decoding; memory stop; output and headphone level controls; and an overload limiter that doesn't compress dynamic range.

Drive system and tapeheads like no other.

Dual's powerful Continuous-Pole/synchronous motor, two capstans and two drive belts maintain speed accuracy within 0.5%.

A C-90 cassette fast-winds in just over a minute, the time other decks need for a C-60.

Hard permalloy tapeheads are used for their extended life and superior magnetic linearity. The four-track record/playback head switches electronically when the tape changes direction; it never shifts position. The result: perfect tape alignment in both directions at all times.

Six ways to install.

You can install the 939 for front load or top load, plus three other angles. And you can also hang it on a wall.

The last word.

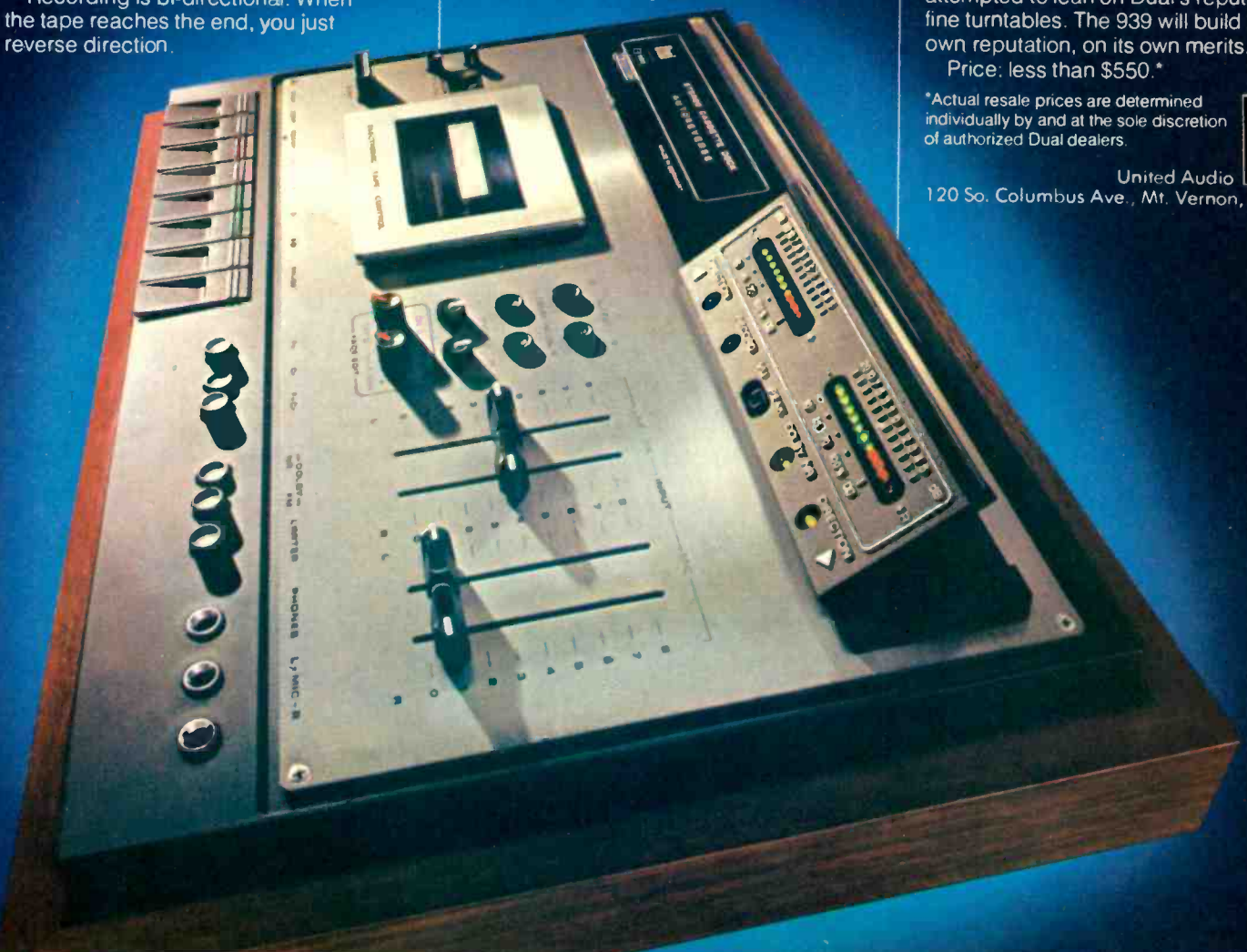
You've probably noticed that we haven't attempted to lean on Dual's reputation for fine turntables. The 939 will build its own reputation, on its own merits.

Price: less than \$550.*

*Actual resale prices are determined individually by and at the sole discretion of authorized Dual dealers.

Dual®

United Audio
120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, NY 10553



If the union members are indeed "being reasonable," at least by management's standards, there remains the problem of quality, the solution to which is one of automation's strongest selling points.

Recording that Ended WWII

Faubion Bowers' article, "The Recording that Ended World War II" [October], was most interesting, filling in much detail on an event that most of us know only in outline. He omitted one very important point, however: the fate of the recording. Was it preserved? If so, where is it?

Edwin R. Kammin
Toronto, Ont.

The recording survived the war and is now part of the Imperial Household Archives in Tokyo.

In Defense of Bruckner

I must protest Harris Goldsmith's statement that Bruckner's Symphony No. 5 is "turgid" and a "monstrosity." These words, gratuitously used in a review of a recording of Schubert's Symphony No. 5 [October], reveal nothing except the reviewer's own prejudice.

I have long since accepted the fact that not every music lover is capable of appreciating Bruckner's art. Critics of his music tend to address themselves to the "Brucknerite," as if only a few fanatics cared about it. Perhaps it is this attitude on the part of those with a public voice that has predisposed many people to a negative view of Bruckner.

Thomas Ulicky
Cleveland, Ohio

Callas: In Memoriam

The loss of Maria Callas is more than the loss of a great artist; it is the loss of a great teacher. Her legacy on records, both commercial and private, will contribute to understanding what the potential of opera is, a potential too rarely realized. Although Callas herself is gone, her uncompromising search for dramatic truth will live on in younger artists who will learn from her.

Jay Kauffman
Philadelphia, Pa.

Right Conductor, Wrong Orchestra

In "The Tape Deck" for October, R. D. Darrell errs: The performances of Liszt's *Tasso*, *From the Cradle to the Grave*, and *Mephisto Waltz* he mentions are played by the Orchestre de Paris under Sir Georg Solti's direction, not the Chicago Symphony. It is easy to understand why Darrell was misled—the playing is polished and virtuosic.

Edward D. Wladas
Chicago, Ill.

The Big Bands

In recalling the era of the big bands ["The Lees Side," September], Gene Lees either forgot to mention or is too young to remember Detroit's Jean Goldkette Graystone Ballroom Orchestra, the prototype of big bands in the early '20s. Among its members were Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Frankie

Trumbauer, Joe Venuti, Russ Morgan, Bix Beiderbecke, Gene Krupa, Glen Gray, Bob Chester, and others—like Paul Mertz, a pianist who participated in a jazz festival at Carnegie Hall last year—less well known but equally "on the ball." This pacesetter band earned the right to a place in the annals of the Swing Era.

Stephan Pasternacki
Los Angeles, Calif.

Critics' Circle

This letter is occasioned by the comments of Stephanie von Buchau in your "Letters" column [October]. I do not in the least agree with Kenneth Furie's assessment of Janet

Baker's vocal resources, but he did express his reservations about this widely admired artist in temperate language. It is Ms. Von Buchau's own published efforts, more than anything else I have recently read, that deserve the accusations of "lofty, inaccurate judgment" and "hubris" that she levels at HIGH FIDELITY.

I would be foolish to expect critics in any publication to recapitulate my personal preferences, but I do expect reviews to be thoughtful, analytical, cogently argued, and based on a thorough knowledge of the music in question. These expectations are usually met by your magazine.

Daniel Morrison
New York, N.Y.

"SPECTACULAR" and other comments from audio critics about Ohm L loudspeakers:



Comments from Stereo Review:

"In summary, the Ohm L...is easily good enough to meet the sort of critical standards usually applied to much larger and considerably more expensive speaker systems.

The upper mid-range and high frequencies were virtually perfect. The balance between lows and highs was excellent...Blindfolded, one would never guess its compact dimensions." (Copyright 1977 by the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. Reprinted from *Stereo Review*, June 1977, by permission. All rights reserved.)

Comments from The Complete Buyer's Guide to Stereo/Hifi Equipment:

"Ohm was among the first companies to take advantage of A.N.Thiele's research into vented loudspeakers, with some pretty spectacular results...In listening to the Ohm L, the immediate reaction is one of surprise at the openness of the sound. In addition, the frequency response of the speaker is exemplary. And the midrange, which is often a weak point in speakers of this size and price, is very good. There is no sense of strain, and voices sound utterly natural."



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FOR
EVERY
SYSTEM
WORTH
MORE THAN
\$500



If you've invested \$500 or even \$5000 in your high fidelity system, read on. Because what we have to say can have a lot to do with the quality of sound you're hearing.

Unfortunately, one of the most overlooked components in a fine sound system is the cartridge. And all too often, it can be the one place where you skimped on quality. (Out of sight, out of mind, as they say).

We sincerely believe that an investment in a Sonus cartridge will truly surprise you with the way it improves the quality of your record reproduction. The analytical quality of the Sonus brings out the inner voices of complex musical passages clearly and cleanly. Listening fatigue disappears. And a Sonus introduces no extraneous coloration of its own.

But what we're talking about is said even better by Sonus owners. "Excellent clarity," "more fulfilling sound," "open, airy 3-D sound," "superb depth and definition," "clean, accurate and transparent sound," are typical of thousands of enthusiastic comments we have received from owners of Sonus cartridges.

Make sure your cartridge matches up to the rest of your system. Write us for further information and the name of the Sonus dealer nearest you.

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SONIC RESEARCH, INC.,

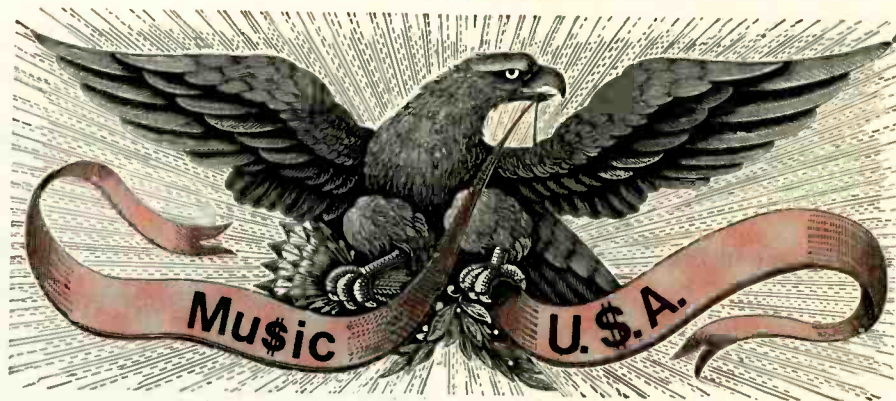
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SONUS

High Definition Phono Cartridges

CIRCLE 32 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

The
Lees
Side



12. The Dotage of American Radio

by Gene Lees

WITHIN TWO OR THREE YEARS of the introduction of commercial television, both baseball and movie attendance were declining, the latter to the point where the National Association of Theater Owners became concerned whether "hardtop" theaters (meaning those with roofs) could survive. Many of course did not, and the quarters in which they were housed were turned to other uses. Suddenly the U.S. was presented with the curious architectural spectacle of supermarkets with marquees.

The peak business year for movies was 1946, when box-office grosses reached \$1,692,000,000. That was the year television broadcasting, which actually began in the 1930s and continued on a reduced scale during World War II, resumed at an accelerated pace. In 1947, large-scale production of television receivers for the public got under way—and motion-picture grosses dropped immediately by \$100 million. From there on, attendance at the movies and other types of out-of-the-home entertainment dropped steadily. Not until thirty years later was the film industry able to equal the grosses of 1946; the '74 box-office figures, in fact, exceeded them with \$1,725,000,000, and in 1975 the take was \$2,117,000,000. But these figures are decep-

tive. Since the value of the dollar has fallen enormously since 1947, the film industry is actually making less money than it did then. Further, with the price of a ticket having climbed from 50 cents or \$1.00 to \$3.00 or even \$5.00, it is obvious that far fewer people go to the movies than in 1947, despite an increase in the population of nearly 50%.

But most profoundly affected by the coming of television was radio. Radio did not die, of course; but it changed radically, and its transmutation was to have far-reaching effects on American music.

As the networks, finding television more profitable (and more glamorous to their advertisers), let their national radio programming fall into desuetude, local stations, no longer able to depend on high-quality shows piped from New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, perforce relied more and more on records. In turn, the music industry, unable to look to network radio for exposure (and ignored for the most part by television on the doubtful theory that music isn't "visual"), became dependent on the airplay of records by local stations. The disc jockey became critically important in the sales chain of the record industry.

Some of the disc jockeys, such as

It's time for everybody else to start playing catch-up. Again.

From the very beginning, experts have acclaimed the performance and feature innovations of Yamaha receivers as nothing less than spectacular.

But now, we've outdone ourselves.

Yamaha is introducing a new line of receivers with such unprecedented performance, it's already changing the course of audio history.

Real Life Rated.™ While traditional laboratory measurements provide a good relative indication of receiver performance, they simply don't tell you how a receiver will sound in your living room in actual operation. So Yamaha developed a new standard for evaluating overall receiver performance under real life conditions. It's called **Noise-Distortion Clearance Range (NDCR)**. No other manufacturer specifies anything like it, because no other manufacturer can measure up to it.

We connect our test equipment to the phono input and speaker output terminals, so we can measure the performance of the entire receiver, not just individual component sections like others do. We set the volume control at -20dB, a level you're more likely to listen to than full volume. We measure noise and distortion together, the way you hear them.

On each of our new receivers, Yamaha's Noise-Distortion Clearance Range assures no more than a mere 0.1% combined noise and distortion from 20Hz to 20kHz at any power output from 1/10th watt to full-rated power.

Four receivers, one standard. On each of our four new receivers, Yamaha reduces both THD and IM distortion to new lows—a mere 0.05% from 20Hz to 20kHz into 8 ohms. This is the kind of performance that's hard to come by in even the finest separate components. But it's a single standard of quality that you'll find in each and every new Yamaha receiver. From our CR-620 and CR-820 up to our CR-1020 and CR-2020.

What's more, we challenge you to compare the performance and features of our least expensive model, the CR-620, with anybody else's most

expensive receiver. You'll discover that nobody but Yamaha gives you our incredibly low 0.05% distortion and -92dB phono S/N ratio (from moving magnet phono input to speaker output).

You'll also discover that nobody else starts out with such a variety of unique features. Independent Input and Output Selectors that let you record one source while listening to another. A Signal Quality Meter that indicates both signal strength and multipath. The extra convenience of Twin Headphone Jacks. Or the accurate tonal balance provided at all listening levels by Yamaha's special Variable Loudness Control.

More flexibility. It's consistent with Yamaha's design philosophy that you'll find the same low distortion throughout our new receiver line. Of course, as you look at Yamaha's more expensive models, it's only logical that you'll find the additional flexibility of more power, more functions, and more exclusive Yamaha features.

For example, there's a sophisticated tuner, with unique negative feedback and pilot signal cancellation circuits (patents pending), that makes FM reception up to 18kHz possible for the first time on a receiver. Plus other refinements like a Built-In Moving Coil Head Amp, Fast-Rise/Slow-Decay Power Meters, and Yamaha's own Optimum Tuning System.

Now's the time to give us a listen. Our new receiver line is another example of the technical innovation and product integrity that is uniquely Yamaha. And your Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer is an example of uncommon dedication to faithful music reproduction and genuine customer service. It's time you heard them both.

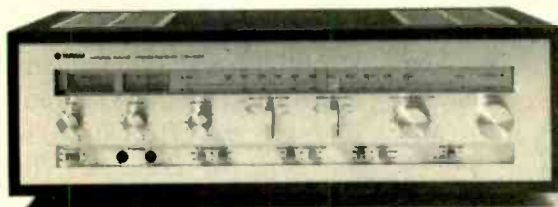
If your Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer is not listed in the local Yellow Pages, just drop us a line.



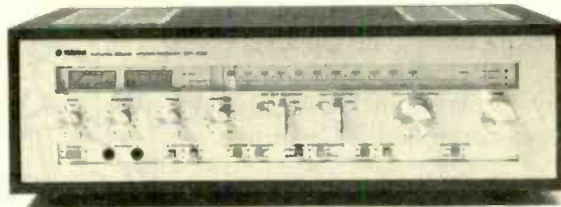
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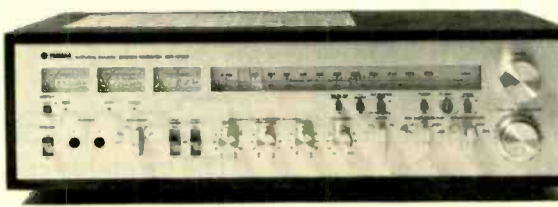
Real Life Rated



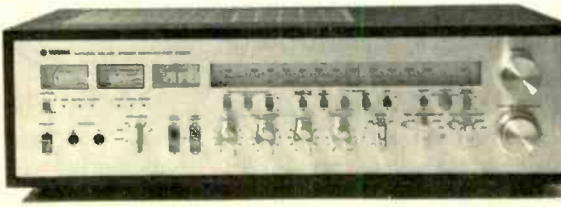
CR-620 0.05% THD 0.05% IM



CR-820 0.05% THD 0.05% IM



CR-1020 0.05% THD 0.05% IM

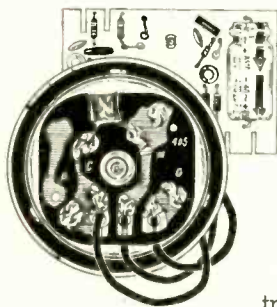


CR-2020 0.05% THD 0.05% IM

Why you should consider the new Garrard GT35 if you're thinking Dual or B.I.C.

We'll say it straight out. The new Garrard GT35 is the best all-around turntable anywhere near its price. Let's do some direct comparing.

Start with the motor. The Dual 1245 features a fine 8 pole, synchronous motor and the B.I.C. 981, a 24 pole, synchronous unit.



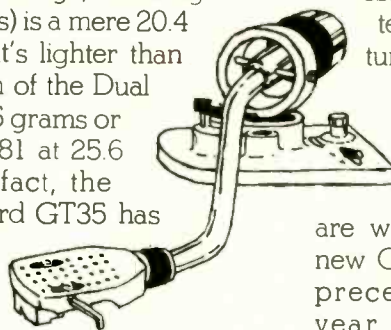
The new Garrard GT35 incorporates a servo-controlled, DC motor.

Servo control provides absolutely steady speed. The motor, (and thus the rotation of the platter), is immune to fluctuations in household voltage or frequency. Len Feldman, writing in *Radio Electronics*, reviewed it as a "significant breakthrough" superior to the "synchronous motor however many poles it might have." The GT35 is the only, belt-driven, single/multiple play turntable in the world with a servo-controlled, DC motor.

Chalk one up for the new Garrard GT35.

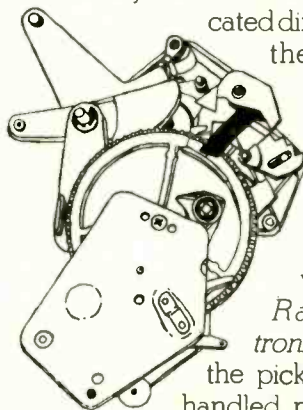
Now for the tonearm. Remember that the delicate stylus, as it traces the groove, bears the full weight of the tonearm. The heavier the tonearm, the greater the wear on the record and stylus. Light is right. The effective mass of the GT35

tonearm (measured with a Shure M95ED cartridge, tracking at 1¼ grams) is a mere 20.4 grams. That's lighter than the tonearm of the Dual 1245 at 27.5 grams or the B.I.C. 981 at 25.6 grams. In fact, the new Garrard GT35 has the lightest tonearm of any single/multiple play turntable.



Chalk up one more for the new Garrard GT35.

The Dual, B.I.C. and Garrard all protect your records as only fully automatic turntables can. And all provide the convenience of multiple play. But only the new GT35 boasts the patented Delglide® system. Unlike the Dual and B.I.C. automatic mechanisms, Delglide is driven by its own belt and is located directly under



the tonearm. Tonearm control is by simple rotary action. It's no wonder that *Radio Electronics* said, "... the pick-up arm is handled more gently than could be done by the steadiest of hands." We make

this claim: Delglide is the smoothest and quietest automatic system ever incorporated in a turntable—of any kind.

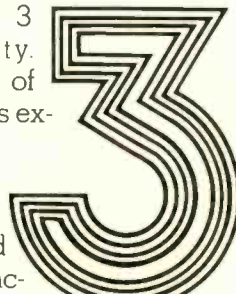
That's still another one for the new GT35.

There's more. The Dual 1245 and the B.I.C. 981 are warranted for 2 years. The new Garrard GT35 carries an unprecedented 3 year warranty. That's our way of underscoring its exceptional reliability.

Finally. The price advertised by the manufacturer. Including the base and dust cover, the Dual 1245 is \$240 and the B.I.C. 981, \$237. The price of the new Garrard GT35: just \$200.

The GT35: a "breakthrough" motor, the lightest tonearm, the smoothest and quietest automatic system and a 3 year warranty.

Consider the GT35. If you're thinking Dual, or B.I.C. Or Technics. Or Pioneer. Or Sony. Or...



Garrard
The turntable specialist.

For a free brochure, write
Garrard, Division of Plessey Consumer Products, Dept. B
100 Commercial Street, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

CIRCLE 19 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



A30XL

Perfect becomes Perfection

What more could be asked? Dyna's famous A-25 is surely the most popular quality speaker system in the world—the perfect choice for more than 900,000 ears. But now we've gone 3 better. The next step closer to perfection for all Dyna owners is the great new A-30XL—Dynaco's first 3-way bookshelf speaker. A deeper low-end, more efficient and smoother over-all, Dynaco again sets the standard.

Perfectionists on a budget will pick the all new A-25 Mark II. For overall value, it's the perfect answer. With refinements like higher efficiency to couple best with the popular receivers (or Dyna's fantastic SCA-50 integrated amplifier) it's sound quality puts it worlds apart from the usual package choices.

For those whose critical taste far outreaches their wallet; choose the new D-XL's, at a down-to-earth price that is as sure to please you as the listening.

3 from the leader in sound value.

Ask for a demonstration and don't settle for anything else. If your dealer doesn't have them, call Dynaco collect at 609/228-3200.

DYNACO

Dept. HF-1, Box 88, Blackwood, N.J. 08012

D-20XL

A-25 Mark II

Dave Garroway in Chicago, Fred Robbins and Martin Bloch in New York, Ed (Jack the Bellboy) Mackenzie in Detroit, Jimmy Lyons in San Francisco, Steve Allen and Al Jarvis in Los Angeles, Dick Martin in New Orleans, and Phil McKeller in Windsor, Ontario (whose clear-channel station reached much of the U.S.), fought what in the light of history can be seen as a hopeless rearguard action in behalf of the higher achievements of American popular music up to that time. It was hopeless because the owners and operators of radio stations were making the pragmatic discovery of an essentially simple truth: More people like bad music than like good music.

Fine art demands something of the audience: attention, sensitivity, curiosity, and critical judgment, among other things. Since most Americans apparently are unwilling to expend much energy on matters involving their very well-being and perhaps even physical survival, is it reasonable to expect them to expend any on their nation's aesthetics, which they fail to see as involving any vital personal interest?

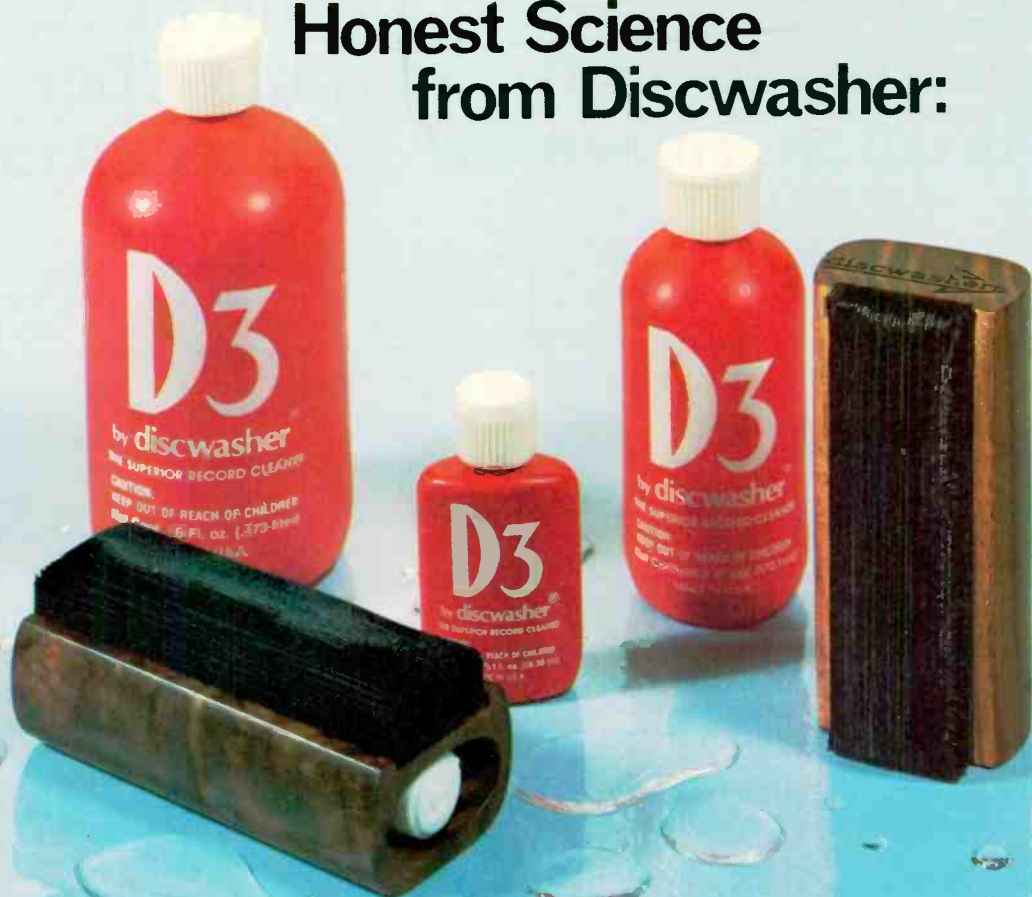
The mass of any culture's art will inevitably be ordinary. It is impossible that it be otherwise. For if all its art became by some miracle exceptional, we would automatically redefine the exceptional. Thus the great artist is an exception to the standards of his profession. And the genuinely perceptive audience is also exceptional. It is, by definition, a minority.

The tragedy of American art is the extent to which control of it has been turned over to business; and business is interested in the largest market. In the case of radio broadcasters, the governing factor of their existence is what they call cost-per-thousand—the cost to the advertiser of reaching a thousand persons. Thus, to a radio station in a given market, it becomes of paramount importance to be (or try to be) the station that reaches the widest audience. And to do that, stations in the 1950s began emphasizing music that was the equivalent of dime-store prints of stags against polychrome sunsets. After 1950, the decline in the quality of popular music on radio accelerated. But it took a quantum plunge when Todd Storz dreamed up his "jukebox of the air."

Storz, of the New Orleans-based Storz broadcasting stations, observed that the same songs were played over and over again on jukeboxes. He theorized that a format involving a limited playlist of constantly repeated hit

CIRCLE 11 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Honest Science from Discwasher:



THOU SHOULDST NOT BE DECEIVED!

There is no perfect record cleaner, only good science and ongoing research. The laboratories at Discwasher, Inc. have spent more time and money in record care research than possibly anyone else in the world. We will share some of these studies in view of what we feel are dishonest claims from parasitic followers of Discwasher innovation.

A quiet, clean record stays that way because of:

- QUALITY pressing;
- SAFE cleaning activity on both groove walls and channels; and
- REMOVAL OF CONTAMINATION with a non-adhering fluid.

A scientifically correct record cleaner:

- WILL NOT pull stabilizers out of vinyl. These paraffin/lanolin-like molecules are essential for record life and cannot be confused with fingerprint oils. Alcohols and utility "cleaners" remove these stabilizers.
- WILL NOT show dramatic static reduction without "leaving" something conductive on the record surface. Such coatings can be measured in a reduction of dynamics (a cartridge picks up motion the size of a wavelength of light!).
- WILL NOT pull vinyl oxides off by rigorous adhesion. How many layers can you lose?

There is no perfect record cleaner — only a nearly perfect compromise.

It's called the Discwasher Record Cleaning System. Ask for it, and you will not be deceived.

As you would expect from LUX, our new R-1050 tuner/amplifier "is no mere run-of-the-mill receiver."

When LUX Audio entered the U.S. audio scene in 1975, we brought with us a worldwide reputation for excellence. But since we also brought only our separate amplifiers and tuners, relatively few audiophiles could enjoy the special qualities of LUX performance.

Now, everyone who would like a LUX tuner, preamplifier and power amplifier—on a single chassis—can have them just that way. We choose to call these new models "tuner/amplifiers," although you probably think of them as "receivers." What's more important is how Hirsch-Houck Labs described the R-1050 in *Stereo Review*:

"Given its features, appearance and performance, this is no mere run-of-the-mill receiver. . . . The excellent audio-distortion ratings . . . obviously place it among the cleanest of the currently available receivers. . . . every aspect of the receiver's operation and handling was as smooth and bug-free as its fine appearance would suggest."

Typical of the circuitry and features that result in such fine performance are these: a dual-gate MOSFET front end for high sensitivity, and a special linear-phase filter array for high selectivity, low distortion and wide stereo separation. The preamplifier section has a two-stage direct-coupled amp for accurate

RIAA equalization and a good phono overload capability. And the power amplifier is direct-coupled DC, in a true complementary symmetry configuration, for excellent transient and phase response.

Operating features include a six-LED peak level indicator for each channel; tape-to-tape dubbing with simultaneous listening to other program sources; turn-on time delay speaker protection plus automatic overload shutdown.

The sound of the R-1050 has been appreciated as much in England as here. For example, the British magazine *HiFi at Home* said: "...treble quality was light and delicate, something LUX engineers always seem to achieve. . . . bass output seemed plentiful and strong, as is often the case with enormous, low impedance power supplies."

If we've encouraged you to experience the sound of a LUX tuner/amplifier, your next step is to visit one of our carefully selected dealers. We'll be pleased to send you the names of those in your area.

Luxman R-1050: 55 watts per channel, THD 0.05%. Suggested price, \$595. Other Luxman tuner/amplifiers: R-1040, 40 watts per channel, THD 0.05%. Suggested price, \$445. R-1120, 120 watts per channel, THD 0.03%. Suggested price, \$895. (Power ratings are minimum continuous output per channel, with both channels driven simultaneously into 8 ohm loads, from 20 to 20,000 Hz, and no more than quoted total harmonic distortion.)

LUX Audio of America, Ltd.

160 Dupont Street, Plainview, New York 11803 • In Canada: White Electronics Development Corp., Ontario



songs would be successful on radio. The selection of songs would be not according to such vague standards as aesthetic value, but strictly according to a commercial criterion: popularity, as determined by such indicators as the charts published in *Billboard*, the record industry trade paper. His format soon was being emulated by radio stations throughout the country. Whereas network radio had presented *Your Hit Parade*, a weekly compendium of the most popular songs, the Storz stations and those that imitated them began broadcasting a "hit parade" of forty songs around the clock, seven days a week. Thus Top 40 radio was born. As the years went on, stations tightened the playlist until some played only fifteen.

By 1970, computerized "jukeboxes of the air" had come into existence. To visit such a station is a disturbing experience. Banks of tapes on large machines sit there in silence. Suddenly one of the tapes will start turning, triggered by a computer, and play a song over the air. Then it will stop and another will start. One tape may contain current hot pop tunes, another a collection of "golden oldies." Some songs are described as they begin to play, others will be "back announced"—all according to commands from computer to tape. The computer also is programmed to play commercials. And on the hour, it will play a prerecorded segment of the news. Not that the station owners want it to, but the Federal Communications Commission requires it.

The FCC hardly constitutes a burden to automated radio. Whereas it prohibits a single company from owning more than seven AM and seven FM stations (to prevent too much control over public communications from gravitating into a few hands), nothing in its regulations restricts the number of stations for which one company may provide programming. Thus an outfit in Los Angeles may determine what is heard on fifty or more stations throughout the country, some of them in major cities with huge audiences.

Nor has the FCC ever taken a stand on Top 40 (or Top 15) radio, which is by its very nature censored radio. By the fiat of a station's owner, everything except that predetermined number of songs that are the most commercially successful at the moment is, in effect, banned from the air.

Federal regulatory agencies have come under increasing fire in recent years for being in bed with the very industries they are charged with overseeing. None of them is more deserving of this criticism than the FCC, which I will examine in more detail in the next issue.

If your cartridge is more than three years old, don't replace your stylus!

Don't get us wrong. There is nothing worse than playing your records with a worn stylus. And no better way to restore your old unit to its original glory than a new diamond.

But frankly, there have been significant strides made recently in the phono cartridge field. And the new cartridges of today stand head and shoulders above even the finest of a few short years ago.

Here's the choice: Get fresh—but outdated—performance with a replacement stylus, or enjoy all the benefits of modern cartridge research and development for just a few dollars more. You'll find that you can update your system for far less than you might imagine. It's probably the most dramatic single improvement you can make.

For instance, Audio-Technica offers Universal™ cartridges equipped with a genuine Stribar stylus and our uniquely effective Dual Magnet™ system beginning at just \$75.00 list. Or you can replace your present cartridge with a fresh new Audio-Technica cartridge with highly-polished elliptical tip for as little as \$45.00 list.



AT11E
\$45.00

AT12Sa
\$75.00

AT13Ea
\$65.00

AT15Sa
\$125.00

Are these new models worth the difference? Absolutely. You'll be amazed at what you hear from today's generation of phono cartridges. Improved frequency response. Lower distortion. Better separation. Less record wear. Truly better sound.

**A new Audio-Technica cartridge.
Your best value in hi-fi.**



audio-technica
® INNOVATION □ PRECISION □ INTEGRITY

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Available in Canada from Superior Electronics, Inc.

CIRCLE 4 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Too Hot to Handle

After reading ads in your magazine, I purchased a Discwasher product called DiscTraker, an accessory to be attached to the headshell of a tone arm in order to reduce the effects of record warps. The ads, as well as my dealer, led me to believe the DiscTraker was mountable on any headshell. This is not at all true. The device cannot be mounted on the headshell of my Dual 1249.

According to the directions, I needed an adapter bracket, available from Discwasher for seventy-five cents. The bracket turns out to be a flat rectangular strip of plastic whose bottom surface has an adhesive coating so it can be bonded to the top of a flat headshell. But the Dual headshell top is not flat—half is raised slightly. With the adapter attached only to the raised half, the force applied by the DiscTraker might result in a slightly tilted tone arm. Is there any way that a DiscTraker can be used with a Dual turntable?—Richard J. Weyhausen, Bronx, N.Y.

Not with yours. And not with any headshell whose top is not flat; examples include Garrard models using the Zero-tracking arm, the new Thorens models, and those of Bang & Olufsen. Owners of the Dual 701, 704, 721, and other models using a flat headshell will be able to attach DiscTraker but will find that the piston will not reach the record surface. Discwasher is now supplying the adapter bracket free as part of the DiscTraker package and will supply the extended piston rod to owners of these Dual models at no charge.

I say that no human ear can tell the difference between two state-of-the-art systems; my brother disagrees. For example, I own a Pioneer PL-510A turntable with Shure V-15 Type III cartridge, a pair of Jensen Model 25 speakers, a Pioneer TX-5500II tuner, and a Sansui AU-717 integrated amplifier. My brother owns an Audio Research power amplifier, Quintessence preamp, Technics SL-1500 turntable with ADC VLM Mk. III cartridge, and Dahlquist DQ-10 speakers. You are undoubtedly familiar with all of these components, so please settle the argument once and for all: Is it at all possible for any human ear to hear any difference in sound quality, reproduction, etc., between the two systems?—Matt Michaels, Buffalo, N.Y.

Yes, it is.

What method and recording levels are best for making a Dolby dub of a Dolby tape from a Tandberg 10XD open-reel deck at 3¼ ips to a Nakamichi 700 cassette, or vice versa? Both machines are using Maxell UD tape. The respective manufacturers have given me ambiguous answers: One says the Dolby should be on, one Dolby off, and neither is specific on levels.—A. J. Kloch, Skokie, Ill.

For the best possible dynamic range it is advisable to turn the Dolby switches of both

machines on and set the controls on the second machine for optimum levels in the copy. It is possible to make a direct copy, with the Dolby switches off, by adjusting levels so that a Dolby-reference output from the first machine (for example, using a Dolby-level test tape) produces a Dolby-reference recording level on the second. But if the copy is being made onto the cassette, peak levels from the open-reel tape may overload it; if it is being made onto an open reel, you may be wasting some of its dynamic range with this method. The slow transport speed you propose using on the Tandberg may prevent the most extreme forms of this difficulty, but generally, straight copying of Dolby-encoded tapes poses more problems than it solves.

I have trouble with subsonic rumble and record-warp oscillations whenever I play even a mildly warped record. I only have 25 watts per channel, and a good bit of that power is soaked up whenever I listen at a fairly loud level. It also sets my woofers to pounding wildly. (I would say my average listening level is about 94 dB.) I need a less expensive alternative than a new turntable. I have already tried a turntable platter pad, but it did not solve the problem. Is it possible to build a fairly good subsonic filter? If not, how much does one cost?—Pat Redmiles, Springfield, Va.

The only add-on subsonic filters we know of sell for at least \$75. It is possible to build one but would require test equipment in addition to special knowledge and skills. Other remedies—such as low-mass tone arms—exist, but none is exactly cheap. Turning down the bass control a bit would help.

Recently I purchased a DBX 119 with the hope of improving my system. But it didn't occur to me at the time that I would have to contend with my Bose 901 (Series I) equalizer. I called both DBX and Bose and got different information as to the hookup. Not being particularly anxious to blow a fine system, I beg your help. Other equipment includes a Crown DC-300 amp (first model) and a Dynaco PAT-4 preamp.—Bob Phillips, Macon, Ga.

Relax! We see no significant difference—or threat to the system—with any of the possible alternative hookups. Since the Bose equalizer must always be used with the speakers, we would put it between the preamp and the power amp. And, having done that, we might run the DBX off the Bose's tape-monitor connections saving those on the PAT-4 for their intended use.

Recently you reported on the Hegeman Input Probe and said that it could improve the performance of some phono cartridges. At present I use a Shure V-15 Type III cartridge

and an Epicure Four preamp, the former requiring about 500 picofarads of shunt capacitance and the latter having only 37 picofarads. This necessitates additional shunt capacitors (over and above capacitance provided by cables, etc.) to give the cartridge the proper load.

With the input capacitance of the Probe given as 34 picofarads, would there be any benefit in using it with added shunt capacitors and the Shure cartridge?—Arthur Walling, Hamilton, Ont.

One thing is certain: The Shure V-15 Type III is very critical about capacitive loading and will not sound right unless this parameter is correct no matter what kind of input it is feeding. For practical purposes the 34 picofarads of the Hegeman Probe and the 37 of the Epicure Four are identical. The addition of 3 feet of cable (which may run about 100 picofarads per foot) to the leads from the turntable (these usually run about 100 picofarads total) by means of appropriate connectors should get everything into the right ballpark for either one. To avoid problems with noise or interference, use cables with braided shields rather than wrapped ones and route the new cable carefully.

Record reviews continually remark on the high "demonstration" quality of certain DG and Philips recordings. I have just purchased DG's new Mahler Second Symphony with Abbado and the Chicago Symphony and have found certain passages inaudible: almost anything extremely soft on strings, brasses, or timpani; off-stage trumpets in the last movement are wispy and sound like bits of thread running through the eye of a needle behind my speakers. Thin sound permeates most discs of the companies mentioned. I would like to know the best solution for a listener desiring the highest resolution of overtones without rattling the windows.

I have two ADC Model 18 speakers (elliptical-woofer model), a Thorens TD-125 turntable, ADC XLM Mk. II cartridge, SME-3009 tone arm, Citation 11 and 12 amp/preamp units, and two Micro-Acoustic tweeters. Are my ADCs outdated? Is my system so good that all the shortcomings on the disc can be heard? Or is it so bad that only the shortcomings are adequately discerned?—Norman Roberts, Seattle, Wash.

Perhaps what you are hearing is the superior dynamic range of many DG and Philips releases, which are not as compressed as many others and therefore reach lower levels in the soft passages when the loud ones are kept below "window-rattling" levels. If so, we would prescribe a loudness control or judicious use of the tone controls to retain solidity in the sound.

Assuming it were ideally matched to a consumer tape deck (Revox A-700, Teac A-6100, A-3300SX2T, or any high fidelity half-track deck), would a semipro or professional noise-reduction unit give better performance than a consumer noise-reduction device will provide with the same decks?—Richard Latta, APO, New York, N.Y.

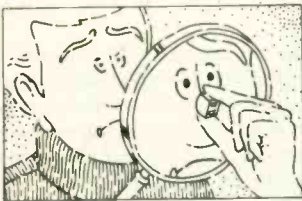
If by "professional" you mean units such as the Dolby A or DBX-142 or Telefunken c4, you certainly can expect better performance than from consumer devices, in which compromises are performed made in order to keep prices low.

ARE YOU BLAMING YOUR TAPE RECORDER FOR PROBLEMS CAUSED BY YOUR TAPES?

Every day people all over the country go into hi fi dealers with complaints about their tape recorders.

When in reality what they should be complaining about is their tapes.

Because the fact is, a lot of the problems that plague tape recorders can be attributed to bad tape.



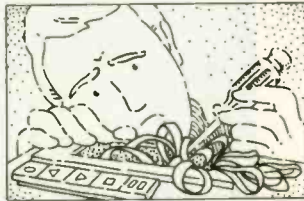
HEAD WEAR IS CAUSED BY YOUR RECORDER. OR IS IT?

If you have to clean your tape heads more than usual, for example, it could be your tape doesn't have a special nonabrasive head cleaner.

Maxell has one.

If your recorder jams, it can be any number of things. Maxell does something to prevent all of them.

We make our cassette shells of high impact polystyrene. And then so they won't crack



JAMMING IS CAUSED BY YOUR RECORDER. OR IS IT?

even after years of use, we finish them to tolerances as much as 60% higher than industry standards.

Inside, we use free rolling Delrin rollers so the tape doesn't stick.

And finally, we screw instead of weld everything together because screws make

for stronger cassettes.

If your recorder frequently suffers lapses in sound, it could be the tape is of inferior quality. And nobody's bothered testing the tape for dropouts before it leaves the factory.



DROPOUTS ARE CAUSED BY YOUR RECORDER. OR ARE THEY?

Maxell tape is made of only the finest polyesters. And then every



POOR TRACKING IS CAUSED BY YOUR RECORDER. OR IS IT?

step of the way it's checked for even the slightest inconsistencies.

So if you're having problems with your recorder, try a Maxell cassette, 8-track or reel-to-reel tape.

You might find there's really nothing wrong with your tape recorder, just with your tape.



MAXELL. THE TAPE THAT'S TOO GOOD FOR MOST EQUIPMENT.

Maxell Corporation of America, 130 West Commercial Ave., Morristown, New Jersey 07074.

Barcus-Berry's Mysterious Glass Plate

On a recent trip to California we stopped in to see Barcus-Berry, not because of that company's estimable musical-instrument line and related products, but because of a recent development that may make it as well known in music reproduction as it is in music making: the AudioPlate. It is a high-frequency driver consisting of a glass plate (about 5 by 7 inches) with an attached transducer.

The driver does not behave like a normal piston—a diaphragm like that on dynamic or electrostatic speakers that moves in and out to "push" the air. Even the folks at Barcus-Berry express some doubt about how it really does work and say they expect its active principle to be the subject of considerable debate. Their tentative explanation is that the energy propagated within the plate and transferred to the air of the listening room behaves more like a shock wave than like a normal acoustic wave, and that the shock wave then, in a sense, "breaks down" progressively in the air to become sound. Evidence cited for this phenomenon is that the propagation does not seem to follow the inverse-square law—perceived levels close to the driver often seem surprisingly subdued, those at great distances surprisingly loud.

Another surprise for those used to conventional drivers is that the response range apparently cannot be extended downward by increasing driver area. According to Barcus-Berry, the useful range of the AudioPlate extends from about 2 kHz to beyond audibility. In this range, however, it claims exceptional performance and a true omnidirectional radiation pattern—depending, of course, on how it is mounted. Since the device does not push the air, it is not inherently bipolar (like cones, domes, electrostatics, Heil drivers, or others with true diaphragms); the positive "shock" of its propagation appears to be produced simultaneously from the front and back of the device, rather than alternately at front and back as with diaphragms, since the plate itself does not move.



We were ruminating on these properties of the design as Mr. Barcus turned on his equipment for a demonstration. The AudioPlates in use were add-on units in wood cases—prototypes of a product that should be appearing in stores about the time you read this—with a built-in 2-kHz crossover. Lacking controlled conditions, we could form only a tentative opinion of the tweeter. What we heard did suggest, however, that the company's enthusiasm for its "find" has some basis. The output of the tweeter seemed unusually smooth, extended, and distortion-free, with superior depth and placement in the stereo image and freedom from objectionable beaming or off-axis nulls.

The AudioPlate is, according to Barcus-Berry, being examined by a number of companies that might incorporate it (under license) into full-range systems. B-B itself already offers a number of speakers with the AudioPlate for sound-reinforcement and musical-instrument use; the add-on tweeter represents its first foray into the home high fidelity market.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

SQ Leads Matrix Competitors in FCC Quad Study

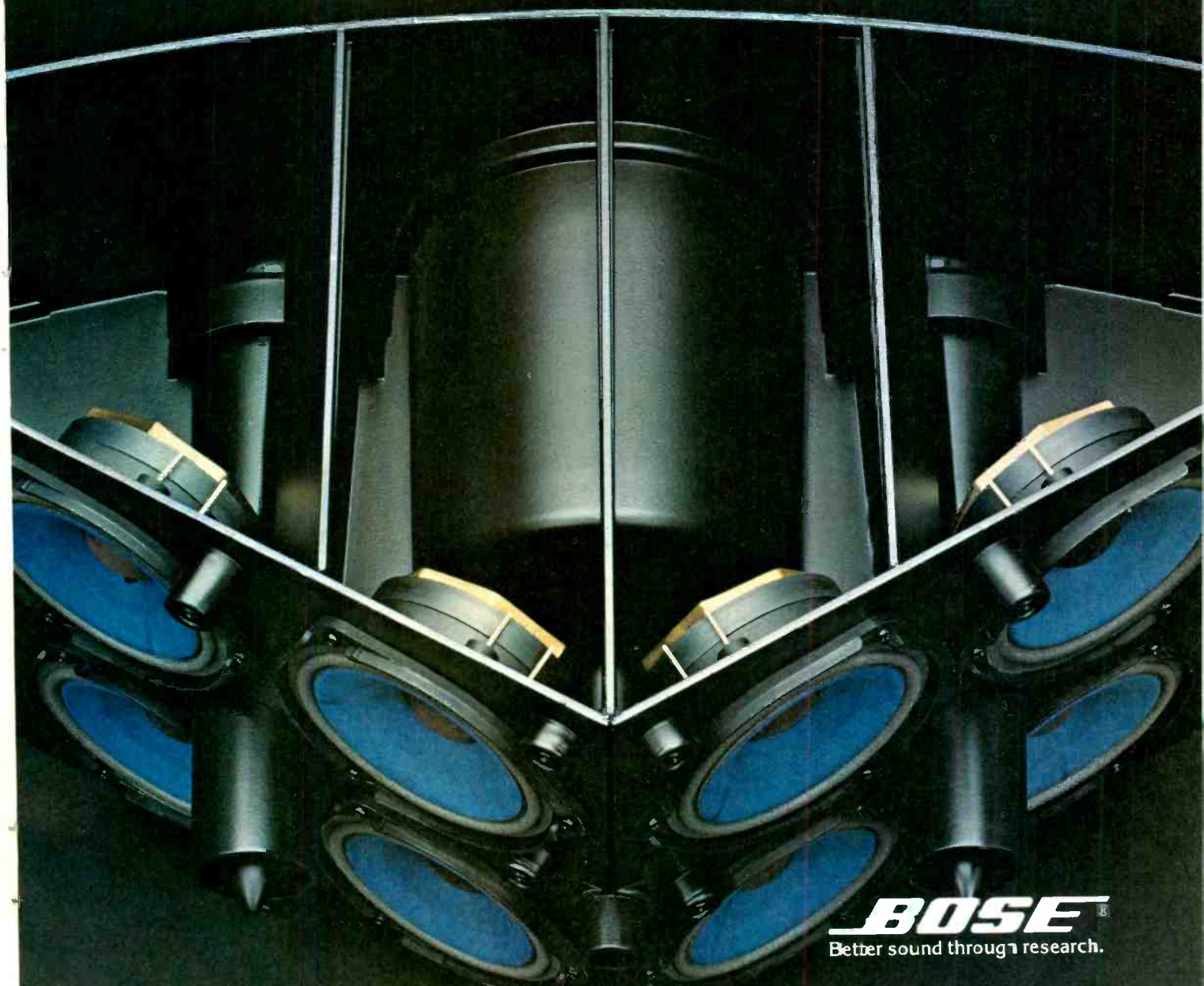
As a prelude to a decision by the Federal Communications Commission to create a standard for quadriphonic broadcasting, the FCC's Laboratory Division conducted a series of listening tests. These tests have established that the audition panel generally preferred four-channel reproduction of music via the CBS SQ matrix system to that offered by the BBC's H matrix and Sansui's QS. In the same tests, SQ trailed discrete quadriphony, as realized by means of a four-channel tape, by a slight margin. But the report

pointed out that, despite superior aural performance, the discrete systems—which require more complex transmitting and receiving equipment—"might be precluded from adoption . . . because of other technical factors and/or economic considerations. They may be forced to survive only as audio systems for the theater or home."

In tests for compatibility with stereophonic and monophonic reproduction, SQ was preferred over all systems, including discrete. The most notable area in which the CBS

No other speaker has ever looked like this, no other speaker has ever been built like this. And we believe no other speaker, regardless of size or price, can recreate the impact and feel of live music like the Bose 901 Series III.

It is a speaker unlike any other.



BOSE
Better sound through research.

In one page we cannot begin to describe the 901 Series III and the technology behind it. So we've put together a comprehensive literature package that includes a detailed 16-page color brochure, a 20-page owner's manual, and a copy of Dr. Amar Bose's paper on "Sonic Recording and Reproduction," reprinted from Technology Review. To receive this literature, send \$1.00 to Bose, Dept. HF10, The Mountain, Framingham, Mass. 01701. Patents issued and pending. Cabinets are walnut veneer.

The luxury a difference:

Sansui's new 9090DB top-of-the-line receiver adds Dolby to its other luxury credentials — big power, an extremely fine tuner section and great versatility. The Dolby circuitry will not only decode Dolby FM broadcasts: it can also encode and decode tape

recordings for reduced noise and hiss.

And, of course, with the Sansui 9090DB you can creatively determine just how you like your music. In addition to bass and treble controls, with turnover selectors for 150 Hz/300 Hz and 1.5 kHz/3 kHz respectively,

The Sansui 9090DB.

AUDIO SECTION

POWER OUTPUT

125 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.1% total harmonic distortion.

FM SECTION

FM SENSITIVITY

9.8 dBf (1.7 μ V).

SELECTIVITY

better than 85 dB.

SIGNAL TO NOISE RATIO

better than 70 dB.

SPURIOUS

RESPONSE REJECTION

better than 85 dB.

* Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories Inc.

Simulated woodgrain cabinet.



A whole new world of beautiful sound.

Sansui

SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

Woodside, New York 11377 • Gardena, California 90247

SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., Tokyo, Japan • SANSUI AUDIO EUROPE S.A., Antwerp, Belgium • In Canada: Electronic Distributors

CIRCLE 53 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

receiver with Dolby.*

there is also a midrange control. High and low filters. A tone offset for bass and treble. A loudness switch and 20 dB audio muting switch. For added creative freedom, two tape monitors and a mic mixing circuit with separate level control. Two tuning meters,

as well as twin power meters that also serve for Dolby tone calibration.

Listen to the 9090DB. Handle its superbly smooth controls. See how they respond to your slightest command. We know you will fall in love with Sansui.



The sound and the theory.



Introducing a speaker system with a sound so fantastic that it took a whole new theory of loudspeaker design to produce it . . . the Koss CM 1010 loudspeaker. It's the ultimate in 2 bandpass speakers, with an extended bandwidth response, high efficiency and incredibly low distortion that's unmatched by any other 2 bandpass speaker at any price.

To achieve such remarkable performance, Koss engineers set critical parameters for cabinet size, frequency response and efficiency. Then the computer-programmed Koss Theory furnished not only construction specifications for the woofer, tweeter, passive radiator and crossover network, but also the optimum position in the cabinet for each component to create maximum structural rigidity and optimum dispersion and phase coherency.

The result is an all-embracing quality of sound. The 10-inch passive radiator reinforces the lower 2 octaves

while the special 8-inch woofer also handles midrange to 3500 Hz. With the radiator's unique alignment mass in place, the CM 1010 reproduces a maximally flat response from an f_3 of 35 Hz on outward. However, for more acoustic energy in the 50 to 80 Hz range, the alignment mass can be removed to create an f_3 of 42 Hz and a low bass ripple of $1\frac{1}{4}$ dB centering on 60 Hz. The CM 1010's high-energy, 1-inch dome tweeter linked to an acoustic transformer increases the high bandpass headroom by an incredible 6 dB. With performance so superior, the CM 1010 is clearly the ultimate speaker in its price range.

For a free, color brochure of Koss CM loudspeakers, write to Fred Forbes, c/o the Koss Corporation. Or ask your Audio Dealer for a live demonstration of the Sound of Koss, and hear the Koss Theory in action. Once you've listened to the revolutionary CM 1010, you'll agree: hearing is believing.

 **KOSS**® CM 1010 SPEAKER SYSTEM
hearing is believing™

KOSS CORPORATION, 4129 N. Port Washington Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212
Koss International/London, Dublin, Paris, Frankfurt • Amsterdam • Koss Limited/Ontario • Koss K.K./Tokyo

matrix showed weakness was in localization tests, where it settled into last place, albeit not far behind other matrices. Comments from the auditors, however, indicated some distaste for all "surround sound" effects in comparison with a presentation in which the back channels carry ambience or reverberated sound only, presumably because the latter more closely simulates the concert hall experience. The testers note, significantly, that requirements for "front plus ambience" reproduction can be met adequately by matrix systems.

The report warned the commissioners that "in any event, extreme care must be exercised in choosing the system for FM Broadcast Service so that future developments in multichannel sound will not be stifled." Amen.

Also . . .

Superscope, whose Pianocorder was discussed in our September 1977 issue, is negotiating to acquire Grand Piano Company of Morganton, North Carolina. A previously announced agreement in principle with the Aeolian Corporation, also a piano manufacturer, has been terminated.

Philips and MCA say they have developed a new type of optical video disc that can be played on both sides to give a

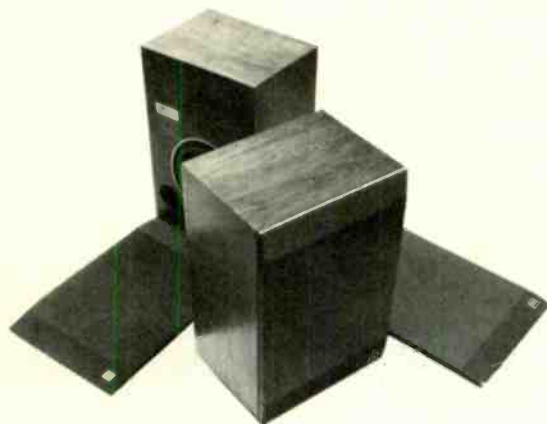
total program time of one hour or more. The new disc is thicker than the earlier version so that modifications to the player are necessary in order to accommodate it. These are currently being made at N. V. Philips and at Magnavox, a subsidiary of North American Philips Corporation. Regional marketing, with players, is planned for next fall.

TDK announces that its sometime league-leading SD series of cassette tapes has been dropped from the line, "victim of major technological advances" in the D cassette tape, which—though it remains relatively inexpensive—appears to have closed the performance gap with SD.

Audio-Technica will begin distribution of Sonic Arts direct-to-disc recordings in addition to the Umbrella discs it currently markets. The first two releases are "Piano Fireworks," with Russell Stepan playing works of Chopin, and "The Piano," on which David Montgomery plays Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, and others. A Tellarc release—"Michael Murray at the Great Organ at Methuen"—also is planned by Audio-Technica.

DBX now has a version (Model 193) of its noise-reduction system specifically engineered as an add-on for Nagra IV-S portable stereo recorders.

Equipment in the News



A bookshelf speaker from JBL

JBL's newest two-way speaker system, the L-40, is a bookshelf model that uses a 10-inch woofer and 1-inch tweeter. Low-frequency damping is provided by an acoustic-resistance shell whose physical parameters match those of the woofer. The basket-shaped fiberglass shell, which is held in place behind the speaker, does not restrict normal cone movement. JBL credits the shell with attenuating energy rise in the lower frequencies, resulting in uniform response down to the limits of the L-40's range. The tuned bass reflex enclosure is finished in black walnut, and the grille is available in brown, rust, and tan. The L-40 costs \$207.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Lexicon's low-cost digital delay system

The Delta-T Model 92 is a digital time-delay system designed for sound-reinforcement applications in small halls such as churches and theaters. There are two independently controllable output channels, each offering up to 120 milliseconds of delay. Other features include automatic bypass, a five-position LED headroom indicator, and XLR input and output connectors. The Model 92 requires only 3½ inches of rack space and operates on 115–230 volts AC, 50 or 60 Hz. Frequency response is rated at +1, -2 dB from 20 Hz to 12 kHz. Suggested list price is under \$2,000.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





Garrard enters noise-suppression field

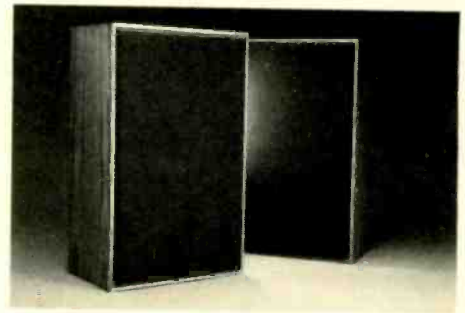
Garrard's first venture into noise reduction is the Music Recovery Module, a device that can be used in a component system to filter disc noise impulses, especially on scratched records, and allow only the music to pass through. A time-delay circuit in the MRM gives the detector enough time to distinguish the characteristics of noise impulses; musical transients are not affected. The switchable suppressor circuit can also be adjusted for intensity of scratch damage: More heavily scratched records receive a greater degree of suppression. The Music Recovery Module includes a phono preamp and sells for \$199.95.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Evolution in a speaker from AEI

Audio Engineering International has announced the availability of Evolution 1, an acoustic-suspension, two-way speaker system. The 10-inch woofer has an impedance control for accenting low frequencies, and the 1-inch dome tweeter has a high-frequency control, allowing the user to compensate for absorption characteristics of the listening room. The minimum power requirement is rated at 15 watts (11 3/4 dBW) per channel into a 4-ohm load. Crossover occurs at 1.5 kHz and rated frequency response is + 1 1/2 dB, -2 dB, 35 Hz to 17 kHz. The Evolution 1 comes in two finishes: The walnut model costs \$156, and the vinyl model is \$137.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Tapco enters the power-amp marketplace

The fan-cooled two-channel CP-500 professional power amplifier uses a Power Sentry circuit to control distortion that can be caused by clipping and to protect tweeters. The CP-500 is rated at 150 watts (21 3/4 dBW) into 8 ohms or 24 dBW (255 watts) per channel into 4 ohms, with THD below 0.009%, and the Power Sentry's operating level is adjustable in each channel. Also available is the CP-120 for biamped and triamped systems. The CP-500 costs \$649.

CIRCLE 153 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Furman Sound's tunable crossover

Model TX-2 from Furman Sound is a tunable crossover and bandpass filter designed for use with either stereo biamped or mono triamped systems in studio, public address, and home setups. The unit is tunable from 20 Hz to 20 kHz and features separate level controls for the two filter bands and one input gain control. The TX-2 incorporates Butterworth filters with a rolloff of 12 dB per octave for smooth frequency handling. Cost of the unit is \$250.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Superscope introduces cassette decks

Superscope is distributing its three new stereo cassette decks, among which is the Model CD-310. Some of the features of this front-loading machine are Dolby noise reduction, calibrated VU meters, and separate bias and equalization switches. It also offers automatic shutoff, separate recording level controls for maximum flexibility, and a peak-limiter switch. The price of the CD-310 is \$149.95. The other models in the line, the CD-304 and CD-303, are top-loaders costing \$139.95 and \$99.95.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

CIRCLE 36 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →

HIGH BIAS.

These cassette deck manufacturers use SA
as their reference for the High(CrO₂) bias/EQ setting:


AIWA · AKAI · CENTREX · JVC
KENWOOD · MERITON · NAKAMICHI
OPTONICA · PIONEER · ROYAL SOUND
SANSUI · SHARP · TEAC · TOSHIBA
UHER · YAMAHA

And are joined by these
in recommending SA for use in their decks:

BANG & OLUFSEN · DUAL · FISHER
HARMAN/KARDON · LAFAYETTE
SANKYO · TANDBERG
AND MANY OTHERS.



There's been a quiet revolution going on in the cassette world. □ Leading makers of quality cassette decks have adopted TDK SA as their reference standard tape for "High" (CrO₂) bias and equalization settings. Why TDK SA? Because TDK SA's advanced tape formulation and super precision cassette mechanism let them (and you) take full advantage of today's advanced cassette deck technology. □ In addition, a growing number of other companies are recommending SA for use with their machines. □ So for the ultimate in cassette sound and performance, load your deck with SA and switch to the "High" or "CrO₂" bias/EQ settings. You'll consistently get less noise, highest saturation and output levels, lowest distortion and the widest dynamic range to let you get the best performance from any quality machine. □ But you needn't believe all this just because we say so. All you have to do is check our references.

 **TDK**®

The machine for your machine.

A new turntable from Kenwood

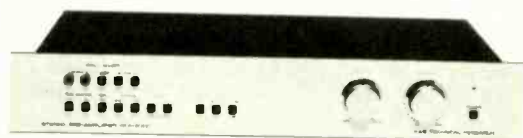
Kenwood's new direct-drive turntable, the KD-2070, has a brushless DC motor coupled to the platter for smooth rotation. According to Kenwood, the result is a wow and flutter figure of 0.04%, with rumble at -65 dB. The KD-2070 comes with an S-shaped tone arm whose tracking error is rated at ± 1.5 degrees. The turntable is also equipped with anti-skating and viscous-damped cueing. A built-in strobe facilitates setting of speeds, and a single control sets pitch for both 33 and 45 rpm. The KD-2070, with base and dust cover, costs \$140.



A&E's precision preamp

To minimize waveform alteration, the A&E SCA-2000 preamplifier holds phase shift to within 3 degrees and total harmonic distortion to 0.01% across the audio band, according to the manufacturer. The two phono inputs have, in addition to switch-selectable input impedances, separate high- and low-frequency feedback networks in the equalizer section that result in a response said to be within ± 0.2 dB of RIAA specs. Other features include a 32-point attenuator volume control and a full complement of inputs selectable via pushbuttons. A product of A&E Technical Research, the SCA-2000 is priced at \$950.

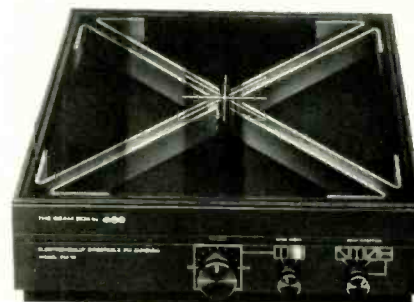
CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



On the beam with BIC

British Industries Company's Beam Box is an indoor antenna designed to eliminate the problem of faulty FM reception. Front-panel controls allow the user to select signal direction and desired frequency. The Beam Box's passive electronic circuit then aims its sensitivity pattern in the specific direction without actually moving the antenna. The results are said to be improved separation and reduced interference. Electronic direction of reception patterns, according to BIC, is especially helpful in areas where outdoor antennas are impractical, such as apartment buildings. The Beam Box, which also has a bandwidth control, uses no house or battery current and costs \$89.95.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Musictronics' new octave divider

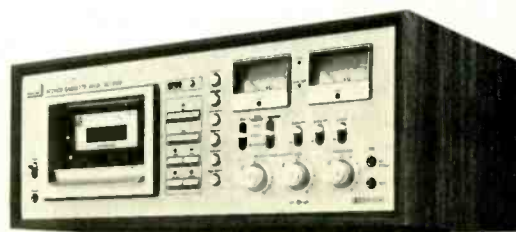
The Mu-tron Octave Divider, designed for use with guitar, voice, and keyboards, produces a sub-octave that, according to Musictronics, retains the character of the original signal. A fuzz effect is achieved via a toggle switch marked RINGER, and there are rotary pots for MIX and TONE. This footswitch-activated device sells for \$160.

CIRCLE 150 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Sansui's top-of-the-line Direct-O-Matic deck

As with the other models in Sansui's current line of cassette decks, the SC-5100 features the new Direct-O-Matic loading and tape lead-in. A two-motor design, the SC-5100 has memory and repeat functions, a timer for unmanned record and playback, Dolby noise reduction and a Dolby-FM switch, and mike and line mixing capability. A peak LED, averaging meters, separate three-position bias and equalization switches, and peak limiter round out the front-panel features. Rated frequency response, with normal tape, is ± 3 dB, 30 Hz to 13 kHz. The price of the SC-5100 is \$600.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



TODAY MORE THAN EVER AR SPEAKS THE TRUTH

LOUD & CLEAN

Amazing.

The hottest new name in the speaker business seems to be AR.

Because we've been busy making a few changes. But we haven't forgot what made us

famous.
Quality.
Accuracy.
Performance,
loud and clean.
Yes, we've

broadened the AR line. Now it includes 7 models designed to sell from about \$65 to about \$450.

Yes, we've improved AR power-handling capacity with an important innovation. The liquid-cooled speaker. All our high-range drivers for '77-'78 will use magnetic fluid (it costs nearly \$3000 per gallon) to position and cool voice coils.

Yes, we've refined logos, cabinet styling and several other neat little touches.

We've even improved distribution. Henceforth you'll find AR only in quality high-fidelity stores.

What hasn't changed is AR quality and quality control. And that's the reason every AR speaker system is covered by the most impressive warranty on construction *and* performance of any major speaker.

For information and "specs" pick up our new catalog from your high fidelity dealer or write to us at the address below.

TELEDYNE ACOUSTIC RESEARCH
10 AMERICAN DRIVE, NORWOOD, MASSACHUSETTS 02062
IN CANADA: A. C. SIMMONDS & SONS LTD.



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CIRCLE 1 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



One great sound



leads to another.

The new Koss PRO/4 Triple A.

The famous PRO/4AA is a tough act to follow. After all, its wide dynamic frequency response with a deep rich bass and crystal clear highs made it the world's most asked for stereophone. But our audio engineers had a few innovative ideas on how to develop a whole new pro. One that sounded so fantastic, you'd almost think your old records and tapes had turned into a whole new music library. And one that was so comfortable, you'd never want your records or tapes to end.

The result is a totally new standard in stereophones: the PRO/4 Triple A. Because the new Koss PRO/4 Triple A

expands the realm of pure sound with a freshness and life-like intensity every music lover will want to hear. Indeed, with a frequency response from 10 Hz to 22kHz, the Triple A offers a full bandwidth dynamic Sound of Koss that makes every note blossom to its fullest harmonic growth. Add to that the human-engineered, contoured, Pneumalite® earcushions that provide both comfort and a flat, low bass response to below audibility, and you've got a whole new state-of-the-art stereophone. And while the new Triple A's extra large voice coil, and oversize diaphragm mix the music in

your head, its extra light construction and unique Pneumalite® suspension dual headband let you float, hour upon hour, unconfined through your private realm of listening pleasure.

Ask your favorite Audio Dealer to show you the new Koss PRO/4 Triple A. And write c/o Virginia Lamm for our free full-color stereophone catalog. But if you really want to see how great the new Triple A is, take your favorite records or tapes with you to your Audio Dealer and listen to them thru the new Koss PRO/4 Triple A. The difference you hear is why we say: "hearing is believing".

© 1977 Koss Corp.

 **KOSS® stereophones**
hearing is believing™

KOSS CORPORATION, 4129 N. Port Washington Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212
Koss International London, Dublin, Paris, Frankfurt - Amsterdam - Koss Limited Burlington, Ontario - Koss K.K. Tokyo

CIRCLE 30 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Here's another Empire 698 Turntable dashing off the assembly line.

It takes 15½ hours to make an Empire turntable.
Each one stands over 80 separate inspections before
it reaches the end of the line.

And after the assembly is done, we test it some more.

Wow and flutter, rumble, and speed accuracy are
electronically confirmed to meet specifications before
final approval.

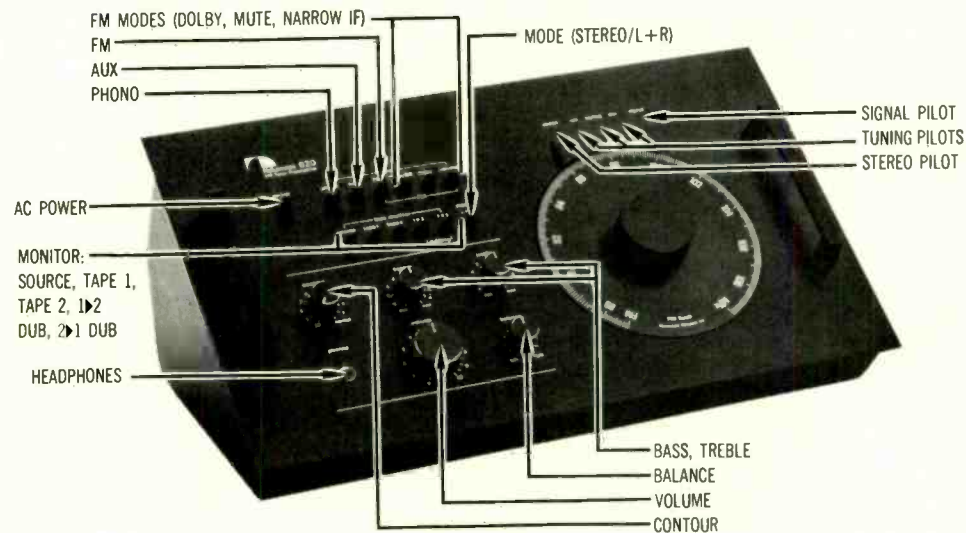
It's not a fast way to finish a turntable, but it's a great
way to start one.

EMPIRE

Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, New York 11530

Preparation supervised by
Robert Long, Harold A. Rodgers,
and Edward J. Foster
Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted)
supplied by CBS Technology Center

New A CONSUMER'S GUIDE Equipment Reports



Another "Rare Bird" from Nakamichi

The Equipment: Nakamichi 630, a stereo tuner/preamplifier in metal case capable of rack mounting. Dimensions: 15¾ by 9¼ inches (main panel); 6¾ inches high, 9½ inches deep. Price: \$630; optional walnut cabinet, \$45. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Nakamichi Research, Inc., Japan; U.S. distributor: Nakamichi Research (U.S.A.), Inc., 220 Westbury Ave., Carle Place, N.Y. 11514.

Comment: In the high fidelity aviary, the tuner/preamplifier is an odd bird—neither a full receiver nor a totally separate tuner. It surprised us a bit that Nakamichi's first FM equipment should appear as part of such a combination. But then, this is quite in character for a company that prides itself on innovation.

The 630 tuner/preamplifier follows the styling of the remainder of the 600 series, itself a departure from tradition. The cabinet is wedge-shaped; with the 630 placed on a shelf or table, the control panel slants upward and to the rear, placing all controls at a convenient angle. (Alternatively, this unit can be mounted with its brethren in the Nakamichi System One equipment rack.) Nor does Nakamichi use the traditional slide-rule tuning dial, opting instead for a jumbo (5¾-inch diameter) rotary dial that, straightened out, would amount to more than a foot of

scale across the FM band. The extremely accurate dial is linearly calibrated every 0.1 MHz. More than eleven turns of the knob are required to sweep the band, and the action is light, super-smooth, and totally without backlash.

Even more surprising for Nakamichi, long known for generously sized meters on tape equipment, is the total absence of meters from the 630. The channel centering is indicated by three LEDs: the central red one for exact tuning, the green outer ones indicating mistuning and the direction of the error. This setup is as sensitive and as accurate as any meter we have used. An amber indicator glows progressively brighter as the signal strength increases. We did not find it nearly as convenient as a meter for orienting an antenna. And, as with the rest of the Series 600, we

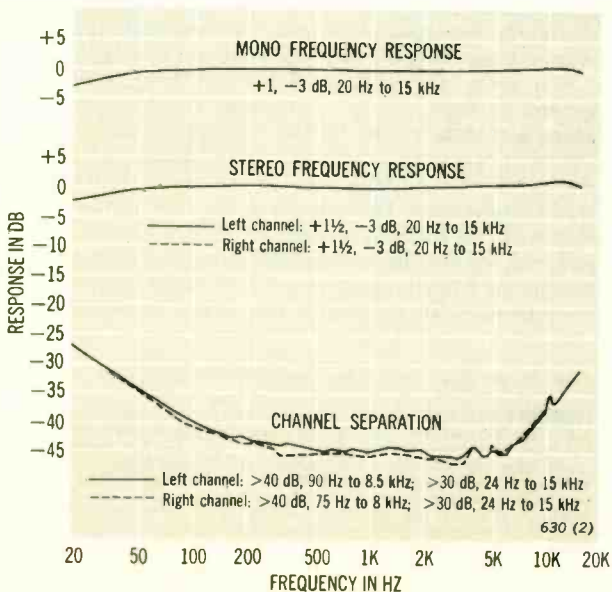
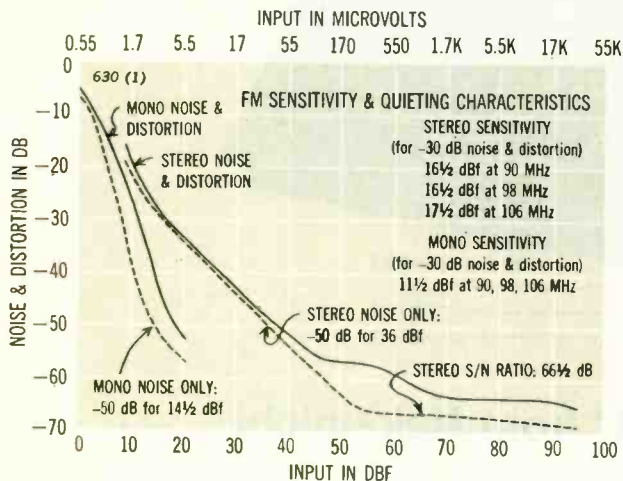
REPORT POLICY Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by CBS Technology Center, Stamford, Connecticut, a division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., one of the nation's leading research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

found it difficult to tell at a glance for what mode the 630 is set since it is controlled by a series of small black pushbuttons that are virtually camouflaged by the black panel.

The tuner offers both standard operation and Dolby decoding via a full built-in decoder, plus a choice between narrow and wide intermediate-frequency bandwidths. FM muting is there as well. Provisions are made to accept one phono input (with a three-position back-panel sensitivity switch), an aux input, and two tape decks, between which dubbing can take place in either direction.

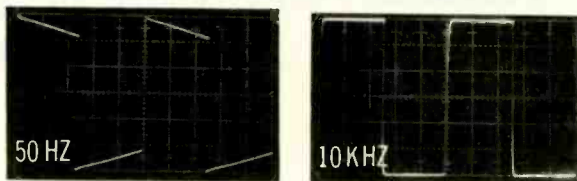
In addition to eleven-position, switched bass and treble controls and the normal volume and balance controls, an eleven-position CONTOUR switch acts as loudness-compensated volume control. (You set VOLUME for "full" listening level, then adjust gain with the CONTOUR, which automatically equalizes for average hearing characteristics at reduced levels.) This technique is far superior to the conventional nonadjustable loudness switch, in our opinion, though we found that the discrete volume settings limit flexibility somewhat. The tone controls, whose range (about ± 9 dB at the frequency extremes) is smaller than usual, are subtle in their operation and, for our tastes, superior to most.

The upper portion of the back panel is replete with sepa-



rate signal-flow diagrams for the tuner and the preamp sections. A pair of switched convenience outlets is provided, but the total rating (essentially 350 watts) is relatively limited. (The Nakamichi 620 power amp, for example, draws twice this figure in flat-out operation.)

Lab data taken at CBS Technology Center attest to the 630's very high level of performance both as a tuner and as a preamplifier. The tuner's 50 dB-quieting figures bode well



Square-wave response

Nakamichi 630 Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	1½ dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	41 dB wideband 78 dB narrowband		
S/N ratio (mono, 65 dBf)	74 dB		
THD (wideband)	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.065%	0.090%	0.078%
1 kHz	0.061%	0.066%	0.065%
10 kHz	0.15%	0.25%	0.21%
THD (narrowband)	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.070%	0.18%	0.17%
1 kHz	0.10%	0.12%	0.12%
10 kHz	0.15%	0.71%	0.57%
IM distortion	0.1%		
19-kHz pilot	-66 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-68½ dB		
Preamp Section			
Output at clipping	L ch: 7.0 V R ch: 7.0 V		
Frequency response	±0 dB, below 10 Hz to 40 kHz +0, -¾ dB, below 10 Hz to 100 kHz		
RIAA equalization	±½ dB, 60 Hz to 20 kHz +½, -2 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz		
Input characteristics (for 2 volts output)	Sensitivity S/N ratio		
phono, 1 mV	1.7 mV	79 dB	
phono, 2 mV	3.4 mV	83 dB	
phono, 5 mV	8.2 mV	85 dB	
aux	170 mV	92½ dB	
tape 1, 2	170 mV	94 dB	
Phono overload (clipping point at 1 kHz)	1-mV sensitivity 60 mV 2-mV sensitivity 120 mV 5-mV sensitivity 290 mV		
THD (for 2 volts output)	L ch 0.0037%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz R ch 0.0031%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz		
IM distortion	0.008%		

for fringe-area reception, especially considering that these measurements were made in the wideband IF position—as were all the lab data not specified as “narrowband.” Capture ratio is good; so are the signal-to-noise ratios and 19- and 38-kHz suppression ratios.

The frequency response is within 1 dB of spec and is very good by any standard. Stereo separation is excellent; alternate-channel selectivity is better than average in the narrowband mode and remains good even in the wideband position. That should make the 630's wideband mode much more frequently useful than that of most tuners with such an adjustment. Distortion in the wideband setting, about as low as any we've measured, increases little in the narrowband mode.

As a preamplifier, the 630 shares much of the circuitry of the Nakamichi 610 and 410 preamps. Both THD and intermodulation distortion are vanishingly small. (The THD figures shown appear to represent noise rather than true distortion.) The frequency response from high-level inputs is ruler flat from 10 Hz to 40 kHz; the phono equalization is excellent. Signal-to-noise ratios also are excellent across the board, varying somewhat with the sensitivity (phono-gain) setting, as is to be expected. The phono overload point also varies with the gain setting but seems to be well related to the respective sensitivities. Note that nominal

sensitivities (1, 2, and 5 millivolts) are very close to the values required for a 1-volt output, though the unit can manage the more familiar 2-volt output level (at which the lab tested it) with ease. In the most sensitive setting, S/N ratio is equivalent to 94 dB, using the common 10-millivolt reference level.

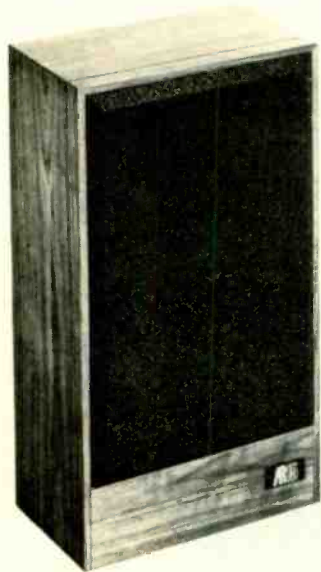
The 630 is an exceptionally clean FM tuner—in the narrowband mode as well as in the wideband one. We found it difficult, in fact, to distinguish between the two on most stations. Only on closely spaced channels is the narrow setting required, and only on exceptionally good stations is the wider setting called for. The quality of this tuner is most readily heard in the treble, where we have found few that match its clarity. The sensitivity proves adequate for moderate fringe-area use, although it is not exceptional.

Tuning is very easy, and the FM mute adequately suppresses interchannel hash without totally squelching the output. It works without thumps but takes the better part of a second to “unmute” once a station has been tuned in.

Although high- and low-cut filters are absent, the CONTOUR and tone controls of the 630 strike us as especially felicitous. Even more impressive is the phono preamp: utterly quiet, very clean, and with stupendous detail. Considered in toto, the Nakamichi 630 is a fine component.

CIRCLE 135 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

AR-15: A Good Speaker for a Small Room



The Equipment: AR-15, a bookshelf loudspeaker system in walnut cabinet. Dimensions: 11¾ by 21½ inches (front, intended for vertical use); 7¾ inches deep plus ¾ inch for foam grille. Price: \$130. Warranty: “full,” five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Teledyne Acoustic Research, 10 American Dr., Norwood, Mass. 02062.

Comment: Many loudspeakers—like many people—make a striking impression at first. It takes further association to reveal their flaws. Not so with the AR-15, one of the smallest and least expensive of the Acoustic Research line. Perfect it is not, but honest it certainly is. A two-way system using an 8-inch woofer and a 1-inch dome tweeter in a small sealed enclosure, the AR-15 is limited in its maximum sound level capability, especially in the lowest octave. But at a reasonable input level it gives quite a good account of itself.

Data taken in the anechoic chamber at CBS Technology Center reveal an essentially uniform average omnidirectional response over most of the band ($\pm 2\frac{1}{4}$ dB from 63 Hz to 8 kHz; $\pm 3\frac{1}{4}$ dB from below 63 Hz to 12.5 kHz) at the 0-dBW (1-watt) power level. Below 63 Hz the response falls off rapidly. A certain forward character is added to the sound by a 3-dB prominence in the midband region (500 Hz to 3 kHz).

The impedance curve is fairly smooth and quite well contained; it reaches a high of about 14 ohms. Nominal impedance measures just under 6 ohms. The lowest impedance (4½ ohms) is reached at a frequency of 2,200 Hz, where some types of music—compressed rock, synthesized music, etc.—may contain appreciable energy. And average impedance is closer to 6 ohms than to the manufacturer's rating of 8. Thus caution is advised: Pairs of these speakers in parallel may overload typical amplifiers.

Efficiency is on the low side, with an average sound pressure level of 79¾ dB delivered from a 0-dBW (1-watt) input of pink noise, 250 to 6,000 Hz. Despite its small size, the AR-15 handles a full 20 dBW (100 watts) of sine wave power at 300 Hz without distress, delivering 102 dB SPL at

1 meter on axis. On a pulsed basis, it took the full power that the amplifier could deliver (28 dBW or 630 watts) for a peak sound pressure level of 109½ dB. Pulse response is fairly good with just a bit of hangover.

Distortion for a 0-dBW input generally remains at or below 0.75% between about 70 Hz and 10 kHz, but in the midrange the third harmonic content generally is above the second—a less fortuitous state of affairs than the reverse. Below 70 Hz, the distortion increases sharply, but not as sharply as one might expect, reaching 2% at 50 Hz and 7% at 30 Hz. With about 20 dB more input—a 98 dB sound pressure level at 300 Hz—the distortion remains below 1.75% from 70 Hz to 10 kHz, with second and third harmonic content about equal. Not surprisingly, the distortion at this power level increases more sharply below 70 Hz and exceeds 10% at 50 Hz.

We found AR's recommended placement—midway up the wall—apt for the smoothest bass response. (At the wall/floor intersection, there is a bit more bass reinforcement but with a loss of some smoothness.) A three-way toggle switch drops the tweeter response by about 4 or 8 dB above the 1,700-Hz crossover frequency; we preferred the 0 dB (highest) tweeter level setting. (The switch is located in a rear panel recess adjacent to the binding-post connectors.)

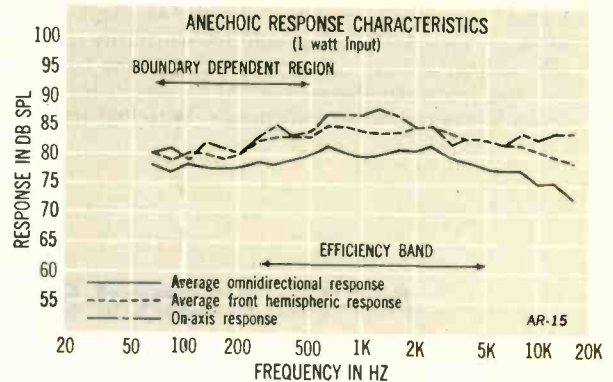
The AR-15's sound is pleasantly forward, and the stereo imaging is wide and stable, if somewhat shallow. There is a definite prominence directly on axis, but once one is off axis by about 30 degrees (a common listening position) the dispersion becomes quite good. The transient response is good and the bass fairly tight, at least at moderate listening levels. The woofer cone motion remains well controlled even on moderately warped records.

Solo instruments—especially violins—are well rendered, but diminishing bass response becomes apparent in the

lower registers of the piano and, of course, the organ. On orchestral compositions requiring greater dynamic range, the limitations of the small system become more evident. The sound becomes somewhat harsh on woodwinds, and violins get a bit steely; brass chords excite enough intermodulation to detract from the clarity.

But these effects occur mainly when the system is forced to strain. At moderate sound levels and in fairly small rooms, the AR-15 is capable of excellent reproduction—remarkably so for a two-way system. And the speaker doesn't try to slip anything by; the limitations apparent at first are the ones you'll hear after extended listening. Such admirable forthrightness makes it unlikely that the speaker will begin to burn your ears (and pride) a few months after purchase. AR can be justly proud of the Model 15—particularly when price (and the five-year warranty) is considered.

CIRCLE 139 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Sophisticated Automation in Mitsubishi's Premier Turntable

The Equipment: Mitsubishi DP-EC1, a two-speed (33, 45 rpm) automatic single-play turntable assembly, with tone arm, base, and dust cover. Dimensions: 18¾ by 14½ inches (base); 6 inches high with cover closed, 16½ inches high fully open. Price: \$590, Warranty: "limited," two

CIRCLE 37 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →



There are certain other instruments every serious musician should know how to play.

The implements used in every art form except music both create and preserve the art. If music isn't captured at the time it's created, it's gone forever.

But the instruments used to capture music can also be used to alter, refine and improve it.

Instruments like the A-234CSX and A-3340S 4-channel tape recorders with Simul-Sync for multitrack recording and over-dubbing, as well as mastering decks like the A-6100 and A-3300SX-2T for mixing down multichannel tapes to stereo.

Instruments like the Model 2A Mixing Console with an

MB-20 Meter Bridge for control of volume, tone, blend and spatial positioning. There are also microphones for every recording need along with accessories like the PB-64 Patch Bay and cables to help organize the process.

TEAC is the leader in multitrack. Less than a decade after multitrack equipment was introduced to the professional industry, TEAC introduced it to people serious about their music. Today, thousands of musicians and recordists are getting many of the important elements of the studio experience but without the studio bill. And TEAC continues its

commitment to multitrack excellence.

To find out more about the adventure of multitrack recording and to hear the quality of music that can be made on TEAC multitrack equipment, send \$2 to Dept. 37 for our "Home Made With TEAC" Album.* Or, if you can't wait to get your hands on the instruments every musician should know how to play, see your TEAC dealer now.

TEAC®

First. Because they last.



*Offer good while supplies last. Void where prohibited by law.

TEAC Corporation of America, 7733 Telegraph Road, Montebello, California 90640. In Canada TEAC is distributed by White Electronic Development Corporation (1966) Ltd.

The Sony 7800 Receiver: It'll put you on the receiving end of a lot more than compliments.



Even before you switch on the STR-7800SD receiver, it'll be receiving. Receiving oohs and aahs.

After it goes on, the accolades will really come in.

After all, it is the finest receiver ever designed by Sony. The 7800 puts you on the receiving end of the most tomorrow-looking technology available today.

You'll receive a feeling of power.

The 7800 brings power to the power-hungry, and can even make the mild-mannered lust for power. Rated

at 125 watts per channel, it's powerful enough to drive any speakers—satisfy any need.

The 125 watts, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, is from 20 to 20kHz—with no more than 0.07% Total Harmonic Distortion.

And that's Sony's conservative rating.

How this combination of power and low distortion was achieved, is an example of Sony's engineering muscle.

Let's start with the toroidal coil transformer. A more efficient structure, it fully exploits the high-perform-

ance power amp. As do two over-sized capacitors, each 22,000uF.

So the feeling of power throughout the frequency range is unmistakable.

You'll receive tuning that'll leave you swooning.

FM circuitry found usually in separates appears in the 7800.

Pardon our initials, but MOS FET's are used in the FM RF amplification. The result: good linearity, low noise and high sensitivity.

For you FM Dolby listeners, a complete FM Dolby noise reduction system, to minimize noise and over-



load distortion.

And there's a new local oscillator circuit. Plus our uni-phase IF filters are so advanced, a computer designed them.

A Multipath switch and meter indicate optimum antenna orientation, thereby reducing distortion. An LED dial pointer doubles in length when an FM signal is received for easy tuning.

You'll receive a pre-amp that's pre-eminent.

High gains for our low emitter concentration (LEC) transistor. Designed, made by, and exclusive to

Sony. It guarantees low noise, and a wide dynamic range. It also keeps RIAA equalization to within $\pm 0.5\text{dB}$.

You'll receive power. And the means to control it.

The pre-amp section also gives you the control you need to keep all that power in line.

A presence switch is a special present: it lets you equalize the mid-range.

Importantly, the 7800 was built with a Professional Attenuator Main Volume Control. It eliminates gang error between channels.

Nor have we overlooked a special loudness network, or an audio muting switch.

Some input on the inputs: Phono 1, Phono 2, External Adaptor, Auxiliary, two tape decks—and tape-to-tape dubbing facilities.

Certain pieces of machinery simply ooze quality and power. Such is true of the 7800SD. It'll put you on the receiving end of the living end.

SONY

You deserve a Citation.



Here's this year's line-up, all brand-new.

Citation 16a Power Amplifier (shown). 150W min. RMS per channel into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20kHz, with less than 0.05% THD. Frequency response from below 4Hz to beyond 120kHz +0, -3dB. Twin Powered. Instant-reading LED displays.

Citation 16s Power Amplifier. Professional version of the 16a, without LED displays.

Citation 19 Power Amplifier. 100W min. RMS per channel into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20kHz, with less than 0.08% THD. Frequency response from below 5Hz to

beyond 140kHz, -3dB. Twin Powered. Instant-reading LED displays.

Citation 17 Preamplifier. Frequency response from below 3Hz to beyond 270kHz, -3dB. Less than 0.001% THD, phono preamp less than 0.002% THD. Five-band active equalizer.

Citation 17s Preamplifier. Same performance specifications as Citation 17, without active equalizer.

Citation 18 FM Tuner. 50dB Quieting Sensitivity, better than 17dBf. Audio frequency response, 10Hz - 50kHz. Patented Quieting Meter.

Citation. The ultimate. Period.

Harman Kardon, 55 Ames Court, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.



harman/kardon
wide,
open sound

years parts, one year labor. Manufacturer: Mitsubishi, Japan; U.S. distributor: Mitsubishi Audio Systems, Melco Sales, Inc., 3030 E. Victoria St., Compton, Calif. 90221.

Comment: With so many fine turntables available, how does a relative newcomer to the U.S. high fidelity market carve out a niche for itself? Mitsubishi's answer is the DP-EC1, a deluxe automatic two-speed single-play turntable and arm combination in which the emphasis has been placed on convenience and safety features but with due attention to performance.

Take the tone arm, for example. With most of today's designers striving for ever lower tone-arm mass, Mitsubishi seems to be going counter to the trend. The tone arm of the DP-EC1 is fabricated of stainless steel—obviously much more dense than aluminum or carbon fiber. But Mitsubishi's research has led it to the conclusion that typical tone arms exhibit a counterweight resonance in the region of 150 Hz as well as spurious resonances at other frequencies. The tubular stainless steel arm, with its counterweight isolated by Butyl rubber, essentially is credited with eliminating these vibrational modes.

The turntable is direct-driven by a servomotor—quite common these days, though Mitsubishi uses a motor of higher torque than is customary. The platter therefore accelerates more rapidly and, since the servo control has the matter well in hand, attains a stable speed without overshooting the mark. The turntable mat is extra thick and formed of a combination of natural and synthetic rubbers to reduce vibration to a minimum.

The real novelty of the DP-EC1 comes in its logic control. Embedded in the platter are nine "light pipes" that protrude through holes in the turntable mat. Organized in three groups of three, they pick up a light beam that is reflected from a prism across the surface of the turntable. The mat is formed with three radial depressions in its top surface so that, when no record is in place, all the light pipes pick up and direct the beam to three photocells below the platter. This tells the DP-EC1 logic that no disc is on the platter. Under these conditions, the arm is prevented from lowering.

If a 7-inch disc is placed on the table, the innermost group of light pipes is covered. When the start button is pressed, the turntable automatically chooses 45 rpm and moves the arm to the 7-inch lead-in groove position. A 10-inch disc covers both innermost groups of pipes, the platter speed is set at 33, and the arm is cued appropriately; a 12-inch disc blanks all photocells, with obvious results. For those relative rarities—the 12-inch 45-rpm record and the 7-inch LP—the platter speed can be altered to suit by a touch of the SPEED RESET button. The platter speed, indicated by a pair of lamps next to the button, is monitored by an illuminated strobe visible through a window on the surface of the deck. A speed control range of somewhat more than $\pm 3\%$ (about a quarter-tone either way) is provided by

a flush-mounted control, and CBS found that, once either setting has been selected, the speed is precise over the line-voltage span (105 to 127 volts). Similarly, locking in 33 rpm sets 45 rpm as well and vice versa.

Power is applied as soon as the arm is moved away from its lock. A light push on the START/CUE button initiates the automatic play cycle; if the button is held down, the arm continues to move toward the center and will lower to commence play as soon as it is released. A built-in mute that kills the cartridge output until the arm is fully lowered is very effective in preventing thumps from the speaker.

At the end of the side, the arm lifts and returns to the rest position. Touching the STOP/LIFT button gently causes the arm to lift and return at any time during the cycle; if this button is held down until the arm is fully lifted, however, the arm will maintain its position above the record. Pressing START/CUE then lowers the arm into the same groove. A lamp near START/CUE lights while the arm is rising or lowering; if the button is released while the lamp is lit, the logic system will interpret this as a command to retract the arm. Thus the system requires a bit more patience than conventional cueing levers do. The REPEAT button can be pressed at any time during the cycle for automatic replay of the disc, canceled by a second press of the button or use of STOP/LIFT. A pilot beside REPEAT indicates when the function is activated.

Tests at CBS Technology Center indicate an excellent flutter figure, averaging $\pm 0.035\%$ ($\pm 0.060\%$ maximum), and an ARLL-weighted rumble that is adequately low—62 dB. The tone-arm resonance, with a Shure V-15 Type III cartridge installed, is only moderate (3 dB) and falls at 8.5 Hz—a trifle on the low side, reflecting the relatively high arm mass. A less compliant pickup thus might be a better choice.

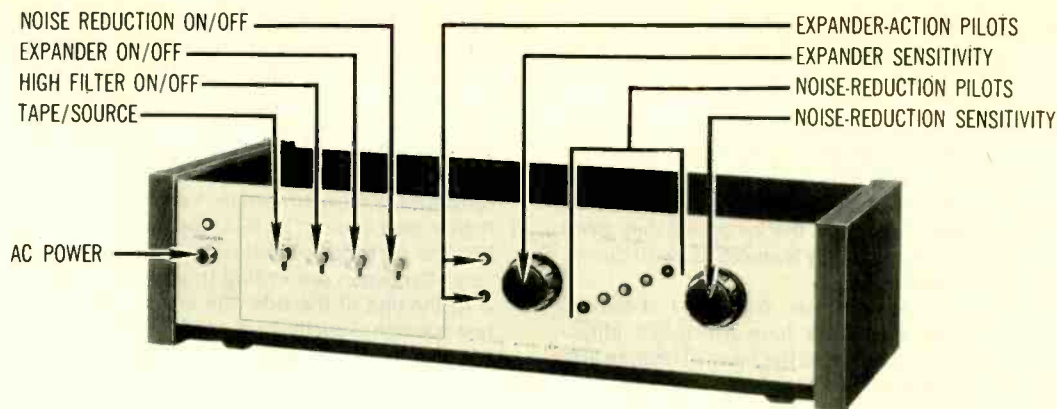
Setting up the Mitsubishi DP-EC1 is a relatively straightforward task, facilitated by following the excellent instructions given in the owner's manual. The included stylus position gauge sets overhang and stylus height. In use, the DP-EC1 had no difficulty tracking a normal assortment of records at a VTF of 1 millinewton (equivalent to 1 gram) using the Shure V-15 Type III, though the lab found that the actual VTF is 0.1 gram low at the gauge's 0.5-gram setting, 0.2 gram low at other half- and full-gram settings. (The scale is calibrated in 0.1-gram increments to 30 grams.) Rumble and flutter are inaudible, and the shock isolation is good. The integral, pivoted dust cover can be lowered into place after the start button is pressed without upsetting the operation.

The DP-EC1's logic works flawlessly, we are pleased to report. We especially like the lock-out feature that prevents operation when no record is on the platter: It should prevent many an accident. With the full logic control already in hand, the next step might be a remote-control option. It seems a natural on so sophisticated a turntable.

CIRCLE 136 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

REPORTS IN PROGRESS

Altec Model 19 loudspeaker
Harman Kardon Citation 19 power amplifier
Ortofon M20FL Super phono cartridge



A "Smart Black Box" from Heath

The Equipment: Heath AD-1304 Active Audio Processor, a stereo expander/denoiser in kit form, in metal case with wood end panels. Dimensions: 17½ by 4½ inches (in front), 7½ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$199.95 (kit only). Warranty: "full," ninety days parts (and labor, where appropriate). Manufacturer: Heath Company, Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022.

Comment: While the legend "Active Audio Processor" on the front panel of the Heath AD-1304 may not be specific about what the device is intended to do, the restrained, even austere styling communicates the fact that here is a solid, no-nonsense item of electronic gear. The processor is, in fact, designed to remove high-frequency noise from and increase the dynamic range of program material routed to its inputs. The two actions are performed in separate modules of circuitry and can be individually defeated by front-panel switches. Two additional switches provide fixed high-cut filtering (for very noisy sources with limited high-frequency content) and a tape monitor to replace the one through which the AD-1304 is connected to the system. The back-panel convenience outlets (switched and unswitched, each 300 watts maximum) represent a thoughtful extra touch.

The expander section, which Heath says is capable of raising the gain through the unit by 4 dB and lowering it by 3 dB, for up to 7 dB of dynamic-range expansion, works on the whole signal and is not particularly fancy. But Heath's engineers seem to have set the detector time constants just about right. With program material that is not too noisy, this section of the AD-1304 is as hard to "catch out" audibly as any signal-processing device we know. Achievement of such performance depends, of course, on whether the user sets the expansion threshold correctly, but this is not hard to do by ear with the aid of the LED indicators that show upward or downward expansion. We got the best results with the threshold fairly high.

When signals are too noisy to be enjoyed, the noise-reducer section of the AD-1304 can be called into play. The action of this stage is monitored by a diagonal string of five LEDs. The lowest and leftmost LED, which is green, turns on when the noise reducer is inactive; the remaining (red) ones turn on progressively until the highest and rightmost indicates that operation is at maximum.

A high-cut filter with a variable cutoff is the main compo-

nent of the noise reducer. Filtering becomes progressively more severe as the signal level drops off, apparently on the theory that soft musical sounds contain fewer audible high-frequency components and that whatever highs are present under those conditions are likely to be noise. A sensitivity control lets the user set the levels at which the various degrees of filtering take place.

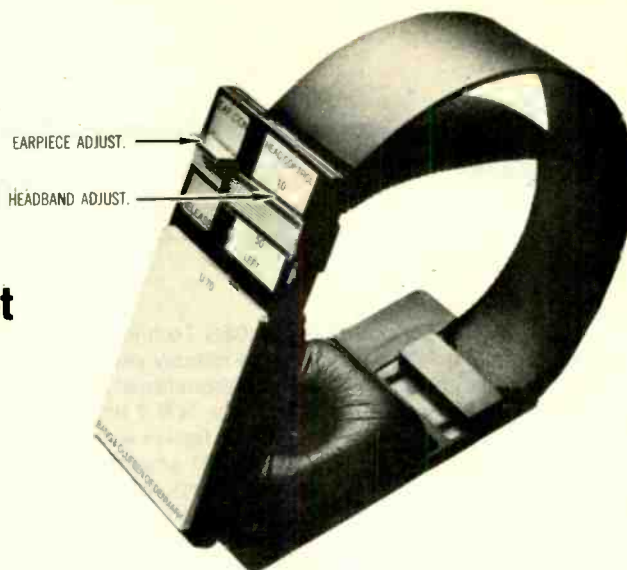
Once again, the time constants seem well chosen, for it is very difficult to hear any anomalies as the filter passband grows and shrinks. All one is very much aware of is, first, that the music emerges from a background of near-silence and, second, that soft passages are relatively devoid of highs. The sound remains reasonably plausible, but switching the noise reducer in and out makes it clear that bona fide high-frequency information is removed along with the noise—and to a degree that obscures a lot of musical detail.

This, as far as we can tell, results from making the device filter aggressively enough to cope with really noisy program material. Here details are probably swamped already, making it unnecessary to worry about them. In many instances, however, we found the noise preferable to the side effects of the reduction system—as we have with comparable devices.

The sample of the Active Audio Processor supplied to us for review was preassembled, but our perusal of the kit-building manual uncovered nothing that would lead us to expect unusual problems in doing the job ourselves. Heath's instructions have their accustomed clarity, and a moderately experienced builder should even find assembly enjoyable. In any case, the AD-1304 is commercially available at present only as a kit.

While we remain basically unconvinced that corrective measures of this sort can ever undo with total success the ills they are designed to combat, we have to admit that at times they are very useful. This unit from Heath uses an approach different—in detail at least—from others on the market and thus has its own strengths and weaknesses. In particular, we find that the expander circuit in the Heath rates high marks in comparison with other single-band expanders. It gives a subtly enhanced dynamic range that sounds quite natural while remaining unobtrusive in operation. The noise reducer, while not as self-effacing in operation, should also prove useful to many listeners depending on the source material it is asked to deal with.

CIRCLE 138 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



B&O's Smartly Styled Headset

The Equipment: B&O Model U-70, a stereo headset with 9-foot straight cable. Price: \$85. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Bang & Olufsen, Denmark; U.S. distributor: Bang & Olufsen of America, Inc., 515 Busse Rd., Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007.

Comment: Consistent with the traditions of Bang & Olufsen products, the new U-70 stereo headset is an unusual (to traditionalists, perhaps slightly oddball) design with a unique and pleasing appearance. Not incidentally, the U-70, in which the earpieces can be rotated individually about the axes running front to back and top to bottom and fixed in the desired positions, turns out to be highly functional as well.

When the phones are in position, most of their 11-ounce weight (excluding the 9-foot cord) is supported by an adjustable leather band that passes across the top of the wearer's head rather than by the spring that presses the earpieces to the outer ears. Tension of the spring is not readily adjustable and is a bit on the high side, which results in positive ear coupling but makes it hard to forget that you are wearing headphones. They are quite comfortable nonetheless—thanks, in large measure, to their many degrees of freedom for adjustment and subtly conceived front-to-back balance.

Impedance of the headset is given by the manufacturer as 140 ohms. No attempt was made to confirm or deny this through measurement, but we did observe that a power amp capable of delivering enough output voltage to drive 5 to 10 watts into an 8-ohm load was able to make the U-70 as loud as we would ever want. Since the voltage from tape-deck monitor outputs is normally less than this, the B&O phones are better suited to use for entertainment than as workhorses for the recording buff.

Though the U-70 may not offer the ultimate in sensuous contact with the outer ear, it more than makes up for this with its sound. The unstrained ease with which the unit reproduces music makes its personality quite unspectacu-

lar—almost as if it should be taken for granted. This quality, which is rare (and is best appreciated after extended listening), helps to keep aural fatigue at a minimum—an important criterion.

From a more analytic point of view, it seems that the U-70 has an unusually well-integrated sound in which all aspects are consistent. Other headsets may have sharper transient response, for example, but the result of that often is a falsification that gives a "clinical" quality to the sound. Low distortion is audibly another strong point of this model. Bass tones, in particular, are free of the traces of buzziness sometimes imparted by headsets.

As usual in headphone listening with material not binaurally recorded, the stereo image is less than entirely plausible, but the U-70 does as well here as one might reasonably expect in yielding an image that does not vary in sharpness or stability with the type of ensemble or program material. Once again, the imaging seems "of a piece" with the other audible parameters.

Absolute judgments upon headsets are out of the question, ears being as individual as they are. (Even left and right ones on the same head do not usually match perfectly.) We can say that we found the Bang & Olufsen U-70 a great pleasure to use and that it succeeded in seducing us away from our loudspeakers (which we dearly love) for longer than was strictly required for testing. Not many headsets achieve that.

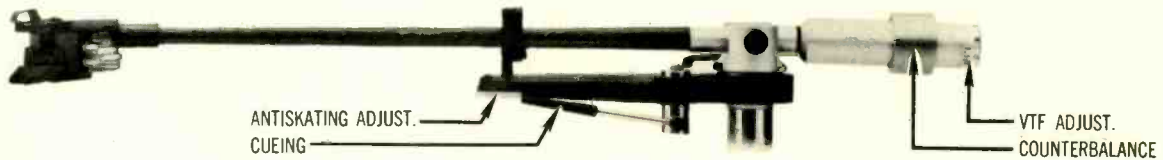
CIRCLE 133 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

ADC's Stylish, Capable Tone Arm

The Equipment: ADC LMF-1, a carbon-fiber tone arm with integral, nonreplaceable headshell. Price: \$205; LMF-2, with replaceable headshell, \$215. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Audio Dynamics Corp., Pickett District Rd., New Milford, Conn. 06776.

Comment: Carbon fiber, a material with an extraordinary

ratio of tensile strength to mass, is an obvious choice for use in a tone arm and has been employed by a number of designers. In the ADC LMF-1 and LMF-2, however, the usual tubular construction has been abandoned in favor of a tapered profile of minimum mass. The principal difference between the two models is that the LMF-1 is built as a single unit whereas the LMF-2 has a detachable headshell.



Lab testing performed at the CBS Technology Center confirms that ADC has achieved a notably small mass in the new design; the low-frequency resonance of the LMF-1, fitted with the Shure V-15 III pickup, is 9.3 Hz, which is close to ideal and one of the highest figures we can recall seeing with this cartridge. The 4.3-dB amplitude rise at this frequency may seem somewhat large, but since discs are relatively silent in the range from about 9 to 14 Hz, there is little chance of exciting the resonance in any case. (With ADC's own ZLM cartridge, the resonance is at 12.7 Hz with an amplitude rise of 7.0 dB. For the same reason, this need elicit no concern on the part of a user.)

Bearing friction in the LMF-1 is negligible in both horizontal and vertical planes. The stylus-force gauge and antiskating mechanism are exact within the lab's limits of measurement. Antiskating force is set at one-tenth the vertical tracking force, which appears to be a commonly accepted value. The maximum setting for vertical tracking force is 1.5 grams (equivalent to about 15 millinewtons), which could make the arm unsuitable for some moving-coil pickups. But these, with their relatively stiff suspensions and high mass, are not very likely to benefit from the use of a low-mass tone arm.

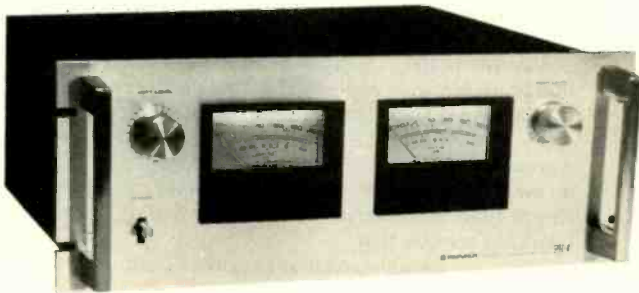
Installation of the tone arm is about par for the course in difficulty—which is to say that it is not an experience to be relished. But fortunately it need be done only once, and ADC's instructions are helpful enough to ameliorate the

pain considerably. A mounting template is provided to help the user locate the pivot point and get the overhang correct. Whatever you do, don't lose the template; it is the only overhang reference given, and you will need it when changing pickups. The three counterweights included in the package make it easy to balance almost any cartridge.

When it comes to playing records, the LMF-1 will reward you handsomely for the effort required to set it up. The cueing action is well damped and quite accurate in its operation, and tracking of warped discs is excellent. One of the main advantages of the ADC and other low-mass tone arms is, in our opinion, that the rapid fall in amplitude response below resonance acts as a built-in subsonic filter—and ahead of the phono preamp, where it will do the most good. We would point out to purists who claim that subsonics add realism to some instruments, such as pedal harpsichords, that such signals would have to be felt, not heard. Since it is doubtful that anyone but the player is in a position to do this, and even more doubtful that speakers can reproduce subsonics at anything even close to natural levels, we'll opt for the filtering effect and save our speakers; as well as the headroom in our electronics.

The ADC LMF-1 is not cheap, but then neither are its materials and workmanship. It does its job very well indeed and would certainly be at home in a state-of-the-art music system.

CIRCLE 132 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Pioneer Spec-4, an Amp for Persnickety Ears

The Equipment: Pioneer Spec-4, a stereo power amplifier in metal case appropriate for rack mounting. Dimensions: 19 by 7 inches (front panel); 17½ inches deep. Price: \$700. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Pioneer Electronics Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 85 Oxford Dr., Moonachie, N.J. 07074.

Comment: In their quest for ultraclean sound, Pioneer's engineers seem to have spared few, if any, pains to reduce distortion and noise to negligible levels in the Spec-4.

Some authorities would claim that the distortion has been made several times lower than amounts generally considered inaudible. We can only note that, as amplifier distortion has been driven to ever-lower levels, so have the minima that, according to research, can be perceived.

In the data measured at the CBS Technology Center, the worst total harmonic distortion encountered (in one channel at 20 kHz) is 81 dB below the desired signal at full power (21¼ dBW, or 150 watts). More typically, distortion products are suppressed by 86 dB, almost independent of level. The best distortion readings at low levels (1¼ dBW or

RECORD

DOLBY NR

TAPE COUNTER
2 1 6



+7dB

+3dB

PEAK

COUNTER RESET

MEMORY

METER

INPUT SELECTOR DOLBY NR (MPX)

OFF ON VU TAPE TIME

LINE MIC/DIN CFF ON MPX ON

3 Minute Warning from AIWA

LH BIAS FINE (%)

With the AD-6550's unique new Remaining Tape Time Meter you never have to worry about running out of tape in the middle of recording your favorite music. In the past you monitored your tape visually and hoped that the musical passage and tape would finish together. Now, this extremely easy to use indicator gives you plenty of warning. It shows you exactly how many minutes remain on the tape. So that when you record the "Minute Waltz" it won't end in 45 seconds.

Wow and Flutter: Below 0.05% (WRMS)

The AD-6550 cassette deck achieves an inaudible wow and flutter of below 0.05% (WRMS) thanks to a newly designed 36-pulse FG servo motor and AIWA's special So id Stabilized Transport (SST) system. And because we use Dolby* we also improve the S/N ratio to 35dB (Fe-Cr). So you can listen to the music instead of tape hiss.

The AIWA AD-6550.
Be forewarned.

AIWA®

LH BIAS FINE (%)



Bias Fine Adjustment

But there's a lot more to the AD-6550. AIWA has included a Bias Fine Adjustment knob that permits the fine tuning of frequency response to give optimum performance of any brand of LH tape on the market.



*Dolby is a Trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.

Total Energy Response:

The reason why Jensen Lifestyle speakers sound better than any comparable speaker.

Just what is Total Energy Response?

Total Energy Response is the uniform radiation of sound throughout the whole listening area—at all frequencies. And it makes an unquestionable difference in the stereo sounds you hear.

Most speakers are to one degree or another directional. That is, part of the room in front of the speaker gets the full sound. Bass, treble and midrange. While parts of the room to the sides of the speaker get just a fragment of the sound. (See Fig. A)

It's precisely this fault we set out to correct. Because others may tell only part of the story. Often with just one response curve measured from just one position—their optimum position.

However their results don't look so favorable when the test microphone is

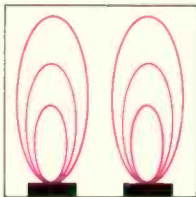


Figure A Ordinary Speaker Dispersion

moved "off-axis," that is, to the side instead of directly in front of these speakers.

Figure B illustrates this. It is a Total Energy Response curve, taken with test microphones in all positions. When comparing the Jensen (blue line) with a comparably priced "flat" speaker (red line), you can see how deficient the other speaker is in total radiated energy in the mid and mid-high frequencies. This midrange deficiency is unfortunately very common amongst speakers, and gives many so-called "flat"

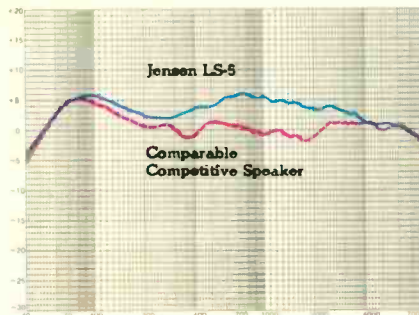


Figure B Total Energy Response Curve

response speakers a very "thin" sound.

The Jensen Lifestyle speaker, on the other hand, demonstrates true Total Energy Response. Uniform radiated



part of the room. Not just the bass if you're to the side of the speakers. And not just the treble if you're in front of them.

2. Excellent stereo imaging. You hear everything that *both* speakers are putting out. Almost anywhere in the room. Unlike listeners of other speakers, who can fall victim to gaps in the response characteristics, or "hole-in-the-middle" stereo.

3. Excellent balance. Many other speakers are hot on treble, or bass, or both. But all that really means is that the midrange is often neglected. Jensen sends the all-important midrange throughout a room every bit as much as the highs and lows.

4. Total Energy Response is achieved in Jensen speakers without any loss of efficiency. Which means a moderate output amp or receiver is still all you need for great performance. Not a big super-amp.

power—at all frequencies—throughout the whole room.

These speakers were conceived, designed and tested for this. Tested from every spot in anechoic "dead" rooms, reverberation "live" rooms, and simulated living rooms.

Our finished products: remarkable dispersion for the hard-to-disperse high frequencies... 160° or 170° wide, depending on the model. Also expanded dispersion of the critical midrange response. And full, rich bass that still perfectly matches the other frequencies for accurate sound reproduction. The way it's *supposed* to be heard.

You can see how the sound from a Jensen is distributed much more evenly throughout a room. And when you're in your own listening room... you can *hear* it.

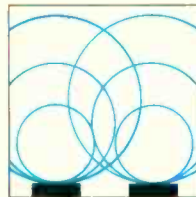


Figure C Jensen Lifestyle LS-5 Dispersion

What gives Jensen Total Energy Response?

A number of features. First, the extremely wide dispersion of the Lifestyle Tuned Isolation Chamber™ midranges.

Especially important are Jensen's two tweeters: a 160° dispersion cone direct radiator, and the 170° dispersion Mylar® Sonodome® tweeter. The sound input to each of these drivers is precisely monitored by Jensen's exclusive Conratic® crossover network, which insures uniform energy transfer between the woofer, midrange, and tweeter.

For final command of the Jensen Lifestyle's sound, behind-the-grille controls are featured. These controls let you adjust the treble, and in some cases, the midrange, to the characteristics of your individual room.

And with Total Energy Response... there's more music to control.

What does all this mean to you?

1. It means that with Jensen Lifestyle speakers, you'll be able to hear all of the frequencies, all of the time, in almost any

Hear the difference yourself...

Stop by your local Jensen dealer and hear for yourself the difference Total Energy Response makes. It's the reason why Jensen Lifestyle speakers sound better than any comparable speaker.

JENSEN

LIFESTYLE SPEAKER SYSTEMS

For the name and location of your nearest Jensen dealer, write:
Jensen Sound Laboratories, Division of Pemcor, Inc., 4136 N. United Parkway, Schiller Park, IL 60176.

1.5 watts) approximately equal the noise floor of the amplifier, which means that actual distortion may be lower still. Intermodulation distortion at 8 ohms is on a par with THD; it runs somewhat lower at equivalent voltages into 16 ohms and roughly 10 times higher into 4 ohms. Even at 4 ohms, however, an output in excess of 23 dBW (200 watts) is available before IM reaches 0.1%.

The frequency response of the Spec-4 looks more like data measured on a fine preamp than that of a power amp. The unit is flat down to at least 10 Hz (the lowest frequency measured in the CBS test), and response is down by a scant 1/2 dB at 100 kHz (the upper limit). Damping factor, at 177, is off the upper end of the scale of what is usually deemed necessary. (The extremely low output impedance implied by this is, we suspect, more a result of the multiple output devices used than extremely high levels of negative feedback.) Nothing that was found in either the lab or the listening room suggests any difficulties with transient distortion.

Despite the fact that Pioneer calls the meters on the front panel of the amp "peak-reading," they give only a rough approximation of the peaks that can be read from an oscilloscope connected to the amplifier output. They do, however, keep a good handle on what is being demanded of the loudspeakers. The scope, incidentally, showed peaks equivalent to about 350 watts into 8 ohms without clipping, which represents peak headroom of better than 3 dB—certainly an excellent figure, though we do not have comparable data for most competing amps.

In the listening room, the Spec-4 sounds clean and transparent at both high and low levels, even retaining its composure when pushed to occasional clipping. With the gain controls set wide open, noise is virtually undetectable at listening positions more than an inch or so from a tweeter. Interestingly, the greater interchannel isolation provided by the dual-power-supply construction does seem to impart extra crispness to the stereo image. In that respect, if no other, the Spec-4 strikes us as an audible improvement over Pioneer's earlier Spec-2 (see HF, April 1977), rated at 24 dBW (250 watts) per channel.

This may suggest—correctly—that we are in doubt as to whether the super-low distortion and ultrawide passband of the Spec-4 offer benefits that the ear can hear. The lab data show that the amp can do what Pioneer says it will and then some. Its basic sound is about as good as that of any amp we have heard, and its separation seems especially good. Any other special quality that the amp may have could be expected to be very subtle and to reveal itself slowly—over weeks or even months of careful listening. Should you be the type of relentless perfectionist who will not rest until you hear the Spec-4 for yourself, the price will probably come as a pleasant surprise.

CIRCLE 140 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Pioneer Spec-4 Amplifier Additional Data

Power output at clipping (channels driven simultaneously)

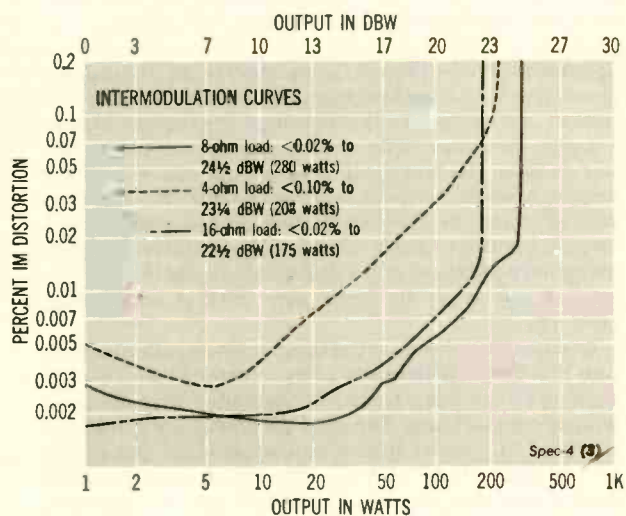
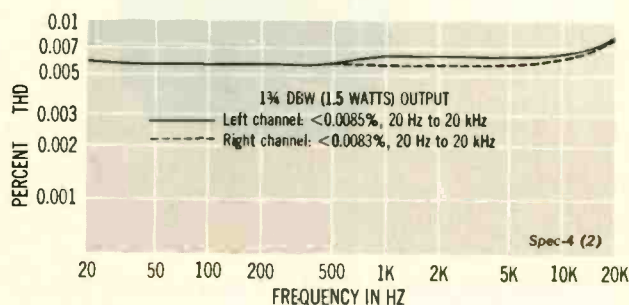
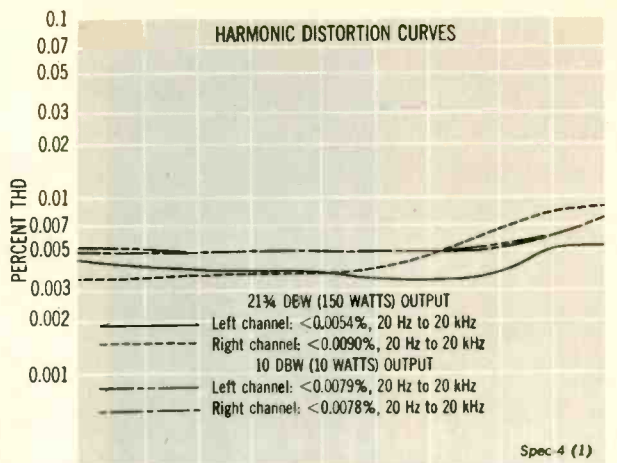
L ch 22 1/4 dBW (168 watts)
R ch 22 1/4 dBW (168 watts)

Frequency response ±0 dB, below 10 Hz to 20 kHz
+0, -1/2 dB, below 10 Hz to 100 kHz

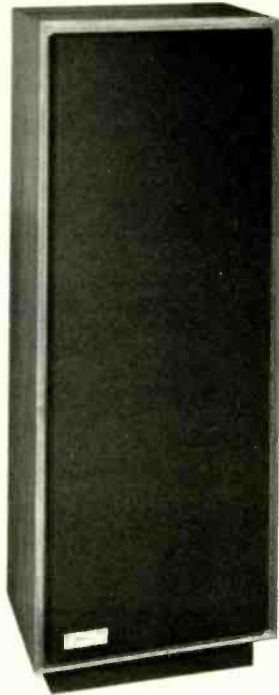
Input characteristics (for rated output at full gain)

Sensitivity	Noise	S/N ratio
740 mV	-80 1/4 dBW	102 dB

Damping factor at 1 kHz 177



Square-wave response



Genesis Does Its Thing Again— Simply and with Elegance

The Equipment: Genesis Model 3, a floor-standing loudspeaker system in wood cabinet. Dimensions: 14½ by 37¼ inches (front), 11½ inches deep; supplied base: 2½ inches high. Price: \$299. Warranty: "limited," lifetime (original purchaser) parts and labor. Manufacturer: Genesis Physics Corp., Newington Park, Newington, N.H. 03801.

Comment: Genesis Physics Corporation is one of the latest generation of loudspeaker manufacturers in the vicinity of Boston. The company's first offerings, the Genesis Models 1 and 2, were interesting and reasonably successful two-way designs, the first using a sealed-box woofer and the second a woofer/passive-radiator system for increased bass efficiency. In the Model 3, Genesis has added a midrange driver (for a total of one passive and three active diaphragms) and moved into a loudspeaker class that is characterized generally by some very difficult engineering problems.

Anechoic data taken at the CBS Technology Center indicate that the high efficiency often associated with vented enclosures has been traded for extended response and relative compactness. The 76½-dB sound pressure level produced at 1 meter from a pink-noise input signal with an average level of 0 dBW (1 watt), 250 to 6,000 Hz, is on the low side, even allowing for the fact that this measurement is now taken omnidirectionally. This—together with the 5-ohm nominal impedance and an overall impedance curve that, though reasonably smooth and well controlled, dips below 4 ohms right around 600 Hz—means that the Model 3 will do its best with a fairly hefty amp that likes to deliver current. Very few amps would appear ready to accept parallel operation of two sets of these speakers.

The Genesis 3 does not have the loudest voice we have heard but is capable of producing quite realistic levels in rooms of moderate size. Its continuous power-handling capability is somewhat limited (audible breakup occurs with an input of 17¾ dBW or 61 watts), but the acoustic output

is a respectable 101 dB SPL at 1 meter on axis. On pulses, the unit will tolerate something more than a peak power of 28½ dBW (720 watts—the limit of the test amplifier) without evidence of clipping, delivering a peak sound pressure level of nearly 112 dB at this input.

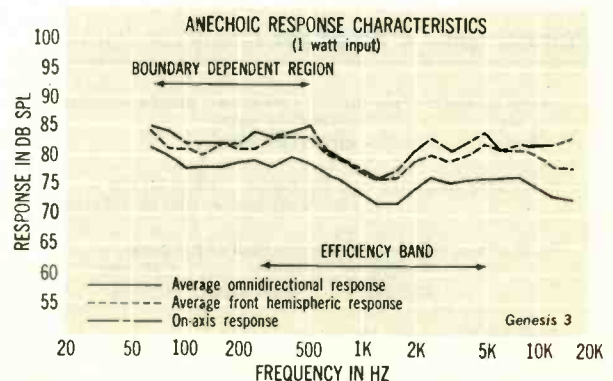
Performance of the Genesis with respect to distortion is fine indeed. From about 80 Hz up, both the second and third harmonics measure below—mostly well below—1%. At an SPL of 98½ dB, the second harmonic content rises appreciably but the third harmonic (the real "bad guy") does not. From 80 Hz down, distortion increases rather rapidly (and predictably) as increased excursions are demanded of the woofer and passive radiator.

Average omnidirectional frequency response of the Model 3 is fairly flat and extended. The relative positions of the on-axis, front-hemisphere, and omnidirectional curves suggest good dispersion with no serious tendency toward beaminess—a suggestion confirmed by listening. All three curves show a dip in the upper bass and lower midrange, which, it turns out, is just about eliminated by flipping the midrange balance switch to the INCREASE position. (The midrange switch can give about 3 dB of boost and 1 dB of cut with reference to NORMAL between 500 and 2,000 Hz; the tweeter control allows 3 dB of boost and 2 of cut from 2,000 Hz up.) Pulse reproduction shows quick startup and little hangover.

The sound of the Genesis (with the midrange set to INCREASE) is generally neutral and, as one would expect from the distortion data, clean. There is enough dynamic range to allow two of these speakers to reproduce the sound of Harry James's band from a direct-cut disc (Sheffield LAB-6 [SL23/SL24]) with no apparent strain. Bass response is particularly good. The stereo image is solid and plausible, although not exceptional in depth. Overall, the system performed well with any music we used to challenge it.

Our conclusion is that Genesis has once again found an elegant and not too costly solution to the problems it has undertaken. The Model 3 represents a truly fine achievement—especially for such a young company.

CIRCLE 137 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





The Featherweight at the Top of the Goldring Line

The Equipment: Goldring G-900SE, a stereo phono cartridge with elliptical stylus. Price: \$120. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Goldring, England; U.S. distributor: Hervic Electronics, 14225 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks, Calif. 91423.

Comment: Goldring pickups—though as well known as, say, Pickering's or Shure's in their native Britain—were little known here before Hervic started importing them. The reputation that precedes them is one of good value in the moderate price range, though the present premium model (presumably, in part, because of importation costs) is above what we would generally consider "moderate" price.

It appears to be designed around the concept that mass is, in general, inimical to phono cartridges in at least two ways: First, a pickup that resembles a plumb bob in weight can undo the artfulness of the tone-arm designer in seeking good warp immunity and tracking; second, too much mass at the stylus tip can cause high-frequency resonances to fall well inside the audible range. The engineers at Goldring have, in the G-900SE, produced a pickup with a rated stylus-tip mass of 0.32 milligram and an unusually low total mass (4 grams) as well.

With a vertical tracking force of 9.8 millinewtons (exactly equivalent to a 1-gram weight) the Goldring was able to pass CBS labs's tortue test successfully. This value, which the manufacturer recommends, and which lies near the center of the nominal range ($\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ grams), was used for the remaining tests. Sensitivity at 1 kHz is 1.05 millivolts per centimeter per second for the left channel and 1.02 for the right, which in addition to being moderately high represents an excellent match (within about $\frac{1}{4}$ dB) between channels. Second harmonic distortion is good and perhaps a trifle lower than average from 1 to 3 kHz, but it rises somewhat at higher frequencies, the rise being particularly sharp in the left channel. Intermodulation distortion is considerably higher than average in both the lateral and vertical planes.

The vertical tracking angle measures out at 26 degrees, a value considerably higher than usual. The low-frequency

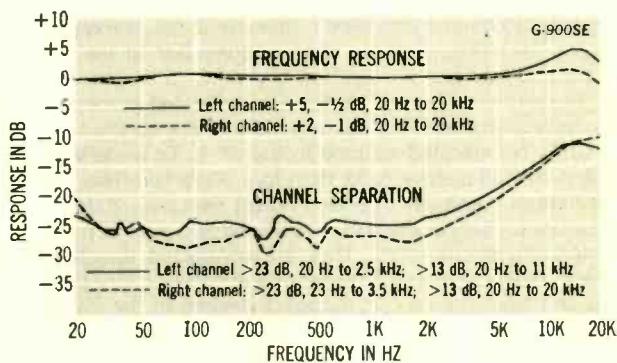
resonance measured in the SME 3009 tone arm is 8.9 Hz, which is not far from the ideal and should be still closer to it with typical arms of lower effective mass. Maximum tracking levels are about par for a top-of-the-line cartridge. The stylus has an elliptical contour and shows good polish and alignment; tracking radii for the left and right sides match within about 4%.

Frequency response of the right channel is fairly close to flat, exhibiting a broad ripple on the order of 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ dB. The left channel is somewhat flatter through the bass and midrange but has a $4\frac{1}{2}$ -dB peak centered at about 15 kHz. The points 3 dB down on the skirts of the peak lie at 8 kHz and beyond 20 kHz. Channel separation at 1 kHz exceeds the manufacturer's claim of 25 dB but decreases rapidly at high frequencies. Square-wave reproduction shows some overshoot and undershoot on the leading and trailing edges but good damping otherwise.

In listening tests, the forte of the Goldring seems to be its notably warm midrange, which is most apparent in moderate to soft passages. As is the case with many other pickups, the sound of the G-900SE can be affected by its interface with the preamp, the most obvious manifestation being the relative brightness of the treble. The high end displays an etched-out quality that tends to be a little edgy as the music becomes quite loud. The bass is generally solid and reasonably tight, although in complex orchestral passages the relative brightness of the upper treble can make it sound comparatively subdued. Breakup is barely audible on some of the louder piano transients found on directly cut discs. The stereo image is not the most stable we have heard but is adequate.

Like numerous high fidelity products, the Goldring seems likely to please a good many people—but not everyone. It has its strong points and its foibles, and the bottom line for any particular listener will probably depend on how the various parameters of judgment are weighted. Once again, the ear—your ear—is charged with delivering the final verdict.

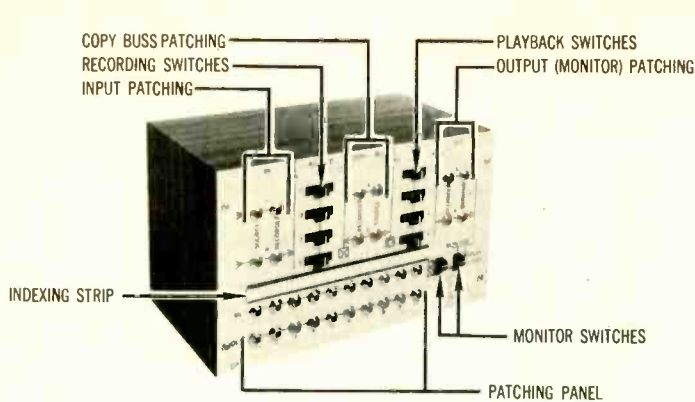
CIRCLE 131 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Goldring G-900SE Pickup Additional Data

Maximum tracking levels (10 millinewtons VTF; re RIAA 0 VU)

300 Hz	+12 dB
1 kHz	+6 dB
10-20 kHz	>-5 dB



Russound's R_x for "Gordian Knot" Systems

The Equipment: Russound SP-1, a stereo switching and patching center in vinyl-finish wood case. Dimensions: 7¾ by 5 inches (front panel); 4¾ inches deep plus clearance for switches and connections. Price: \$149.95. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Russound/FMP, Inc., Canal St., N. Berwick, Maine 03906.

Comment: In the last few years, the frequency with which we have found ourselves talking about outboard accessory devices—for noise reduction, equalization, matrix decoding, ambience simulation, dynamic enhancement, and whatnot—seems to have increased exponentially. Incorporation of such units into a component system perforce creates a complex exercise in signal-routing. When tape decks are added and when some or all of the outboarded gear will be required after playback for some purposes and before recording for others, the interconnection task quickly becomes formidable if the user is not to have frequent and irksome recourse to reconnection at the multiple back panels.

Russound to the rescue! For a complicated problem, it proposes what at first—but only at first—appears to be an equally complicated solution in the SP-1. To understand what this all-passive (and therefore distortion-free, with minimum possibility of added noise) switching/patching box does, begin at the bottom with the two rows of paired miniature phone jacks. They are connected directly to back-panel pin jacks for the input and output connections to and from the various outboard devices in the system and thus constitute the main patching panel. An index strip, covered by a clear plastic "window," identifies the ten jack pairs—one each for in and out. (An ample supply of cards from which the user can cut new index strips is provided.)

Patch cords (twelve of them are supplied) can be used to insert the outboard devices at any of three points in the tape-switching chain above the patching panel via sets of phone jacks that automatically feed through when no plug is inserted into them. The first point is between SOURCE (normally the tape-recording output of your receiver, preamp, or integrated amp) and the tape decks; the second is within the TAPE-COPY loop of the SP-1; the third is between the tape-output section and the output of the SP-1 itself. The monitor switching allows you to hear either

that final output or the signal on the tape-copy loop; a second switch chooses between before (a circle) and after (a cross) any outboard device inserted into the copy buss.

In addition, there are two banks (for recording and playback) of four switches for each of the four recorders that can be hooked into the SP-1. Each has an IN position (for normal recording and/or monitoring use), OFF, and COPY. (If you want to use more than four recorders, Russound offers the TMS-2 as an add-on extender to the SP-1, though we doubt many home recordists will find the built-in complement inadequate.)

To demonstrate how all this works together, let's assume some practical situations. Suppose we have a Dolby unit connected to the first four jacks in the patch panel. (Left encode input and output might go on jack-pair 1, right encode on 2, left decode on 3, and right decode on 4.) Pairs 5 and 6 could be used for a Burwen denoiser, 7 and 8 for a graphic equalizer.

We are listening to a weak FM station and want to insert the Burwen, so we patch from SOURCE to the input side of 5 and 6, from the output side of 5 and 6 to MONITOR (bypassing the whole tape section) and listen to the denoised monitor output. Now a new program comes on, and we decide to record it on tape deck 1. We remove the patch from MONITOR and insert it into RECORDER. Then we move RECORD switch 1 to IN and PLAY switch 1 to MON. We can now record the denoised signal or listen to it via the output of deck 1.

Now let's say that we have borrowed a tape of eminently collectible program content but of poor technical quality: somewhat noisy and with boomy, rather muffled sound. We'll play the tape on deck 2, fix up the sound, and record the presumably superb result—with Dolby—on deck 1. We move PLAY switch 2 to COPY, then run patch cords from COPY BUSS SOURCE to input jacks 7 and 8 (the equalizer). From the corresponding output jacks we patch to inputs 5 and 6 (Burwen), and from those outputs to inputs 1 and 2 (Dolby encode). From outputs 1 and 2 the patch loop is then returned to COPY BUSS RECORDER. At this point, the output of deck 2 is passing into the dubbing buss, out through its interrupt loop to the equalizer, denoiser, and Dolby encoder, and back into the dubbing buss.

Now we set up recorder 1 by putting RECORD switch 1 at COPY and PLAY switch 1 at MON. In the output section, we run patch cords from RECORDER to inputs 3 and 4 (Dolby decode) and from outputs 3 and 4 back to the output section's MONITOR connections. We now have deck 1 taking its Dolby-encoded signals from the dubbing buss and playing back via the Dolby decode for monitoring. Between the switching on deck 1 and that on the SP-1 and the various outboarded units, we will have a number of useful monitoring options to help us set the equalizer and denoiser for optimum results in correcting the signals at hand. That done, we adjust Dolby and recording levels and make our copy. (Note that this problem uses up all twelve patch cords; for some situations we might want to buy even more.)

It should be obvious from the foregoing that the utility of the SP-1 depends on the system in which it is to be used. Simple systems will profit little, complex ones can profit immeasurably. For more complex patching schemes that you may want to re-employ, Russound supplies a half-dozen front-panel sheets on which the patch scheme can be marked so you won't have to figure it out all over again. But we found the patching "chores" fun and really quite simple as long as we approached them in rational fashion. The unit itself is not particularly elegant in appearance, but it will not disgrace a stylish system either; what matters is whether or not your system can benefit from its inclusion. Ours certainly did.

CIRCLE 134 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Now you can have something in common with FM stations. This Technics turntable.



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It's expensive. Because the combination of materials, craftsmanship and technology is rare. And, until now, unavailable. Like the obsidian lava case. One of the highest density materials known to man. And one of the best solutions known to feedback.

Or the world's first nitrogen-hardened titanium tonearm. The same rigid titanium nitride developed for aerospace. It's less than 85% the weight of aluminum. With far better vibration characteristics.

Another impressive achievement in tonearm design is the ultra-sensitive suspension. Five ruby ball bearings in four anti-shock pivots. With one-fifth the friction of conventional ball bearings. And with Technics unique variable damping you can customize the tonearm to virtually any cartridge.

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and incredibly fast stop/start action. And you can turn on this performance from your listening position. With Technics "black box" remote control.

Technics SL-1000MKII. A unique combination of technology for the audiophile who demands the ultimate in turntable performance. Compare specifications and you'll see why there's no comparison for Technics SL-1000MKII.

MOTOR: Brushless DC motor, quartz phase locked servo circuit. TORQUE: 5.2 lbs. in. STARTING TIME: 0.25 sec. (25° rotation) to 33 1/3 rpm. BRAKING TIME: 0.3 sec. (30° rotation) from 33 1/3 rpm. LOAD FLUCTUATION: 0% to 4.3 lbs. in. SPEED DRIFT: ± 0.002%. WOW AND FLUTTER: 0.025% WRMS (JIS C5521). RUMBLE: -73 dB (DIN B). TONEARM TYPE: Variable dynamic damping universal. FRICTION: 5 mg. (lateral and vertical). EFFECTIVE MASS: 22 gm. with 6.5 gm. cartridge and 1.25 gm. tracking force. SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$1,300*.

Technics SL-1000MKII. A rare combination of technology, a new standard of audio excellence.

*Technics recommended price, but actual retail price will be set by dealers.

Technics Professional Series
by Panasonic



From the Mouths of Babes

by John Culshaw

I AM NOT used to talking to groups of children, but a while ago a friend of mine invited me to speak at his local school, which is on the outskirts of Birmingham—England, not Alabama—because it was holding a kind of seminar on music with emphasis on sound in general and recorded sound in particular. Casting aside a great deal of self-doubt, I agreed. It turned out that I was not to address all the children at once (there were about five hundred of them between the ages of eleven and fourteen, with an equal proportion of girls to boys), but in four separate groups, so that while I was talking to one group the other three could be getting on with their “experiments.” The whole thing was a revelation, at least to me.

It was suggested that I should speak to each group for about fifteen minutes on the subject of how records are made and then throw the class open for a thirty-minute question session. I was a bit doubtful about the time allotments. Could children of that age sustain questions and answers for all that time? I needn't have worried; but for the helpful intervention of a teacher, I might have been there all night.

I think it was probably a more rewarding experience for me than for the children, because the range and perception of their questions quite put to shame the kinds of things adults usually ask at Gramophone Society

meetings. Thus nobody asked whether Maria Callas was short-sighted (most of them had never heard of Maria Callas) or whether a certain conductor really was having a flirtation with his lady harpist, as had been hinted in one of the more scurrilous newspapers. No, the children wanted to know about the bass response of cassette machines, about multitrack, about why 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm had been chosen for LP rather than, say, 37 $\frac{3}{4}$.

The engrossing thing here, which has to be admitted at once, is that most of this interest had been generated by an enthusiasm for pop music that the teachers, quite rightly, saw no reason to discourage. Not that there was any lack of opportunity in the school to explore classical music as well, either actively through learning an instrument or passively through listening to records; but when I asked each group for a show of hands to indicate a preference for either pop or classical, the proportion was virtually an invariable 95% pop to 5% classical. And the reason given was always the same: You can experiment more with pop, because it encourages you to do things with sound that probably in no way enhance the classics. They didn't put it quite like that, but that was what they meant.

Although some people may find that state of affairs deplorable, I most certainly don't. I would rather see a child engaged in any kind of music-

making than none at all, and it is a very different story from my own days at school before the war. Maybe I was particularly unlucky in that the music master was a boneheaded pedant beside whom Beckmesser would have looked like a champion of the avant-garde.

My own instruments at the time were the piano, which was pretty appalling, and the clarinet, which was worse, if I remember correctly. At one stage I was stricken with one of those ailments that in those days kept you in bed for weeks, although you really didn't feel all that ill. I tried to think of something useful to do, and as I had recently joined the Boy Scouts I thought I would teach myself another instrument and try for the music badge. It had to be something one could practice in bed, eliminating the piano—and, I quickly discovered, the clarinet as well. (A child, at least, can't sit high enough.) So what better than the harmonica—especially in view of forthcoming camping expeditions?

By the time I went back to school I was quite proficient, but when I applied to the aforesaid boneheaded pedant for an audition to get the badge, he recoiled as if I had entered his study bearing a dead rat instead of a perfectly respectable mouth organ. “That is not a musical instrument,” he pronounced. “Now get out!”

So you can see why I was so struck by the goings-on not far from Birmingham. Those children were being taught not just music, but the technology—and particularly the recording technology—which these days is almost inseparable from music, like it or not. Every child claimed to have a collection, however modest, of either records or tapes and sometimes both. (“What do you think of Shostakovich's Fourteenth?” asked a cherubic thirteen-year-old member of the 5% elite.)

But there was something else, and it was the most persistently pursued area of questioning of them all: It concerned money. How much does it cost to make a record? How much does the artist get for each record sold? Is it better to make your own recording and then lease it to a company? Will the banks lend money for that purpose?

And so it went. Naive questions maybe, and very hard to answer clearly to children, but indicative of a simple awareness of economics that astonished me. As I climbed on the train back to London, it struck me that unless those children and that school were totally unrepresentative, the record industry has very little to worry about in the future. ●

Introducing a new high in Technics waveform fidelity: A low price.

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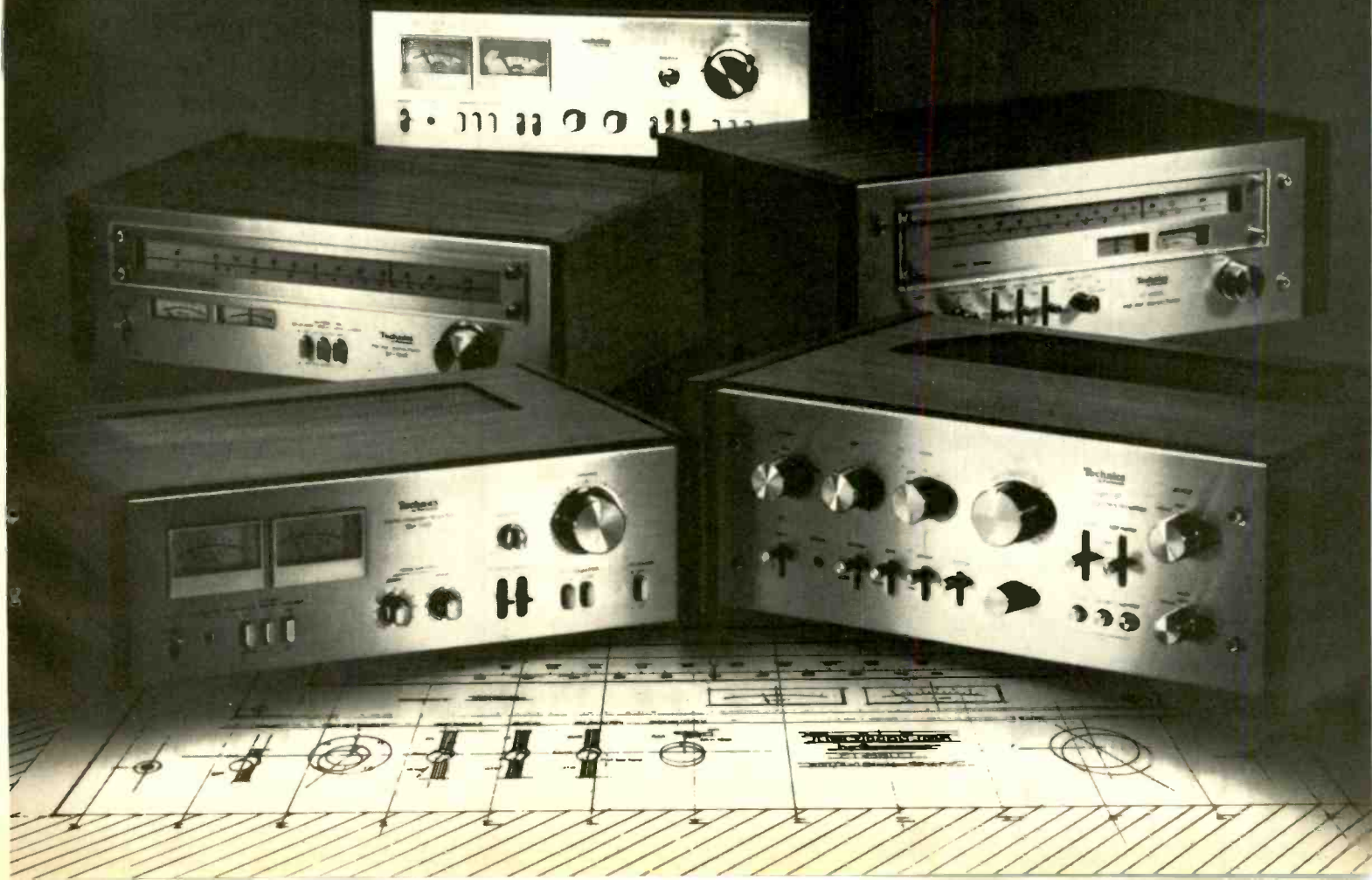
Listen to Technics new matching amps and tuners. And hear the high-priced sound of waveform fidelity. Without the high price.

Power output: SU-8600—73 watts. SU-7700—50 watts. SU-7300—41 watts. All per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven, into 8 ohms from 20 Hz—20 kHz with no more than 0.08% total harmonic distortion.

*Technics recommended price, but actual retail prices will be set by dealers. All casework is simulated wood.

Technics

by Panasonic



Y	1	N	2		B	3	S	4		X	5	A	6	T	7	O	8	G	9	H	10	Y	11	L	12	M	13	N	14			
		B	15	S	16		R	17	A	18	Y	19	X	20	S	21		T	22	U	23	K	24			N	25	A	26			
W	27	S	28	H	29		I	30	D	31		M	32	L	33	B	34	Y	35	S	36	Z	37	O	38			V	39			
P	40	X	41	G	42		M	43	U	44	S	45	A	46	B	47	F	48	R	49	V	50			A	51	N	52	M	53		
Y	54			T	55	J	56	S	57	C	58	R	59	Z	60	M	61			H	62	N	63	O	64		S	65	B	66		
G	67			X	68	U	69	A	70	D	71	Y	72	J	73	M	74			N	75	K	76	W	77	V	78	S	79	L	80	
		O	81	U	82	C	83	K	84	M	85	T	86			X	87	Z	88			G	89	H	90	L	91		V	92		
Y	93	S	94	N	95	B	96			A	97	J	98	P	99	D	100			S	101	G	102			M	103	X	104	Z	105	
N	106	L	107			V	108	F	109	H	110	O	111	R	112	P	113			K	114	Y	115			I	116	M	117	N	118	
S	119	C	120	A	121			L	122	Y	123			S	124	G	125	M	126			N	127			B	128	O	129	U	130	
R	131			A	132	R	133	T	134	J	135	H	136	E	137			O	138	B	139				G	140	A	141	S	142	M	143
J	144	K	145	V	146	L	147			X	148	I	149	S	150	B	151	N	152	Y	153	A	154	G	155			K	156	H	157	
O	158	W	159	T	160			M	161	N	162	U	163	B	164	E	165	S	166	P	167				Z	168			N	169	K	170
S	171	I	172	R	173	W	174			L	175	U	176	W	177	K	178	X	179			J	180	Y	181	A	182	W	183			
N	184	S	185	Y	186			O	187	M	188	E	189	B	190	P	191	X	192	H	193	T	194	Y	195			K	196	N	197	
D	198	F	199	T	200	S	201	O	202																							

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 Output, reading down.

The answer to HiFi-Croctic No. 32 will appear in next month's issue of HIGH FIDELITY.

INPUT

- A. Jazz pianist (b. 1928), recorded *For Real and Here and Now* on Contemporary (full name)
- B. Strauss waltz (2 wds.)
- C. Broadcasters' group (acron.)
- D. Essential person
- E. Fleur-de-_____
- F. _____ *ein Traum*, Sophie and Octavian's Act III duet in *Der Rosenkavalier*
- G. Tape device
- H. _____ Madlson, jazz cornetist (2 wds.)
- I. Rebec successor
- J. Spanish pianist/conductor (b. 1895)
- K. Full stage name of chanteuse Giovanna Gassion (1915-63)
- L. Czech composer (b. 1919): *Etude symphonique*, recorded by Abravanel
- M. 20th-century style fostered by Stravinsky
- N. *Ivan Susanin* (5 wds.)

OUTPUT

- 141 121 6 18 51 182 154 26
- 70 97 46 132
- 151 190 15 66 47 164 96 128
- 3 139 34
- 120 58 83
- 71 198 100 31
- 137 165 189
- 109 199 48
- 140 125 67 9 42 89 155 102
- 29 157 62 10 90 136 193 110
- 116 172 30 149
- 73 56 180 144 135 98
- 84 24 114 156 178 196 76 170
- 145
- 33 80 147 122 107 12 91 175
- 85 143 32 74 13 53 126 103
- 188 161 117 61 43
- 162 106 63 75 14 169 184 197
- 2 52 118 25 152 127 95

INPUT

- O. Direction that a passage is to be performed as if out of breath (It.)
- P. Composer/conductor/arranger Morton
- Q. Peculiar, as a type of ball
- R. English woman composer (b. 1906): *And Suddenly It's Evening*, recorded by BBC Symphony
- S. Mahler song cycle (3 Ger. wds.)
- T. Set of Debussy piano pieces (Fr.)
- U. Swedish composer Bo (b. 1937): *Frequenzen*, recorded by Mainstream
- V. Wandering minstrel's bride (comp.)
- W. Inciting
- X. With Word Y., cantata by Hindemith (Lat.)
- Y. See Word X. (2 Lat. wds.)
- Z. Doloroso

OUTPUT

- 111 38 81 158 129 202 138
- 167 40 191 99 113
- 8 64 187
- 49 59 131 133 112 173 17
- 171 150 4 21 119 94 101 36
- 201 124 185 166 45 142 79
- 65 16 57 28
- 194 160 86 22 134 7 200 55
- 82 176 69 163 130 44 23
- 50 78 39 92 146 108
- 159 177 77 27 183 174
- 20 192 148 104 41 68 87 5
- 179
- 186 123 181 19 54 72 1 115
- 153 195 11 93 35
- 60 168 105 37 88

B-I-C VENTURI. Tomorrow's technology in 7 Formulas today.

Speaker design is a funny business.

It is relatively easy to be esoteric. Much harder (and rarer) to be truly advanced.

Nonetheless, in 1973, B-I-C set out to make some fundamental improvements in speaker system design.

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Before Sound Guard[®], you only played a record in mint condition once.



Magnification shows the record vinyl wearing away.



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The Unknown Recordings of Vladimir Horowitz

by Caine Alder

Some of the incomparable pianist's greatest recorded performances — including works never made available to the public in any of his albums — remain hidden in his record companies' vaults or his own private collection.

THE GODS MUST have indeed looked upon Vladimir Horowitz with great favor, for they blessed him with a hair-trigger temperament and a pair of the most diabolical hands in the history of piano-playing. But there is far more to the Horowitz mystique than sonority and speed. He has a substantial amount of musical individuality, taste, and sensitivity as well. At age seventy-three, Horowitz continues to thrill capacity audiences in the greatest concert halls of the land. This month, on January 8,

he will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his American debut by making his first appearance with an orchestra (the same New York Philharmonic with which he made that debut on January 12, 1928) in a quarter-century.

And music lovers continue to show interest in his recordings. Beyond his vast discography of commercial releases (see *HIGH FIDELITY*, July 1973), there are many recordings that never have been made available to the public—some in the

vaults of record companies and some held solely by Horowitz himself.

The latter are perhaps the most important and least known of the unpublished recordings. I first heard of them nearly twenty years ago, when the late Jan Holcman told me that Horowitz had played for him a recording of the Liszt B minor Sonata from a 1949 performance in Carnegie Hall that was the greatest interpretation of the work he had ever heard, including the commercial version recorded in England in 1932. I know also of two concert pianists who were lucky enough to have heard samples from this collection: Balakirev's *Islamey* and a shattering rendition of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6* that reportedly excelled by far the 1947 Victor release.

Though the sound quality of Horowitz' private recordings, taped at his concerts, ranges from poor to excellent, they offer a number of advantages, especially for those who wish to make an in-depth study of the artist. They bear honest interpretations, with no editing—the spontaneity and excitement of an actual performance remain along

with the flaws. But more important, they include repertoire that for one reason or another has been ignored by the recording companies Horowitz has been affiliated with.

I have separated the company-held recordings by type: those made at recording sessions and those that RCA and Columbia taped at Horowitz' public recitals. (A list of illicitly made tapes of the pianist's concerts and broadcasts by members of the audience would probably include most of the performances he has given, at least since the introduction of the tape recorder. At least forty are known.)

Giving me invaluable assistance in compiling these lists were John Pfeiffer of RCA Records, Thomas Frost of Columbia Records, and A. R. Locantro of EMI. I hope that their companies can be prevailed upon to bring the priceless material in their possession to the public and that Horowitz will authorize release of the recitals in his private collection, even if he feels that his pianism at the time they were recorded does not reflect his attitudes and ideals today.

I. Unreleased Commercial Recordings

*Horowitz knew which works he wanted to record and persisted with these pieces until his playing met the high standards he set for himself. There were times, however, when he abandoned his efforts with certain compositions after one or two takes and went on to something else. The following list includes both the unreleased commercial takes of works that he later recorded again and recordings of those works that have never been released to the public in any version (the latter marked *).*

When Horowitz was recording such things as all-Scarlatti and all-Scriabin LPs for Columbia, he usually would tape more material than was needed and then select whatever would fit onto two sides of a record. In these instances, interpretations that finally appeared on disc were selected for overall balance, contrast, and variety of style rather than for performance quality alone. Perhaps Columbia will gather the unused odds and ends from numerous recording sessions and issue them on one or two LPs.

RCA Victor, 1928-30

*SCHUBERT-LISZT: Liebesbotschaft, 1929

*LISZT: Paganini Etude No. 4, in E (first version), 1930

His Master's Voice (England), 1930-35

PROKOFIEV: Toccata in D minor, Op. 11, 1930

This piece was intended as a possible filler for the original 78-rpm set of the Rachmaninoff Third Piano Concerto, Op. 30.

CHOPIN: Nocturne in F, Op. 15, No. 1, 1933

CHOPIN: Mazurka in A minor (probably Op. 17, No. 4), 1934

*BRAHMS: Variations on a Theme by Paganini, Op. 35, Part 1, 1934

CHOPIN: Sonata No. 2, in B flat minor, Op. 35, 1935

LISZT: Années de pèlerinage: Sonetto del Petrarca (probably No. 123), 1935

RCA Victor, 1940-51

*CHOPIN: Waltz in D flat, Op. 64, No. 1 (Minute), 1942

LISZT: Années de pèlerinage: Sonetto del Petrarca No. 104, 1942

CHOPIN: Mazurka in F sharp minor, Op. 59, 1942

SCARLATTI: Sonatas in A (2—numbers unknown), 1942

BIZET-HOROWITZ: Variations on Themes from "Carmen," 1942

BEETHOVEN: Sonata No. 21, in C, Op. 53 (Waldstein), 1944

BRAHMS: Waltz in A flat, Op. 39, No. 15, 1945

MOSZKOWSKI: Etude in F, Op. 72, No. 6, 1945

SOUSA-HOROWITZ: Stars and Stripes Forever, 1945

BEETHOVEN: 32 Variations in C minor, WoO. 80, 1947

SCHUBERT: Impromptu in G flat, D. 899, No. 3, 1947

CHOPIN: Impromptu No. 1, in A flat, Op. 29, 1947

SCHUMANN: Arabeske, Op. 18, 1949

BACH-BUSONI: Toccata and Fugue in C, S. 564, 1950

CHOPIN: Polonaise in A, Op. 40, No. 1 (Militaire), 1950

MOSZKOWSKI: Etincelles, Op. 36, No. 6, 1951

His Master's Voice (England), 1951

SCARLATTI: Sonata in A, L. 483, 1951

***SCARLATTI**: Sonata in A minor, L. 239, 1951

CHOPIN: Impromptu No. 1, in A flat, Op. 29, 1951

CHOPIN: Nocturne in E minor, Op. 72, No. 1, 1951

There is evidence that some or all of these works, recorded while Horowitz was touring Europe for the first time since the mid-1930s, were released on 78s for a short time in Europe only. The Scarlatti A minor Sonata was new to the Horowitz discography.

RCA Victor, 1951-59

***BIZET-HOROWITZ**: Concert Fantasy on a Gypsy Song from "Carmen," 1957

This is a longer, more elaborate version than the one usually played by the pianist as an encore. Horowitz nearly resumed concertizing in 1957, and this transcription was to have appeared on his programs.

Columbia Masterworks, 1962-73

BEETHOVEN: 32 Variations in C minor, WoO. 80, 1963

***CLEMENTI**: Sonata in A, Op. 36, No. 1, 1963

***CLEMENTI**: Adagio (unidentified), 1963

***MOZART**: Adagio (unidentified), 1963

CHOPIN: Etude in G flat, Op. 10, No. 5, 1963



In 1928

***CHOPIN**: Mazurka in B minor, Op. 30, No. 2, 1963

***CLEMENTI**: Rondo (unidentified), 1963

***CHOPIN**: Etude in E flat minor, Op. 10, No. 6, 1963

***SCARLATTI**: Sonatas: L. 28, 118, 129, 147, 189, 198, 267, 481, 1964

***SCARLATTI**: Sonata, K. 9, 1964

DEBUSSY: Etude No. 11, Pour les arpèges, 1965

***CHOPIN**: Nouvelle Etude No. 3, in A flat, Op. posth., 1965

BEETHOVEN: Sonata No. 7, in D, Op. 10, No. 3, 1965

***MENDELSSOHN**: Etude in A minor, Op. 104, Book II, No. 3 (ending by Horowitz), 1967

***LISZT-HOROWITZ**: Scherzo and March, 1967

LISZT: Années de pèlerinage: Au bord d'une source, 1967

***BACH-BUSONI**: Ich ruf' zu dir (chorale prelude), S. 639, 1969

***MEDTNER**: Fairy Tale, Op. 51, No. 3, 1969

The two preceding works were pressed in limited number as Christmas presents for CBS executives. *Fairy Tale* reappeared in 1970 on "Songs of Christmas," an LP produced by Columbia Special Products (CSS 1033) and distributed by Goodyear stores.

***CLEMENTI**: Adagio and Rondo (unidentified), 1972

***SCRIABIN**: Etude, Op. 65, No. 3, 1972

***SCRIABIN**: Etude in B, Op. 8, No. 4, 1972

***SCRIABIN**: Feuillet d'album, Op. 58, 1972

II. Recitals Recorded for Possible Commercial Release

Over the last quarter-century live-performance material has played an increasingly important role in the Horowitz discography. Between 1951 and 1953, RCA Victor recorded four Carnegie Hall concerts, portions of which were released commercially. With Horowitz' dramatic return to the concert stage on May 9, 1965, Columbia Masterworks began recording a series of some twenty programs (including a rehearsal and two appearances in preparation for the 1968 television recital), running through December 1968.

Another hiatus in Horowitz' public career—lasting some five years—followed his Boston recital of October 26, 1969, and by the time he resumed concertizing he had once again become an exclusive RCA artist. RCA

has continued the practice of recording many of his live performances; between November 1975 and November 1976 seven recitals were recorded.

The lists that follow concentrate on performances that have not been released. In the case of the Columbia and RCA Red Seal material, no attempt has been made to reproduce the actual recital programs, since they involve considerable duplication of repertory—and in the case of works that have been or might be released commercially it is all but impossible to determine the specific performance(s) used.

Again, those works that have never figured in the Horowitz commercial discography are indicated with an asterisk (*).

RCA Victor, 1951-53

March 5, 1951

***MOZART**: Sonata in B flat, K. 333

***CHOPIN**: Polonaise in C sharp minor, Op. 26, No. 1

CHOPIN: Polonaise in A, Op. 40, No. 1 (*Militaire*)

***CHOPIN**: Etude in E flat minor, Op. 10, No. 6

CHOPIN: Etude in C sharp minor, Op. 10, No. 4

CHOPIN: Waltz in A minor, Op. 34, No. 2

LISZT: Valse oubliée No. 1

LISZT: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6

(encores unknown)

Two items from this recital—the Schu-

mann *Clara Wieck* Variations and the Chopin B flat minor Mazurka, Op. 24 No. 4—were released in 1957 on LM 1957.

April 23, 1951

CHOPIN: Barcarolle in F sharp, Op. 60

CHOPIN: Nocturne in F minor, Op. 55, No. 1



In the early Fifties

CHOPIN: Scherzo No. 1, in B minor, Op. 20
SCHUMANN: Kinderszenen, Op. 15: Träumerei

Six other works from this recital (by Haydn, Brahms, Chopin, Scarlatti, Moszkowski, and Sousa) were released in 1957 on RCA Victor LM 1957, and the Mussorgsky-Horowitz *Pictures at an Exhibition* was released in 1959 on LM 2357. It may be of interest to note that *Pictures* and the four encores were broadcast live over New York radio station WQXR, and this portion of the program circulates in the underground.

January 12, 1953

(25th anniversary of U.S. debut)

TCHAIKOVSKY: Concerto No. 1, in B flat minor, Op. 23. New York Philharmonic, George Szell, cond.

This concert was recorded in "New Orthophonic Sound" by RCA Victor but has never been released commercially because of the conflicting contractual commitments (to Columbia) of Szell and the Philharmonic.

February 25, 1953

(25th anniversary of U.S. debut)

***BRAHMS:** Rhapsody in E flat, Op. 119, No. 4

***DEBUSSY:** Children's Corner Suite: The Little Shepherd

The balance of this recital was released by RCA Victor as "Horowitz Anniversary Recital" (LM 6014, two discs)—with the exception of the additional encores (unknown) beyond the Chopin and Prokofiev works included.

Columbia, 1965-68

The recitals recorded by Columbia produced four commercial albums and part of a fifth (three Chopin works were included in the otherwise studio-made Chopin disc, M 32932). Listed below are those works that have not appeared in Horowitz' Columbia discography, with their performance dates. All dates refer to Carnegie Hall appearances except the follow-

ing: November 13, 1966, and November 3, 1968—Woolsey Hall, New Haven; October 22, 1967—Queens College, New York; November 12, 1967—Brooklyn College, New York; December 10, 1967, and November 17, 1968—Washington, D.C.; April 7, 1968—Symphony Hall, Boston; May 12, 1968—Orchestra Hall, Chicago; December 1, 1968—Academy of Music, Philadelphia.

BEETHOVEN: Sonata No. 7, in D, Op. 10, No. 3. 11/9/65

***BEETHOVEN:** Sonata No. 28, in A, Op. 101. 10/22/67, 11/12/67, 11/26/67, 12/10/67, 4/7/68, 5/12/68

BEETHOVEN: 32 Variations in C minor, WoO. 80. 4/5/66, 4/17/66

CHOPIN: Barcarolle in F sharp, Op. 60. 10/22/67, 11/12/67, 11/26/67, 12/10/67, 4/7/68, 5/12/68

***DEBUSSY:** Preludes, Book II: No. 7, Les Terrasses des audiences au clair de lune. 11/13/66, 11/27/66, 12/10/66

***HAYDN:** Sonata No. 58, in C. 11/3/68, 11/17/68, 11/24/68, 12/1/68, 12/5/68

LISZT: *Années de pèlerinage: Au bord d'une source.* 11/3/68, 12/1/68, 12/15/68

***LISZT-HOROWITZ:** Scherzo and March. 10/22/67

LISZT: Valse oubliée No. 1. 4/5/66, 4/17/66

***MENDELSSOHN:** Etude in A minor, Op. 104, Book II, No. 3. 10/22/67, 11/26/67, 12/10/67

MOSZKOWSKI: Etude in F, Op. 72, No. 6. 4/7/68, 11/3/68, 12/1/68, 12/15/68

POULENC: Toccata. 12/10/66

***RACHMANINOFF:** Prelude in G, Op. 32, No. 5. 12/10/66

***SCARLATTI:** Sonata in F sharp, L. 35. 10/22/67, 11/12/67, 11/26/67, 12/10/67

***SCARLATTI:** Sonata in G, L. 124. 10/22/67, 11/12/67, 11/26/67, 12/10/67, 4/7/68, 5/12/68

***SCARLATTI:** Sonata in A, L. 494. 10/22/67, 11/12/67, 12/10/67

RCA Red Seal, 1975-76

The recitals newly taped by RCA break down as follows: two each from Carnegie Hall (November 16 and 23, 1975) and Ambassador Hall Auditorium, Pasadena (February 22 and 29, 1976), and one each from Orchestra Hall, Chicago (November 2, 1975), Paramount Auditorium, Oakland (February 15, 1976), and Powell Hall, St. Louis (November 21, 1976). To date two works have been released based on this material: Schumann's Sonata in F minor, Op. 14 (performed on all dates except 11/21/76), and Scriabin's Sonata No. 5 (performed 2/29/76), both on ARL 1-1766. The rest of the repertory performed is given below, with dates of performance.

CHOPIN: Ballade No. 1, in G minor, Op. 23. 2/15/76, 2/22/76

CHOPIN: Etude in G flat, Op. 10, No. 5. 11/2/75

CHOPIN: Introduction and Rondo, in E flat, Op. 16. 2/29/76, 11/21/76

CHOPIN: Mazurka in A minor, Op. 17, No. 4. 11/2/75, 11/23/75, 2/29/76

CHOPIN: Mazurka in C sharp minor, Op. 30, No. 4. 2/29/76

CHOPIN: Nocturne in E minor, Op. 72, No. 1. 11/21/76

CHOPIN: Scherzo No. 1, in B minor, Op. 20. 11/2/75, 11/16/75, 11/23/75

CHOPIN: Waltz in A minor, Op. 34, No. 2. All except 2/29/76

CHOPIN: Waltz in C sharp minor, Op. 64, No. 2. 2/29/76

***CLEMENTI:** Sonata in C, Op. 36, No. 3. 11/21/76

DEBUSSY: Children's Corner Suite: Serenade for the Doll. 11/16/75

LISZT: *Années de pèlerinage: Au bord d'une source.* All except 2/29/76, 11/21/76

LISZT: Sonata in B minor. 11/21/76

LISZT: Valse oubliée No. 1. All except 2/29/76, 11/21/76

MOSZKOWSKI: Etincelles, Op. 36, No. 6. All dates

RACHMANINOFF: Etude Tableau in E flat minor, Op. 39, No. 5. All except 2/29/76, 11/21/76

RACHMANINOFF: Etude Tableau in D, Op. 39, No. 9. 11/2/75, 11/16/75

***RACHMANINOFF:** Prelude in G, Op. 32, No. 5. 11/2/75, 11/16/75, 11/23/75

RACHMANINOFF: Prelude in G sharp minor, Op. 32, No. 12. 2/15/76, 2/22/76

RACHMANINOFF: Sonata No. 2, in B flat minor, Op. 36: Finale. 11/23/75, 2/15/76, 2/22/76

SCARLATTI: Sonata in A, L. 483. 11/2/75, 2/29/76

SCHUMANN: Arabeske, Op. 18. 2/15/76, 2/22/76

SCHUMANN: Blumenstück, Op. 19. 11/2/75, 11/16/75, 11/23/75, 2/29/76

SCHUMANN: Kinderszenen, Op. 15: Träumerei. All except 11/23/75, 2/29/76

SCRIABIN: Etude in D sharp minor, Op. 8, No. 12. 2/29/76



In the early Seventies

III. Recitals Taped for the Pianist's Private Use

In 1945, Horowitz arranged independently to have his recitals in Carnegie Hall recorded for his exclusive use for reference and improvement. Over the next six years, twenty-two 78-rpm albums were recorded. Should Horowitz ever consent to have any of them issued, they could only appear on the RCA label, since he was under contract to that company at the time.

To my knowledge, this is the first publication of the contents of these recitals, the repertoire of which has been unknown to all but a few of the pianist's closest colleagues. Among the items are works that have never before been available commercially (again marked *) and works that apparently exist only in this collection (marked **).

March 28, 1945

- CZERNY:** Variations on "La Ricordanza," Op. 33
BEETHOVEN: Sonata No. 21, in C, Op. 53 (*Waldstein*)
 ****RACHMANINOFF:** Etude Tableau in C minor, Op. 39, No. 1 or 7
RACHMANINOFF: Etudes Tableaux: in C, Op. 33, No. 2; in E flat minor, Op. 33, No. 6; in D, Op. 39, No. 9
CHOPIN: Mazurkas: in B minor; in C sharp minor; in F minor; in B minor (opus numbers unknown)
LISZT: *Années de pèlerinage: Au bord d'une source*
LISZT: *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses: Funérailles*
 ****BARBER:** *Excursions*, Op. 20 (world premiere)
SOUSA-HOROWITZ: *Stars and Stripes Forever*
 ENCORES:
BIZET-HOROWITZ: Variations on Themes from "Carmen" (additional encores unknown)

March 4, 1946

- SCARLATTI:** Sonatas (3—numbers unknown)
 ****MENDELSSOHN:** Songs Without Words: Nos. 33, 36
MENDELSSOHN: Songs Without Words: No. 40
LISZT: Sonata in B minor
 ****KABALEVSKY:** Preludes, Op. 38 (10 selections)
CHOPIN: Nocturnes: in F sharp, Op. 15, No. 2; in E minor, Op. 72, No. 1
CHOPIN: Polonaise in A flat, Op. 53
 ENCORES:
SOUSA-HOROWITZ: *Stars and Stripes Forever* (additional encores unknown)

April 6, 1946

- HAYDN:** Sonata No. 62, in E flat
SCHUMANN: Fantasy in C, Op. 17
PROKOFIEV: Toccata in D minor, Op. 11
CHOPIN: Ballade No. 1, in G minor, Op. 23
CHOPIN: Mazurkas: in F minor; in ? (opus numbers unknown)
DEBUSSY: Preludes, Book II: No. 5, Bru-

- yères; No. 6, General Lavine, Eccentric
DEBUSSY: Etude No. 11, Pour les arpèges
 ****DEBUSSY:** Etude No. 1, Pour les cinq doigts
MENDELSSOHN-LISZT-HOROWITZ: Wedding March (encores unknown)

April 24, 1946

- MENDELSSOHN:** Variations sérieuses, in D minor, Op. 54
SCHUMANN: Arabeske, Op. 18
PROKOFIEV: Sonata No. 7, in B flat, Op. 83
CHOPIN: Andante spianato and Grande polonaise brillante, Op. 22
CHOPIN: Etudes: in E, Op. 10, No. 3; in C minor, Op. 10, No. 12
CHOPIN: Mazurkas (2—opus numbers unknown)
MENDELSSOHN-LISZT-HOROWITZ: Wedding March
 ENCORES:
SCHUMANN: Kinderszenen, Op. 15: *Träumerei*
SOUSA-HOROWITZ: *Stars and Stripes Forever* (two additional encores, unknown)

February 3, 1947

- MOZART:** Sonata in A, K. 331
MENDELSSOHN: Songs Without Words: Nos. 35, 25
 ****KABALEVSKY:** Sonata No. 2, Op. 45 (U.S. premiere)
SCHUMANN: Sonata in F minor, Op. 14: Variations on a theme by Clara Wieck
CHOPIN: Impromptu No. 1, in A flat, Op. 29
 ***CHOPIN:** Etude in E flat minor, Op. 10, No. 6
CHOPIN: Etudes: in C minor, Op. 10, No. 12; in C sharp minor, Op. 10, No. 4; in E, Op. 10, No. 3
 ****LISZT-HOROWITZ:** *Légendes: St. François de Paule marchant sur les flots* (encores unknown)

March 28, 1947

- MENDELSSOHN:** Variations sérieuses, in D minor, Op. 54
MOZART: Sonata in F, K. 332

- MUSSORGSKY-HOROWITZ:** *Pictures at an Exhibition* (first performance of Horowitz arrangement)
CHOPIN: Mazurkas (4—opus numbers unknown)
LISZT: *Années de pèlerinage: Au bord d'une source*
 ****POULENC:** *Intermezzo*



In 1939

- POULENC:** Presto in B flat
PROKOFIEV: Toccata in D minor, Op. 11 (three encores, unknown)

April 28, 1947

- SCARLATTI:** Sonatas (6—numbers unknown)
 ****KABALEVSKY:** Preludes, Op. 38 (8 selections)
BEETHOVEN: Sonata No. 14, in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2 (*Moonlight*)
CHOPIN: Barcarolle in F sharp, Op. 60
CHOPIN: Ballade No. 1, in G minor, Op. 23

CHOPIN: Waltz in A minor, Op. 34, No. 2
LISZT: Valse oubliée No. 1
LISZT: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6
ENCORES:
MENDELSSOHN-LISZT-HOROWITZ: Wedding March
 (additional encores unknown)

February 2, 1948

HAYDN: Sonata No. 62, in E flat
SCHUBERT: Impromptu in G flat, D. 899, No. 3
SCRIABIN: Vers la flamme, Op. 72
SCRIABIN: Poem in F sharp, Op. 32, No. 1
SCRIABIN: Etudes: in F sharp, Op. 42, No. 4; in D sharp minor, Op. 8, No. 12
KABALEVSKY: Sonata No. 3, Op. 46 (U.S. premiere)
****CHOPIN:** Fantaisie in F minor, Op. 49
CHOPIN: Impromptu No. 1, in A flat, Op. 29
CHOPIN: Nocturnes: in E minor, Op. 72, No. 1; in F sharp, Op. 15, No. 2
CHOPIN: Polonaise in A flat, Op. 53
ENCORES:
SCARLATTI: Sonata (number unknown)
SCHUMANN: Kinderszenen, Op. 15: Träumerei
MENDELSSOHN-LISZT-HOROWITZ: Wedding March
 The Scriabin works may have been Horowitz' first public performances of any works by this composer.

April 2, 1948

BEETHOVEN: 32 Variations in C minor, WoO. 80
SCHUBERT: Impromptu in G flat, D. 899, No. 3
MUSSORGSKY-HOROWITZ: Pictures at an Exhibition
CHOPIN: Ballade No. 4, in F minor, Op. 52



In the mid-Seventies

DEBUSSY: Children's Corner Suite: Serenade for the Doll
****DEBUSSY:** Etude No. 6, Pour les huit doigts
LISZT: Harmonies poétiques et religieuses: Funérailles
***RACHMANINOFF:** Prelude in G, Op. 32, No. 5
RACHMANINOFF: Prelude in G minor, Op. 23, No. 5
ENCORES:
SOUSA-HOROWITZ: Stars and Stripes Forever
 (additional encores unknown)

January 17, 1949

****BACH:** Toccata in C minor
****CLEMENTI:** Sonata in A, Op. 36, No. 1
SCHUMANN: Arabeske, Op. 18
CHOPIN: Sonata No. 2, in B flat minor, Op. 35
****PROKOFIEV:** Pieces, Op. 95: No. 1, Intermezzo; No. 3, Valse lente
RACHMANINOFF: Etudes Tableaux: in E flat minor, Op. 39, No. 5; in D, Op. 39, No. 9
****DEBUSSY:** Etudes: No. 4, Pour les sixtes; No. 1, Pour les cinq doigts
SCRIABIN: Etude in C sharp minor, Op. 2, No. 1
LISZT-HOROWITZ: Rakóczy March
 (four encores, unknown)

February 21, 1949

****MENDELSSOHN:** Songs Without Words: Nos. 33, 36
MENDELSSOHN: Songs Without Words: No. 40
BEETHOVEN: Sonata No. 7, in D, Op. 10, No. 3
SCRIABIN: Poem in F sharp, Op. 32, No. 1
SCRIABIN: Vers la flamme, Op. 72
****KABALEVSKY:** Preludes, Op. 38 (6 selections)
CHOPIN: Ballade No 3, in A flat, Op. 47
CHOPIN: Mazurkas: in E minor, Op. 41, No. 2; in C sharp minor, Op. 30, No. 4; in F minor, Op. 7, No. 3
LISZT: Années de pèlerinage: Sonetto del Petrarca No. 104
LISZT: Valse oubliée No. 1
LISZT-HOROWITZ: Rakóczy March
 (five encores, unknown)

March 21, 1949

****BACH:** Toccata in C minor
SCARLATTI: Sonatas: in A minor; in A; in G (numbers unknown)
LISZT: Sonata in B minor
SCHUMANN: Sonata in F minor, Op. 14: Variations on a theme by Clara Wieck.
****POULENC:** Novelette in C
POULENC: Pastourelle; Toccata
CHOPIN: Etudes: in C sharp minor, Op. 10, No. 4; in C sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 7
CHOPIN: Nocturne in E minor, Op. 72, No. 1
CHOPIN: Polonaise in A flat, Op. 53

ENCORES:
SCHUMANN: Kinderszenen, Op. 15: Träumerei
SOUSA-HOROWITZ: Stars and Stripes Forever

January 23, 1950

BACH-BUSONI: Toccata and Fugue, in C, S. 564
SCHUMANN: Kinderszenen, Op. 15
BARBER: Sonata, Op. 26 (world premiere)
CHOPIN: Mazurkas: in D flat, Op. 30, No. 3; in F minor, Op. 63, No. 2; in C sharp minor, Op. 41, No. 1
CHOPIN: Ballade No. 1, in G minor, Op. 23
CHOPIN: Nocturne in F minor, Op. 55, No. 1
****BALAKIREV:** Islamey
 (five encores, unknown)

March 20, 1950

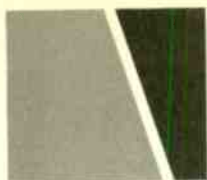
****CLEMENTI:** Sonata in B flat, Op. 47 (the second movement of Clementi's Op. 34, No. 1, was substituted for that of Op. 47)
MENDELSSOHN: Variations sérieuses, in D minor, Op. 54
SCHUMANN: Blumenstück, Op. 19
BARBER: Sonata, Op. 26
CHOPIN: Ballade No. 3, in A flat, Op. 47
CHOPIN: Etude in C sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 7
CHOPIN: Andante spianato and Grande polonaise brillante, Op. 22
CHOPIN: Nocturne in F minor, Op. 55, No. 1
PROKOFIEV: Toccata in D minor, Op. 11
ENCORES:
BIZET-HOROWITZ: Variations on Themes from "Carmen"
 (additional encores unknown)

April 24, 1950

****CHOPIN:** Polonaise in C sharp minor, Op. 26, No. 1
CHOPIN: Ballade No. 4, in F minor, Op. 52
CHOPIN: Mazurkas: in F sharp minor, Op. 59, No. 3; in A minor, Op. 17, No. 4
CHOPIN: Impromptu No. 1, in A flat, Op. 29
CHOPIN: Sonata No. 2, in B flat minor, Op. 35
****LISZT:** Consolations: No. 3, in D flat; No. 5, in E
LISZT: Années de pèlerinage: Au bord d'une source
LISZT: Harmonies poétiques et religieuses: Funérailles
LISZT: Années de pèlerinage: Sonetto del Petrarca No. 104
LISZT-HOROWITZ: Rakóczy March
 (encores unknown)

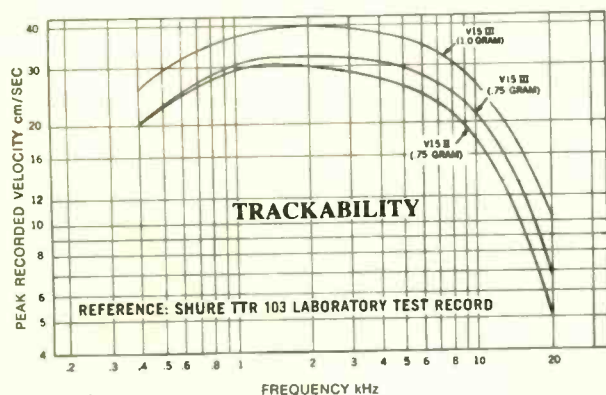
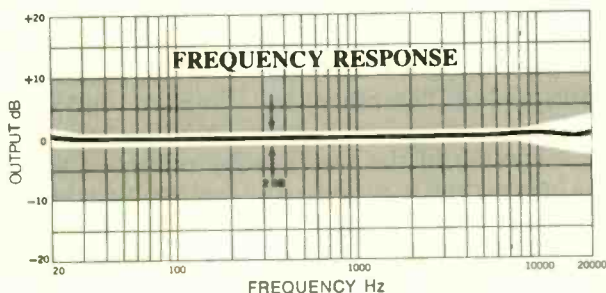
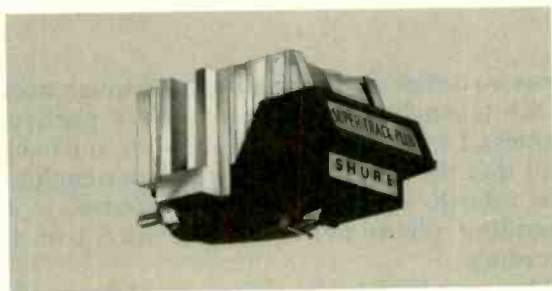
March 5, 1951

This recital was also recorded by RCA and is therefore listed with the recitals recorded for possible commercial release.



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Toward a Super-Refined Music Reproducer

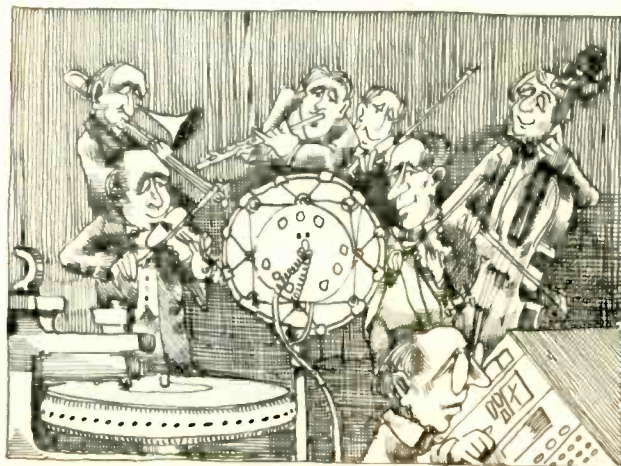
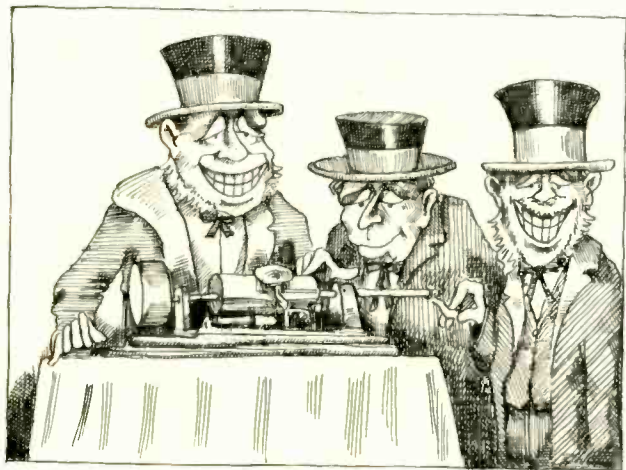
Columbia Masterworks' director of a&r production, taking a cynical look at some "advances" in today's recording techniques, invents a scenario in which he heralds the wave of the past.

by Andrew Kazdin

EVERY SO OFTEN, a significant breakthrough occurs in the technology concerned with a particular business. I note with exceptional pride and excitement that the record industry is experiencing its own rebirth. I am referring, of course, to the spreading phenomenon of the direct-to-disc recording.

It has long been realized that one of the weakest links in the chain of operations that yields a long-playing record is the intervention of magnetic tape. Once thought to offer the artist and producer undreamed-of flexibility and creative options, tape is now recognized to have liabilities as well. The invention of the Dolby noise-reduction systems only served to disguise the real problem with a cosmetic patina that distracted audio engineers from a realistic appraisal of the situation. It was felt that, with sufficient diligence, tape could eventually be bypassed. I am delighted to report the solution is at hand.

Nothing could be simpler than direct-to-disc recording, and yet nothing could be more elegant.



As Lorin Maazel so aptly put it in last July's *HIGH FIDELITY*: "It's pure sound. You take it from position A, you put it into position B." A musical performance so recorded is, by definition, created in one piece. No more can the destructive influence of tape splicing intrude upon the emotional fabric of the musical *Gestalt*. No more can the meddling producer "improve" upon orchestral balances after the fact. In short, direct-to-disc recording ushers in a new era of technological and aesthetic excellence.

But now comes the really exciting news. As so often happens in the creative process, one good idea leads to another. Spurred on by the enormous advantages realized by tape elimination, committees of research engineers are seeking innovative ways to continue the trend initiated by these pace-setting records.

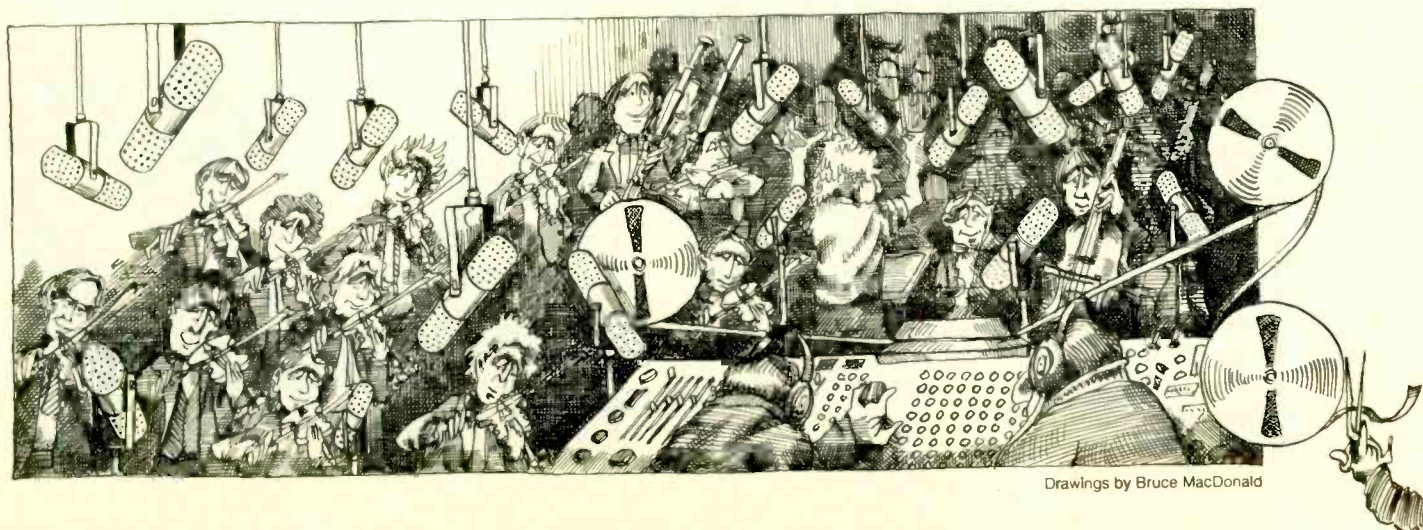
As we all know, a serious disruption of uniform high fidelity reproduction of music on disc occurs toward the inner radii, where the tangential velocity of the grooves falls to a point that makes storage of high-frequency information difficult. Various remedial attempts have met with only limited success. The ultimate solution has been staring us in the face for years: By increasing the angular velocity of the recording lathe, substantially higher frequency response can be achieved along with lower distortion. By picking an already established speed—say, 78 rpm—modification of much existing equipment is made unnecessary. With a microgroove cutting stylus, this speed can yield a recorded side of approximately fifteen minutes. While this might seem short by conventional standards, it is conveniently similar to the upper practical limit that is being cut today on 33½ direct-to-disc releases. Therefore, the Rotational Practices Committee initially recommended that this speed be universally adopted.

At the same time, advances were reported in the sensitive area of the pressing compound. Ever since the oil shortage became apparent a few years ago, the research departments of our major press-

ing plants have been looking for a smoother, quieter compound on which to press records. It is exciting to report that the Molecular Orientation Committee has announced that such a formula is a reality.

Shellaclike in nature and tougher than vinyl, $S_2L C_4$ is a simple nonpolymer substance that has been proven to give the most uniform surface quality to our idealized direct-to-disc products. But, although it is highly immune to lateral or tangential lacerations, this material is not entirely resistive to stresses of torsion. In a word, it is breakable. It was felt, however, that this was a small price to pay for the desirable qualities mentioned above, especially since the procedures for proper record care have become second nature to most collectors and considerably reduce the risk of damage.

Simultaneously with the intricate chemical investigations that produced $S_2L C_4$, the Electronics Research Committee set itself the task of solving, once and for all, the problems of phase cancellation and distortion that plague any multichannel recording. Every serious audiophile knows that such demons as phase shift, phase distortion, and out-of-phase conditions are the culprits on which a lot of unsatisfactory sound reproduction can be blamed. After many months of testing, the panel of electronics experts finally came up with an ingeniously clever answer. Problems of phase, they reasoned, are a result of the interaction of two or more independent channels of audio information. If the multiplicity of channels is minimized, then so is the offending condition. Just to be certain that no unnatural phase conditions exist at the recording locus, it was recommended that multitracking be abandoned in favor of a single receptor placed at the acoustic apex of the studio. The signal thus created embodies a simple solution to a long-tolerated defect in high fidelity sound reproduction. In addition to the functional improvements, such "single-source sonic reduction" affords certain obvious economic benefits. When combined with the qualities of absolute compatibility and rumble-



Drawings by Bruce MacDonald



free operation, these advantages make it a certainty that future direct-to-disc releases will be painstakingly processed in this new format.

The Geometric Processes Committee, the most recent to report, had a much more complex job to perform. For the ultimate in accurate sound reproduction from discs, tracking error should be eliminated. All the exotic bends and twists of the tone arm can only serve to reduce tracking error, not eradicate it. Some years ago, a straight-line system was adopted, but the committee found that such a tone arm did not deliver optimum performance at the higher tangential velocity required to meet the new frequency-response specifications. It was decided, therefore, to replace the conventional turntable with a radically different disc/motion system. The committee members concluded that, instead of transcribing the sound modulations in a spiral pattern, a helical pattern must be used. This has the added advantage of constant tangential velocity. The helix can be inscribed on a kind of cylinder with the pickup stylus traveling in a straight line parallel to the central axis. Extensive testing of this format reveals a highly stable system of superior frequency response and zero tracking error.

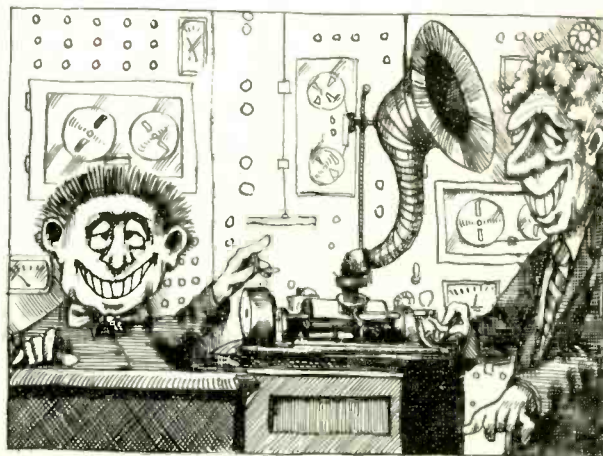
This breakthrough, however, occasioned some rethinking in other quarters. Despite the exceptional features found in S₂L C₄, its fragile constitution proved a serious liability when formed into a cylinder and rotated at high speed. A new assignment was given to the Molecular Orientation Committee: Find a sturdier substitute for shellac. The search was long and arduous, but the compound was found. For many years Celluloid was chiefly thought of as the material from which such things as collar stays and credit cards were made. Astonishingly, the committee discovered that it facilitates the ultimate in transparency of sound in cylinder design and production—with increased strength to boot!

Now, I hesitate to report on technological advancements before they are fully developed, but I must provide a sneak look at the final improve-

ment that, if the Transducer Evaluation Committee has its way, soon will become a very real part of the truly refined audio reproduction system. It has been axiomatic for years that the least linear of audio devices—those most prone to alter and “color” the sound—are the transducers that convert one form of energy into another: microphones, tape heads, cutting heads, pickup cartridges, loudspeakers, and so on. While all have improved vastly in the last decade or two, the improvements in other areas of audio (for example in electronics, where noise and distortion are continually being reduced though never eliminated) leave transducers behind—still the laggards in the race for audible perfection.

Since sound, both in the studio where it is recorded and in the home where it is reproduced, is a mechanical phenomenon consisting of the dynamics of air-molecule motion, it is proposed that all transducers—and, with them, the residual noise and distortion of electronics—be eliminated from the chain. Through the pioneering work of Dr. Thomas Stockham, computer analysis has been successfully utilized in removing the nonlinear characteristics of the classical recording horn. This simple “audio inducer” can now come into its own as the finishing touch in a recording free of transducer corruption. Of course, the principles of reciprocity so admirably demonstrated and employed by Dr. Ray Dolby in his revolutionary noise-reduction systems make it virtually mandatory that the horn used in recording also be used in playback. In this way, absolute faithfulness to the original sound is assured.

In summary, it is easy to see that we are on the brink of an entirely new era of sound reproduction. It is mind-boggling to realize that all of these innovations were developed through the motivating catalyst of the direct-to-disc recording process. Audiophiles the world over owe a debt of gratitude to the few brave pioneers who had the vision to conceive of this process and the prowess to sell it to the public. ■



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Twin pivots insure superior transient ability, enabling the 2002-e to accurately follow even the most complex waveforms. And dual bearings maximize tracking ability, so that even difficult high-level passages can be accurately tracked at very low stylus forces.

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Great-Minds-etc. Department. It was more than fifteen years ago (1961, to be precise) that RCA and Decca/London simultaneously offered recordings of Verdi's *Otello*, the first in stereo. In the meantime EMI seems to have taken over the franchise, giving us two versions (Barbirolli's and the Karajan remake), the only ones made since then.

Until now, that is. For *Otello* has found its way into the a&r minds of—you guessed it—RCA and Decca/London. Readers may recall from September's recordings preview that an RCA recording (with Plácido Domingo, Leontyne Price, and Sherrill Milnes, James Levine conducting) was projected for last summer: it didn't materialize but has been penciled in again for next summer. Meanwhile, Decca/London's project more or less transplants the cast of the 1976 Paris Opera production to Vienna. The Paris Desdemona and Jago, Margaret Price and Gabriel Bacquier, are joined by Paris' second-cast *Otello*, Carlo Cossutta (the first-cast *Otello* was Domingo, though it was Cossutta who sang the U.S. tour performances), and the Czech tenor Petr Dvorský as Cassio. The supporting cast, from Paris, includes Kurt Moll (Lodovico), Michel Sénéchal (Roderigo), and Jane Berbié (Emilia). The conductor, of course, is Sir Georg Solti.

Giulini and DG. Not long after the news that Carlo Maria Giulini has accepted an appointment to succeed Zubin Mehta as music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic comes word that he has signed an exclusive recording contract with DG. It is not yet known whether he will record in Los Angeles, but he will definitely continue the happy collaboration with the Chicago Symphony that produced the recording of Mahler's Ninth Symphony chosen as one of the three 1977 International Record Critics Award winners (see last month's report).

Note to operaphiles: Among the Giulini projects so far announced by DG is a complete *Rigoletto*, only his second opera (following the c. 1970 *Don Carlos* for EMI) in more than fifteen years.

Fidelio Records. An addition to the roster of small labels with ambitious plans is Fidelio Records (120 Kingston Pl., #30, Bloomington, Ind. 47401), whose initial projects spotlight—but are not limited to—an impressive array of string players.

Violinist Josef Gingold has recorded a disc of Fritz Kreisler pieces and joined cellist Janos Starker in the Kodály Duo—the latter coupled with Bernhard Heiden's cello sonata, with

Behind The Scenes

pianist Menahem Pressler of the Beaux Arts Trio. Gingold and Starker were also scheduled to participate in a coupling of concertos by David Baker, one for violin with jazz orchestra and one for cello, and Starker's solo projects include a disc of etudes and Paganini *Caprices* transcribed for cello. Another cellist, the Odessa-born Vladimir Orloff, who has been living in the West since 1964, is heard in works by Locatelli and others, and another Soviet émigré, the double-bass player Eugen Levinson, who left Leningrad for the U.S. last winter, has made a recital disc. Also to be heard is Yuval Yaron, winner of the Sibelius violin competition.

Two larger-scaled projects have been announced: the six Bach solo-violin sonatas and partitas by Boston Symphony concertmaster and assistant conductor Joseph Silverstein, and the last six Mozart piano concertos by Pressler. Also on the Fidelio roster is another distinguished pianist, the Hungarian-born György Sebok—a longtime collaborator, of course, with his compatriot Starker. And adding a touch of even more variety is a disc of Schumann and Wagner songs by mezzo-soprano Elisabeth Mannion.

Price at large. Only last September we noted the profusion of prominent artists formerly under exclusive recording contracts now working for a number of companies. Now this group has another distinguished member: soprano Leontyne Price. We told you in November's column that she would be singing Leonora in Herbert von Karajan's Berlin *Trovatore* for EMI. Also planned is the title role in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, which she first sang this past fall in San Francisco. The recording, conducted by Sir Georg Solti, is to be made for Decca/London, with Editra Gruberova as Zerbinetta.

A new Frau? Speaking of Strauss, there has been talk of a new DG *Frau ohne Schatten* under Karl Böhm, who has made no secret of his desire to redo the opera whose premiere recording he conducted in 1955 (the set now on Richmond). The original plan, we are told, was to make a live recording based on Böhm's fall per-

formances at the Vienna State Opera (with a cast headed by Leonie Rysanek, Birgit Nilsson, Ruth Hesse, James King, and Walter Berry), with part of the tab picked up by an American philanthropist. Apparently DG was unable to reach agreement with the unions concerned, and the live recording fell through. It is still hoped, however, that a studio recording may be arranged.

Berman's Gershwin? That's right, folks. Lazar Berman is talking to Columbia Records about doing Gershwin's Concerto in F and *Rhapsody in Blue*. Apparently Gershwin is big in the U.S.S.R. and in the repertoire of many Soviet pianists. Berman, incidentally, is familiar with—and enthusiastic about—the incomparable Gershwin/Whiteman jazz band recording, but whether he will attempt to show his American colleagues how to play jazz piano will have to await the recording sessions.

Tennstedt's bow. Our "Letters" columns have more than once contained pleas for recordings by the German conductor Klaus Tennstedt, who has made such a deep impression in his work with major U.S. orchestras (in particular the Boston Symphony) since a visa fluke enabled him and his wife to leave East Germany for the West. Now we can report his first recording projects for EMI, both with the London Philharmonic: the Grieg and Schumann piano concertos with the young Cuban-American pianist Horacio Gutiérrez (whose debut disc, containing the Tchaikovsky and Liszt First Concertos, impressed Harris Goldsmith in the February 1977 issue) and the Mahler First Symphony.

Baritone Atlantov. Postscript to our November mention of tenor Vladimir Atlantov's cancellation of his scheduled U.S. trip last spring, which was to have included a Met debut as Cavaradossi and participation in the Solti/Chicago concert performance and RCA recording of the Verdi Requiem: It seems that Atlantov has decided to sing as a baritone. His new career was reportedly to begin with Renato in Verdi's *Ballo in maschera*.

Early Mozart. DG has now acquired from BASF (which is in the process of easing out of the record business) the rights to its series of early Mozart operas coproduced with Austrian Radio. Leopold Hager conducts the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra in the previously released *Re pastore*, *Lucio Silla*, and *Bastien und Bastienne* as well as the as yet unreleased *Mitridate, rè di Ponto*. Continuation of the series is being discussed. ●

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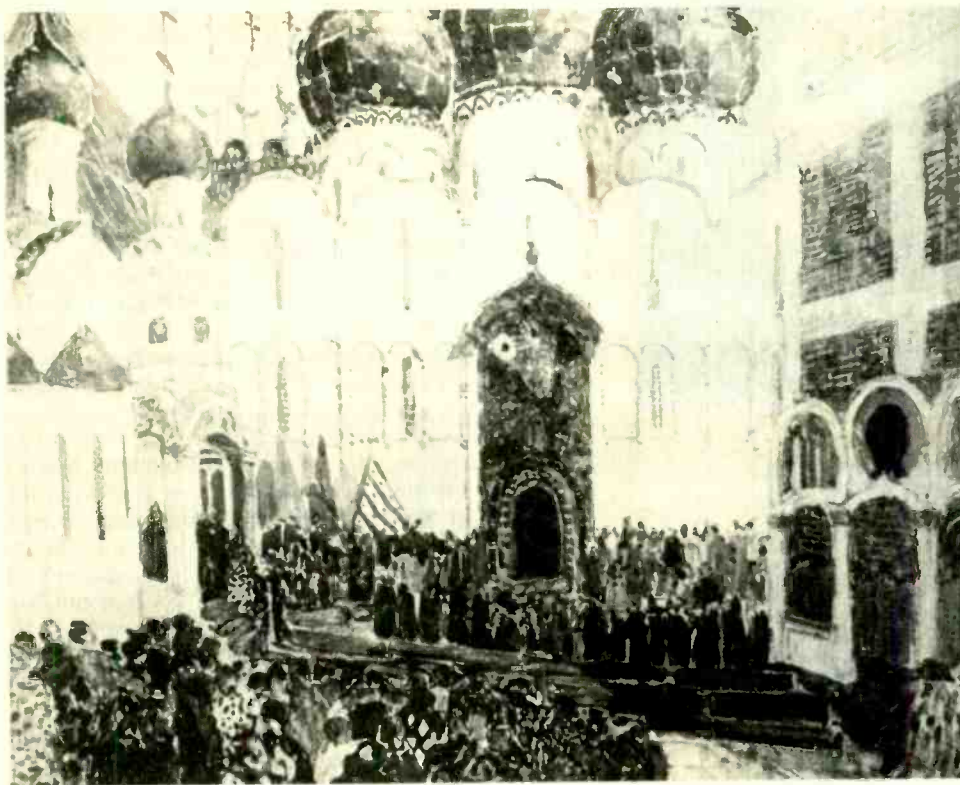
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Golovin's backdrop for Diaghilev's 1908 Moscow production of *Boris Godunov*

At Last, Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov

Angel's new Boris, the first based on the composer's own texts, is "self-recommending" despite editorial and musical problems.

by David Hamilton

THE SCOPE of the problems implicit in that simple-sounding phrase "original version" applied to Angel's new recording of Mussorgsky's *Boris* is so great that it can only be suggested in a mere record review. Still, the problems have an important bearing on the sounds recorded here, and on the listener's response to those sounds, so they must be at least broached.

Since most listeners will be coming to the new recording by way of earlier complete recordings, all based on the Rimsky-Korsakov version, let me begin by outlining the ways in which it differs from that version. First off, it's longer, since Rimsky omitted a certain amount of music—some of it on reasonable grounds (passages that Mussorgsky himself had omitted from his 1874 vocal score), but also some of it rather arbitrarily (e.g., the introduction, at the beginning of the second act, of the chiming clock that will, later on, spook the Tsar Boris).

Second, some of it is different in substance: Rimsky composed interpolations in the Coronation Scene and at the end of the Polonaise, recomposed

the final pages of the Polish act and important parts of the big revolutionary chorus in the Kromy Forest scene.

Third, an incredible amount of it is different in detail. Unlike such later editors as Karol Rathaus, Rimsky didn't simply reorchestrate *Boris*. He went through it like a composition teacher "correcting" it, to remove what he described as its "impractical difficulties, fragmentary musical phrases, clumsy vocal writing, harsh harmonies and modulations, faulty counterpoint, poverty of instrumentation, and general weakness from a technical point of view." Scarcely a measure was left untouched in some way: Rimsky revoiced chords, rebarred passages, transposed whole sections, smoothed out harmonies, made modal melodies into tonal ones, and of course thoroughly reorchestrated the entire score, radically altering its sonorous character, with innumerable concomitant changes of dynamics, phrasing, and tempo markings. He made a very different opera of it—not merely through the bright colors that he



Martti Talvela (Boris)



Andrzej Hiolski (Rangoni; Shchelkalov)



Bozena Kinasz (Marina)

added (most famously in the Coronation Scene), but through the slick blandness of the harmonies he "corrected," the conventional smoothness of his scorings.

None of this is exactly a secret, for that 1874 vocal score has been pretty continuously available for more than a century (it is still in print, though now superseded by the recent Oxford University Press scores, both orchestral and vocal—the latter, unfortunately, including only an English text). And during this time such aspects of Mussorgsky's style as his "fragmentary musical phrases," "harsh harmonies and modulations," even his supposedly "faulty" counterpoint, have been found original, striking, and valid by many musicians.

In the 1920s the Russian musicologist Pavel Lamm undertook to prepare a scholarly edition of Mus-

sorgsky's original, including much material omitted from the vocal score. The at first sporadic performances which ensued demonstrated at least that the "impractical difficulties" and "clumsy vocal writing" were by no means insuperable problems.

And as for the "poverty of orchestration," David Lloyd-Jones has pointed out that, as early as a "pre-view" performance in 1873, the orchestration was much praised; concerning the Inn Scene, César Cui wrote, "The scoring of *Boris* is most talented . . . completely theatrical, continually colorful and effective, and it depicts each individual character and the dramatic situation marvelously." Without question, there are examples of unidiomatic writing for the instruments, passages that fail to "sound" in proper balance; it is to these that the revisions of *Rathaus*, in particular, were addressed. (At the time of the recent Met production, much critical comment lumped *Rathaus* together with Rimsky as a comparable traducer of Mussorgsky's intentions, which was ignorant and unfair to the memory of a scrupulous and serious musician.) To argue that the composer's orchestration might be improved upon does not lead logically to the conclusion that we must embrace the Rimsky revision—you might as well argue that a piano ought to be rebuilt entirely because a couple of notes are out of tune.

For quite some time now, respectable opinion has been in favor of discarding the Rimsky version, and gradually opera houses have begun to come around. In the course of events, however, it has become clear that there is another level to the *Boris* problem, for Lamm's edition (and the more meticulous Oxford one, edited by Lloyd-Jones) revealed that there is more than one "original" version of the opera—in fact, two and a half: the first version of 1869, in seven scenes (Novodevichy Monastery, Coronation, Pimen's Cell, Inn, Tsar's Apartments, St. Basil's, and Death), which was rejected by the officials of the St. Petersburg theaters; the revision that Mussorgsky undertook in 1871–72, rewriting the scene in the tsar's apartments, adding the Polish act, deleting St. Basil's, adding Kromy Forest (eventually, though apparently not at first, placed after the Death Scene), and making minor revisions elsewhere; finally (this is the "half," so to speak), the 1874 vocal score, which makes certain cuts in the second version.

Confronted with all this material, what should one perform? Obviously, one could elect one of these alternatives and stick with it: Sarah Caldwell, in Boston during the 1960s, performed the two primary versions in two successive seasons, a most sensible proceeding. But most opera houses have preferred a combination (usually with cuts, Mussorgsky's or their own), their primary motivation being an unwillingness to sacrifice either St. Basil's or the Kromy Forest: the first because it is an obviously powerful and atmospheric episode (and because it gives the principal singer an additional appearance), the second because it, too, is enormously effective.

The trouble is, the two scenes are incompatible. When revising the opera, Mussorgsky picked up the episode of the boys teasing the Simpleton and the later repetition of the Simpleton's song from St. Basil's and inserted them in Kromy Forest. Since the

Simpleton's altercation with the boys is absolutely central to St. Basil's productions offering both scenes must omit it from Kromy Forest—but his final appearance there is also essential, so he is allowed to turn up there as well, without any rational explanation. (David Mottley, the producer of the Angel recording, opines that the Kromy scene is "surely a most incongruous setting for a group of rowdy children"—hasn't he ever seen a refugees' or migrant workers' camp? It is vastly less improbable than a village idiot managing to make a trip of over two hundred miles in the middle of a seventeenth-century Russian winter—or did he have a Eurailpass?) And this is not to mention the musical-dramatic solecism of ending two scenes with the same *coup de théâtre*: It's a case where two times a good thing makes too much of a good thing.

Furthermore, each of Mussorgsky's versions has its own dramatic integrity: The first concentrates on Boris, his rise and fall, while the second, with its much greater exposure for the False Dmitri, contrasts the fortunes and weaknesses of Tsar and Pretender. (This whole matter has been thoughtfully discussed by Edward R. Reilly in his article on *Boris* and its editions, in *Musical Newsletter*, fall 1974, to which interested readers are enthusiastically referred.) Mixing them up, or reshaping them through cuts, undermines this integrity. Should one choose to perform the later version, however, a legitimate case can be made for electing either the full version of Mussorgsky's manuscript or the shorter form of the 1874 vocal score—or perhaps some mixture of both, for there is good reason to suppose that some of the 1874 cuts were made for political rather than musical reasons (e.g., Pimen's narrative of the tsarevich's death).

With all that background, one can fairly describe what Angel has elected to record as essentially the full second version of 1871–72, with St. Basil's added and the corresponding cut made in Kromy Forest. (Arthur Jacobs' otherwise useful summary in the Angel libretto, by failing to distinguish between the 1871–72 and 1874 forms of the second version, is not quite clear about this.) Certain variant readings of the vocal part from the 1874 vocal score have evidently been preferred as reflecting Mussorgsky's final thoughts on the matter, and rightly so, in my opinion.

Obviously, this particular procedure is open to the strictures outlined above—particularly because it does not permit the listener to restore what the composer had in mind in 1872 by simply skipping St. Basil's (unless he undertakes a tape-splicing job to put the Simpleton and the boys back into Kromy). Nor, on the other hand, can he really hear the 1869 version by omitting the Polish act and Kromy, for we don't yet have the significantly different 1869 version of Act II on records (not to mention other, relatively minor divergences). What we have here is an indefensible and—worse—inextricable conflation of two rather different states of the work.

"Well," someone will ask, "how would you have done it?" And, since you are kind enough to ask, I'll tell you: record the 1871–72 version complete on eight sides (i.e., without St. Basil's), and add a supplemen-

tary record, containing the original 1869 version of Act II, followed by St. Basil's. Then, by playing the Prologue and Act I, switching to the supplementary disc, and winding up with Side 7 (the Death Scene), we would have a pretty fair approximation of the first version (in a sequence suitable for automatic changers, even!), while the basic eight-side sequence would give us the second version. (Competing record companies are encouraged to file this suggestion for future use; it is offered without charge.)

Still, there's a great deal here for which we may be grateful. There's the music that Rimsky omitted—some of it, such as Shchelkalov's speech to the Duma, familiar from the 1974 Met production, but also other passages, including the complete original form of the Kromy revolutionary chorus, that were omitted there. This is all quality stuff, and it fills in significant matters of plot and character. Good news, too, is the fact that there's been no audible tampering with Mussorgsky's scoring; I can't guarantee that there haven't been minor internal redistributions of string parts or the like, but there's no blatant "improvement" of the sort that surfaces here and there in the Met version (e.g., trumpets added to the lower brass on the tune at the end of the Coronation Scene, or the Rimsky-ish exchange of string and wind assignments in one of Dmitri's declarations to Marina). And it also appears that a serious effort has been made to think the piece through freshly, to avoid carrying over phrasings, dynamics, and the like that really apply only to Rimsky (let alone arbitrarily preferring Rimsky's phrasings, as happened occasionally in the Met version: At the start of the Coronation Scene, Mussorgsky marked the winds in two-note slurs, while Rimsky made them staccato to match the pizzicato strings—at the Met, it all came out staccato, but Semkow plays it as written, to quite different effect).

All this is so very well intentioned, and so continuously fascinating to hear, that one might well fail to notice, at first hearing, that the performance itself isn't very successful. The singing is never less than respectable; there are no really glamorous voices, but I take it that's not first priority in this opera—I'm sure it wouldn't have been for Mussorgsky—and in any case vocal glamor would not have overcome the often serious obstacles that Semkow creates with his sluggish and erratic tempos.

Not everything is so troubled: the Kromy Forest scene moves at a good clip (the quality of this scene is particularly welcome in that it was pretty gruesomely eviscerated in the Met version), and Semkow's moderate speeds work rather well in the first Polish scene: A pensive Marina is quite plausible, and Bozena Kinasz avoids any effect of somnolence by keeping all those dotted rhythms sharp and clear (the velvety oiliness of Andrzej Hiolski's Rangoni, a really distinguished piece of singing, also helps to put this scene over, though some of the choral work at the beginning is on the fuzzy side).

One senses that Semkow has something in mind with his approach, that the performance didn't come out this way simply because he's by nature a sluggish conductor. His freedom with tempos, notably in the Novodevichy Monastery and St. Basil's scenes, is clearly purposive, intended to be expressive—but it

fatally disrupts the continuity, the cumulative pulse of these scenes. And a common tendency to slow down for cadences manages to turn the scene in Pimen's cell into a whole series of separate little acts, the numerous rests sounding for all the world like intermissions. Having slowed down so often during a scene, Semkow has to go even further to really end it: The Novodevichy scene, here played for the first time on records with Mussorgsky's wonderful original ending, the populace grumbling sourly about being required to express "public opinion" to order, seems as if it will never finish, just get slower and slower and slower.

This chorus and orchestra, though competent, are not prepared to deliver sustained intensity under these circumstances (as, for example, the Bolshoi people did for Golovanov in 1948 under superficially similar but vastly more considered leadership). The soloists do better, but they often have to make bricks from straw. Martti Talvela is imposing in sound, but

generally smooth and unvaried in tone; as at the Met, he doesn't seem to be able to get much character into the voice—it's frequently more emission of tone than singing. Gedda is in typical current form, dry in sound but reliable even in the high tessitura of this version (Rimsky brought the part down lower). Leonard Mróz is a solid, often vivid Pimen. As already mentioned, Hiolski is impressive as Rangoni; he also doubles as Shchelkalov, to less effect—one has come to expect more plangency of tone in this part, especially since the opening of the Bolshoi New York season of 1975, when Yuri Mazurok sang the part. The Feodor (Wiera Baniewicz) has a nice boyish sound, and Paulos Raptis may be forgiven for not being an exceptionally expressive Simpleton, since at Semkow's *molto largo ed sempre ritardando* tempo for his song, he clearly has his hands full just singing it. Aage Haugland's Varlaam is flavorsome, but he gets submerged by the orchestra in much of his song. Bohdan Paprocki's Shuisky is accurate but bland.



Melba

The "star-like brilliance" of Dame Nellie Melba is vividly preserved in EMI's five-disc collection of the soprano's London recordings.

by Andrew Porter

NELLIE MELBA was the greatest soprano of her day—a "day" that lasted for some forty years.

As Helen Porter Mitchell she was born in Melbourne, Australia, in 1861. In 1886 she studied with Mathilde Marchesi, the teacher of Emma Eames and many another famous soprano. In 1887, as Melba, she made her debut, in Brussels, in *Rigoletto*. She was at Covent Garden in 1888, sang there every season but two until 1914, reopened the house after the 1914-18 war, and gave her Covent Garden farewell in 1926. She made her Met debut in 1893. The New York critic W. J. Henderson, who heard her regularly during her prime, once wrote:

The quality of musical tone cannot be adequately described. No words can convey to a music lover who did not hear Melba any idea of the sounds with which she ravished all ears. ... Maurel used to say of the voice of Tamagno, "C'est la voix unique du monde."

One could equally well have said of Melba's: "It is the unique voice of the world." Its beauty, its power, its clarion quality differed from the fluty notes of Patti. ... It has been called silvery, but what does that signify? There is one quality which it had which may be comprehended even by those who did not hear her: it had splendor. The tones glowed with a star-like brilliance. They flamed with a white flame.

Happily, music lovers can still listen to Melba singing. She made her first records in 1904, when she was forty-two, and her last in 1926, when she was sixty-five; and there are many of them that, when well reproduced, still reveal the "star-like brilliance," the beauty of timbre, the complete command of vocal technique, and the scrupulous interpretative finish that made her unrivaled.

There were, and are, singers more piquantly charming and singers with more intensely passionate

Despite all this—and recorded sound of something less than ideal clarity—I would still describe this as a self-recommending recording for all admirers of Mussorgsky and his masterpiece. It may not be the way the opera ought to play, but it is pretty close to the way it ought to sound. As such, it will help us all to clean Rimsky out of our ears and minds, and should establish a broadly familiar standard against which future performances of real or purported “original Mussorgsky versions” can be measured. (One of the unfortunate fates of great works that have been tampered with by their composers is that, forever after, conductors and producers feel they have a license to indulge in further tampering—as recent productions of *Carmen*, *Forza*, and, of course, *Boris* have amply demonstrated.)

Angel’s libretto includes the original text both in Cyrillic and in Roman transliteration, a translation that appears reasonable (I am not really competent to judge it in detail), and Jacobs’ generally helpful es-

say. The notes on the performers are stronger on puffery than information or accuracy (the list of famous earlier Borises names Mark Reshetin where Mark Reizen is surely intended, and implies that Raphael Arié recorded part of the Rimsky version, when in fact he made perhaps the first recording ever to use the original scoring).

MUSSORGSKY: Boris Godunov.

Xenia	Halina Lukomska (s)	Missail	Kazimierz Pustelak (t)
Marina	Bozena Kinasz (ms)	Khrushchov	Jan Goralski (t)
Feodor	Wiera Baniewicz (ms)	Rangoni; Shchelkalov	
The Nurse			Andrzej, Holski (b)
	Bozena Brun-Baranska (ms)	Boris Godunov	Martti Talvela (bs)
The Hostess	Stefania Toczyska (ms)	Pimen	Leonard Mróz (bs)
Dmitri	Nicolai Gedda (t)	Varlaam	Aage Haugland (bs)
Shuisky	Bohdan Paprocki (t)	Police Officer	Kazimierz Sergiel (bs)
The Simpleton	Paulos Raptis (t)	Mityukh	Wlodzimir Zalewski (bs)

Boys’ chorus from the Cracow Philharmonic Chorus, Polish Radio Chorus (Cracow), Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra, Jerzy Semkow, cond. [David Mottley, prod.] ANGEL SDLX 3844, \$32.98 (four SQ-encoded discs, automatic sequence). Tape: ●● 4X4S 3844, \$31.98.

vocal personalities, but in recorded vocal history there is perhaps only Pol Plançon, the bass, on a comparable level of technical accomplishment (insofar as such voices can be compared at all), while singing like Melba’s is simply not to be heard today. It belongs to a different, and vanished, world of vocal achievement; and even in that world Melba was unique: As Henderson said, “The full, flowing, and facile emission of the tones has never been surpassed, if matched, by any other singer of our time.”

Now EMI has issued a set that collects in chronological sequence, on ten LP sides, all the surviving material from Melba’s London recording sessions, the first of them held in March 1904 in her drawing room in Great Cumberland Place, the last in December 1926 in the Small Queen’s Hall. As an appendix there is “On m’appelle Mimi,” a solitary Paris recording, dated June 1908 in most discographies but here moved back to early May.

Many of the items are described as “previously unpublished,” but this means unapproved and unpublished in her lifetime. Collectors discovered that, by ordering from HMV, “blind,” individual pressings of the matrix numbers that were gaps in Melba sequences, they could obtain valuable unpublished material; some of this was then published for W. H. Seltsam’s International Record Collectors’ Club and has appeared since in various Melba LP anthologies. One of the most familiar of these “unpublished” sides is the “distance test” of 1910: two phrases of Ophelia’s mad scene (from Thomas’s *Hamlet*)—the trill on F sharp followed by a downward arpeggio, and “*Pâle et blonde dort sous l’eau profonde*”—each of them sung first close to the recording horn, vivid and immediate in sound, and then repeated at increasing distances from it.

In themselves, these two phrases provide a microcosm of much of Melba’s art. Let me quote Henderson again:

The Melba attack was little short of marvelous. The term attack is not a good one. Melba indeed had no

attack; she opened her mouth and a tone was in existence. It began without ictus, when she wished it to, and without betrayal of breathing. It was simply there. . . . Her staccati were as firm, as well placed, and as musical as if they had been played on a piano. Her cantilena was flawless in smoothness and purity. She phrased with elegance and sound musicianship as well as with consideration for the import of the text.

And then, on two sides recorded in 1904, we can hear these two phrases of Ophelia in context, and discover that Melba’s “technique was such as to bring out completely the whole beauty of her voice and to enhance her delivery with all the graces of vocal art.”

Often she is described as “cold,” and certainly her singing does not have the vibrant emotional quality to be found in the voice and style of such a contemporary as Gemma Bellincioni or of, say, Claudia Muzio. But it seems to me that only a coldhearted, unmusical listener can remain unmoved by the beauty of timbre and of phrasing to be heard in her Ophelia, her *Desdemona*, her *Violetta*, her *Mimi*. As Arthur Sullivan put it, “So perfect is Melba’s vocal utterance that by the mere emission of tone, independent of all collateral aid, she can express the whole gamut of human feeling.”

She was a champion of contemporary music. *Otello* and *La Bohème* were modern operas when she sang them; *Pagliacci* was less than a year old when she introduced it to London; she studied her roles with Gounod, Massenet, Delibes, Saint-Saëns, Thomas, Verdi, Puccini. Her repertory ranged from Rossini’s *Semiramide*, Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Gounod’s *Marguerite and Juliette* to Verdi’s *Aida* and Wagner’s *Elisabeth* and *Elsa*. She contemplated *Tosca* (and recorded “*Vissi d’arte*”) but never sang the part. The *Siegfried* Brünnhilde she essayed once, at the Met in 1896, with Jean de Reszke; it was not a success. (At a private performance she once sang the Woodbird’s music; that is something one would like to have on record.) But in

the years covered by the recordings she restricted her operatic repertory to the roles that suited and did not strain the marvelous instrument. In an essay accompanying the present album, Michael Aspinall remarks that "at one time critics only too glibly supposed that since she did not sing Isolde she must be 'unmusical.' All they had to do was to listen to her record of Tosti's 'Goodbye' to recognize one of the most musical of all singers."

Almost all of what made Melba unique can be heard in the results of the 1904 sessions in her drawing room (which must have been very large; were the three orchestrally accompanied arias really made there?). There are seventeen surviving sides, collected on the first disc of the album. The very first word, "Mary," of Tosti's "Mattinata" is a miracle of limpid sound shaped by consonant and vowel. The next song, Bemberg's "Nymphes et sylvains," brings one of her star-bright notes on "dansez," matchless mordents on "et vous naïades, faunes, dryades," and, in the cadenza and coda, her brilliantly incisive, clean-cut, but never *hard* coloratura and a chain of her perfect trills. (To appreciate the perfection of a Melba trill, play one of her records at half-speed, and the absolute precision of the vocal mechanism is revealed: apply the test to modern singers, and the result is usually a sloppy smear.)

Then comes Violetta's first aria. The album quotes a London *Times* review of 1908: "Madame Melba is perhaps the only singer who can delude her hearers into believing for a moment that *Traviata* is a work of beauty. . . . How this most tedious of operas reaches in her hands almost the level of real music drama can hardly be guessed, for it is certainly not in any appreciable degree due to great or even convincing acting. The secret would seem to be in the singer's marvelous power of giving expression to the voice itself without altering the purity of its quality or the exquisite finish of its style."

This was the season when Melba and Tetrizzini were alternating in the role and when the younger singer's apparently carefree, spontaneous virtuosity was electrifying London; the critic notes that, while Melba's coloratura had all its wonted ease, certainty, and delicacy, her "eloquently expressive phrasing" of "Ah! fors'è lui" and "the magical power of her cantilena and her musical phrasing" set her apart. Other things to remark are Melba's stylish use of portamento and rubato (as well as some decoration of the vocal line such as Bellincioni, a Violetta whom Verdi admired, also practiced). Portamento and rubato are even more striking in the "Dite alla giovine" of the final, 1926 session, with John Brownlee as Germont; what modern conductor would allow his soprano to sing the phrase "unico raggio di bene" so eloquently?

As originally recorded, "Ah! fors'è lui" continued with the recitative "Follie! follie!" and an almost recklessly brilliant, high-speed "Sempre libera," but when the disc was published these were blocked out. A little later, with orchestra, Melba recorded a new "Sempre libera" in a performance equally brilliant but less hurried. However, the "buried" section of the earlier disc was not lost forever. In a Melba anthology in HMV's Great Recordings of the Century series, of 1904-6 recordings (COLH 125, published in 1961, now deleted), the piano-accompanied recita-



Mathilde Marchesi and Melba in 1899

tive was retrieved, to lead into the orchestral "Sempre libera"; and in the present issue we have both sides complete. Aspinall calls the downward runs "a jumble"; in fact, Melba sings the once fairly standard smoother variant, in roulades, by which sopranos avoided the yapping effect so often produced by Verdi's repeated-note downward scales grouped in pairs.

Some of these early sides begin with a background voice giving the signal to start and end with a faint jumble of voices, presumably in congratulation, after the song or aria is done. In the first of two versions of Handel's "Sweet Bird" a slip occurs, and Melba says: "We'll have to do it all over again." When it was done all over again, she started at a much later point in the song; in this reissue, as on COLH 125, the two versions are ingeniously conflated to give us a "Sweet Bird" in full. The earlier, interrupted side then reappears, unedited, as an appendix.

It is tempting to continue with a title-by-title commentary, for in every Melba disc—even in "God Save the King," accompanied by the Band of His Majesty's Coldstream Guards, her least interesting record—there is something worth remarking. A few points must suffice: the utterance of the word "bada," in Mimi's farewell, especially in the earliest (from March 1904) of the three versions here gathered: the ineffable combination of power, purity, and sweetness that flowers in the coda of Tosti's "La Serenata" without ever breaking the scale of the song; the beauty of the move from note to note on the word "lark" in Bishop's "Lo! here the gentle lark"; the verve and vivacity in the "Sevillana" from Massenet's *Don César de Bazan*, which can make even a solitary listener feel like breaking into applause. (Three unpublished "Sevillana"s of 1910 are here; I like the first best, though Aspinall does not; the "Sevillana" eventually released was a Victor recording.)

But all listeners will find their own favorites, in a repertoire that ranges from a very grand "Porgi amor" and an Elsa's Dream (in Italian) of uncommon purity and sweetness to the high spirits of Alfred Scott-Gatty's "Goodnight" ("Darkies, let us sing a song, in de old plantation") and—Melba's last record—"Swing low, sweet chariot," where one "home," in particular, is spun out to a note of almost unearthly beauty. John Pitts Sanborn Jr. wrote in 1907 that Melba "can lay a note out on the air as a painter lays his color on the canvas." At the age of sixty-five she could still do so.

The last discs, of course, were electrically recorded. So, earlier that year, was the Covent Garden farewell, comprising Act III of *Roméo et Juliette*, the Willow Song and "Ave Maria" from *Otello*, and Acts III and IV of *La Bohème*. Charles Hackett, the Roméo, was not an HMV artist, and so *Roméo* went unrecorded, but *Otello* and six *Bohème* excerpts, sometimes beginning or ending abruptly, were taken down over land line from the theater. Only the first part of the Willow Song, Mimi's farewell, and Melba's farewell speech were found suitable for release at the time; but all ten sides—together with a



Melba as Thomas's Ophelia

dull address by Lord Stanley—are here, and they form a precious document of Melba on the stage. There are some uncomfortable, as well as some very beautiful, moments in *Otello*. As Mimi, at the close of what must have been an emotionally as well as technically exhausting evening, the voice seems to take on new freshness and ease.

Yet, on the whole, it is perhaps the first (1904-5) and the very last records that are the best of all. The early records were probably hard to play on early equipment; and first takes are often more brilliant—closer to the horn?—than the subsequently published versions, or than later remakes of the same titles more cautiously recorded. But the closer, the better, when it's a question of modern tracking from unworn copies: the "distance test" makes that clear. (The 1904 orchestral sound is also surprisingly good.) Later engineers were more circumspect when incising what Sanborn described as "the large voluptuous body of her voice," for grooves containing loud high notes soon wore out and began to blast under the pressure of steel needles in heavy acoustic tone arms. In the final 1926 recordings the "presence" is back again, though the repertoire—"Dite alla giovine" and

a Bemberg duet with Brownlee, Szulc's "Clair de lune," and "Swing low"—does not call for the large, brilliant, fearless manner of Melba's prime.

There are a few things to be said against Melba. Sometimes the final note of a song seems to be just a shade below pitch. Aspinall remarks that "poor recording robs the higher notes of some harmonics, and may make them sound slightly flat when in fact she was singing in tune"—but that does not explain why the same note elsewhere in the same song should be unaffected and remain perfectly in tune. As a rule, Melba's pitch is impeccable. Her pronunciation is sometimes ugly: Marguerite's "*Il me trouverait belle*" rhymes with Norman Mailer. (But when it was suggested to Delibes that the singer's French was not good enough for *Lakmé*, he is said to have replied: "*Qu'elle chante en chinois, si elle veut, mais qu'elle chante mon opéra!*"—"Let her sing in Chinese, if she likes, so long as she sings my opera!")

Her performance of Lotti's "*Pur dicesti*," for all the marvelous trills, is less winning than Patti's, and her "Comin' thro' the rye" less vivid and personal. In the course of his long, interesting essay, Aspinall raises other issues, concerned with register change and with "backward" florid technique; listeners may well find themselves agreeing with his factual observations while not agreeing that they demonstrate "two alarming flaws" in that superlative technique. And when he describes "Home, sweet home" as "wobbly," eyebrows will surely rise.

EMI's earlier Patti album (EMI Odeon 1C 147 01500/1, distributed by Peters International) enshrines the art and at any rate the later voice, miraculously well preserved, of the prima donna who reigned in the second half of the nineteenth century. This album presents her great successor with vivid power and beauty. The transfers, edited by Bryan Crimp, have a full-bodied, immediate sound that is often difficult to draw from worn, treasured copies of the original 78s. Many of the shells survive at Hayes, EMI's headquarters, and collectors were generous in providing the best possible copies of other items. The album should dispel the myth that Melba's voice was "white" or "cold"; listen to it ring out triumphantly in the final trio of *Faust*, with McCormack and Sammarco. The discographical information is ample but stops short of giving Victor, later HMV, or IRCC numbers. The Aspinall essay includes several interesting contemporary reviews (some of which I have quoted above). The serious omission is of the texts; these are needed for a full enjoyment of the singing, and could easily have been compiled.

Now it is up to RCA to publish a complementary volume of Melba's fifty-odd American recordings, made between 1907 and 1913. Among other wonderful things, they include "*O soave fanciulla*" with Caruso, "*Depuis le jour*," a Willow Song and "Ave Maria" more exquisitely sung than in the 1926 Covent Garden live recording, and a melting "Songs my mother taught me."

H NELLIE MELBA: *The London Recordings, 1904-26*. Nellie Melba, soprano; various other performers. [Bryan Crimp, reissue prod.] EMI/CAPITOL RLS 719, \$23.98 (five discs, mono) [from HMV originals] (distributed by Capitol Imports).

reviewed by ROYAL S. BROWN

SCOTT CANTRELL
ABRAM CHIPMAN
R. D. DARRELL
PETER G. DAVIS
ROBERT FIEDEL
SHIRLEY FLEMING
ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN
KENNETH FURIE
HARRIS GOLDSMITH
DAVID HAMILTON
DALE S. HARRIS
PHILIP HART
PAUL HENRY LANG
IRVING LOWENS
ROBERT C. MARSH
ROBERT P. MORGAN
JEREMY NOBLE
CONRAD L. OSBORNE
ANDREW PORTER
WILLIAM RADFORD-BENNETT
H. C. ROBBINS LANDON
PATRICK J. SMITH
SUSAN THIEMANN SOMMER



Arthur Rubinstein—A miracle of sorts

BACH: Christmas Oratorio, S. 248. Elly Ameling, soprano; Janet Baker, mezzo; Robert Tear, tenor; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; King's College Choir (Cambridge), Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Philip Ledger, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL SC 3840, \$23.98 (three SQ-encoded discs, automatic sequence).

HANDEL: Messiah. Diana Hoagland and Barbara Wallace, sopranos; Pamela Gore, alto; George Livings, tenor; David Evitts, baritone; Chorus and Orchestra of the Handel and Haydn Society (Boston), Thomas Dunn, cond. [Tomlinson Holman and Newton Electronics, prod.] SINE QUA NON/SUPERBA SA 2015/3, \$14.94 (three discs, manual sequence). Tape: ●● ADVENT EE 1061, \$17.90.

No contest between these two "Christmas oratorio" offerings: The Bach is a dud, the Handel a fascinating job. Both sets are noteworthy as attempts to apply our current knowledge of baroque performance practice to practical situations: While both use scaled-down forces (extremely so in the case of the Boston Messiah) and "correct" (sometimes pedantically so) baroque-style note and phrase readings, both also use modern instruments and mixed soloists; the Boston Messiah also uses female choristers.

Angel's Christmas Oratorio has a stylistic kinship with the Harmoncourt/Telefunken recording (36.35022) in its fondness for clipped, mechanical phrasing. But where the close, dry Telefunken engineering emphasized the effect to an almost silly extent, the Angel sound is so muffled and indistinct as to reduce the performance to a series of burbles. It is hard to guess how much the Angel processing is at fault, but it is also hard to believe that the engineering can be entirely responsible for the ugly ho-ho-ha-ha choral sound; listen, for example, to the opening chorus of the fifth cantata, "Ehre sei dir, Gott, gesungen."

The solo singing offers little compensation. The women are okay (though Elly

Ameling sang better on both her previous recordings), but Robert Tear and Fischer-Dieskau are a trial. Severe warpage on three early-production copies of the set didn't help, but I'm not sure it hurt much either. The previous Christmas Oratorio recordings have much to recommend them; my strong preference remains Richter's (Archiv 2710 004), with the outstanding solo quartet of Gundula Janowitz, Christa Ludwig, Fritz Wunderlich, and Franz Crass.

The Boston Handel and Haydn Society's Messiah, which documents the radical change in that venerable institution's approach heralded by the appointment of Thomas Dunn as music director a decade ago, has taken me some getting used to, and it starts unpromisingly. Dunn doesn't double-dot the Grave of the Sinfonia, which is okay with me, but he still halves the values of the eighth notes, leaving air holes between them and the following dotted quarters—a peculiar hiccup effect that undoubtedly has some basis, which I don't grasp. This eccentric reading fortunately proves atypical, and Dunn's leadership is on the whole musical and sympathetic.

What distinguishes this performance—and the more I hear it, the more it fascinates me—is its remarkable chamberlike texture. The full string complement numbers only twenty players, but even that group is

scaled down to eight (plus continuo) when Handel specifies *senza ripieno*. Most of the arias are thus accompanied by this extremely modest ensemble, enabling the soloists to develop an extraordinarily wide range of expression without vocal strain. Even in those numbers that do call on the reinforcements of the ripieno (which includes winds and timpani as well as the extra strings), Handel often imaginatively alternates sections with and without the ripieno, and this recording realizes those effects with a vividness I have never heard before.

As suggested, the intimate character of the performance dramatically simplifies the singers' task, and all five soloists have pleasant and relatively malleable voices, capable of reasonably clean passagework and plausible trills. The men seem particularly able to take advantage of the situation, and I especially enjoyed the work of tenor George Livings, who sings with impressive firmness and a graceful lilt. He also sings wonderfully natural American English—not only honoring our tongue but avoiding the preciousness of pseudo-British diction. Baritone David Evitts is an even better singer, though his production sounds a bit tight and there are places (surprisingly few) where I miss the vocal presence of a bass.

The soloists also sing as part of the chorus, which is filled out by a ripieno complement of sixteen. I don't see that the choral writing involves a solo/ripieno distinction at all comparable to that of the orchestral writing, but these twenty-one singers achieve a clarity and expressiveness impossible for a larger group, and yet, because the choristers are individually skilled singers, they produce an ample body of sound. Indeed what I enjoy so much about this performance is not its historical "correctness" (I doubt that Handel envisioned such modest forces), but its aesthetic appropriateness. Colin Davis' landmark Messiah (Philips SC71AX 300) still seems to

Explanation of symbols

Classical:



Budget



Historical



Relissue

Recorded tape:



Open Reel



8-Track Cartridge



Cassette

me overall the most satisfying performance on record, but I am coming to regard Dunn's as the most revelatory of the others.

In choosing among *Messiah's* textual variants, Dunn has followed the sound suggestions of Alfred Mann, whose version postulates a highly plausible "definitive" edition. The recording was produced jointly by the Handel and Haydn Society and Advent Corporation, which has issued it on two chromium dioxide cassettes. Simultaneously there is a disc edition from Sine Qua Non, and I felt a good deal more comfortable with the latter, which offers a pleasing blend of close-to-pickup and reverberance. The cassette edition, at least on my equipment, adds a fierce, even strident, edge. The tape edition offers no great advantage in sequencing: *Messiah's* odd proportions distribute even less conveniently over the four cassette sides than over the six disc sides.

The cassette edition includes a full listing of musical numbers and performers, but no texts and only bare-bones notes; purchasers are informed that the Handel and Haydn Society's *Messiah* program book is available directly from the Society (158 Newbury St., Boston, Mass. 02116) for two dollars. The disc edition has a booklet with texts and annotations, the latter mostly excerpted from the program book, which contains such a wealth of information and documentary material (including full scores of some of the textual alternatives not performed here) that I would recommend it to all lovers of *Messiah*.

Messiah footnote: The season has brought two other recordings worthy of note. First, RCA has reissued Sir Thomas Beecham's 1958 recording (his third), originally a deluxe four-disc Soria series edition, as a three-disc Gold Seal set (AGL 3-2444, \$14.98). It's a whacky, eccentrically overblown performance, but this is the eccentricity of genius (I'm sure that Beecham knew how outrageous many would find his "edition") and I've always loved this performance, with its curious but interesting solo quartet: Jennifer Vyvyan, Monica Sinclair, Jon Vickers, and Giorgio Tozzi.

Beecham's orchestra, of course, is the Royal Philharmonic, which is also heard in the Reader's Digest recording made about the same time under Sir Malcolm Sargent, now issued for general sale for the first time on Quintessence (P3C 2701, \$11.94). The performance isn't that different from Sargent's somewhat earlier Liverpool recording on Seraphim (SIC 6056), which has the extra attraction of the tragically short-lived bass-baritone James Milligan. The Quintessence quartet is good enough: Elizabeth Harwood, Norma Procter, Alexander Young, and John Shirley-Quirk (the latter, then in the early years of his career, heard in sharply focused voice, a striking contrast with his current work). If you're looking for an old-style reverent performance at budget price, either will serve; the Quintessence sound is slightly clearer-textured, but the actual choral work is woollier. K.F.

BEETHOVEN: Sonata for Piano, No. 18, in E flat, Op. 31, No. 3. **SCHUMANN:** Fantasiestücke, Op. 12. Arthur Rubinstein, piano. [Max Wilcox, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-

2397, \$7.98. Tape: ●● ARK 1-2397, \$7.95; ●● ARS 1-2397, \$7.95.

RCA has been re-releasing some of its older recordings with new numbers (the recent issue of the Guarneri Quartet/Boris Kroyt/Mischa Schneider Tchaikovsky Souvenir de Florence on ARL 1-2286 is a case in point), but, believe it or not, this Beethoven/Schumann coupling is new. Rubinstein recorded these old favorites of his, each for the third time, only in 1976.

What can one say? This is, of course, a miracle of sorts. Rubinstein, always an intensely human player, displays certain frailties, as indeed he always has, but few of them are traceable to advanced age. In the Beethoven sonata there were actually more finger slips in his previous recording (now unavailable)! His tempos are faster now, more characteristically Beethovenian. And, as with his third recording of the *Appassionata* (LSC 2812), I find that his sonority is now more granitic, more down to the bottom of the keys than in his earlier salon-like approach. Some dynamic markings are inverted, perhaps, and the interpretation may still be a trifle urbane and genteel for such a spitfire composer, but in many ways this latest recording is an improvement over Rubinstein's former editions.

In the Schumann Op. 12 *Fantasiestücke*, Rubinstein's clear, accurate fingerwork does lack the refinement heard in his 1963 edition (LSC 2669), but in that respect the new recording more closely resembles the earliest one, on Victor 78s. Again I find the

most recent version the most richly satisfying. In the first recording, Rubinstein sounded a bit tense: His tempos were generally faster, even in such reposeful pieces as the opening "Des Abends," and the constricted phrases didn't sing enough. In the 1963 account everything sounded somewhat at arm's length and impersonal, an effect probably furthered by the slightly artificial-sounding Dynagroove equalization. The formal tone of that second reading is heightened by such details as the repeat of the first section of "Grillen," bypassed on both of the other recordings (and also by Perahia, Columbia M 32299). In most of the pieces, the 1976 version seems the most spontaneous and creative, the most communicative, and certainly the best reproduced; the piano sound is rich, plangent, and natural.

Curiously, the only failure of note is in the slow, contemplative, nonpyrotechnical "Warum," which one might suppose would have been most suited to a nonagenarian master. That piece is rather aggressively thumped out, without grace or flow. There are also numerous instances of incorrect voice-leading in "Fabel," "Traumeswirren," and "Ende vom Lied," and the pianist's well-known "stage whisper" (his reluctance to play really softly) harms the climaxes of the final piece: The ear, having adjusted to the raised dynamic level, anticipates a huge fortissimo that can never arrive. But if Rubinstein has become a bit cavalier about the letter of this music, he has obviously continued to reflect on its spirit.

Critics' Choice

The best classical records reviewed in recent months

- BACH, J.C.:** Sinfonias. Zinman. PHILIPS 6780 025 (2), Nov.
BACH: Brandenburg Concertos. Leonhardt Consort. ABC/SEON AB 67020/2 (2), Dec.
BEACH: Piano Concerto. Boehm, Landau. TURNABOUT TV-S 34665, Dec.
BEETHOVEN: Piano Sonatas Nos. 1, 7. Richter. ANGEL S 37266, Oct.
BRAHMS: Orchestral Works. Abravanel. VANGUARD CARDINAL VCS 10117/20 (4), Oct.
BRIDGE: Phantasm. **MOERAN:** Rhapsody No. 3. Braithwaite. HNH 4042, Dec.
BRUCKNER: Symphonies Nos. 4, 7. Masur. EURODISC 27 913 XGK (3). Symphonies Nos. 7, 8. Böhm. DG 2709 068 (3), Nov.
CHOPIN: Piano Works. Zimerman. DG 2530 826, Oct.
CIMAROSA: Il Matrimonio segreto. Varady et al., Barenboim. DG 2709 069 (3), Nov.
COUPERIN, L.: Harpsichord Suites. Curtis. ARCHIV 2533 325. **MUSIC OF THE COUPERIN FAMILY:** Pearlman. TITANIC Ti 9, Dec.
DAVIES: Dark Angels. **WERNICK:** Songs of Remembrance. DeGaetani, Ghiglia, West. NONESUCH H 71342, Dec.
DVOŘÁK: Piano Concerto. Richter, Kleiber. ANGEL S 37239, Dec.
DVOŘÁK: Quartets, Opp. 27/80, 51. Prague Qt. DG 2530 719, Nov.
ELGAR: Cello Concerto; Enigma Variations. Du Pré, Barenboim. COLUMBIA M 34530, Nov.
GRANADOS: Goyescas. De Larrocha. LONDGN CS 7009. Piano Works, Vol. 1. Dosse. VOX SVBX 5484 (3), Oct.
HANDEL: Oboe Sonatas. Roseman et al. NONESUCH H 71339, Nov.
HAYDN: Orlando paladino. Shirley, Auger, Luxon, Dorati. PHILIPS 6707 029 (4), Dec.
HAYDN: Piano Works, Vol. 4. Ránki. HUNGAROTON SLPX 11625/7 (3), Oct.
MOZART: Oboe Quartet; Clarinet Quintet. Koch, De Peyer, Amadeus Qt. DG 2530 720, Nov.
POWELL: Sonata Teutonica. R. H. Johnson. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS SD 368, Dec.
PUCCINI: Gianni Schicchi. Gobbi, Cotrubas, Domingo, Maazel. COLUMBIA M 34534, Dec.
SHOSTAKOVICH: The Nose. Akimov, Moscow Chamber Opera, Rozhdestvensky. EURODISC 89 502 XFR (2), Dec.
SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 2. C. Davis. PHILIPS 9500 141, Dec.
AMERICAN MUSIC FOR CLARINET. M. and B. Webster. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS SD 374, Dec.
MUSIC OF THE FRENCH BAROQUE. Oberlin Baroque Ensemble. Vox SVBX 5142 (3), Dec.
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and my reservations, while consequential, shouldn't deter anyone from discerning the generous greatness of his artistry, which emerges loud(!) and clear. "Des Abends" is touched with rare, uncluttered poetry; "Aufschwung," taken a bit more staidly than on the earlier occasions, abounds with passion and energy; "Grillen," more playful than before and with superb separation of inner lines, is simply magnificent. And what can one do but register astonishment at the strong, steady, ninety-year-old fingers that whisk their way through the knotty treacheries of "Traumeswirren"?

A word of warning: My review copy had a left-channel dropout at the beginning of "Fabel." This has been corrected, but it's wise to check. H.G.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 4, in B flat, Op. 60; Grosse Fuge, Op. 133. Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. PHILIPS 9500 033, \$8.98. Tape: ●● 7300 456, \$8.95.

This performance of Beethoven's Fourth Symphony is the sort that could be most enjoyable at a summer concert—it is cool, lively, and mercurial, not too weighty or intellectually demanding. Given the permanence of recorded form, however, it must be deemed a disappointment.

For one thing, Philips has chosen not to make a virtue of using an ensemble similar in size to the one that Beethoven might have had in mind, instead fudging the issue much as Columbia did with Bruno Walter's Columbia Symphony recordings. The modest forces have been electronically beefed up, so that what one hears is an orchestral tone of less than ideal heft in tuttis, with paradoxically less clarity in instrumental asides than one hears in many of the big-orchestra versions. Moreover, the reverberation makes it difficult to follow the horizontal lines easily, with the basses particularly ill-defined.

For all that, the sound is basically pleasant: what really puts this Fourth out of serious contention is Marriner's perfunctory reading, which just zips along in a casual, unimaginative fashion, without any enlightening molding of phrases or feeling of real sympathy or weight (a weight due to timing and accent, not pertaining to number of personnel). Marriner shows greater involvement in the *Grosse Fuge*, and some of the part-writing is beautifully clarified. But even here a certain lameness—out of character with the music—appears. The *meno mosso* alternate sections are feelingly played and beautifully refined but absurdly slow and romanticized. I prefer this work in its string-quartet original (especially in the Yale, Vegh, and Juilliard versions) but would recommend the bygone Winograd, Klemperer, and Adolf Busch accounts for those who like the weight (or security!) of a string orchestra. H.G.

BERLIOZ: L'Enfance du Christ, Op. 25. Janet Baker, mezzo-soprano; Eric Tappy, tenor; Thomas Allen, baritone; Jules Bastin and Joseph Rouleau, basses; John Alldis Choir, London Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 6700 106, \$17.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

Comparison:
Martinon/French Radio

None. HB 73022



DG/Lauterwasser

Christa Ludwig
Brahms with rare distinction

As readers will doubtless recall, I have consistently favored the recordings in Colin Davis' Berlioz cycle over alternatives, and this one—a remake of his earlier Oiseau-Lyre version, but with generally superior forces—is also an estimable achievement, aptly and flexibly paced, with a sure sense of Berliozian shape and sound. In this case, however, there is something to be said for a competing version that comes from home ground: Martinon's recording with French Radio forces, though less consistently and smoothly recorded, brings the text into sharper, more idiomatic focus, and is equally well played and perhaps even better sung, notably by the soloists: it's also a darn sight less expensive.

I think the idiomatic factor counts for something, for Berlioz' genre-scene approach to the holy events gains in vividness from the extra punch of linguistic authenticity. Better voices matter, too: Eric Tappy, an artistic singer but not a really sweet-voiced one, hasn't as much dynamic scope at his command as does Martinon's Alain Vanzo, and the latter's firm, lovely tone adds an extra dimension even to the quiet final pages, where Tappy is by any other standard quite good.

Similarly, I prefer Jane Berbié to Janet Baker, whose tone is not as full as it used to be; Roger Soyer as Herod to Jules Bastin, who is short at the bottom of the range and strained at the top; Claude Calès to Thomas Allen, who sings well enough but doesn't quite blend with Baker's tone; and Juan Soumagnas, a firm and focused Ishmaelite Father, to Joseph Rouleau's woollier tone.

There is also more character, and sometimes greater skill, in the French wind playing, particularly on the part of the flutes in the Ishmaelite trio, who play with a luminous tone that escapes their London colleagues.

All of which is not to say that the new recording isn't accomplished and enjoyable—but this is one of the rare cases where Berlioz' countrymen have put their innate qualifications wholeheartedly and appropriately in his service, and there is something to be learned here about style, particularly vocal style. Philips provides

the usual booklet, with text, translation, and the usual fine essay by David Cairns. That, at least, is not surpassed by any of the competing versions. D.H.

BRAHMS: Songs. Christa Ludwig, mezzo-soprano; Leonard Bernstein, piano. [John McClure, prod.] COLUMBIA M 34535, \$7.98.

Zigeunerlieder, Op. 103. Liebestreu, Op. 3, No. 1; Ruhe, Süßliebchen, Op. 33, No. 9; Von ewiger Liebe, Op. 43, No. 1; Die Mainacht, Op. 43, No. 2; Feldelnsamkeit, Op. 86, No. 2; Sapphische Ode, Op. 94, No. 4; Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht, Op. 96, No. 1; Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer, Op. 105, No. 2; Ständchen, Op. 106, No. 1; Mädchenlied, Op. 107, No. 5.

The prospective buyer of this captivating recital might be well advised to begin with Side 1, band two, and leave the *Zigeunerlieder* until last. The reason, quite simply, is that these songs are so closely miked as to overemphasize an element of strenuousness in their performance. The sheer noisiness of the opening song in particular is likely to give a misleading impression of the record as a whole, which is full of arresting subtleties. While it is true that Leonard Bernstein is hardly among the most refined of accompanists and in lively, energetic songs tends to bluster, it must also be said that the rather shallow, clattery recording, made during an actual recital, aggravates the problem. In any case, whatever quibbles one may have about his playing, the fact remains that he and Christa Ludwig give performances of rare distinction.

Almost all of these songs are concerned with love, yet each is so vividly and individually characterized that by the end of the program we seem to have traversed a whole range of human experience. Ludwig, in fine, warm voice, respects the essential nature of Brahms's songs, making all the words clear without sacrificing a jot of the composer's melodic integrity. Once or twice she finds it hard to achieve a pure vowel sound, but the vocal lapses here are not only few, but are utterly unimportant next to the combination of insight and beauty she brings to this material. Ludwig's performance of "Von ewiger Liebe," with its plangently sustained climax and its air of passionate conviction, is especially fine. Perhaps the fact that she was singing before a live audience has something to do with the mood of rapt dedication she conveys in this recording.

The sound demonstrates the familiar drawbacks of such ventures—close miking, coughs, anticipatory applause—but the disc is full of compensatory virtues. Texts and translations. Highly recommended. D.S.H.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 3, in F, Op. 90. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, James Levine, cond. [Thomas Z. Shepard, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-2097, \$7.98. Tape: ●● ARK 1-2097, \$7.98; ● ARS 1-2097, \$7.95.

Here is the most reasonable facsimile in stereo sound of Toscanini's great NBC Symphony recording (in Victrola VIC 6400). Levine sets broad tempos and maintains an iron grip on the music's swaggering rhythms. The first-movement repeat contributes to the granitic, massive scale of the performance. Some may find the lyrical outpourings of the middle movements somewhat cool in sonority and wanting in agogic stress (as in the recordings by Le-

vine's official mentor, George Szell), but there is no stinting here in sheer energy of response from the strings. Levine's performance, like Toscanini's, is also abundant in its clarification of inner voicings, and the brass, timpani, and bass lines are always intelligently organized in relation to melodic business. I still prefer the cubistic tautness of Toscanini's finale, in contrast to which Levine's is more conventionally rhapsodic and surging. On the other hand, the Chicago Symphony's playing has none of the rough edges that occasionally blemished the NBC Symphony's. (The Chicagoans also sound more alert for Levine than they did in the more hazily "romanticized" Reiner recording, now on RCA Gold Seal AGL 1-1280.)

Levine's seems to me the standout among the "objectivist" Brahms Thirds available singly, followed closely by Kertész' (London CS 6837), which has the economic and documentary bonus of the performance of the *Haydn* Variations that was completed without conductor after Kertész' death. RCA's sonics are clean and powerful, vivid even to capturing some vocal obbligato from the podium (apparently Levine was enjoying himself as much as I did). Levine's triumphant Brahms First (ARL 1-1326, May 1976) and Third leave me eagerly anticipating the balance of his cycle. A.C.

BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 7, in E. WAGNER: Siegfried Idyll. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Cord Garben, Hans Hirsch, and Magdalene Padberg, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 102, \$17.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: ●● 3370 023, \$17.96.

BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 9, in D minor. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Michel Glotz, Hans Hirsch, and Magdalene Padberg, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 828, \$8.98. Tape: ●● 3300 828, \$8.98.

The more valuable of these latest Karajan/Berlin Bruckner remakes is the new Seventh. It may not have the sheer humanity of the magnificent Böhm/Vienna recording reviewed last November (DG 2709 068, coupled with the Eighth), or for that matter of the Masur (Eurodisc 27 913 XGK, coupled with the Fourth—reviewed in tandem with the Böhm set), the Rosbaud (Turnabout TV-S 34083), or the 1927 Horenstein (Unicorn UNI 111).

It is, however, a gleamingly polished job in its own right, played and recorded with enormous power and brilliance. There is little to fault here, except for a minor anticipation of the *ruhig* at bar 165 of the first movement and a tentative horn entrance at bar 315 of the finale. That and a few exaggerated crescendos (e.g., at bar 110 of the scherzo, in the trio) exhaust my specific reservations, alongside which I must note the abundant care taken with many other details, such as the clearly audible differentiation in the first-movement coda between the low brasses' *fff* and the rest of the orchestra's *ff*. Karajan's Adagio, though almost as forward-pushing as Masur's, balances this with an alternating Moderato that is discernibly brisker, though still not uncomfortably so. I could ask for more pointing in the phrasing of the scherzo, as in

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the bluntly driving Haitink reading (Philips 802 759/60).

By and large, the new DG Seventh impresses me as a brightly restored image of the similar performance heard in the muddy sonics of Karajan's 1972 Angel account (SC 3779, coupled with the Fourth). Textually, it seems basically to follow Bruckner's original score (e.g., Karajan wisely abjures the Nikisch tempo modifications, and the switch from arco to pizzicato comes three rather than four bars before the end of the Adagio), with selected features incorporated from the revisions—notably the cymbals et al. at the Adagio's climax. All of this DG once again lumps under the unhelpful label "original version."

I wasn't overly fond of Karajan's earlier Ninth (DG 139 011, released in 1969), and the only substantial improvements I note are elimination of the unmarked *accelerando* and *ritard* between bars 360 and 380 of the first movement and reversal of the general backwardness of the recorded sound. In the earlier recording, you could hardly hear the violins in the beginning of the first-movement coda: the remake is clearly and crisply engineered—though no more so than the Barenboim/Chicago (DG 2530 639) or Mehta/Vienna (London CS 6462) versions, and certainly somewhat lacking in their solidity and warmth of ambience.

Karajan has made one other change worth noting: The scherzo is now a shade less mercurial in tempo, though hardly as insistently menacing as Haitink's (Philips 835 381). Some impact is lost when, at bar 147, Karajan observes the direction *allmählich bewegter* not wisely but too well, so that by bar 153 the "gradual" speedup sounds like a circus act out of control. In the gothic opening movement structure continuously sags, partly because of a prevalent stodginess, partly because of errors in judgment at crucial points—e.g., the delayed *ritard* after bar 61, the lack of a horn *diminuendo* emerging out of the climactic cutoff at bar 503. The sublime closing Adagio is slightly better: The celestial breakthrough at letter A (in the Nowak score) is quite triumphant: the sharp slowdown at C is wisely heeded, though the moderate speedup at D is not. Not enough, all told, to move this recording into the top group with Haitink, Mehta, and Barenboim. Perhaps Angel's forthcoming Giulini/Chicago version will be a stiffer challenge.

With the steady stream of remakes we have lately had from Karajan, it seems unbelievable but is nevertheless true: The *Siegfried Idyll* on Side 4 of the Bruckner Seventh set is his first-ever recording! It's a performance of great dignity and high drama, impeccably executed in a recording of even wider dynamic range than that of the Bruckner symphonies. Those who want more tenderness in Wagner's immortal gift to his wife and newborn son are directed to such recordings (all, as it happens, budget-priced) as Monteux's (Victrola VICS 1457), Sawallisch's (Turnabout TV-S 34246), and Steinberg's (Seraphim S 60166).

I am most enamored of Solti's lovely Vienna recording of the original chamber scoring, but I can't recommend it as coupled on London CSA 2216 with Solti's disjointed Bruckner Seventh, which is further marred by simpering violins and loud, oafish brasses. There is a plausible alternative for diligent Wagnerians: Solti's *Idyll*, along



Herbert von Karajan
Gleamingly polished Bruckner

with the only recording of the charming a cappella *Kinderkatechismus* (sung by the Vienna Choir Boys), occupies the sixth side of Deryck Cooke's "Introduction to *The Ring*" (London RDN-S-1). A.C.

FRESCOBALDI: Toccatas and Capriccios. Lionel Party, harpsichord and spinettino. [Max Wilcox, prod.] DESMAR DSM 1013, \$7.98.

For this anthology of toccatas and capriccios by Frescobaldi, Lionel Party plays two historic Italian instruments in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum. Most of the selections are performed on a harpsichord built by Girolamo Zenti in 1666 and enlarged in 1755 by Ferrari, and four pieces played on a 1540 spinettino.

The harpsichord is quite a fine example of the Italian style, producing a sound that is at once robust and refined. The spinettino is a more qualified success: There are some lovely sonorities, to be sure, but one suspects that the tone color is suffering a good deal because the instrument has been tuned about a third below what must have been its original pitch (which, in turn, would have been about a whole tone flat of today's standard). The decision to use this drastically lower pitch is said to have been made "because of the age of the instrument," but one wonders if this wasn't overly cautious. As it is, the bass strings cannot produce any substantial resonance, and one can only guess what the instrument must have sounded like at original pitch.

Party's playing throughout is supremely eloquent and characterized by that marvelous sense of freedom that Frescobaldi repeatedly enjoins upon the performer. Harmonic tensions are caressed most sympathetically, and yet there is no lack of rhythmic momentum—or, where it is called for, even virtuosity. The recorded sound is superb, and I believe the surfaces (the pressings are by Teldec in Germany) are the quietest I've ever encountered. The graphic design of the record sleeve, with a striking color detail of the spinettino on the front, is particularly attractive.

I wish, however, that more care had been taken in identifying the sources of the musical selections, since the indications *Libro Primo* and *Libro Secondo* are helpful only if we know to which collection they refer. I suspect, too, that no less a figure than John

Bull would have taken exception to the anonymous annotator's assertion that Frescobaldi "was perhaps the first major composer to be concerned mainly with instrumental music, and especially with keyboard music." S.C.

HANDEL: Belshazzar.

Nitocris	Felicity Palmer (s)
Cyrus	Maureen Lehane (ms)
Daniel	Paul Esswood (ct)
Belshazzar	Robert Tear (t)
Arioch	Thomas Sunnegardh (t)
Gobrias	Peter van der Bilt (bs)
A Messenger	Staffan Sandlund (bs)

Herbert Tachezi, harpsichord and organ; Stockholm Chamber Chorus, Vienna Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond. TELEFUNKEN 46.35326, \$31.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

For Handel the Old Testament was a demonstration of the workings of God in history—not perhaps to be taken quite as literally as Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion*, but providing nonetheless in an only partly symbolic fashion an assurance of divine providence, a model and an endorsement of the righteous conduct of national affairs. And indeed the libretto of *Belshazzar*—by Charles Jennens, the pompous and wordy but by no means stupid Midlands squire with whom Handel had already collaborated on *Saul, L'Allegro*, and *Messiah*—draws quite as heavily on Herodotus and Xenophon (the *Cyropaedia*) as on the Book of Daniel.

Jennens' text begins with a long and totally un-Biblical scene in which Nitocris, dowager queen of Babylon, reflects on the mutability of empire and the transience of human glory in face of the unchanging power of God. Handel straightaway seizes his chance to underline the loftiness of the theme with an elaborate accompanied recitative followed by an aria whose striking first phrase vaults through a rising tenth: The grandeur is that of an allegorical fresco by Tiepolo.

This philosophical idea will recur constantly, both in the comments of the chorus, which speaks in its own right as well as representing Jews, Persians, and Babylonians, and in the dramatic action. Daniel, as Jehovah's prophetic spokesman, interprets the divine will to Nitocris (who resigns herself to it), to her son Belshazzar (who scornfully rejects it), and finally to the conqueror Cyrus: "Read those lines./The great prediction which thou hast already/In part accomplish'd, and, we trust, will soon/Fulfil the rest. . . ." To which Cyrus replies: "Yes, I will build Thy city. God of Israel,/I will release Thy captives, not for price./Not for reward, but to perform Thy pleasure./Thus prostrate I confess, Thou art the Lord./There is none else, there is no God beside Thee." *Belshazzar*, then, is a drama with a central philosophical theme—a drama, moreover, that moves with all the more vividness because it was conceived to be played out not on any physical stage, but in the imagination of the listener.

Handel's surviving letters from the period when he was working on *Belshazzar* (the late summer and fall of 1744) leave no doubt at all that he was excited by the libretto Jennens had sent him, even allowing for a little tactful deference to his well-connected collaborator. He felt free, however, to leave sections of the wordy libretto un-

set, justifying himself frankly to Jennens on the ground that a complete setting would have been impracticably long. But he did accept the unusual proportions, with a twin-size first act in which the various elements of the drama are presented separately and the violent climax of the action prepared.

The shorter second act gave Handel an excellent chance to contrast the military character of the invading Persians with the drunken debauch of the Babylonians, supposing themselves secure inside the walls of Babylon. Anyone whose notion of the "sacred oratorio" has not already been shaken by Belshazzar's aria in the first act may well be startled by the directness of Handel's musical character-painting at this point: There are no drunken hiccups, but the unison beginning of the chorus "Ye tutelary Gods of our empire, look down" is as boozy a drinking song as one could hope to find, while Belshazzar's "Let the deep bowl Thy praise confess!"—with its unpredictably lurching melodic line—suggests that he at least is already half seas over.

The mysterious hand's writing on the wall, however, is treated with the utmost austerity—an unaccompanied recitative of quiet staccato repeated notes on the violins, like the scratching of an unseen stylus. (The dramatic effect fails, I think, in this performance, because conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt interprets Handel's "adagio" much too slowly and so loses the scene's impetus.) After the riches of the first two acts, far too abundant to detail here, it may come as a surprise to find how much remains for the third, leading up to a long and subtle duet between the victorious Cyrus and Nitocris, which more than anything else suggests that the real culmination of this drama is not revenge, but reconciliation.

Perhaps because it aimed too high for its audience, *Belshazzar* had little success in Handel's lifetime. He gave it only three times in his oratorio season at the King's Theatre in 1745, although the lack of enthusiasm may have been partly due to last-minute cast changes, which necessitated makeshift alterations to the score as Handel had planned it. Chrysander rightly discounted these in deciding what to include in the main text of his 1864 edition for the Handel-Gesellschaft. He was more capricious, however, in what he chose to take and to omit among the various substitutions and alterations that Handel made for subsequent revivals in 1751 and 1758. Thus he printed only the final version of the aria for Cyrus' companion Gobrias "Oppress'd with never-ceasing grief" (on the reasonable if unscientific ground that it was better than the original one), but only the first version of Nitocris' "The leafy honours" (perhaps he did not know that Handel had completed one replacement for it and begun yet another).

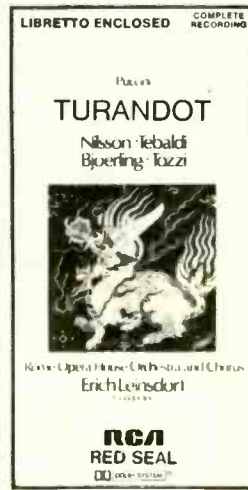
What criteria should a conductor adopt when deciding on a version for performance? A purist would demand that he confine himself to those items known to have been performed on a single occasion during Handel's lifetime, but my own feeling (particularly for a recording that is unlikely to be duplicated in a hurry) is that he should stick as close as possible to the composer's original conception, rejecting those changes forced on him by circumstances beyond his

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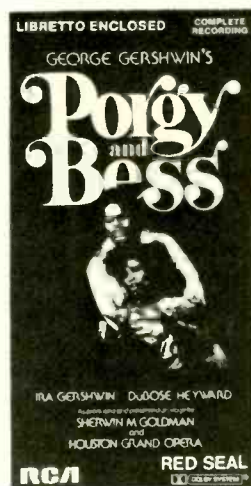
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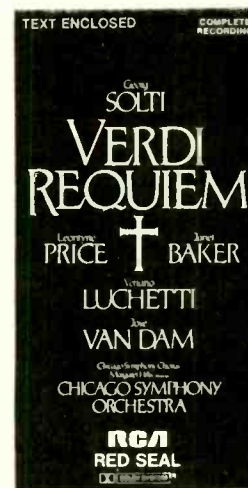
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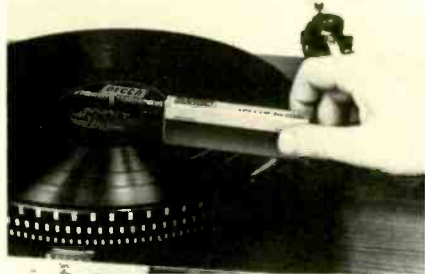
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control but accepting, at the risk of inconsistency, such later alterations as can reasonably be shown to be deliberate improvements.

This is, in fact, pretty much the solution Harnoncourt arrives at by following Chrysander's text and choosing, where Chrysander prints alternatives, the earlier or "A" version (except, for some reason, in the final chorus). Just once this results in reproducing a nonsense that Handel himself perpetrated, when by too eagerly cutting Jennens' text he made Daniel reply to a question Nitocris has not actually asked, but in general the recitatives are so well sung that one is glad to have the earlier—in most cases longer—versions. As for the arias, I would have preferred to have the later setting of Nitocris' aria mentioned above, which Chrysander does not print, as well as the later version of Gobrias' "To power immortal," which he does.

I have already expressed dissatisfaction with one of Harnoncourt's tempo choices: that example could be multiplied, and my reservations extend to other aspects of his approach. Suspicions are aroused when one reads, in his booklet notes, that "in accordance with performance practice at that time it can be assumed that final instrumentation was determined at the particular performance and thus was not a part of the composition . . . [my italics]." Anyone who imagines that Handel left things as much to chance as all that cannot have been doing his homework very thoroughly: His orchestration is conditioned both by the nature of the particular work and by the conditions for which it was written.

Saul (1739) is lavishly scored, with three trombones and such colorful additions as harp (for David), theorbo, and glockenspiel. But *Belshazzar*, which anyone familiar with Walton's cantata might have expected to get similar treatment, calls for no extras. The reason may have been that Handel's finances were at a low ebb in 1744, but Winton Dean makes the point—in his indispensable study, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques*—that he generally preferred to depict the fiercer aspects of barbarism with "the concentrated impact of strings in three octaves, sometimes reinforced by oboes. The Babylonian choruses and Belshazzar's airs are all scored in this way, and very effective they are." The panoply of trumpets and drums is reserved to the warlike Persians, and only the Jewish choruses are allowed the richness of more than four parts.

Harnoncourt has occasionally seen fit to double his strings with oboes where Handel does not call for them, but since this is so discreet as to be hardly noticeable one wonders why he bothered. It would have been more to the point, surely, to supply the extra couple of oboes that Handel would almost certainly have expected in the choruses and martial numbers, and to increase the *Concentus Musicus'* single bassoon to two—or better still, the four that Handel certainly had at the Foundling Hospital a few years later (cf. Dean, p. 103). It is no more authentic to tailor Handel's orchestration down to an existing early-music ensemble than to beef it up to a modern symphony orchestra.

Harnoncourt's remarks about continuo instruments are also questionable: We know with some accuracy what Handel's

preferred practice was, and it certainly did not include the use of "harps, chitarroni, lutes, etc." Fortunately, Harnoncourt has opted for the instruments he did normally use, namely organ and harpsichord, though I very much doubt if Handel ever alternated the two between characters in recitatives as is done here—sometimes with ludicrous results, as when a single organ chord is popped in to support Gobrias' response to a remark of Cyrus, who himself rates harpsichord accompaniment. The evidence (cf. Dean, p. 111) points strongly to harpsichord (with cello and violone or double-bass) for all recitatives and most arias and organ for a few particularly solemn arias and all choruses.

When it comes to the voices, we again know a good deal more precisely than the album notes tell us just what forces Handel had in mind. Not only Nitocris and Cyrus were sung (as here) by women, but Daniel too—strange as the idea of Mrs. Cibber representing a venerable prophet may seem to us today. Handel's chorus, on the other hand, was entirely male, probably amounting to no more than a couple of dozen. I see nothing wrong in the decision to cast Daniel as a countertenor, particularly so strong a countertenor as Paul Esswood, whose range exactly suits the compass of the music. But it does seem odd that Harnoncourt, who has recorded so much with male-voice choirs, should choose to use a mixed-voice group, with its quite different timbre and internal balance.

The Stockholm Chamber Chorus' English, incidentally, is very good if somewhat lacking in savor. The only inaccuracy of pronunciation I noticed, apart from the sounds, was "tummelt" for "tumult," but exclamations such as "See from his post Euphrates flies!" or "Help, help the king! he faints! he dies!" come over with less vividness than a good English choir could have given them, and the extended choruses that end each act are frankly rather lacking in muscle and sinew.

This is certainly not for want of good example from the soloists. In fact the strongest feature of this recording, and the chief reason why it is an absolute must for Handelians in spite of all my reservations, is the powerfully characterized singing of all the main roles. Despite a cruelly slow tempo for her recitative Felicity Palmer sets the standard at once in Nitocris' opening scene, with steady focused tone and a sense of line that one only wishes were more evident in the instrumental playing. If Esswood's Daniel is less immediately arresting, this may be because the male alto voice lends itself to less subtlety of tonal shading, partly too because Handel seems to have found the prophet less interesting than the queen—but the great interpretation scene, with its unaccompanied melisma on "Mene, mene, tekel upharsin," is finely done in any case.

Maureen Lehane tackles the breeches part of Cyrus with all the zest one would expect from her operatic performances. Perhaps there is a shade too much conscious theatricality in her delivery of the gentleman king's unfailingly noble sentiments, but that is a fault on the right side in this music, and her fairly bold use of ornament can certainly be seen as a musical expression of Cyrus' heroism. Robert Tear risks the same charge in order to project

Belshazzar as a king you love to hate and gets away with it marvelously—because always musically. The suggestion of the Babylonian king's fondness for strong drink is planted in the libretto before he even enters, and Tear makes the most of it.

As indicated, I have frequent reservations about Harnoncourt's tempos and phrasing; even where his theoretical ground is solid, his choices often misfire in practice. (In fairness, many of his tempos strike me as exactly right.) The freshness and clarity of timbre of this performance will certainly come as a revelation to anyone whose notion of Handel's oratorios is still conditioned by the massive choral societies of yesteryear. But most of us have already taken that step. What we now need are performances as true to the music's inherent character as to its sound world, which this performance is only intermittently. J.N.

HANDEL: Messiah—See Bach: Christmas Oratorio.

JANÁČEK: Kátja Kabanová.

Katérina Kabanová	Elisabeth Söderström (s)
Marfa Kabanová	Nadežda Kniplová (s)
Varvara	Libuše Marová (ms)
Glaša	Jitka Pavlová (ms)
Feklušá	Gertrude Jahn (ms)
Boris Grigorjevič	Peir Dvorsky (t)
Tikhon Kabanov	Vladimír Krejčík (t)
Váňa Kudrjás	Zdeněk Svehla (t)
Kuligin	Jaroslav Souček (b)
Dikoj	Dalibor Jedlička (bs)

Vienna State Opera Chorus, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Mackerras, cond. [James Mallinson, prod.] LONDON OSA 12109, \$15.96 (two discs, automatic sequence). Tape: ●● OSA5 12109, \$15.95.

Comparison:
Krombholc/Prague National Theater Supra 50781/2

Although Janáček's six major operas have all been recorded, they haven't maintained a very firm position in the American catalog. At this point, only the second stereo recording of *Jenůfa* (Angel SBL 3756) is listed in SCHWANN, where it is now joined by London's Kátja Kabanová—the first Janáček opera to be recorded outside of Czechoslovakia. The other four operas, in their original Supraphon form, are fairly widely distributed in this country by U.S. Qualiton Records, although SCHWANN does not list them.

Yet whenever one of the operas is performed in this country, it arouses considerable enthusiasm (e.g., the New York City Opera's *Makropoulos Affair*, the Met's *Jenůfa*, and, most recently, San Francisco's *Kátja*)—an enthusiasm that so far hasn't apparently carried over into persistent record sales. The reason for this, I suspect, involves the interrelationship of two factors: the Czech language, and Janáček's particular balance of musical and dramatic elements.

On the one hand, most serious American opera listeners have probably acquired at least a nodding familiarity with German, French, and Italian (probably building on school or college training in one or more of them); along with the structural and etymological similarities between these languages and our own, they have some handholds on the words of opera in these tongues (including, among other things, a fair grasp of the meaning of key words).

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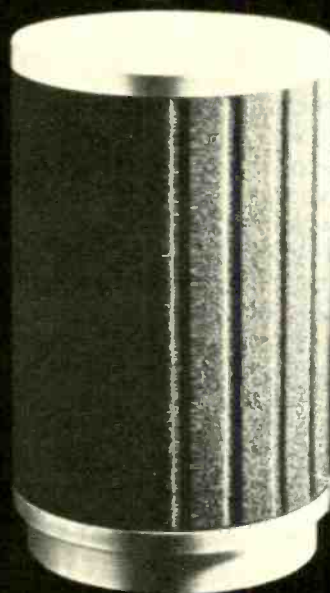
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Czech on the same level, and are thus driven to real nose-in-libretto listening—which even so doesn't bring one as close to appreciating Janáček's prosody as most of us are to Wagner's or Verdi's, nor does it leave enough of the mind free to attend to the longer-range growth and shaping of the music. (This was brought home to me quite forcefully on listening to a recording of an excerpt from *Káťa* sung in German; though I've recently spent a good deal of time with the opera's original text and an English translation. I found that the import of the passage came through much more directly in the language I knew something of than it ever had in Czech.)

Still, it isn't quite that simple. After all, *Boris Godunov* has made lots of headway in a number of recordings, all of them sung in Russian—a language not much more familiar to most opera listeners than Czech. And here we have to take into account Janáček's approach to composing an opera, an approach in which the music, quite purposefully, plays a more modest role than in the works of his nineteenth-century predecessors or those of his contemporaries (e.g., the Italian verists, Richard Strauss, even Schoenberg and Berg)—a tradition to which Mussorgsky, for all his naturalistic tendencies, certainly belongs in important respects.

In that older tradition, the expressivity of music—whether in the orchestra or in the voice—asserts itself far more than in Janáček; indeed, it often dominates, telling us not only what the character is thinking, but to some degree what we ought to think about him or her. To an ever-increasing degree in his mature operas, Janáček eschews that Romantic subjectivity, aspiring to a less stylized, more effacing role for music as a subtly inflected "conveyor belt" carrying a more conversationally paced drama.

Thus, to the extent that the impact of Janáček's music derives from its relation to the continuing interplay among characters who are often more specifically limned by their words and actions than by their music, that music isn't as independently accessible as is the music of, say, a Verdi aria: You will doubtless get more out of the latter if you know what the words are about, but it's possible to derive much satisfaction merely from the curves of the melody, the symmetry and shaping of the music. (Mussorgsky shares a good deal of this Romantic aesthetic, and it's worth noting, I think, that his most "naturalistic" passages, such as the *Boris Godunov* scene in Pimen's cell, are those found least absorbing by the average listener without access to the detailed significance of the Russian words.)

Janáček's interest in linguistic verism—his fidelity to the intonations of the Czech language, with its poverty of vowels and thus of sustained sounds—has as a consequence a decidedly limited lyricism, a profound dependence on the words as generative force behind both melodic shapes and longer-range continuity, for all that in its way his language is a stylized one too (notably in its reliance on *ostinato*). One can hardly imagine an "Opera Without Words" record devoted to *Káťa* (let alone *From the House of the Dead!*), while there is certainly music in *Boris* that could carry its own weight in such a treatment.

Of course, all American and English stage presentations of Janáček operas have

been in English translation, which, though sacrificing something, salvages something else that is indispensable: a clear projection of the progress of the action, without which the music will not stand before an audience. It wouldn't surprise me to find that most of the recordings have been sold to people who first encountered the operas on-stage.

All of which is by way of explaining why it takes a bit of study and concentration to get at a Janáček opera on records, and why the experience may not be quite as satisfying as a stage performance even so (quite aside, of course, from the added dimension of the visual presentation—and, of course, that's something Janáček was counting on, too, and for which he left room, as it were, when composing). A recording of one of the operas in English might speed up the process of appreciation, but Americans, who have been taught that opera in translation is fundamentally immoral, are only gradually being weaned away from this oversimplification of a complex aesthetic problem. Still, it must be emphasized that getting to know these works is worth the trouble, for they are indeed remarkable in their sincerity, directness, and craftsmanship both musical and theatrical.

Since the best way to approach the Janáček operas is chronological, proceeding from the relatively lyrical *Jenůfa* (1903) to the austerities of *From the House of the Dead* (1928)—and skipping for the moment the weaker and more specialized *Mr. Brouček* (1908-17)—availability of *Káťa Kabanová* (1919-21) in a widely distributed recording is timely. Similar to *Jenůfa* in its provincial setting and veristic focus on passion and frustration, *Káťa* is based on a celebrated Russian realistic drama, Alexander Ostrovsky's *The Storm* (1859): the locale is Russia—a town along the banks of the Volga—and the dictatorial authority of the older generation over the young is the central issue. *Káťa* is a sensitive, imaginative girl, married to the dull, mother-ridden Tikhon; she falls in love with Boris, who is similarly under the thumb of his uncle, the rich merchant Dikoj. But *Káťa* cannot cope with an illicit affair—as, by contrast, can a younger couple, Varvara and Váňa—so she confesses to her husband and eventually commits suicide.

Janáček made his own libretto from a Czech translation of Ostrovsky's play, eliminating minor characters (some of those that remain are so scantily present as to be mere ciphers) and simplifying the action. He developed effective contrasts of musical style for the different personalities: cramped and short-winded for the older folks, broadly lyrical for *Káťa* and Boris, insouciantly folklike for Varvara and Váňa. Though much is made of nature in the story—the Volga and the storm of Ostrovsky's title—there is little nature-painting in the music (the London/Decca engineers have "remedied" that by providing sound-effects thunder that is more intrusive than atmospheric).

The Supraphon recording of *Káťa*, conducted by Jaroslav Krombholc, once available here on the Artia label, is now listed under the numbers 50781/2 (stereo, with a stiff but not impossible English translation). It isn't precisely competitive with the new recording, for it uses Václav Talich's revision of the opera, while London

offers the first recording of Charles Mackerras' new edition based on Janáček's manuscript. Talich's "improvements" entail a certain amount of orchestral enrichment (extending even to additional counterpoint, such as a new clarinet line at *Káťa's* entrance in the first scene), and some downright recomposition in the final pages. Mackerras, besides cleaning all that up, has restored two rather brief interludes that Janáček composed for a 1928 production, to give the stagehands more time between the scenes in the first and second acts; he admits, by implication, that Janáček's orchestration wasn't always perfect, but says that modern techniques enabled him to make everything audible in the recording without modification. This is convincing, and the bigger, warmer orchestral sound of the new recording has more impact than Supraphon's tighter, drier tone, as well as a better blending of such tricky sounds as the celesta doublings.

The Vienna Philharmonic plays quite beautifully (they had already worked with the Mackerras edition in a 1974 Vienna production conducted by János Kulka), and right away in the prelude one can find the string playing cleaner than that of the Prague National Theater Orchestra, though later one notes a degree of portamento that the Czech orchestra abjures. I do miss the distinctive bright force of the Czech trumpet tone, and here and there there is more delicacy and liveliness in the Czech playing (the folksong bits, for example). In the matter of the many *Luftpausen*, unmarked in the score, that are traditionally inserted in this music, Mackerras appears to be much in line with Krombholc, although not always.

J. B. Steane has remarked on "how difficult Janáček makes it for singers to remember that singing is their business," which is one way of describing his vocal style. Except for Elisabeth Söderström, London's cast is almost entirely imported from Czechoslovakia: some from Prague, some from Brno (the young Slovak tenor, Petr Dvorský, was first auditioned in Milan, where he was studying). Except for the Varvara, who has a tendency to flat, they all deal admirably with the music's requirements, and appear to cope idiomatically with the words. Söderström, her tone perhaps less pure and firm than of old, projects an appropriately vulnerable character, rather different from Drahomíra Tikalová, her edgier but more forceful opposite number in the Czech set; I like her better, though I did note that I had slightly more trouble finding my place in the libretto when she was singing, suggesting that her diction is not as precise or committed as that of the natives. The Czech cast is also quite good, boasting one classic performance (Beno Blachut's Boris); Nadežda Kniplová's *Kabanicha*, for London, however, seems to me the more characterfully shrewish performance of that part—like the *Kostelnicka* in *Jenůfa*, it seems traditionally to be the preserve of over-the-hill Brünnhildes, but Kniplova brings to it vocal as well as declamatory power.

London's contribution to the Janáček discography is thus a solid one—devotees of the opera who already know it from the older recording may well want to hear the de-Taliched form, and newcomers will be well served. In addition to the libretto (with



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a good new translation). London offers an article by Mackerras and two slightly duplicative essays about the opera, evidently prepared for the San Francisco Opera's program book. What I do miss, however, is the motivic analysis that was included in the Artia edition of the Supraphon recording—a definite help in orienting the listener to Janáček's musical language. D.H.

MOZART: Requiem, K. 626. Anna Tomova-Sintov, soprano; Agnes Baltsa, mezzo; Werner Krenn, tenor; José van Dam, bass-baritone; Vienna Singverein, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Michel Glotz, Hans Hirsch, and Magdalene Padberg, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 705, \$8.98. Tape: ●● 3300 705, \$8.98.

MOZART: Requiem, K. 626. Carole Bogard, soprano; Ann Murray, mezzo; Richard Lewis, tenor; Michael Rippon, bass; Amor Artis Chorale, English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary, cond. [Seymour Solomon and Christa Landon, prod.] VANGUARD VSD 71211, \$7.98.

B MOZART: Requiem, K. 626. Elly Ameling, soprano; Barbara Scherler, mezzo; Louis Devos, tenor; Roger Soyer, bass-baritone; Gulbenkian Foundation Chorus and Orchestra, Michel Corboz, cond. RCA GOLD SEAL AGL 1-1533, \$4.98.

They keep tackling the Mozart Requiem, but the solution remains elusive.

One of these recordings, the RCA Gold Seal (from Erato), can be passed over quickly: It is an unacceptable amateur excursion into an area where the best profes-

sionals tread with fear and caution. The In-troit starts at an excruciatingly slow pace, the sentences fall apart, and all definition is lost as this piece of musical dough slowly spreads in every direction. Conductor Michel Corboz phrases and uses dynamics that would have shocked the Cecilian Romantics a century ago: There are king-sized ritards, there are cadences that in elderly listeners could cause asthmatic seizure, the mechanical thumping on the strong beats is disconcerting, and so forth. The transition to the "Lacrymosa" is a capital musical offense.

The Vanguard recording also suffers from ponderous tempos, oversized allargandos (the one at the end of the Kyrie conjures up eternity), unimaginative phrasing, and unattractive sound. Even Carole Bogard, a musicianly singer, has difficulty articulating properly at Somary's tempos. The ensembles are wayward, partly because mezzo Ann Murray wobbles, partly because the recording favors the lower voices. Richard Lewis is the solid tenor, Michael Rippon the adequate bass.

Deutsche Grammophon has brought out its varsity team, Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic, but the results are no better than most other attempts at this great masterpiece and are at times really disturbing. The chief culprits are the conductor and the recording crew; in some instances the former seems to be the victim of the latter. The bass and the trombones are too prominent, the choral sound is so variable that at times one gets the impression there are two choral bodies, one singing out in the fortes and another singing the piano

passages in the next room. The balances are poor, and if I could use musical examples I could show you some curiously stacked chords. The solo quartet is also poorly balanced, and occasionally even the three (superfluous) trombones are at odds among themselves. And yet, don't we often see in HIGH FIDELITY photographs of conductor, soloists, and engineer deeply absorbed in listening to the playback of what they have wrought while the producer beams in the background? Sometimes we can only wonder what it is they hear.

Nor is Karajan blessed with a first-class group of soloists. Tenor Werner Krenn is cautious and devotional when he should sing out with a warm voice. There is only one law in making music, whether sacred or secular: Give it all you have. It is the conductor's task, however, to make the soloists conform to it. Soprano Anna Tomova-Sintov sings almost everything in a sort of semi-legato, and she does not hit the high notes squarely, but rather slides up to them. Mezzo Agnes Baltsa is just passable. José van Dam, the bass, is the most satisfactory in the cast, but the four voices do not mix well.

Karajan seems unsure of his tempos. The In-troit is too slow, making the chorus logy, and there is a strange heaviness on the strong beats; on the other hand the "Recordare" is too hurried, and the subtle dissonances caused by the suspensions are lost. The "Confutatis" is too fast and rough, the heavenly "Voca me" is distant and colorless, while the mystery of the "Oro sup-plex" is taken away by the unduly prominent trombones. At the triple exclamation

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"Rex, Rex, Rex tremendae" the chorus should fairly explode, but the attacks are not incisive enough.

I could go on, but you get the idea: We still await a superior presentation of this long-suffering great work. P.H.L.

MUSSORGSKY: Boris Godunov. For an essay review, see page 83.

RAMEAU: Harpsichord Works (complete). Kenneth Gilbert, harpsichord. [Heinz Wildhagen and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2710 020, \$26.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

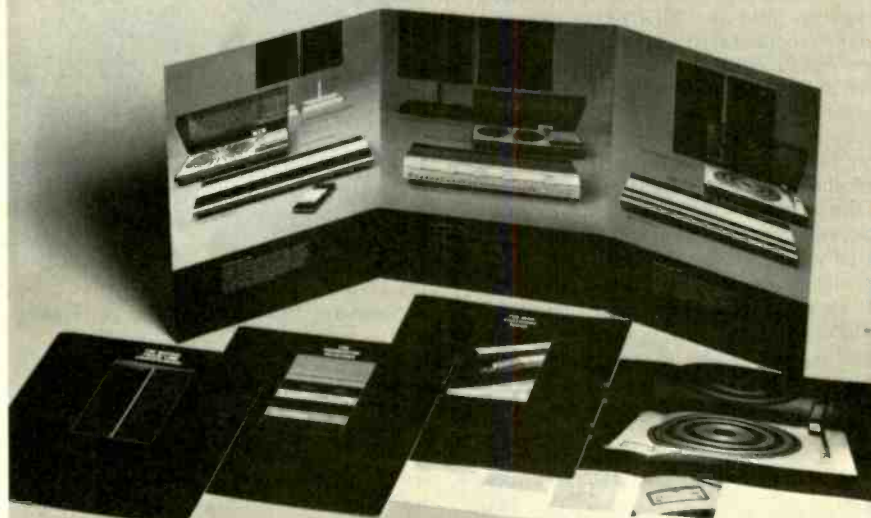
Accomplished harpsichordists are much more numerous today than they were, say, ten years ago, and it seems virtually certain that standards of harpsichord playing have been improving markedly. It is especially remarkable, then, that such performers as Gustav Leonhardt, Alan Curtis, and Kenneth Gilbert have maintained and even enhanced their enviable reputations during this period of increasing competition and improving standards. Each of them—and perhaps others who deserve to be added to the list—has consistently demonstrated technical mastery, a formidable scholarly background, and thorough stylistic understanding, and each has made important contributions to the harpsichord discography.

Gilbert's most recent claim to attention has been his British RCA series of the complete *Livres de clavecin* of François Couperin, each release of which has been greeted with almost unanimous enthusiasm. Now Gilbert offers a recording of the complete harpsichord works of Rameau (using his own new "Le Pupitre" edition, just published by Heugel), and the results are, if anything, even more satisfying.

While for the Couperin recordings Gilbert used a modern instrument (a French-style Hubbard), these new Rameau performances have been recorded on three historic harpsichords in the collection of the Paris Conservatoire: The *Premier Livre* (1706), *Cinq Pièces* (1741), and *La Dauphine* (1747) are played on a 1697/1789 Dumont/Taskin; the 1724 *Pièces de Clavecin* on a 1749 Goujon; and the *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin* (1728) on a 1761 Hensch. The choices prove to be singularly happy ones. One would be hard-pressed to find a more sympathetic match of instruments and music, and each of the three harpsichords possesses a richness and nobility of tone that eludes even the best modern builders.

Gilbert's performances are similarly sympathetic: so finely controlled as to seem wholly effortless and suffused with an almost Parnassian beauty that Rameau would have admired immensely. *Les Cyclopes* is quite grand, *L'Agaçante* is appropriately saucy, and Gilbert handles the contrasting indications *hardiment* (strictly) and *gracieusement* (freely) in *L'Enharmonique* with exquisite sensitivity. Some listeners, preferring a more pronounced delineation of the harmonic stresses in such pieces as *L'Entretien des Muses* and *Les Soupirs*, may feel that Gilbert is rather too restrained with rubato

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and agogic accents, but at least for me repeated listenings made quite a persuasive case for his tasteful reserve.

My only quibbles are with the inconsistent treatment of repeats, the tendency of some mordents to appear before the beat, and a couple of instances of awkward *inégalité*. (Surely Gilbert's exaggerated *pointé* treatment is inappropriate for the tied eighth notes at the beginning of *La Livri*.) These are small details, though, that scarcely detract from the distinction of these performances, which have been given commendably natural recorded sound.

It should be noted that the visual design of the boxed set—the front of which bears a gorgeous reproduction of the Hemsch rosette—is most elegant, and the enclosed booklet includes photographs of each of the instruments and even some details of soundboards, jacks, and knee levers. We are also given a historical synopsis for each instrument and some very fine notes (as far as they go) by Yves Gérard, translated by Lionel Salter. It seems an unfortunate omission, though, that there is no real discussion of the individual pieces and the descriptive titles. S.C.

SCHUMANN: *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12—See Beethoven. Sonata for Piano, No. 18.

SCHUMANN: *Papillons*, Op. 2; *Symphonic Etudes*, Op. 13 (with posthumous etudes). Murray Perahia, piano. [Masatoshi Sakaida and Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 34539, \$7.98.

This is Perahia's finest recording to date, and among the best piano recordings ever made. All the qualities noted and admired in his first disc (*Schumann's Davidbündler* and Op. 12 *Fantasiestücke*, Columbia M 32299) have mellowed into an absolute mastery attainable by only a few pianists of any epoch. A great artist has been resplendently captured at the height of his powers.

Perahia's performance of the engaging, richly diversified early *Papillons* could not be improved upon. The reading springs vividly to life with all sorts of spontaneous-sounding (but actually scrupulously considered) inflections and effects. His timing and inner ear never desert him for a moment, and he maintains a remarkably crystalline, translucent texture, conjuring with almost offhand (but of course deceptive) simplicity just the right sound to fit each kaleidoscopic mood. The grace and rhythmic élan of the C major episode, the suggestive trumpet/hunting-horn sonority when called for, the vernal freshness and bounding enthusiasm of the part that obviously inspired Sullivan's "Three Little Maids" *Mikado* trio, and many more such felicities speak with magical directness. Cortot, Novaes, Kempff, Richter, Arrau, and many others have recorded this music, but Perahia's account might well be the most intuitive and perceptive of them all.

Perahia subtly differentiates between the impromptulike grace of *Papillons* and the more studied formality of the *Symphonic Etudes* (in reality an expansive set of variations). While he gives the music plenty of elbow room for expansive poetry (his account has far more color and flexibility



Murray Perahia

A great artist at the height of his powers

than most performances), the formal dimensions are conveyed with patrician exactitude. Perahia observes all repeats and plays all five of the extra variations omitted from Schumann's 1852 edition but posthumously reinstated by Brahms with Clara Schumann's consent. These are interspersed among the standard etudes, as Cortot and a few other performers did, and I could not agree more with this artistic decision. (Indeed this decision involved some rethinking: The standard etudes had been recorded in Japan; the interpolated etudes were done later in New York. Columbia has matched the sound quite successfully—whatever disparity I imagined hearing, knowing the recording's provenance, could be attributed to tone color for musical characterization.) Perahia, incidentally, also opts for the 1852 revision of the finale—again, in my opinion, the correct decision; the earlier version has a trite central episode and rambles a bit.

As in the *Papillons*, the pianism is remarkable for fluency and beauty of sonority. The tone is authoritative, beautifully voiced, and without even a hint of the percussiveness that afflicted Perahia's *Fantasiestücke*. In fact, the piano sound here—from both sides of the globe—is richly atmospheric, far and away the best reproduction he has yet received. H.G.

SIBELIUS: *Symphonies*: No. 3, in C, Op. 52; No. 6, in D minor, Op. 104. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 9500 142, \$8.98. Tape: ●● 7300 519, \$8.95.

The darkly cushioned ambience Philips has provided for the earlier installments in Davis' Sibelius series is again in evidence in the Third Symphony, but the Sixth—a lean, cool, acerbically classical piece—has been fittingly accorded a drier, lighter, and brighter acoustic. Moreover, in the Sixth Davis summons up the tonal sheen, glittering like fine crystal, of which the Boston Symphony is capable at its best. One needs no fancy control-room high jinks to do this in Symphony Hall, so Davis shares credit for insisting not only on taut rhythm and articulation, but also on a chamber music texture in which woodwind lines are always to the fore. This, then, is the most stylistically "right"-sounding Sibelius Sixth since the work's first recording, by Georg Schnéevoigt and the Finnish National Orchestra (available on Turnabout THS

65067). And with the obvious advantage of a really virtuoso orchestra and contemporary stereo, what more could one ask?

On first hearing I did have something more to ask: I wished that Davis had adhered more closely to Schnéevoigt's interpretive game plan (which presumably bore the composer's stamp of approval). For the most part he does. Davis' opening movement is ideal—crisp and unforced where so many others (Karajan, Berglund, Collins) are pretentious and overripe. The Allegretto of the second movement is recognized as the point of repose it is, but cleansed of the Romanticisms with which too many readings shatter its rarefied mood. The main (Allegro molto) part of the finale deftly combines the thrust and sharpness of Schnéevoigt with the menacing swagger attained at a broader pace by Beecham (a twilight-era HMV shellac set for which many British critics feel the same fierce loyalty I've had for the earlier Schnéevoigt). Where Davis parts company with my (Schnéevoigt-derived) ideal view of the work's contours is to treat as a scherzo the "Forest Murmurs"-like episode at the end of the second movement rather than the third movement. But a closer reading of the score upholds his Sibelian credibility: it now seems to me that the time-value changes within the second movement and the ambiguous *Poco vivace* marking of the third justify either approach.

No rationalizing or rethinking is required to appreciate Davis' Third. The first movement has all the purposive stride and juxtaposed elements of mystery anybody could want. In the middle movement, Davis opts for a slow interpretation of the cryptic tempo marking—*Andantino con moto*, quasi *allegretto*—and I prefer the dreamy tenderness of his reading to the jaunty inanity of nearly everyone else's. The constant undulations of tempo in the finale are deftly realized, and the symphony's climax (with the chorale passage so musically braying out over the carefully accented 6/8 rhythm in the strings) is nothing short of stunning.

I needn't say any more about the previous discography of these two misunderstood and underperformed pieces. Davis' performances speak for them about as eloquently as I can imagine in this imperfect world. This is one of the great records of our time. A.C.

VERDI: *Requiem*. Leontyne Price, soprano; Janet Baker, mezzo; Veriano Luchetti, tenor; José van Dam, bass-baritone; Chicago Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. [Thomas Z. Shepard, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 2-2476, \$15.98 (two discs, automatic sequence).

Sir Georg Solti's account of this score is, I fear, no more satisfactory than the one he recorded nearly a decade ago for London (OSA 1275). What was missing then is, in my opinion, missing still: a genuinely comprehensive view of the music, a sense of unfolding spiritual drama.

What we have instead is a procession of disconnected passages and isolated thrills. A first-rate performance of Verdi's noble meditation on ultimate truths invariably becomes a richly emotional experience. The present recording does not lack for brilliant effects, but because these are inci-

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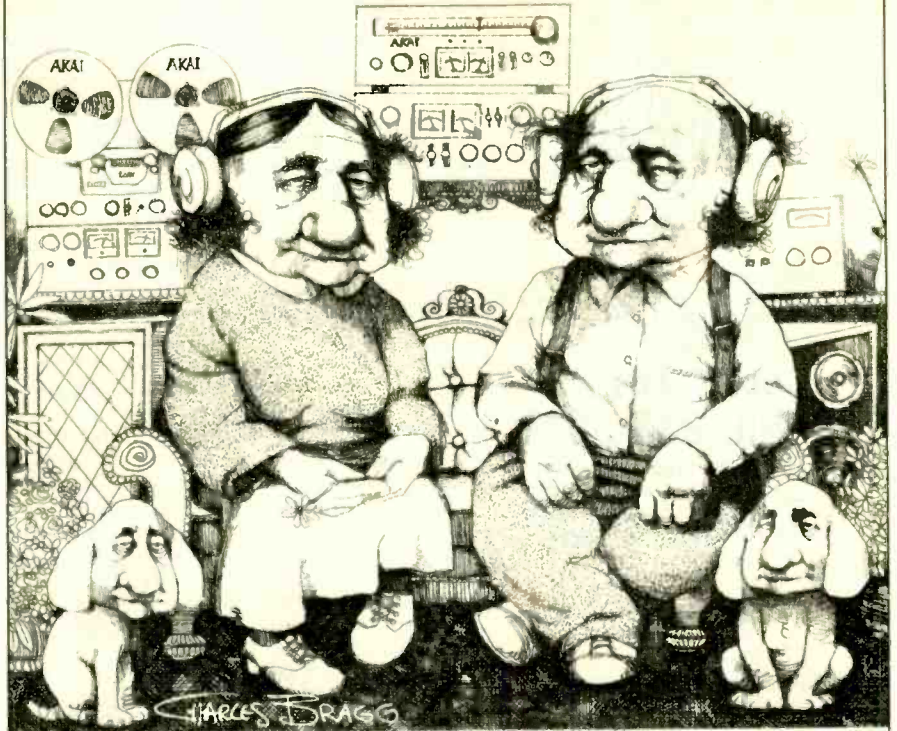
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dental rather than part of an organically conceived interpretation one remains unmoved. For myself, the characteristics of Solti's reading—cataclysmic fortissimos, sudden blazes of orchestral color (especially those achieved by emphasizing the brass and timpani), drawn-out andantes—make for slickness and superficiality.

Solti is, of course, a man of remarkable talents. No one could fail to respond to the standards of orchestral virtuosity he has achieved with the Chicago Symphony, which in this recording plays magnificently. On the other hand, like so many celebrated conductors today, Solti's ear for singing is much less certain. Indeed, his four soloists make as incompatible a team as I have ever heard in this music, the clash of timbres at the end of the "Lacrymosa" being highly disagreeable. Dame Janet Baker's narrow vibrato simply does not blend at all with the other soloists' voices. Most of the time she sounds slightly but maddeningly under pitch, and in the ensemble passages she lacks sufficient substance and tonal color to make her presence adequately felt. In terms of weight and color she is especially weak in the lower register.

José van Dam, too, lacks presence when matched with the other soloists, and like Baker he is deficient in the lower reaches of his music. Unlike Baker on this occasion, however, Van Dam shows himself to be an impressive musician. He phrases nobly and sings with an appropriate blend of dignity and feeling, whereas the mezzo seems to have no idea of what, musically and interpretively speaking, she is supposed to be doing—as witness such details as the wildly exaggerated downward portamento on the word "illa" at the beginning of the "Lacrymosa" and the ugly aspirates she employs to deal with the low-lying ornamental passages in the "Liber scriptus" and "Quid sum miser."

That Leontyne Price lacks the lower voice necessary for the full realization of this music, especially the final "Libera me," is hardly news. As a comparison with her performance on the seventeen-year-old Requiem conducted by Fritz Reiner (now London OSA 1294) shows all too clearly, time has not improved matters in this respect. Nor has it preserved unimpaired the glories of her upper voice, though much that the soprano does in this area is still very beautiful. In many ways the most satisfactory of the soloists is tenor Veriano Luchetti. The voice is bright and forward and to my ears decidedly attractive, though the tone has a tendency to spread at the top in loud passages. Apart from an odd aspirate or two, and the fact that in the "Hostias" he substitutes the rapid alternation of thirds for a conventional trill, he is pleasingly musical, displaying a welcome attentiveness to Verdi's dynamic markings.

Margaret Hillis' chorus is admirable. The recording, while presumably arranged to accommodate Solti's preferred brass-heavy balances, is wonderfully capacious. Texts and translations. D.S.H.

VERDI: Il Trovatore.

Leonora
Ines
Azucena

Joan Sutherland (s)
Norma Burrowes (s)
Marilyn Horne (ms)

Manrico
Ruiz
A Messenger
Count di Luna
Ferrando
An Old Gypsy

Luciano Pavarotti (t)
Graham Clark (t)
Wynford Evans (t)
Ingvar Wixell (b)
Nicolai Ghiaurov (bs)
Peter Knapp (bs)

London Opera Chorus, National Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Bonyngue, cond. [Ray Minshull, prod.] LONDON OSA 13124, \$23.94 (three discs, automatic sequence). Tape: OSA5 13124, \$23.95.

London has tried an end run around the formidable problem of casting *Trovatore*, and on paper it looks plausible—all the principals carry at least some of the right credentials. In execution, however, it just doesn't go.

Perhaps it is pure coincidence, but the singer who comes closest to making contact with his part is the one cast member who is grappling in the vocal trenches for which he was trained: Pavarotti. Not that his Manrico is remarkable: He just passes muster musically and makes almost nothing of the role's dramatic challenges; he can't fall back on sheer tonal heft as could such recorded predecessors as Pertile, Del Monaco, Tucker, and Corelli (Manricos of varying quality but all capable of generating heat through raw animal vigor); and the serious erosion of his top evident in recent years—even the A flats are approached with decided caution—has a pacifying effect on much of his work.

For all that, Pavarotti's is still the right sort of voice, trained to produce the right sort of legato and to project with some strength in the right places. He does some lovely singing in such comfortable, purely lyric stretches as "Ah sì, ben mio" and the "Miserere," though even as a "lyric Manrico" he can't begin to compare with Bjoerling, heard at his commanding best in the old RCA *Trovatore*.

Both Horne and Wixell are disappointing, for I had hoped both might more successfully adapt their admittedly non-Verdian instruments. Part of the blame, I think, is Bonyngue's; his occasional penchant for slow tempos not only creates some peculiar sectional relationships, but underscores the singers' technical unsuitability.

"*Stride la vampa*," for example, is paced so slowly as to alter the character of the tune (though when the music is later recalled it is taken at Verdi's much quicker tempo). I might understand if the Azucena were Schumann-Heink or Branzell, but in Horne's case we get vivid evidence that her chest register and the lower fifth of her head register are neither powerfully enough developed nor freely enough integrated with the rest of the voice for this music. Since in addition her top has lost the solidity of her younger years, we are offered in effect a catalog of her current vocal limitations, without any compensating interpretive insight—the crucial (and long, oh so long) Azucena/Manrico scenes fail rather badly, painless though the singing is.

Wixell has on other occasions used his un-Verdian baritone to substantial Verdian effect: if there is a better Simon Boccanegra around, I wish he'd come out of hiding. But he is really comfortable only from about B flat up to E, at a flowing tempo and at forte volume. Anything higher or lower, louder or softer, may produce either conspicuously audible vocal adjustments or an

overload of his already borderline vibrato. Time and again one senses that even a slightly modified tempo might have spared Wixell considerable grief. Take the Count's unaccompanied entrance recitative: Bonyngé is not the first conductor to set a tempo much slower than Verdi's metronome marking, but what made sense for Warren in his prime leaves Wixell wandering chromatically.

There are moments in Sutherland's Leonora—florid ones, naturally—that prompt fantasies of what she might have done had she chosen long ago to structure her voice for this kind of writing. Her cadenzas, for example, incorporate graceful trills that remind us what this music can sound like when it is showing off the singer's vocal strengths rather than spotlighting her weaknesses. (We get a painful example of the latter at the end of Act I, where both Sutherland and Pavarotti have chosen to end the trio on high D flat. Given the present state of their voices, this qualifies as asking for trouble.)

The problem is that Sutherland's voice was never set up for projective strength, in particular on top, and time has further reduced her ability to produce steady sustained tone. The upper transitional area (E flat, E, and F) is critically insecure; every phrase that passes through it—and there is hardly a passage in the role that doesn't depend on it—is disfigured by the tremulous sound. By cruel coincidence this area is the most secure part of Norma Burrowes' voice, and the clear E naturals and F of Ines' "Dubbio, ma tristo presentimento" (her response to "Tacea la notte") stand as an unintentional but gloomy rebuke to what precedes.

I wish I could be more properly grateful for London's generosity in casting Nicolai Ghiaurov as Ferrando, a less-than-star part, but once again the role emphasizes what he can't do more than what he can. Verdi himself advised that a front-line singer wouldn't be required but that a "baritone bass" was indicated, and the writing makes clear what he meant: Although the upper limit of the role isn't exceptionally high, the singer must have free access to the E above middle C, which Ghiaurov these days doesn't. Since the role otherwise demands more in the way of imaginative projection than sheer vocal splendor, his rather gummy legato proves considerably less effective than the work of numerous other basses—many of them of far lesser stature—who have recorded the role.

Bonyngé's conducting has the customary virtue of his rhythmic firmness, but in addition to the tempo questions raised above I am bothered by a general lack of responsive inflection, of shading and nuance. The orchestra is tidy enough, but the choral work could be more effective. The men who impersonate Manrico's retainers produce an unintentionally comic effect at the end of Act II when they enter, proclaiming "Urgel viva!" to rescue Leonora: Bonyngé's idea of an allegro vivo is so lethargic, and the choral tone so drab and soggy, that their mood seems funereal rather than victorious.

London offers a bonus in its incorporation of the ballet music that Verdi added for Paris. I find it an intrusion, but perhaps there is value in having one recording that includes it. Otherwise I can think of no rea-

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son for preferring this set to its direct competitor, the uncut RCA set (LSC 6194) conducted uncentrically by Mehta and cast with singers (Price, Cossotto, Domingo, Milnes, Giattotti) uniformly better suited to their roles; all make impressive contributions, and Price and Milnes are quite fine.

Among the cut recordings, I value more than half a dozen for various individual performances, but one of them, RCA's 1952 set (Victrola AVM 2-0699), seems to me indispensable, despite limp conducting, for the work of Milanov, Barbieri, Bjoerling, and Warren. Trovatore may not have gotten much respect in intellectual circles in those days, but on-stage a more heroic crop of singers gave it a kind of respect it could stand a great deal more of today. K.F.

WAGNER: Siegfried Idyll—See Bruckner: Symphony No. 7.

WALTON: Troilus and Cressida.

Cressida	Janet Baker (ms)
Evadne	Elizabeth Bainbridge (ms)
Troilus	Richard Cassilly (t)
Pandarus	Gerald English (t)
Diomede	Benjamin Luxon (b)
Antenor	Malcolm Rivers (b)
Calkas	Richard Van Allan (bs)
Horaste	Robert Lloyd (bs)

(plus smaller roles)

Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Lawrence Foster, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] EMI/CAPITOL SLS 997, \$23.94 (three SO-encoded discs, manual sequence) [recorded at performances, November 1976] (distributed by Capitol Imports).

There was a time, not long ago, when Sir William's popularity in this country, a-building since the 1930s, was sufficient to inspire an all-Walton night at the summer outdoor concerts held in New York's Lewisohn Stadium. It didn't draw the way Gershwin Night or Viennese Night did (no hang-up at the hot-dog stand during intermission), but it happened. Around this same time, *Troilus and Cressida* seemed a reasonable bet to enter the international operatic repertory. It had been excitedly greeted in its London premiere (December 1954), had been produced with some success in Milan and San Francisco and brought back a second season at the New York City Opera, and was the subject of an Angel highlights disc featuring Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Richard Lewis (35278/L, deleted). In common with few other contemporaneous works, it called for the orchestral and production resources of the grand-opera repertory company and contained roles that might attract major singers, without posing any serious threats for an audience that could swallow Strauss.

For all this, the piece has not been much performed. But, with some revisions by the composer, it has recently been accorded a second Covent Garden production and—with the aid of several outside funding sources—this complete recording taken from the live performances. The recording does not really give the work its due, but I sincerely doubt that its due is in any case much more than a heartfelt "Good Try!"

I say this with some disappointment, for I had some nice memories of the Schwarzkopf/Lewis disc and a mixed, benefit-of-

the-doubt sort of recollection of the City Opera production. The latter, like many of the company's efforts in those days, had flimsy scenery but gutsy performances—a balance nice to look back upon from a time when the flim and the gut have changed places. In reading through the notes on composition of the piece left by Walton and his librettist, Christopher Hassall, as well as the notes of Gillian Widdicombe that accompany the new album, I am struck by the proportion of their attention that seems to have been drawn by calculation of what might "work"—the wish to "engage the sympathetic interest of people today," to add "another 'singers' opera" to the repertory, to select and alter elements of the legend (Hassall drew primarily on Chaucer) in such a way as to make a tidy and traditionally satisfying operatic structure. It seems to have been important that the principals be "noble," and that the inconvenience of the previous versions' ultimate disposition of the characters (not very noble, and not at all stably neat) be resolved into a grand-opera dew: If nobility is what we are about, then the ignobilities that reside in the principals (and make them human) cannot account for their downfalls, but must be externalized in the form of treacherous Other People, who in turn cannot be allowed any nobility at all. Thus, in the libretto the characters of Calkas and Evadne (and in a different way, the potentially fascinating one of Pandarus) exist primarily for the purpose of extracting and tamping into neat piles all the contradictions that might otherwise be found in the principals. We do indeed arrive at a simple conflict and a "pattern of contrasted characters"—but can we believe in, or care about, any of them?

For my part, I cannot invest much in such divisions of human reality, but could perhaps feel some of their force if the music conveyed them with real bite and individuality. We would then have something like the equivalent of the sort of strong sketch a good actor arrives at early in role preparation, when he has found a plausible "through line" and pursues it with energy, but has not yet found the subsidiary colors, the shorter spans of intent and obstacle, that add up to a true character living a full life. Sir William cites the model of Tosca, with some reason: but if this is all he and Hassall felt Puccini and Giacosa and Illica achieved (not to mention other, more complete operatic fulfillments), then closer inspection might be recommended.

But on the whole, Sir William's music takes hold of the libretto's character reductions only in a general way: Diomede sounds martial, Pandarus has lots of curlicues, Calkas is given some sweaty declamation. For the leads, invention is somewhat more varied. I can tell that Cressida feels sad and lonely several times, and that Troilus and Cressida become excited when making love. These are the best portions of the score, but they are still not terribly specific or gripping: Who these folk are, and what the qualities of their relationship (after all none of us make love *without* excitement—what else?) is left rather murky.

Some commentators have regarded Walton's settings for Pandarus as masterly characterization. I suspect that Peter Pears (the role's creator) may, like a good old-time lawyer, have given a convincing flourish to

a basically leaky case (snippets of his Pandarus, along with a somewhat ragged patch of Marie Collier's Cressida, are included on London OSA 1276, the Covent Garden "Anniversary Album," now deleted). And I recall Norman Kelley making a showy thing of the part at the City Opera. As heard here, in a more ordinary performance, the writing sounds terribly obvious and stereotyped.

It is Cressida, I think, who is best served by the composer. In each of her several arias, Walton has found his way to some aspect of her privacy. He presents these in sequence, triggered by the developing dramatic situation, almost in the manner of a Handel leading lady. It is a rather narrow range of feeling he allows her, but within it he accomplishes some very lovely and poignant lyrical shifts, with many refined colors tipped in along the way. And once his love duet has gotten past its apostrophes to various abstractions, it contains some evocative writing; I particularly like the little instrumental dawn passage and following solo for Cressida after the big You-Know-What interlude—a good deal of flailing and thrashing, that; I doubt that we miss much.

Elsewhere, we have so much tired rhetoric, so many clichéd gestures. The public, heroic side of things (a side displayed at length, I fear) seems to have stumped the composer totally. He keeps signaling to us hopefully, but the pathways are worn and our responses tire quickly. We soon begin to predict which words will be accorded what sorts of ascending repetitions: perish, perish, perish; afraid, afraid, afraid; bitter, bitter, bitter; lo-ove, lo-ove, lo-ove. In a trice, we are scrutinizing the libretto's language, and start to wonder if altars can truly be senseless, or whether or not an earthquake is a good thing for a departure to be as drastic as—once this process starts, an opera is in irretrievable trouble. Finally, the only message all this elocution conveys is a sort of Declaration of Importance, and the suspicion arises that it is actually empty, empty, empty and even pretty awful, awful, awful.

In terms of character perception and musical language, Walton pays the price for his conservatism—the devices are too old-fashioned to fool anyone, and the listener soon detects that all this does not really possess the announced significance. If one is out to contact a wide audience in clear, direct language, one had better have something personal and urgent to say, as Verdi and Puccini and their librettists did. If one does not have much to say but wants the audience to believe it is experiencing something significant, then one must select and manipulate elements of the cultural code whose content the audience (and the authors, for that matter) may only dimly understand but whose deeper importance it will assume, and at the same time provide opportunities for titillation in performance. That was Meyerbeer's triumph, and in our own time Ginastera's: The latter's operas really have no more to say than Walton's, but the combination of musical language, theatrical opportunism, and pretensions to psycho-symbolic insight (all borrowed from yesterday's avant-garde in their respective fields and presented with the most flamboyant emphasis) cleverly argues that

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something profound must underlie all the stagey excitement, though no one can quite identify it. This is the sense in which "timelessness" is vital to a less-than-first-rate artwork. Walton and Hassall didn't allow for the windage, and fell behind even their traditional target audience by a good thirty years.

The performance heard here is, on the whole, a mediocre one. The most notable thing about it is Janet Baker's Cressida, a role the composer has reworked to her voice with a number of transpositions. The changes in tessitura (as heard in a comparison between these records and the old highlights disc) make surprisingly little difference: We lose a few high notes that had more logic as effect than as music, and we lose a trace of the brighter, more youthful color that one feels should be in the part but is not much emphasized in the writing anyway. Baker is very much a middle-voice singer, having command of neither range extreme and lacking the color potential in the rest of the range that goes with such extension. But the voice remains attractive and solid enough within its technical limits, and it is still a pleasure to hear her instinct for vocal legato, her ability to project textual sense by singing words rather than diction-izing them, her grip on internal process at key dramatic moments (she becomes touching at some of the role's most dangerous junctures).

And except for the smooth-voiced Robert Lloyd in the small role of Horaste, she is alone in these respects in this cast. Richard Cassilly has sung much better than this in the past, in a range of roles stretching from Don José to Peter Quint. As heard here, the voice has lost a good deal of its balanced depth and fullness, becoming mouthy in the middle and rather brittle and edgy toward the top. Bright vowels are unpleasantly exaggerated, and he tends to solve the problems one phrase at a time, when what the role's labored writing badly needs is a simplifying, unifying sort of musicality. (Lewis, with less imposing vocal equipment, makes more sense of it on the old record.)

Of the others, both Richard Van Allan and Benjamin Luxon throw themselves gracefully at the ill-measured angles and corners of their writing, chewing the words hammily and neglecting the connective line that must underscore such stuff if it is to have shape. The former's good bass voice sounds in grumpy form; the latter's light baritone is on too weighty a mission. Gerald English, the Pandarus, has a somewhat pinched tenorino of comprimario character; the role needs more. Elizabeth Bainbridge is a vocally reliable, unforced Evadne, the best of these supporting singers.

Lawrence Foster certainly has the score in hand, and secures generally good playing, with some very nice solo woodwind work in the aria accompaniments. But as a piece of musical syntax, his reading does not compare well with the composer's own in the excerpts—again, it is largely a question of seeing a section or scene as a series of gestures and short-breathed movements as against a single, tightly bound arc. Possibly the recording method, which I assume has involved piecing together takes of several performances, has contributed to this impression.

The recording's acoustic is strangely boxy and dry, with the instrumental voicings not always well balanced. The soloists are distinctly recorded, though, and the British EMI pressings are good ones. The booklet includes the complete revised libretto, a synopsis, Widdicombe's thoughtful, supportive essay, and a scattering of small-scaled production and recording-session photos.

C.L.O.

Recitals and Miscellany

NELLIE MELBA: The London Recordings, 1904-26. For an essay review, see page 86.

GILLIAN WEIR: French Virtuoso Organ Music. Gillian Weir, organ of the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, England. [Martin Palmer, David Slaymaker, and Robert Walker, prod.] PRELUDE PRS 2507, \$7.98 (distributed by Qualiton Records).

CHARPENTIER, J.: L'Ange à la trompette. **DUPRÉ:** Variations sur un noël, Op. 20; Symphony No. 2, Op. 26. **SAINT-SAËNS:** Fantaisie, Op. 159. **VIERNE:** Feux follets, Op. 53, No. 3; Nardes, Op. 55, No. 4; Toccata, Op. 53, No. 6.

The new (1973) organ in the Concert Hall of the Royal Northern College of Music at Manchester, England, made quite a positive impression on me when I heard Graham Barber's Vista recording (VPS 1025) of works by Karg-Elert, David, Demessieux, and McCabe. Built by the Austrian firm of Hradetzky, it is a sizable mechanical-action instrument of fifty-one speaking stops on three manuals and pedal, housed in a dramatically cantilevered case. The tonal design has an ostensibly classic basis, but the commendably restrained voicing and the provision of complete reed choruses on Great and Swell make the instrument surprisingly versatile in later music. It is still a remarkable accomplishment that it proves so convincing in this new recording of modern French music, virtually all of which was conceived for the rich sonorities of the great Cavallé-Coll instruments in France.

Although I don't much care for Charpentier's *L'Ange à la trompette*—that ostinato figure at the end is just too silly—Gillian Weir's new record offers a generally worthy program, and a recording of Dupré's *Symphony* is particularly welcome. The playing is nothing if not breathtakingly virtuosic, and everything is brought off with tremendous élan. I sometimes thought the tempos were pushed a bit too much (as in the Saint-Saëns *Fantaisie*) and was bothered by the lack of rhythmic continuity in the Dupré *Variations sur un noël*, but the overall effect is exciting indeed.

The recorded sound is vivid and full-bodied, with only a small amount of distortion in the loudest passages; being cut at rather low level, though, the surface noise is a bit more evident than one might have wished. The program notes by Robert Walker are disappointingly superficial, I'm afraid, and we are given almost no information about the organ. (The lack of a specification is inexcusable.)

S.C.

Prestigious presentation boxes. What holiday gift for a friend or oneself could be more apt than the first complete taping of Bach's exultant *Christmas Oratorio*? At last, the incomparable Richter version is available in a three-cassette edition (Archiv Prestige Box 3376 007, \$23.94; with notes and texts), which is not least rewarding for the finest soloists of any recording to date: Janowitz, Ludwig, Crass, and—most memorably—the late Fritz Wunderlich. The still robustly vivid 1966 engineering does full justice both to them and to the Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra, while Richter's reading felicitously reconciles the often conflicting demands of stylistic authenticity and dramatic appeal.

Then, for ultrapurists who demand period instruments, boy sopranos and altos, etc., there is the Harnoncourt/Concentus Musicus Bach B minor Mass, which has aroused so much controversy since it first appeared on discs in 1969. It too is now given welcome, however belated, release in a three-cassette Telefunken box (4.35019, \$31.92, with notes and texts). The distinctively "different" sound qualities here won't be to every taste, but they italicize arrestingly fresh aspects of this mighty music that contrast sharply with those of the other available tapings: the romanticized Karajan/DG version and the rough but exciting account by Corboz for the Musical Heritage Society.

Both sets, like all tapes I discuss nowadays, are processed with Dolby quieting. The Telefunken release also introduces the new TriTec technology in which the chromium-dioxide tape occasionally used in the past is replaced by an unspecified high-density oxide that calls for chrome (70-microsecond) playback equalization.

Not only Bachians, but Brucknerites, Mahlerians, and even Savoyards can discover good-anytime gift boxes. There is no current tape competition for the Bruckner Seventh and Eighth Symphonies enchantingly recorded by Böhm and the Vienna Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon 3371 027, \$23.94). . . . And while there are earlier (Bernstein and Mehta) cassette editions of Mahler's *Resurrection* Symphony, the new Abbado/Chicago version, with soloists Horne and Neblett, is notable for its exceptional taut control and sonic transparency (DG 3370 015, \$15.96, with texts). . . . The soloists of the present-day D'Oyly Carte Company, with Nash conducting the Royal Philharmonic, may be no match for their illustrious predecessors, but they're stylistically adept, and the theatrically vivid recording makes their *Iolanthe*, complete with

by R. D. Darrell

The Tape Deck

dialogue, more delectable than ever (London OSA5 12104, \$15.90; notes but, inexcusably, no texts).

Remembering reel connoisseurs too. Even the open-reel faithful have cause for holiday celebration. Besides the recent Barclay-Crocker Musical Heritage and Vanguard releases and the recent Stereotape series from both RCA and London, the promised Deutsche Grammophon/Stereotape series gets under way at last with two complete operas (Verdi's *Macbeth* and Joplin's *Treemonisha*), two Archiv and three DG sets, one Archiv and five DG singles.

I couldn't wait to hear first another of the late David Munrow's invaluable legacies (ranking with last September's "Instruments of the Middle Ages and Renaissance" on Angel cassettes): "Music of the Gothic Era," featuring the legendary Léonin and Pérotin Notre Dame organa with Ars Antiqua and Ars Nova motets (Archiv/Stereotape AR 2710 019 V, \$31.95; with thirty-two page booklet). And everyone who shares my personal susceptibility to quintessentially Czech music surely will share my relish for the Israeli Yuval Trio's first-ever tapings of the poetically evocative Dvořák *Dumky* Trio and Smetana's heart-breaking Trio, Op. 15 (DG/Stereotape 2530 594 A, \$9.95).

Onward and upward with RCA. Proving itself to be one old-dog institution that can learn new tricks, RCA follows up its admirable recent cassette policy changes (musically justified side breaks and Dolby noise-reduction processing) with a switch from its generally disliked "economy" cardboard packaging of the last few years back to the standard plastic "jewel-box" type. Among the earliest examples, I particularly like the first taping of Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence* in its original string-sextet form, spiritedly played and cleanly recorded by the Guarneri Quartet with Boris Kroyt and Alexander Schneider (ARK/ARS 1-2286).

Entry into Valhalla. I find it quite impossible to believe that Stokowski is dead. And of course the incomparable

enchanter isn't, and never will be, as long as his recorded music-making lives on to spellbind listeners of any time anywhere in the world. Nevertheless, it's hard to realize that, while there are some recent recordings still to appear, as well as innumerable older ones likely to be reissued, one of the longest, most prolific, and most provocative of all recording careers has come to a close. For those of us who have followed it all our listening lives—alternatively or simultaneously delighted and infuriated—there is an aching sense of personal as well as musical loss.

Thus the recorded legacy Stokowski has left us becomes even more precious. Of the latest additions to that legacy, I have yet to hear the first tape products of the Columbia contract that was to have run up to the Old Sorcerer's 100th birthday: the Bizet *L'Arlesienne* and *Carmen* Suites (MT 34503) and the "Great [non-Bach] Transcriptions" (MT 34543). But I do have the presumed last of his many Wagnerian programs and the first open-reel in a good many years: his first recording of the Rachmaninoff Third Symphony, which he premiered in 1936. Neither of these ranks among his greatest achievements, but each is wonderfully characteristic. The sonically full-blooded if rather ineffectively Dolbyized Wagner program (a Royal Philharmonic companion to the London Symphony *Götterdämmerung* excerpts of April 1977) comprises his last remakes of the *Tristan* Prelude and "Love Death," *Rienzi* Overture, *Meistersinger* "Dance of the Apprentices" and "Entry of the Mastersingers," plus—now most poignantly of all—the latter opera's Act III Prelude and the "Magic Fire Music" from *Die Walküre* (RCA Red Seal ARK/ARS 1-0498, \$7.95 each; no notes).

The Rachmaninoff Third, a quintessentially idiosyncratic Stokowskian reading in engineer Bob Auger's scarcely less idiosyncratic multi-miked recording of the National Philharmonic, is of course the same Desmar version, filled out by the *Vocalise*, that appeared in Advent's deluxe cassette processing in April 1977, and it's fascinating to compare that state-of-the-art music cassette with the present state-of-the-art Barclay-Crocker open-reel edition (DSM D 1007, \$7.95; twelve-page booklet). Which format is technically superior? Under ideal conditions, I'd give the reel a narrow edge; but in first-rate cassette playback vs. less than first-rate reel playback, the result would be reversed. On average home systems, the two editions are likely to seem sonic mirror images. ■



Billy Joel: Up from Piano Man

by Susan Elliott

Just after 'Piano Man' came out, I was like the darling of the press. You know, they like to pick up on unknowns and make them their little heroes. I was new to the success thing, so I figured, 'Oh wow! I'm King Kong—I'm great!' That was 1973. Now it's four years later and I'm an old dog and I can't get hung up in that anymore. If a record's a hit, that's nice. I just write songs."

It's a good thing Billy Joel has a record company doing public relations for him. Because his own summation of his successful career as a singer, songwriter, and keyboard player extraordinaire is, to put it mildly, slightly off the mark. The twenty-eight-year-old "old dog" has released four albums in as many years, two of which have gone gold, with one—his most recent, "The Stranger" [BACKBEAT, December 1977]—exhib-

iting more musical growth in one year than most writers can consummate in a decade.

But understatement is his style. He's a musician first, a live entertainer second, a recording artist third, and a "rock star"—well, hardly. "It kind of throws the record company off, because they think everybody is dying to be a rock star, and when somebody doesn't care much they think, 'Well, he won't play the *game*.'"

Part of this low-key attitude is due to the fact that Joel has been supporting himself as a practicing musician since he was fourteen. The de rigueur piano lessons for the young suburban boy of Hicksville, Long Island, started at age four and continued on and off for eleven years. His keyboard technique would seem to indicate long hours of arduous practice, but apparently that was not his wont. "It was a pain in the neck.

Backbeat

As I got older I realized that if you're going to be a concert pianist then you've got to practice six hours a day and devote your whole life to it. You become a high-strung maniac. . . . It just seems to be so competitive. It doesn't seem to be a lot of fun. And I wanted to have fun." Since Joel senior was an amateur classical pianist, playing boogie-woogie and stride was frowned upon and was therefore "fun." "It was almost forbidden—that's why I really got off on it."

Early listening experiences included the "crazy Latin records" his father brought home from trips to South America and the likes of Dave Brubeck and Oscar Peterson. His taste in rock & roll was selective: "A lot of the records I thought were stupid. I liked Phil

"I signed a lot of stupid papers . . .
I signed away my publishing
and my copyrights. . . ."

Spector records, the old Sam & Dave stuff, James Brown, Otis Redding. . . ." The most influential were the Beatles. In fact, it was about the time that they broke here in 1964 that Joel joined the Echoes and became part of the one-band-per-block Long Island circuit. Their instrumentation was standard mid-Sixties—two guitars, bass, and drums—with one significant exception: Billy's piano. "We had a card—'Jim, Steve, Bill . . . rock & roll for all occasions.'" As it turned out, there was only one drawback to starting early: Working until 3 a.m. made it hard for him to get up in the morning, and he didn't graduate from high school.

Soon after the Echoes had changed their name to the Lost Souls (perhaps indicating how they were doing), Billy joined a group called the Hassles on the condition that he could bring the Lost Souls bass player with him. His two years of blue-eyed soul with the Hassles ended when he and the drummer split off to form a hard-rock duo, appropriately named Attila. At this point, Joel, who was accompanying his own screeching vocals on organ, had covered the full spectrum: classical to jazz to rock to soul to hard rock. But the last stage was too much for him. "I said to myself, 'I can't sing like this all the time. This is crazy!'" So he decided to retire from performing and devote his time exclusively to songwriting.

He quickly learned that the only way to expose

his material would be to record it himself, and in 1971 he signed with Family Productions. The result of the deal was the album "Cold Spring Harbor" (now a collector's item), a six-month promotional tour, and a lot of disappointment, since he never saw any records in the stores or money for his band. As he describes it, "I signed a lot of stupid papers . . . I signed away my publishing and my copyrights. . . ." To this day, he's still trying to get them back.

Although his first encounter with a publishing/production company sounds like a fairly standard songwriter's contract, the whole affair left a bitter taste. His solution was to "disappear" by moving to the West Coast. "I figured I'd just sit them out. If they finally realized that they weren't going to get anything out of me, maybe they'd negotiate a new contract."

It worked—for two reasons. One was that while on the "Cold Spring Harbor" tour he recorded *Captain Jack* for a radio concert aired over WMMR in Philadelphia. There was a rush of requests following its initial airing, with no album or single available to buy. The other was that Clive Davis had expressed an interest in him for Columbia. Suddenly, Billy Joel looked like an attractive commodity to Family Productions, so he and his new lawyer were able to negotiate a better deal with them. A large part of what he had wanted was to sign with a major label. He almost went with Atlantic, but Davis apparently rushed in at the last minute with a better offer. (Kip Cohen, now with A&M, did the actual signing since Davis had been asked to leave Columbia in the time between verbal and written agreement.)

So, in 1973, Columbia released "Piano Man," and Billy was on his way to being King Kong. The album went gold with the help of its single of the same title, and *Cashbox* named him Best New Male Vocalist of 1974. That single's raw material came from his six-month gig at the Executive Lounge in Los Angeles, taken on while waiting out Family.

"It's nine o'clock on a Saturday.
The regular crowd shuffles in—
There's an old man sitting next to me
Makin' love to his tonic and gin."*

In the song's chorus the bar's clientele implores him to "sing us a song, you're the piano man." A nice song, sure. But also a terrific marketing hook. And with the piano featured on every cut of the album, it became



Joel's identity tag for the press and the industry.

But it was a limiting image. The honeymoon with Piano Man wouldn't last forever, and he knew it. Joel is an eclectic and spontaneous writer; he likes to change. But since the keyboard formula had worked so well the first time, producer Michael Stewart decided to do it again the second. This time, it didn't work. "Streetlight Serenade," released in '74, has been the least successful of his four LPs with Columbia. As Joel puts it, "The second album can never be the thing that the first one was." With the exception of *The Entertainer*, the cuts didn't come close to the strength and drive of *Captain Jack*, *Ballad of Billy the Kid*, or *Travellin' Prayer*. Joel also blames it on stretching the piano's role too thin. "Each tune needed a different treatment. Just because I wrote a song on the piano doesn't mean it should feature the piano. It was their idea of the image they wanted me to project."

In fact, he doesn't like either of his first two albums. "There's something very mushy and powder-puffy about them. I like to rock & roll." And, significantly, he likes to rock & roll with his own band, but Stewart had insisted on using his session people.

So the pressure was on: Either shape up or sink into oblivion on the third album. After several unsuccessful attempts with Stewart to record it live, producer Jimmy Guercio was brought in, along with Nigel Olsson and Dee Murray—Elton John's drummer and bassist. Joel hadn't been too thrilled about using all the king's horses simply because he still wanted to use his own. But based on Guercio's reputation, he figured he'd give them a try. Two months passed, and "it didn't happen." So he and Guercio flew to New York and tried stock session players at A&R. Another two months and still no sparks. Finally, Joel decided to take his band into Ultrasonic studios on Long Island and produce the album himself. "I had my own band. They knew it cold. But I didn't want to argue with Jimmy. I just figured, 'Why don't you give my guys a shot?'"

He wasn't talking out of blind loyalty. The band's contributions to "Turnstyles" (1976) helped to create the musical breakthrough that Joel needed. Richie Cannata's smooth, sizzling saxophone on the jazzy *New York State of Mind*. Liberty DeVitto's Latino drumming on *All You Wanna Do Is Dance*. Joel's and

DeVitto's fiery rock & roll energy and technique on *Angry Young Man*, and Doug Stegmeyer's less-is-more bass playing throughout combined to create a jigsaw puzzle of a masterpiece, and Joel's versatility as a writer and performer came through unshakably for the first time. Production was detailed—each cut had its own distinct personality. Piano was either way back in the mix as part of the basic rhythm section or featured prominently, in which case it was stylized to fit: '50s Ray Charles on *New York State*, sixteenth-note arpeggios on the gentle ballad *Summer, Highland Falls*.

The material was stronger too. His move back to New York in 1975 (which makes him one of the few East Coast musicians to actually come *back* from L.A.) no doubt had something to do with that, because the songs exhibited a kind of on-my-own-terms writer confidence that was missing from "Streetlight." *Say Goodbye to Hollywood*, in which he celebrates rather than damns his move with a Phil Spector production takeoff, probably serves as the most literal example of that new confidence.

"It was like leaving a whole school of production with the ten million strings and the dive-bomber effects," says Joel. "I just had this thought of the Ronettes with their beehive hairdos—'Say goodbah to Holleewoodd.'" As it turned out, Ronnie Spector (formerly of the Ronettes and Phil's second wife) later did record it, "which was a gas. Wow—Ronnie Spector did *my* song with the E Street Band. What more could you ask for?"

Billy Joel is a funny man. You can see it in a lyric like *The Entertainer* ("I know the game, you'll forget my name/And I won't be here in another year/If I don't stay on the charts") or in an arrangement like *Say Goodbye*. He may be down on being a "rock star," but he's way up on audience response and on enter-

"This was the first producer
I ever worked with that I didn't
have to go in and
battle to use my own band."

taining people. "I'll see some people who are middle-aged sitting there, and I'll see some old ladies who liked *Piano Man* or something. . . . And then we get these rock & roll rowdies—'Go Billeeee . . . yeahhh!'—drinkin' beer. And then you'll see these fourteen-year-old little girls running up to the stage. . . ."

Joel tours nine months out of the year, in part because he loves it and in part because—he claims—his album sales aren't enough to sustain him. "My family calls me up and they say you must be rich now, you must've made a million." But he says that since his newest recording is the only one on which he owns all the publishing rights free and clear, he isn't rich. He also asserts, incredibly, that he's made a total of only \$7,000 on "Piano Man." "This is why I go on the road so much. I basically make my living by touring."

In spite of that heavy performance schedule, his writing shows no signs of neglect. He tries to write all

the time and is a member of the "trunk" school—storing away bits and pieces that might not finish themselves until a few years hence. But he prefers to write spontaneously. "The best stuff is the stuff that comes out real fast," he says. (He conceived, wrote, and fin-

"To be a musician
and to be making a living
is a miracle to begin with."

ished fifteen verses of *The Entertainer* while watching *The Midnight Special* one night.) He calls himself Picasso in comparison to Randy Newman, who takes three years to come up with one album's worth of material, but he says that Stevie Wonder's reputation for composing two or three songs a day "blows me away." His most recent album was completed in five weeks, with only four songs ready to go when he entered the studio. As producer Phil Ramone put it to him, "You were on a high roll—you just went with it."

He writes either at the piano or—recently—with a guitar, and surprisingly the lyrics usually come after the melody even though they're harder for him. He doesn't spend a lot of time worrying about coming up with the Hit Single and will not record anything he doesn't like. "I hear indirectly from the record company, 'He's very self-destructive. He keeps denigrating having a hit single.' I'm not down on it, I just can't get hung up in it. *Piano Man* was the biggest hit, but what does that mean? That I should keep writing songs like *Piano Man*—'Son of Piano Man, Piano Man Three, Volume Four'?"

The jazz groove of "The Stranger" shows him to be about as far away from the step-wise bass line and simple, repetitious melodic hook of *Piano Man* as he is from its "mushy" production. That jazz feel started with *New York State of Mind*. "New York has a kind of jazz influence on me, and I've been leaning more into jazzier things to give Richie [Cannata] a chance to blow." But it's just another area of writer exploration. "I like to be eclectic. I'm pretty sure that I'm not going to go further with it."

Given his penchant for live performance and his opinion of the first two albums, it's understandable that Joel is not heavily involved in or dependent upon studio technology. The sparser production and trimmed-down orchestrations of "Turnstyles" are indicative of this. "The Stranger," which takes its predecessor's ambience one step further with even tighter ensemble playing and cleaner electronics, was produced under the cool hand of Phil Ramone. Ramone is New York's recording guru, handling the albums of such greats as Paul Simon, Barbra Streisand, and the Starland Vocal Band and the productions of such giants as CBS's television broadcast of Carol Burnett and Beverly Sills from the Metropolitan Opera House. And Joel can't speak highly enough of him. "He's as crazy as I am. He doesn't come off like 'I'm the producer, and we're going to do it *my* way.' He's willing to let anything happen in that studio. All these great musicians love Phil. . . . He can pick up the phone and get

Arp & Friend, Inc.

by Jib Ellis

There are still musicians around who reach into their side pocket and pull out a harmonica—but then they'll cup the thing between their hands and a mike linked up to 50 amps of electronic assistance. The guitar has long since gone to electricity (or a mike and sound system when the picking purist prefers hollow-bodied resonance), and even the human voice rarely comes across the air waves without layers of vocal overdubs and special effects. Music and technology have been living together for years. In the last decade they have produced a legitimate offspring: the electronic music synthesizer.

No longer thought of as a gimmicky, sci-fi monster, the synthesizer is today an integral part of recording, performing, and, in many cases, the composing process itself. The synthesizer industry in the U.S. alone represented some \$17 million in sales in 1976, with the 35% lion's share belonging to Arp Instruments in Lexington, Massachusetts. Arp's keyboards are played by such luminaries as Joni Mitchell, Herbie Mann, Stevie Wonder, and the Rolling Stones, to name but a few. And this year the company enters a new field with its Avatar, the first guitar synthesizer. No wonder they're branching out—they did a little under \$6 million in U.S. business in '76 and crossed the Atlantic for the first time to make close to \$1 million in European sales. The Japanese-made Roland is the biggest-selling synthesizer in Europe, but Arp's Odyssey, on the market since 1972, is the best-selling keyboard synthesizer in the world. Which is quite an accomplishment for a company that started out seven years ago in Newton Highlands, Massachusetts, in a cinder-block building about the size of a diner.

Founders Alan Robert Pearlman (hence Arp) and David Friend outwardly seem as different as AM and FM. Both are physical fitness buffs, and both have professional backgrounds in engineering and music, but Friend is very definitely the marketing man and Pearlman the technologist. At twenty-nine, Friend looks more like an attorney than a grownup child prodigy. When he was eleven, he laid an electronic path that guided a robot lawnmower around the yard and back into the garage, where it shut itself off. Friend was also the first person ever to graduate from

The author is a free-lance journalist based in Boston.

Barbara Alper



*Alan Pearlman (top) and David Friend:
a winning collaboration*

Yale (1969) with a double major in music and engineering—which is how he came to the attention of Pearlman.

Pearlman had experimented in music technology throughout the Sixties while he headed (with Roger Noble) a company called Nexus Research. Nexus manufactured operational amplifiers for the Gemini and Apollo space projects, but in 1967 Pearlman and Noble decided to head in different directions and sold

Nexus to Teledyne-Philbrick. Noble got right into electronic music and founded Computone, which makes the Lyricon. But Pearlman's first move was to his other obsession—physical fitness. So he created a company called Tonus in order to produce in film about jogging.

The film was not a booming success, so Pearlman went back to music and technology. Experimental work with synthesizers was relatively widespread at this time, what with the Mark II project (an early attempt to make a computer “talk”) down at the Columbia-Princeton electronic music labs in New Jersey, Bob Moog's activities at Cornell, Donald Buchla's electronic music “box,” and Englishman Peter Zinovieff's voltage-controlled Putney synthesizer. But no one had actually created a *performance* synthesizer, and Pearlman could see ways around the technical snags that were preventing his contemporaries from coming up with one. For one thing, deficiencies in the machines' circuit design were causing the oscillators (which produce the basic tones) to drift badly out of tune. The Buchla synthesizer, popular among the avant-gardists, was not even set up for 12-tone performance, and could only spit out short “blips.” Moog's Model I, which Walter Carlos used on “Switched-On Bach” in 1968, had a diatonic keyboard and could indeed produce extended musical lines. But the major problem with the Moog and the Buchla was that the machinery had to be completely reset in order to change from one type of sound to another. This meant long tedious hours amid mazes of patch cords. In Carlos' case, it sometimes took weeks to create a fifteen-minute piece of music.

“The famous Maxwell House *bleep-a-bleep-a-bleep-bleep* . . . helped to bring it further into the forefront.”

To bring Friend back into the picture, we must first introduce Lou Pollock, a Boston attorney and primary Pearlman backer. He was leafing through his Yale alumni newsletter when he came upon a piece about this '69 graduate who had majored in music and engineering, now at Princeton working on his doctorate. Since the odd combination of interests coincided with Pearlman's, he got in touch with Pearlman, who in turn got in touch with Friend. Friend was growing weary of graduate school anyway, so the Ph.D. was set aside, and Friend teamed up with Pearlman and Tonus at the cinder-block facility on Kenneth Street.

Friend's arrival, in 1970, added an artistic cast to Pearlman's clinical habits of thinking. In brief, Pearlman combined information from the Buchla and Moog units with his own in-depth knowledge of linear circuitry (he was very close to a performance instrument by now), and Friend's “human engineering” transformed the prototype synthesizer from a lab machine for scientists into an instrument for musicians to play. This involved designing a control panel that was easy to understand and quick to use in changing from one tone quality to another. Thus was born the Model

2500, the first performance-quality synthesizer.

The first 2500 was built by Tonus. It didn't become an Arp until later that year, when Pearlman's initials, sounding somewhat musical, became the corporate name. (Friend's wife designed the logo.) The 2500 had been fitted with a drift-free oscillator—a patent Pearlman brought with him from Nexus—and matrix switching, a means of interconnecting sound modules through printed circuits that eliminated the cumbersome jungle of patch cords. It was four feet high by six feet long by two feet deep—and that was just the main console. There were also two huge wing cabinets that housed additional circuitry. It was not exactly portable, nor was it cheap. The whole system sold for around \$20,000, though its creators were willing to part with the unit minus the wing cabinets and



Odyssey row at the factory

enclosed pair of modules for considerably less money. The 2500 was unwieldy and expensive, but it could be played in concert, and—thanks to Friend's human engineering—it could be played like an instrument.

Now all that remained was to sell it. Pearlman is an intense, wry man with a good business sense—personable but shy. Friend has charm, sense, and technical knowledge, and is also very well connected. His links begin with former clubmen at Yale and go well into the upper echelons of the New York music world where he made something of a name for himself with a project he had worked on in college. This almost-invention allowed a composer to feed a programmed presentation of a musical score by phone into a central computer, where it was transformed into music. This then came back across the telephone lines for the composer to listen to and/or record. It worked out to be an awfully long run for a short slide, but Friend had made his mark in the land of musical hotshots.

Armed with connections, information, and a giant Arp 2500, Friend went off to New York to sell synthesizers. The salesroom was a super-posh suite at the St. Moritz on Central Park South, where he set up the 2500 and began calling everybody he knew in the music business who might be willing to shell out ten or twenty thousand bucks for the latest thing on the market. Up until then, only college and university music departments had been able to afford the few existing

prototypes. Pearlman and Friend were going after individual composers and performers for the first time.

The first paying customer was Ugo Toricelli, an Italian industrial film producer who actually used the 2500 on some of his soundtracks. Pete Townshend was the first rock musician to buy a 2500, and many commercial recording studios followed suit with the idea of increasing their bookings. The Who, the Beach

**“I put the 2600 under my arm
and made what was probably
the first sales call on a music store
in the history of
the synthesizer industry.”**

Boys, and the Beatles were among the first to use it on their albums, and the famous Maxwell House *bleep-a-bleep-a-bleep-bleep* television ad campaign helped to bring it further into the forefront of the media/recording industry.

But its price tag was still too high for the average working musician, and Friend had decided by this time that they needed to come up with a synthesizer that was small and inexpensive enough to be sold at musical instrument retail outlets. “I think Al thought I was a little off my rocker at this point,” he says. “He was also interested in getting a lower-priced synthesizer, but more because he saw it coming within reach of the average high school—a market much more akin to our traditional bread-and-butter university business.” In any case, they designed the 2600 model to sell for \$2,500—one-quarter the cost of a stripped-down 2500—and Friend headed back to New York to show off his latest offspring. But the posh exhibition suite was a thing of the past: “I put the 2600 under my arm and made what was probably the first sales call on a music store in the history of the synthesizer industry,” says Friend. His first stop was Manny’s Music on 48th Street, and owner Henry Goldrich became the first dealer in history to carry a music synthesizer. By the end of 1971 he was joined by a dozen retailers around the country, and once again Arp & Friend had successfully broken new ground.

The 2600s sold as fast as the tiny plant in Newton Highlands could put them out. Not ones to rest on their laurels, our heroes remained at the drawing board and in 1972 came out with the Odyssey, which at the time sold for about half the price of the 2600. The Odyssey was created specifically for stage use in front of a live audience, and, according to Friend, the control panel required the biggest contribution from “human engineering.” For the first time, tonal changes could be made almost instantaneously and patch cords were eliminated altogether. The Odyssey is perhaps the most widely copied of the Arp models, with its worldwide popularity testifying even further to its quality of design. Friend says it has remained basically unchanged, with a few circuitry improvements, and he seems quite confident that both it and the 2600 will be around for some time.

By the close of 1972, the educational market for synthesizers had receded considerably, mostly due to

universities’ shrinking budgets. But Arp & Friend were sailing clear because the bulk of their income was coming from retail outlets—by now, fifty of them. The conclusion of a public stock offering in 1973 enabled them to continue widening their distribution, still using their own salesmen trained “their way” (all must go through an intensive familiarization program at the plant). It was also during this time that the two-headed think tank came up with the first preset synthesizer—the Soloist. It eventually gave way to the Pro Soloist, which was recently succeeded by the Pro/DGX [BACKBEAT, November 1977]. The Soloist was followed by the fully polyphonic String Ensemble in 1975, designed specifically to re-create the sound of a violin section. Its success led to a symphonic keyboard, the Omni, which extended its predecessor’s basic idea to include all sections of the orchestra. The Omni, which has been on the market for just over a year, is the company’s biggest sales success to date. But Friend feels that their latest creation, the Avatar, will be the real show-stopper. He’s been calling the shots correctly since the beginning, so expect to hear a lot from and about it in months to come.

Leaning against a windowsill in his office (he rarely sits), Friend told me: “I remember picking up



The 2600—still going strong

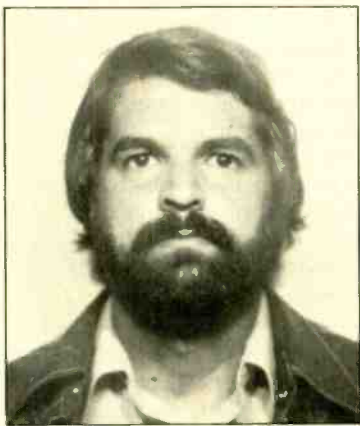
Stevie Wonder at Logan Airport in Boston back in 1972, when he had his first 2600. I took him to the factory and worked with him for a full day in our studio here, teaching him how to operate the controls and how to play the instrument live.”

Arps are now a staple for Stevie—and a lot of other less well-heeled musicians as well, what with the list prices running from \$995 up to \$3,195 for the big 2600. For Pearlman and Friend have done what they set out to do: They have devised a quality means of synthesizing music for a reasonable price. Pearlman still runs six to eight miles a day. Sometimes he and Friend discuss business while running around the track at the new fifty-thousand-square-foot plant in Lexington. Keep pumping that fresh oxygen into those bloodstreams and brains. ●

The Boys in the Band + 2: A 1977 Retrospective

This year's record releases and industry goings-on are best recapped in the same fashion that they happened: disconnected pieces of experience, both positive and negative. Here are a select few of them.

PLUS: The birth of BACKBEAT ... The diversity and consistent quality of the cuts on Fleetwood Mac's "Rumours" album ... The



Jim Melanson:

"If record prices keep rising, it's going to make it that much harder for new artists to break in."

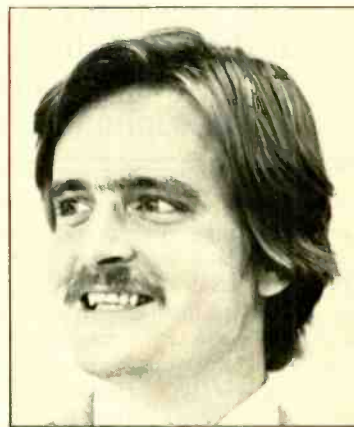
rebirth of James Taylor's recording career ... Lenny LeBlanc and his partner Peter Carr hitting the charts for the first time with the single *Falling* ... Karla Bonoff proving to CBS execs that she can sell records after an uphill fight to get signed ... The individualized sides from each player on Emerson, Lake & Palmer's "Works" ... The kinky, yet serious, playing of New Zealand group Split Enz (on discs, not live) ... Settlement of legal squabbles between Bruce Springsteen and his manager, allowing Springsteen to return to the studio ... The emergence of Peter Gabriel as a solo artist ... The success of Mick Jones and the group Foreigner ... New respect given *Record World's* charts ... Debut albums from such acts as Waves, Malcolm Tomlinson, and Chris De Burgh ... Eric Gale taking time out from studio work to cut his own LP ... Phoebe Snow's latest album, "Never Letting Go" ... The late-year release of Eddie Money's first album. (Odds are good that Money will be a high roller during 1978 for both Columbia and his manager, well-known concert promoter Bill Graham) ... Neil Young's "American Stars 'n Bars" ... The Emotions' r&b single *Best of My Love* ... Progressive jazz/r&b musician and producer Bob James forming his own label, Tappan Zee ... Mick Jagger and the Stones still being able to put it together ... The half-steps of recognition given to Latin music.

MINUS: The dullness of Fleetwood Mac's in-concert playing and "Rumours" holding the No. 1 chart position for that long ... The move to the \$7.98 suggested list price ... Continued shoddy pressings ... RCA not being able to break the group Flame and its debut album "Queen of the Neighborhood" ... With few exceptions (the group Pockets among them), the lack of strong new entries on the r&b

market ... Walter Egan's Fleetwood Mac sound-alike quality on his first release ... Deardorff & Joseph's imitating the Seals & Crofts sound ... The glut of punk rock releases, most of which never deserved to be recorded ... David Soul's continued efforts to be a recording artist ... The thought that Columbia will soon mount another promotional blitz for Bruce Springsteen's forthcoming album ... Rock award television shows ... Continued boredom with AM radio ... The death of Elvis Presley and the turn his personal life took in later years ... The formularized sound of most r&b and disco records ... Rowdy concert crowds ... American jazz and blues artists still having to go overseas to "make it" ... FM radio sounding more and more like AM ... Overly slick country music releases.

As for the future, my big hope is that the industry doesn't price itself out of the average person's pocketbook. If record prices keep rising, it's going to make it that much harder for new artists to break into the spotlight. Musically, your guess is as good as mine as to what's coming down the road, especially in terms of exciting, trend-setting sounds. The pabulum will be there, count on it. But so too will be music that is really worth listening to—sometimes you'll just have to look harder to find it.

Television's "Marquee Moon," Garland Jeffreys' "Ghost Writer," Bryan Ferry's "In Your Mind," Jimmy Webb's "El Mirage" ... what do these albums have in common? Nothing but brilliance—and abysmal sales. The list goes on and on, adding up to a sorry indictment of American taste in 1977. The sad fact is that, more than ever, what



Ken Emerson:
"What sells, stinks."

sells (pace Peter Frampton), stinks. Great music is being made, but only a minuscule portion of it is being played on the public airwaves and in the privacy of people's homes.

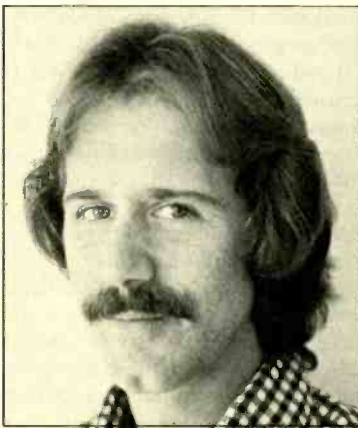
The situation resembles nothing so much as the early '50s, before the advent of rock & roll. Less divides Rosemary Clooney and Linda Ronstadt than you might think, and, just as in the '50s, something's gotta give. The mounting pressure has produced punk rock, and more power to it. More power to anything that upsets the complacency of

contemporary pop music and, even more important, the complacency of the contemporary pop audience.

For that audience has lost its adventurousness, and pop music is only as vital as the populace—which is one of the differences between high and mass art. Yet the greatest artists, even by academic standards (Shakespeare and Dickens, for example), have been those who have enjoyed a symbiotically energizing relationship with a mass audience. But in this year of Elvis' death, the most creative musicians, from Randy Newman to Johnny Rotten, are only cult figures (at least in America).

The sound of '77 has been a time bomb, ticking away amid the doldrums of disco, "fusion" jazz, compromised country, and rote rock. If 1978 doesn't explode and, in the words of Parliament-Funkadelic, "tear the roof off the sucker," the fault will lie with the masses as much as with the music.

While the year's best album, Steely Dan's "Aja," strikes these ears as both truly progressive and genuinely popular (it's selling faster than any Dan set to date, despite its ambition to move even further away from the mainstream), 1977 seems far more an index of the durability of '60s styles than a watershed for seminal new music.



Sam Sutherland:
"1977 seems far more an index of the durability of '60s styles than a watershed for seminal new music."

New Wave, itself an increasingly potent emblem of listeners' (and critics') eagerness for sweeping change, has yet to yield more than a handful of acts whose sensibility truly updates the basic rock framework. My own tastes in that area lead me to include only Elvis Costello's "My Aim Is True" among the year's very best—and that record derives its musical charm directly from '50s and '60s roots. Perhaps Television or Talking Heads, the most impressive of the U.S. acts I've heard yet from the putative punk/New Wave axis, will follow through on their next albums. But the fact that both appear uncomfortable with that tag is another cause for caution in predicting any outright conquest by the New Wave.

The most obvious indicator that '60s rock is '70s mainstream pop is the year's landslide populist masterpiece, "Rumours," which has verified that housewives now love rock & roll. (That is not intended as a slur.) As this is written, the fourth single from the set is a smash, and my sources predict the album may stay at No. 1 for the rest of the year, with the label thinking about still *more* singles.

The same sort of conservatism—or to use a more accurate phrase, orthodoxy—applies to Graham Parker and the Rumour, both in their collaborative LP, "Stick to Me," and the Rumour's breezier but equally spirited debut on their own.

"Max." Add to that list Peter Gabriel's stunning debut album, Mink DeVille's first, and a number of other runners-up from both new acts and revitalized veterans like James Taylor and Crosby, Stills & Nash. What this all testifies to is the longevity of what once seemed Totally Happening Now and my own concerns about premature senility.

Village Voice critic Robert Christgau once pinned down a pitfall for pop writers when he observed that close attention to the mainstream inevitably drives the listener toward the less accessible styles of the vanguard. Which may explain why my personal favorites have to include Randy Newman's "Little Criminals," Kate and Anna McGarrigle's "Dancer with Bruised Knees," the Alpha Band's "Spark in the Dark," and perhaps a half-dozen other albums that probably won't get near the Top 50.

And, as long as I've already violated *BACKBEAT*'s long-suffering editor's request to stick to just five strong works, I have to pay tribute to Townshend and Lane's "Rough Mix," and Joan Armatrading's "Show Some Emotion," arguably the year's best solo work by a female vocalist, despite photo-finish competition from Karla Bonoff, Bonnie Raitt, and Linda Ronstadt. And Joni Mitchell's collaboration with Weather Report, not released as of this writing, could also rise to the top of that class.

The current cross-breeding of jazz with rock, soul, and disco has led many to believe that true jazz has become "popular." But the sales success of the kind of recording turned out by George Benson, Grover Washington Jr., and Herbie Hancock (when he is not performing as a legitimate jazz artist on a disc such as the first of *V.S.O.P.*) does not



John S. Wilson:
"Even the reissue series that seemed to be rolling along so well in '76 slowed down."

mean that jazz is popular. Nor did the success of Benny Goodman's and Artie Shaw's Swing versions of pop tunes in the '30s and '40s mean that jazz was popular then. In fact, the jazz-tinged pop music of the Swing Era made it even more difficult for straight jazz to be heard. And that, to some extent, is what is happening today.

It is to be expected that the extremes of jazz—the old-fashioned and avant-garde—will have a limited, specialized audience. But the middle ground, contemporary jazz, needs strong support if all of jazz is to remain viable. Judging by the current recording situation, it is no better off than the specialized areas. In fact, in some ways the avant-garde and the traditional are faring better than the mainstream because their followers, not expecting the major companies to pay much attention to them, have developed their own outlets.

So significant jazz records were few and far between in 1977. Charles Mingus' "Three or Four Shades of Blue" celebrated the healthy return of a master who had been in de-

cline. Similarly, Dexter Gordon's "Homecoming" marked the re-emergence of a star of the Fifties. But in general it was an unhealthy year. Even the reissue series that seemed to be rolling along so well in '76 slowed down. There is one bright and hopeful note in Columbia's inauguration of its Contemporary Masters Series, which includes releases by Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Gerry Mulligan, and Miles Davis.

This was the year for punk rock signings to a host of record companies. Still staunchly resisted by most radio stations (particularly the so-called "progressive" FMers), punk rock, or New Wave, is the first time in a decade that publicity has generated record-industry response to a genuinely new movement. (Although we'll have to wait a year to



Toby Goldstein:
"This was the year
for punk rock signings."

see if it can actually make money.)

To no one's great surprise, it was an independent, Sire Records, that staked its reputation and made the biggest investment, issuing the Ramones' second and third albums, the first by Talking Heads, the Dead Boys, and the Saints. It also signed many new bands from around the U.S. and Europe and arranged to re-release Patti Smith's privately owned single, *Piss Factory*, the first punk collector's item. Warner Bros. has made a massive commitment to New Wave by distributing Sire product and, most significantly, by signing the Sex Pistols for what must have been a staggering amount of money. CBS is expected to make a similar push with the Vibrators and the Motors, Polydor is trying to break the Jam, and A&M has let the Stranglers out on the loose.

How many young consumers will opt for safety pins and black-leather-jacketed music is anybody's guess. The Ramones came reasonably close to a hit with their danceable single *Sheena Is a Punk Rocker* (the importance of the single to punk's fate may be its most underestimated factor), but many of the most raved-about LPs, particularly Blondie's, have been sales disappointments. Is there enough rebellion and desperation in America's sixteen-year-olds for them to scream along with Johnny Rotten, "We're pretty vacant and we don't care," or would they rather continue to smoke pot and thump along with Foreigner, who did a cool two million sales on their first LP to make them 1977's Boston.

Punk's disparagers find it easy to condemn a movement that sounds rehearsed and repetitious to them. Well, rock & roll in its earliest days was a repeat-beat formula. Albums like the Stranglers' "Rattus Norvegicus" and "No More Heroes," Television's "Marquee Moon," and Talking Heads's "77" adapt the classic rock tradition to a totally fresh outlook. And when it comes to the Sex Pistols' first, the Dead Boys's "Young Loud & Snotty," the Ramones' three

albums, Jam's "In the City," and the Clash's forthcoming first, the energy generated could lift contemporary music out of the morass that is most mainstream pop. We might look like fools pogoing, but at least we're not tempted to fall asleep.

The year 1977 will never appear in anyone's almanac as a watershed period for contemporary jazz. Recordings by new and/or young artists were few and far between; most of those that *did* arrive came in the form of discs released privately by the artists themselves and distributed through the always-haphazard medium of mail-order. One no-



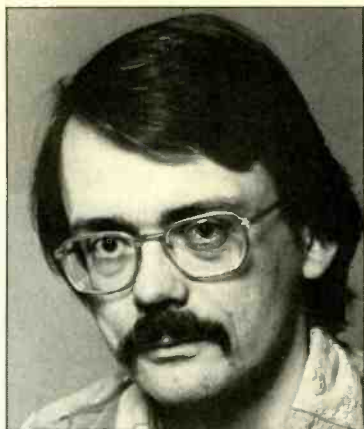
Don Heckman:
"The most encouraging
development . . . was the persistence
of individual styles."

table exception was Douglas Records' five-LP collection of New York loft jazz, "Wildflowers." Despite its problems—a somewhat parochial viewpoint as well as some questionable creative choices—it is the first fairly broad survey of contemporary jazz music to receive extensive national distribution (by Casablanca). Equally important was Prestige's release of a three-record set chronicling a complete 1969 Cecil Taylor concert.

"Crossover jazz" seems to have reached its peak. It has already gobbled up the talents of such fine performers as Freddie Hubbard, Donald Byrd, Bob James, Stanley Turrentine, etc. But its appeal—in financial terms, at least—has not diminished and it is the rare jazz player, from Sonny Rollins to Jaco Pastorius, who has not flirted with the lotsa bucks possibilities of messing around with repetitious disco rhythms. Even so, whatever "crossover jazz" may have represented as a jazz revival was obviously overrated. More receptivity to jazz in the form of a genuine renaissance? I don't think so. Jazz reaches too far into the area of art music to ever appeal to a lowest-common-denominator audience, regardless of the occasional impact of transitory fads like disco/jazz, jazz/rock, etc.

The most encouraging development of the year was the persistence of individual styles. In New York and Los Angeles, the cities I know best, one could quite literally listen to every imaginable kind of jazz, from hard-core Dixieland through big-band Swing and into avant-garde. And despite the lack of widespread distribution, most of that music can be found on record, even though it might take an enterprising listener to seek it out. So, even if 1977 started no new trends and spotlighted no new faces, a year in which the following was available can't be all bad: Acoustic jazz by the likes of Keith Jarrett, Ornette Coleman, V.S.O.P., and Sonny Rollins; electric jazz by Weather Report, Chick Corea, Stanley Clarke, etc.; Dixieland; big-band revivals; classic improvisations from Dave Brubeck, Jim Hall, Ron Carter, Lee Konitz, and many more. (more . . .)

Which way did r&b go in 1977? In much the same direction as the people on Main Street: every which way. Any distinguishable trends were mostly intensifications of ones already in the air: the development of a black m.o.r.; a return to the days when the divisions between jazz, r&b, and popular music existed more in the heads of critics than in



John Storm Roberts:
 "Any distinguishable trends are . . . a black m.o.r. . . . and the steadily increasing influence of Latin."

the hands and voices of musicians: and, perhaps most importantly, the steadily increasing influence of Latin idioms (both salsa and Brazilian) on mainstream American styles—not just in the rhythm section but also in the front line.

The charms and pitfalls of black easy listening were exemplified by Gladys Knight and the Pips's "Still Together," with her delicious singing and Van McCoy's awful, super-kitsch production. Among scores of Latin-influenced examples of what I suppose we have to call fusion music, I particularly liked the recent Mandrill album, "We Are One." On the other side, signs of flexibility in hardcore salsa included newcomer Ricardo Marrero's excellent "Time."

I'm not sure whether the cosmic Looney Tunes movement spawned by George Clinton's Parliament and Funkadelic is more than a flash in the pan. I liked "The Clones of Dr. Funkenstein," but later spinoffs have got coy and same-y.

Trends or no trends, meanwhile all sorts of people have been making good sounds—hard and soft, aggressive and laidback. Some of them have even come from those bloated giants of midtown: Witness Candi Staton's marvelous "Music Speaks Louder than Words."

I am feeling unimpressed: Nothing new and significant has happened in 1977. For the most part, developments between last January and this fall have been extensions of what has gone before. Fleetwood Mac came up with another fine album, so did the Carpenters, Loretta Lynn, and Neil Young, but they were all more



Todd Everett:
 "I vote for a resurgence of rockabilly."

or less expected pleasures. A couple of new bands sold well—Foreigner comes immediately to mind. But is theirs the kind of music that will revolutionize the industry or the nation's listening habits? Hardly.

Punk or New Wave is such a manifest joke that even its greatest proponents are admitting it's a media hype. The only ones who profit from it are the band members who get work without having to learn their craft first and club owners who have found an inexpensive alternative to disco.

We keep hoping. 1977 finds us in the same, pleasant straits as 1956 and 1963. It's time for something. But what? I vote for a resurgence of rockabilly: Alan Price singing a medley that included *Blue Moon of Kentucky* and *That's All Right* during a recent local concert was a good sign. Ray Campi is active on the West Coast, and Robert Gordon is generating some enthusiasm on the East. It would be lovely, but I'm not betting on the outcome.

The most important event of 1977 was Elvis Presley's death. Not that it indicated the end of an era. Rather, it brought Elvis back into the mass consciousness and onto the air waves, where he has belonged all along. With luck, people were listening and were reminded of what rock & roll is supposed to sound like.

I see aging men with salon curls and cocaine sniffles and am told they are outlaws, the future of country music. Thirty years ago, true country-music outlaws roamed the South. Alvin Edwards and his Texas Rhythm Boys sang of the lurid joys of Benzedrine. Ernest Tubb shot up the lobby of the WSM building [which houses the transmitting tower



Nick Tosches:
 "The future of country music lies in its maniacs, not its crossovers."

for Grand Ol' Opry broadcasts]. And now what? Waylon Jennings throatily invites us to sit cross-legged, stringing daisies in the afternoon sun of Luckenbach, Texas. Live fast, die young?

Outlaws are not the only ones who would have us return to 1967. In her recent "Here You Come Again" album, Dolly Parton bares her soul, Marin County style. Unfortunately, her soul is something not unlike toilet water.

This hickodelic trend will ebb in 1978. Waylon, currently the most successful country singer, will remain successful, because beneath it all he's good. Dolly will be retired to a home for the hopelessly poignant.

The single country album of 1977 that touched greatness was Gary Stewart's "Your Place or Mine," a howl of whisky and cheap sex that reminds us what country music is, was, and always shall be: philosophy beyond reason, madness and guilt. Much else was good. Willie Nelson's "To Lefty from Willie" was a gentle, powerful tribute to the greatest country songwriter of all time. Lefty Frizzell. Hank Williams Jr., with "One Night Stands," showed again that he's worth more than his overrated immortal father.

Country music's gravest sins of 1977 were the same sins it has committed for years, foremost of which is the loathsome ruining of talent—sometimes genius—by unfeeling, abysmal technique. Nashville producers continue to encourage their artists to record songs *they* will profit from, continue to approach the craft of recording as if it were a contest to recapture the Mantovani Sound. Mickey Gilley's "First Class" and Moe Bandy's latest album, "Cowboys Ain't Supposed to Cry" (which I burnt), are examples of incipient greatness reduced to flatulence. The way Jerry Kennedy continues to misproduce Jerry Lee Lewis, country music's sole living genius, is criminal. What Billy Sherrill does to George Jones is only slightly less grievous. As with rock & roll, the future of country music lies in it maniacs, not its crossovers.

I asked each of Backbeat's reviewers to state frankly how they viewed the general health of the popular music industry, using as their criteria nationally distributed LPs released in 1977. We opted for this kind of year-end celebration rather than the usual best of/worst of compilation because (1) we're all a little tired of those anyway and (2) the ten



Susan Elliott:
"There is nothing more satisfying than discovering a new artist on your own."

personalities you see on these pages represent a wide range of opinion and expertise which, when pooled, could not possibly agree upon one comprehensive listing—at least

Billy Joel, Continued from page 113

anybody to come down to the studio."

A quick look at the credits on "The Stranger" clarifies that: Hugh McCracken on guitar, Phil Woods on alto sax, Ralph MacDonald on percussion. . . . But Ramone had no qualms about keeping Joel's band at the core. "This was the first producer I ever worked with that I didn't have to go in and battle to use my own band," he says. He describes their five weeks in the studio together as a party. "I never knew any album could be fun to make. Before it was always very clinical . . . playing to this glass booth. Only thing is, I like to be . . . spontaneous, and after you do a song four or five times you start to lose the spark. Phil doesn't like to do too many takes. He goes for feel."

So does Joel. He always tries to do vocals live. "It's more natural for me. . . . There's something between my voice and the piano. I don't think I sing as well when I'm not playing." In fact, he just about does the whole album live,

without killing each other in the process.

Although none of us had any idea of what the others would be holding forth on, there seems to be one recurrent theme: *The Big Sleep*. Basically, the year's releases brought no surprises. Name acts continued to make good on past success formulas, producers continued to water down their subjects' talents in an effort to broaden appeal. . . . Nobody's taking any chances and it's all for the sake of the Almighty Dollar. Depressing isn't it?

But who is really to blame here? Record companies are, after all, in business to make money. Which quite logically impairs their willingness to take chances—what sells is what's safe is what's recorded and released. But who determines the first link in the chain reaction? If market research shows that America buys Barry Manilow then America gets Barry Manilow. As Ken, Don, Jim, and John Wilson all point out, the innovative and worthwhile *is* out there. Garland Jeffreys *did* put an album out, and we did review it. But America didn't buy it because America had never heard of him—he just wasn't safe enough.

The picture is not totally bleak of course. What is selling in 1977 is not all safe and comfy-cosie bland. Randy Newman's new album comes to mind, so do Steely Dan's and Billy Joel's. But though well deserved, these successes derive primarily from a stunning track record, heavy promotion, airplay, or any combination thereof. What about the new acts? What about the LP's that weren't handed to us on media's silver platter? What about Fringe Benefit? What about Waves? What about Wildflowers IV? They were mentioned in these pages, but we can't singlehandedly revolutionize the masses' buying patterns.

The point is that rock & roll's proponents have been soaking up "the same old stuff" for long enough now to have developed individual tastes and to be actively seeking new sounds. (Do not be deceived by *New Wave*—much of it is simply media's answer to *NoDoz*.) The responsibility to take chances lies first with the buying public—new acts cost a lot less than big-name vinyl does anyway. Besides which, there is nothing more satisfying than "discovering" a new artist on your own—without having had your eardrums saturated from airplay, without having had your eyeballs knocked out of their sockets by full page ads in the Sunday papers. The diversity of product out there is astonishing. It is simply a matter of getting up off of our collective duffs and seeking and supporting the new and musically adventurous. ●

with orchestrations relegated to the role of sweetening. The basic track, which determines the arrangement, usually includes drums, bass, some guitar, piano, and the final vocal. "I don't believe in fixing. We try to get as close to what it should really be when we first lay down the basics. That's the whole thing." And, while most of Joel's songs and final arrangements thereof do a healthy amount of key and key-area changing, that is always an integral part of the song's conception, never an arranger's crafted afterthought.

I guess you could almost call him a purist. He doesn't need help in the studio; he prefers live performance; he writes into, plays off, and depends upon his own band; he always takes the same Bechstein studio grand with him on tour; and at one point he even did away with a certain piano pickup because "it didn't sound like an acoustic piano." What counts is the music, not the trappings, not the success. "I think I'm good at what I do and if you like what you're doing that's a big part of it. So what more could I want? To be a musician and to be making a living is a miracle to begin with." ●

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Synthe-Sounds '77

by Don Heckman

Synthe-Sounds '77, presented by the Los Angeles chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences late last summer, promised to be an intimate event. After all, what kind of audience could there be for a program performed by a synthesizer ensemble?

As it turned out, a large and diverse one. More than six-hundred people jammed into a banquet room in the Sportsman's Lodge, and when I arrived they were all stuffing themselves with rubber chicken and waiting enthusiastically for the concert to begin. Wondering where all these people had come from, I asked one of the three gray-suited executives from Disneyland sitting at my table what he expected to get from the show. He explained that synthesizers were a very prominent and valuable element in the huge and varied Disney music enterprises. The balance of the audience was there for similar reasons. No composer, arranger, or business person involved in any of L.A.'s multitudinous music activities can ignore the present and the rapidly expanding future of these instruments.

We were not disappointed by the forty-minute performance, and—considering the personnel—no wonder. On keyboard synthesizers were Ian Underwood, Mike Boddicker, and Clark Spangler. Lee Ritenour played guitar synthesizer, Mike Baird was on drum synthesizer, and Abe Laboriel played bass. Stretched across the stage was a marvelously colorful array of both old and new units. On the far left side, Boddicker worked with one of Bob Moog's original multipatch synthesizers as well as an Arp 2600 and a shiny new Polymoog. Next to him, Underwood played a Minimoog and an Oberheim 6-voice polyphonic synthesizer. Toward the rear, Baird thundered away at a full set of drums that were augmented by the Syndrum, a new, quite remarkable drum synthesizer (see review on page 127). Ritenour played a 360 Systems guitar synthesizer constructed around Oberheim modules, and, on the far right side of the stage, Spangler worked on a new Yamaha polyphonic synthesizer. Only bassist Laboriel performed without benefit of anything more than a basic instrument.

Assembled somewhat quickly by Underwood, the group's inadequate rehearsal time prevented them from getting into anything complicated. Since the basic rhythm section was drawn from Lee Ritenour's working band, three or

four of the pieces were lifted from his newest recording. Nice, but not precisely representative of synthesizer versatility. One section used some carefully programmed string sounds from Boddicker's and Spangler's instruments, but problems with the sound system made the results sound less like strings than like—yes—synthesizers. Perhaps the most successful piece was provided by Ian Un-



Lee Ritenour on guitar synthesizer

derwood (he had no title for it); despite the sound-system problem it clearly was a work in which synthesizers were used as synthesizers, not as simulators of other instruments.

"I think that's the key thing to remember about synthesizers," Underwood told me later. "These are instruments in their own right. They're never going to sound exactly like, say, a clarinet or a violin. But they will sound like something else. And part of the challenge of using them is finding out all the new things that they *can* sound like."

Underwood is a longtime veteran of the Frank Zappa band and one of the first musicians to gain extensive experience with synthesizers in day-in, day-out live performance situations. Recognizing some of the hazards of those situations, he decided to be practical when

Continued on page 126

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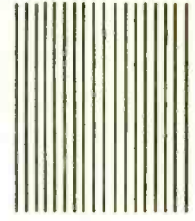
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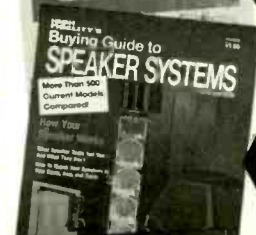
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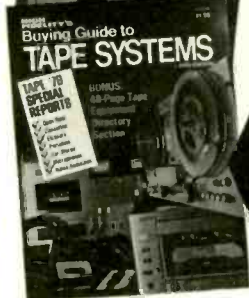
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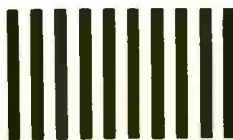
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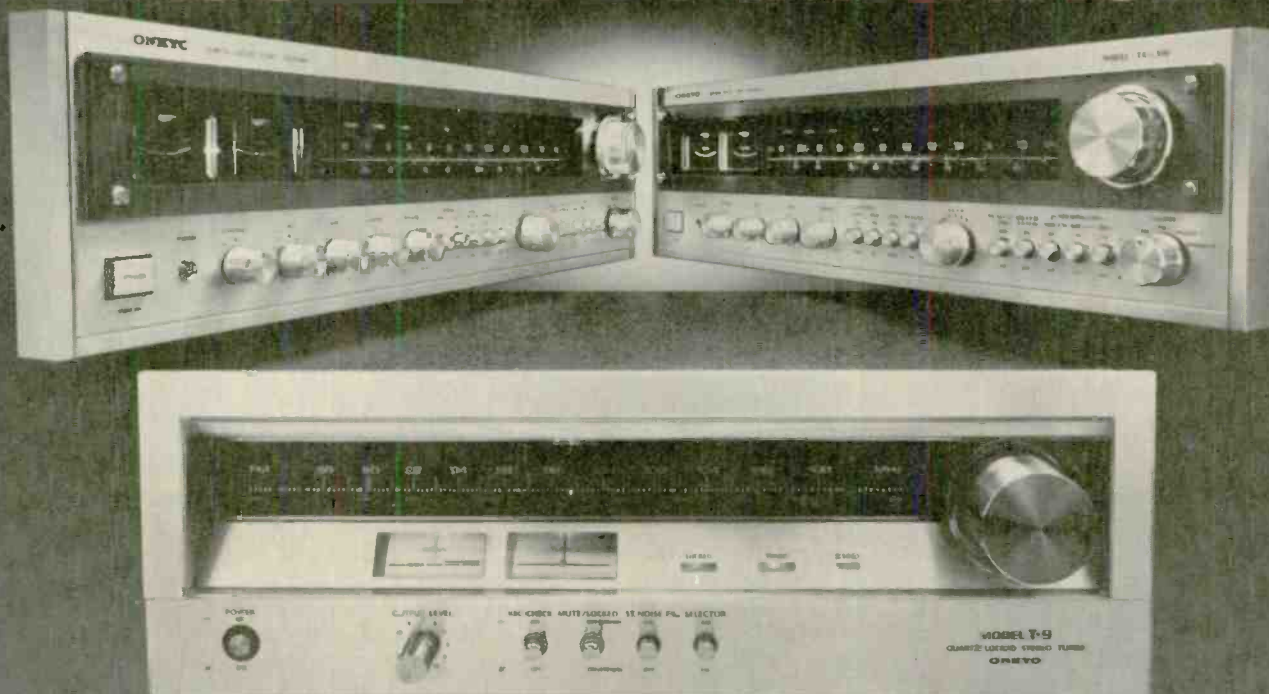
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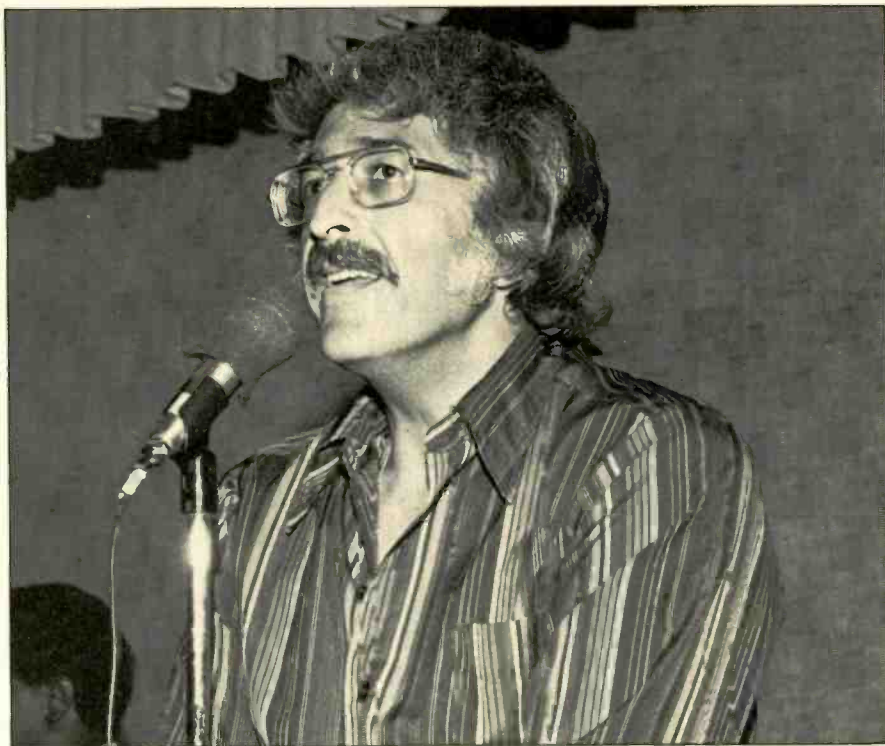
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Continued from page 122

asked by NARAS to put the concert together. "I just called guys who were the best synthesizer players around, and who had different equipment," he said. "I thought that was a better way to give a real picture of what was happening rather than to make some kind of ideal synthesizer orchestration that really wouldn't be reflective of what's happening on the street. I wanted the performance to speak for itself without running explanations from us. If people had questions about the stuff, they could always come up afterwards [which they did], but this way it allowed us to simply show how you can make practical performance music on synthesizers."

Was the absence of other synthesizer brands any kind of comment about their relative value? "Not really," answered Underwood. "We simply played the instruments we had." (Yet, clearly, the tendency of L.A.'s professionals to choose from the brands represented on the program is about as good a testimonial as one could ask for.) "The major units are all different, and they all do different things," he said. "Sure, they overlap, but each one—because of the design philosophy behind it—will do things that the others can't do. And that's one of the things we were trying to demonstrate."

Certainly most of the performers were enthusiastic about their instruments. Drummer Baird was delighted with his Syndrum, which he fed through an MXR phaser for some of the most ex-



L.A. chapter president Bernie Fleischer makes the opening remarks

traordinary sounds this side of a gamelan orchestra. Ritenour spoke enthusiastically about his 360 Systems unit: "I've played a lot of guitar synthesizers, and I have to tell you that this is the only one that really does it for me."

With synthesizers becoming almost unbelievably common in television, fea-

ture film, and recording work (it's difficult to hear a string section these days that hasn't been supplemented by synthesizer), information, instruction, and exposure to new models is imperative for the music industry. For those of us on the West Coast, Synthe-Sounds '77 was a big step in the right direction. ●



Abe Laboriel on nonsynthe-bass



Mike "Pooh Bear" Baird at the Syndrum

Input Output

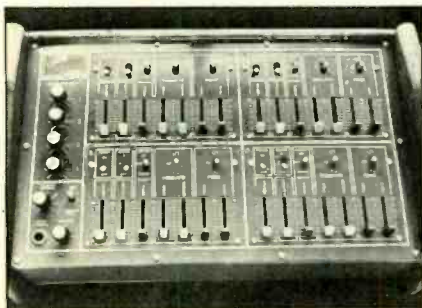
Instruments and
Accessories

Three Different Drummers

Syndrum. Drum synthesizers are not particularly new, and there are a lot of conflicting opinions as to their relative effectiveness. One of the problems has been that most drummers work by feel and cannot predict what they might need from a synthesizer in the first place.

Enter Syndrum, developed by professional drummer Joe Pollard. It's an instrument that can be explained and used quickly. Each of its four drums is equipped with its own oscillators and its own set of controls. The latter includes SUSTAIN, which is specified at 10 milliseconds to 20 seconds; SNARE 1 and 2 for "light rock" and "loose concert," respectively; SWEEP, which is switchable between up and down and controlled with a slider pot; and VOLUME. Each drum's vibrato is adjustable by means of RATE and SPREAD faders and a three-way waveform switch. Tone controls also offer three waveforms, as well as coarse and fine tuning. The master panel includes four sensitivity controls for stick-attack adjustment, master volume, and headphone volume. The four identical control modules provide an enormous range of contrasting sounds, and the drumheads are of the standard 8-inch variety and can easily be retensioned and replaced if necessary. Syndrum, released in June, has already been used on Linda Ronstadt's "Simple Dreams," Carly Simon's single, *Nobody Does It Better*, and many other recordings.

A subjective reaction from a non-



Syndrum control modules



Syndrum drumhead

drummer: The unit is spectacular. Most important, it is one that allows a drummer to move dramatically into the tone and pitch area of a music ensemble. In that sense, Syndrum may be the most revolutionary of all the burgeoning synthesizers. Cost for the set of four is just under \$2,000, and single units should be available by February.

DON HECKMAN

CIRCLE 123 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

PAIA Programmable Drum Set. Not just your ordinary cha-cha/rock rhythm machine, the PAIA kit offers a selection of percussion sounds—claves, congas, bass drum, snare, tom-tom, and wood block—



PAIA Programmable Drum Set

that can be programmed for any combination of patterns by means of touch-sensitive pads. First, you engage PROGRAM and choose your sound(s). By working with REST (the only way to get something other than a straight four to the bar), ACCENT BASS, and TEMPO, you can create your own pattern(s) over four bars, eight, or however many you may need. Since you'll probably want a new pattern in the bridge, you touch RESET/BRIDGE/RESET/PROGRAM, in that sequence, and start afresh. During playback from the top, hold down BRIDGE

when you get there, then release it to return to your original or A-section pattern. The Programmable Drum Set's memory can also recall an entirely different pattern with its own bridge at any time.

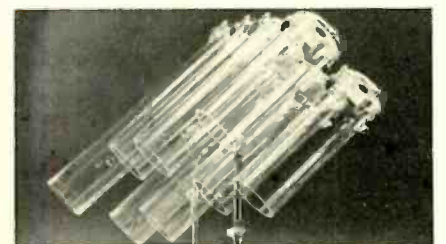
Before my Sunday afternoon spent with this unit, I had never built a kit before. Being a recording engineer and not an electronics technician by trade, I made some pretty dumb mistakes—like forgetting to install the thirty-six wire jumpers. But when I called, the folks at PAIA courteously pointed out what I'd done wrong. Looking at the instruction booklet now, I don't see how I could have messed up so badly. Parentheses next to each step of the operation should enable the builder to check off each completed assignment, but in my haste to hear my creation in action, I neglected to do so. I relate this simply to illustrate that this is an easy project—if you follow instructions—that is fun to do and yields delightful results. Also, if you have problems along the way the manufacturer will help you out. The completed Programmable Drum Set is an excellent educational tool and can be a versatile aid to the musician who can't afford a live rhythm section. It operates on one 9-volt and four AA penlight cells, and retails for \$79.95.

FRED MILLER

CIRCLE 121 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Tama Octoban Octave-Tuned Drums. Here's something to add to your percussion kit that promises not to take up too much room. Each of the eight drum heads in the set are six inches in diameter with the varied depths of the cast acrylic shells creating the pitch differences. The manufacturer tells us that diatonic melodies (within one octave) can be played when the drums are tuned to the same tension. Cost for the set of eight is \$695.

CIRCLE 122 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



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Graham Parker: Born to Stand and Fight

by Toby Goldstein

Graham Parker & the Rumour: *Stick to Me*. Nick Lowe, producer. *Mercury SRM 1-3706, \$7.98. Tape: ●● MCR4 1-3706, ● MCR8 1-3706, \$7.98.*

Listening to a Graham Parker record brings you about as close to the real thing as seeing an A-bomb explode on film. None of the three albums released in this country (there's an English "official live bootleg" that is avidly collected) captures the fervor of his wrung-out intensity, and it's doubtful that any piece of vinyl ever will. Yet if his records are not the equivalent of his in-person act, they are at least high-quality substitutes.

Like Bruce Springsteen, the artist to whom he is frequently compared, Parker has a gift for writing songs of desperation and orchestrating them with emotive fury in stinging guitars and buoyant keyboards. In "Howlin' Wind" and "Heat Treatment," his first two LPs, he rails against a world that threatens him. He holds little faith in the niceties of trust, patience, or romanticism, preferring to present events the way he has lived them. His reward is a harsh beauty. An early song, *Don't Ask Me Questions*, was Biblically vehement in its defiance of those who conventionally accept their fate; *Pourin' It All Out*, from "Heat Treatment," was a relentless assertion that frustrations must be vented if one is to survive.

"Stick to Me" is bound together by similar elemental forces. In the title song, Parker issues a warning to "stick to me just like glue," while bassist Andrew Bodnar and drummer Steve Goulding (both members of the Rumour, his backup band) pelt him with thunder that is punctuated by screaming brass and dissonant strings. This album marks his first use of a string section, but rather than watering him down it lends an added moaning agony to a select few cuts. Female backup singers also appear on the reggae-flavored *Problem Child*,

but ride on the beat to leave the song's overall sparsity intact.

As a result of several American visits following the release of "Heat Treatment," Parker has incorporated a strong New York strain into his scripts. *New York Shuffle* and *The Heat in Harlem*, in their respective portrayals of the speeding lunacy and aimless wandering of life in the Big Apple, exhibit his gifts for authentic life-style re-creation. He gives himself almost seven minutes to journey past overflowing hydrants and tenement stoops on *Harlem*, while the Rumour, sounding like a machine motor, works in tandem to rhythmically portray the beating-down sun.

"Stick to Me" could have been a high-powered exhibit of the pressures to live up to others' expectations and make it big the third time out. After all, Springsteen was a critics' cult figure until his third release, "Born to Run," cata-

pulted him into the stratosphere. And Parker was the critics' "pick to click" for the potentially explosive 1977, with the perfect face for it—compact and mysterious in sunglasses. Yet there is no obvious smash hit single on "Stick to Me," which means that he remains a relatively free man. He can still sit in his tight little room, recalling Phil Spector as he writes *Thunder and Rain*, or remembering a particularly crazy night down at the pub as he points a finger in *The Raid* and asks, "Where were you when the raid came?" "Stick to Me" is another chapter in the diary of a private man who was born to stand and fight.

Joan Armatrading: *Show Some Emotion*. Glyn Johns, producer. *A&M SP 4663, \$7.98. Tape: ●● CS 4663, ● 8T 4663, \$7.98.*

Joan Armatrading's first collaboration with producer/engineer Glyn Johns on her eponymous third album brought an already maturing and richly personal style into sudden, sharp focus. Although best known for his heritage as a rock architect (Stones, Beatles, Steve Miller, the Who, Eagles, ad infinitum), Johns has turned increasingly to the frontier of mid-'70s pop, working with subtler dynamics and more varied instrumental styles. His re-



Parker (in the shades) and the Rumour



Joan Armatrading

cent clientele includes Georgie Fame, Andy Fairweather-Low, and Pete Townshend and Ronnie Lane. Armatrading provided him with a special challenge because her feminine sensibility is stubbornly protected from conventional romance by her musical toughness and wide-ranging lyric ideas.

"Show Some Emotion" carries this inspired pairing to an even more stunning level than "Joan Armatrading," preserving the earlier LP's emotional chiaroscuro yet refining and advancing the artist's musical presence as both vocalist and guitarist. The new songs have more of a true band feel, despite the various combinations of keyboard players and rhythm sections. (Jerry Donahue—a transplanted American who has been a fixture of the British folk-rock scene since the '60s—is the one constant, his superbly restrained electric guitar performances moving nimbly from ornamental filigree to elegantly sinuous lead work.)

Armatrading remains the centerpiece of each song, though, her supple acoustic lead and powerful rhythm playing holding their own in the often brisk, propulsive fabric of the faster cuts (the title tune, *Never Is Too Late*, and *Mama Mercy*) and taking over as the instrumental core of the sultry *Opportunity*. And then there is that voice: a deep, powerful contralto that slips cleanly into a surprisingly wide upper range, recalling Odetta in its balance of timbre and color. Yet her phrasing is far more flexible than that singer's, depending on the material at hand. Efforts to pin down influences are probably futile at this point, however, for she moves through a full spectrum of inflections with a confidence that goes beyond momentary echoes of other artists.

Thus she can open the album with the bluesy, half-grooving love song *Woncha Come on Home*, carrying its wry pleading with just guitar, kalimba, and voice, and

then jump into the shimmering jazz momentum of the title cut. From there she can cool down for a middle-of-the-night ballad (*Warm Love*) and then rev up again for an emphatic, muscular reggae styling of *Never Is Too Late*. None of these transitions seems strained or calculated. Each of those songs and the works that follow establish their own special flavor, verifying that her impact ultimately derives as much from her writing as from the arrangement's economically drawn framework.

Johns's production is immaculate in its recorded accuracy and spacious ambience, and each detail is rendered with crispness. Yet the overall feel is still close to the playing, never coldly technical. And Armatrading's mercurial persona, moving as it does from tenderness to biting candor, could generate a few thousand words by itself. s.s.

Blue Oyster Cult: Spectres. Murray Krugman, Sandy Pearlman, David Lucas & Blue Oyster Cult, producers. Columbia JC 35019, \$7.98. Tape: ●●JCT 35019, ●●JCA 35019, \$7.98.

"Spectres" is a perplexing album because it's hard to put one's finger on precisely why it doesn't capture the imagination. Perhaps it's because punk rock now makes much of what used to pass

when a thinly veiled quote from the Beach Boys's *Good Vibrations* pops up on *Golden Age of Leather*. Two songs about vampires and one about Godzilla are three too many.

Anyway, "Spectres" rocks but rarely rivets, and it lacks the emotional resonance and surprising tenderness of BOC's last (and best) album, "Agents of Fortune." The music seldom seems to be coming from anywhere—from a feeling or an intellectual concept at best. It simply hangs there like, well, like a spectre. And the effect is more often hollow than haunting.

BOC has never worn its collective heart on its black-leather sleeve, so it's curious that the most striking songs here are the most straightforward and, yes, even sentimental. *Death Valley Nights'* insistent chorus ("All I want is a kiss from you, babe..."), for instance, is simple yet affecting. But too much of the album makes no impression at all. K.E.

Ray Charles: True to Life. Ray Charles, producer. Atlantic/Cross-Over SD 19142, \$7.98. Tape: ●●CS 19142, ●●TP 19142, \$7.98.

To anyone saddened by Ray Charles's "comeback" in a TV commercial for blank tape, "True to Life" should sound heartening indeed. Charles's relative



Blue Oyster Cult—missing the impact of past efforts

for hard rock seem pallid. But then, Blue Oyster Cult has gone soft of its own volition. The success last year of *Don't Fear the Reaper* (reprised here by the less than incendiary *Fireworks*) seems to have encouraged them to attempt to broaden their appeal still further by restraining their riffs and emphasizing vocal harmonies with a distinctly wimpish cast.

Or maybe it's because their fascination with evil, which used to be ironic, has become merely facetious. "Spectres" is a jokey album, never more so than

inactivity since the early '70s was compounded by his decision to form and distribute his own label, and the recordings of that period were clearly hampered by musical unevenness as well.

These new songs, by contrast, find him in stronger voice than any albums made in the last decade. It's an unassuming program of standards, both old and new: classic pop and show tunes by Rodgers and Hammerstein, Gershwin, and Sammy Cahn; some r&b; a version of Johnny Nash's *I Can See Clearly Now*

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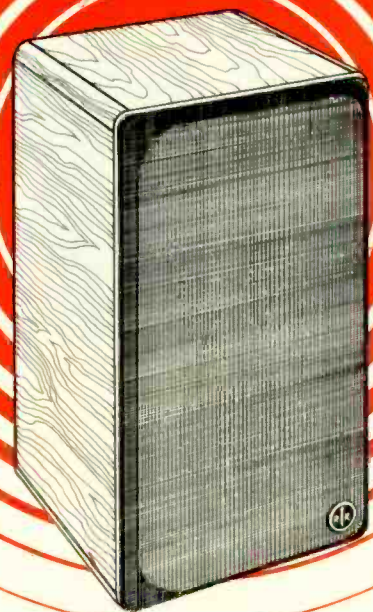
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that has been creditably transformed from reggae into a charged Memphis blues; and the Beatles' *Let It Be*.

His use of contemporary and vintage arranging styles is still somewhat disconcerting. The lean, charged r&b classicism of *I Can See Clearly Now* seems incongruous alongside the lounge melodrama of *Be My Love's* overstated horn charts. And the album's more energetic medium and uptempo tunes make the breezy cocktail-waltz treatment of *Oh, What a Beautiful Morning* sound enervated. But these lapses are more than compensated for by Charles's sustained power and ebullient persona.

The defiant fervor that gives *Let It Be* its resilient gospel feel, the exquisite candor of *The Jealous Kind*, the good-humored street savvy of *Game Number Nine*, and even the straightforward cover portrait, reinforce the LP's feeling of déjà vu to his '50s blues-based work with Atlantic. But "True to Life" transcends nostalgia to achieve its own character—a character that, admittedly, shows the singer's musical age but suggests his intact power as one of the century's most distinctive and influential pop originators. In fact, this record is one of the most reassuring surprises in some time. s.s.

Merle Haggard and the Strangers: A Working Man Can't Get Nowhere Today. Ken Nelson & Fuzzy Owen, producers. Capitol ST 11693, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 4XT 11693, ●● 8XT 11693, \$7.98.

When Merle Haggard left Capitol for MCA last year, one Capitol worker told me that the forsaken company would continue to release Haggard albums for years to come, so great was the stockpile he left behind. Judging by this collection



Merle Haggard—one of his finest

of 1976-77 material, there is much to look forward to, for it is a far better album than any sanctioned by Haggard in recent years.

Some of his best have been of older songs, chosen for worth rather than historicity, and sung with churlish devotion. Here are Jimmy Work's 1955 *Making Believe*, Hank Williams' 1950 *Moanin' the Blues*, the Delmore Brothers' 1949 *Blues Stay Away from Me*, and Bob Wills's 1947 *Blues for Dixie*. In *Got a Letter from My Kid Today*, Haggard revives Wills's obscure 1941 version of the Tin Pan Alley original.

Goodbye Lefty is a knowing, loving tribute to Lefty Frizzell, the greatest songwriter and one of the greatest singers country music has yet produced. *I'm a White Boy*, first released by Jim Mundy, is certainly among the best of Haggard's writing: a leering, happy, wise song about white folks and black folks that some will hear as another *Okie from Muskogee* and others as a wonderful antitoxin for chronic wimpiness.

A couple of songs fail. The title cut is a damp handful of prosaic nonsense—the sort that scholastic types and disc jockeys savor. *When My Last Song Is Sung* is a sacred ditty that I don't think even Jesus Christ would give a second listen to. But *I'm a White Boy* and the older songs make this one of the Haggard albums that will live on, fine and undated, until the end of time, when all that remains of country music will be a can of stale hair-spray. N.T.

The Joy. Michael Stewart, producer. Fantasy Records F 9538, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 5 9538, ●● 8 9538, \$7.98.

Back when Terry Garthwaite and Toni Brown were fronting the Joy of Cooking, groups with female lead singers were a novelty. Now, just several years later in the days of Fleetwood Mac and Heart, there's no question as to women's ability to (a) rock, (b) roll, and (c) sell millions of records, even—as in the case of Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell—older women. Which should take care of any inquiries as to why this album was recorded and released. Brown and Garthwaite got back together, evidently because their personal lives were in order and neither had managed to develop a solo career (in spite of Garthwaite's expensive, pretty nice album for Arista back in that company's early days).

Brown has the smoother, straighter voice and does the somewhat larger share of the duo's writing. Garthwaite sounds like a light, jazzy Janis Joplin, with a throaty quality that makes her instantly distinguishable. Usually they sing together, with the voices skipping over and blending with one another in a fash-



Toni Brown and Terry Garthwaite

ion as appealing as it is unique in its jazzy, almost scat, feel.

In a move that's as shrewd commercially as musically, the album contains a couple of "outside" songs that the two perform the very devil out of, particularly Van Morrison's *Come Running* and Eddie Floyd's *Til Your Back Ain't Got No Bone*. Both are well suited to (particularly) Garthwaite's obvious r&b leanings as well as to the instincts of the backup personnel. That includes some L.A. session musicians joined from time to time by such Bay Area pals as Taj Mahal and Elvin Bishop. Additionally, there are tunes by some relatively obscure writers—Judy Mayhan's *Wrap the World* and Ian Jack's *On the Natch*—which indicate that Stewart and the ladies have done some serious preparation for the LP. The originals are fine, too, but may fall something short of becoming standards in the pop repertoire. They'll sound good, though, if and when we get to hear the Joy live. T.E.

Kansas: Point of Know Return. Jeff Glixman, producer. *Kirshner JZ 34929*, \$7.98. *Tape: ●● JZT 34929, ● JZA 34929*, \$7.98.

Taking issue with Steely Dan's dictum that "Hot licks and rhetoric/Don't count much for nothing," Kansas declares on its new album that "All these hot licks and rhetoric/Surely do you no harm." Well, the disproof is in the pudding: The hot licks and rhetoric here are so much hot air. True, they're not injurious to your health, but they're not very interesting, either.

"Point of Know Return" disappoints expectations raised by its predecessor, "Leftoverture." The problem seems to be that this time around the group's

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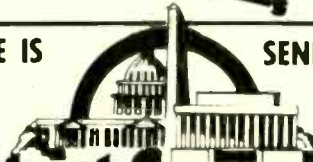
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BY NICK TOSCHES

Rex Allen Jr.: The Best of Rex. Norro Wilson, producer. Warner Bros. BS 3122, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M5 3122, ● M8 3122, \$7.98.

This anthology, drawn from 1974–77, is a pleasant example of a man who knows his limits. Our son-of-a-cowboy-singer who has been groomed for hosting TV game shows sings of love, mostly failed (*Goodbye, Don't Say Goodbye*, etc.), and nostalgia (*Can You Hear Those Pioneers, Cool Water*, etc.)—two thematic crowd-pleasers. And on the back cover, we see Rex holding a can of Budweiser and a cigarette, so there can be no doubt: This is not Pat Boone.



DONNA FARGO
Shame on Me
Includes the Title Single
Also Includes *Gone at Last*
Happy Together/Time

Donna Fargo: Shame on Me. Stan Silver, producer. Warner Bros. BS 3099, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M5 3099, ● M8 3099, \$7.98.

I must admit that I am partial to albums that feature on their covers pictures of women in hosiery. If Ms. Fargo were not displaying her fine denier here,

would I still describe her music with phrases such as “Wagnerian assurance,” “femininity beyond sex,” and “emotional hue-storm”? Would I even have succumbed to listening to a song with a title such as *Dee Dee* or *Ragamuffin Man*? Honestly I must admit: perhaps not.

Tompall Glaser: The Wonder of It All. Jimmy Bowen, producer. ABC AB 1036, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 5 1036AB, ● M6 1036AB, \$7.98.

This album is a disappointment, for it has none of the powers that set Tompall apart from the mundane bulk of Nashville. Instead of his raw, manic voice, we hear him straining to conform. Instead of his daring Texas-blues arrangements, we hear the Nashville Sound, about two steps to the left. Instead of visions and epiphanies, we hear everyday tropes. But I’ll keep listening to Tompall’s albums, for someday the definitive one will arrive.

Linda Hargrove: Impressions. Pete Drake, producer. Capitol ST 11685, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 4XT 11685, ● M8XT 11685, \$7.98.

Linda Hargrove possesses a sort of intelligence that separates her from most country artists, many of whom feel that two thousand years of lyric poetry has culminated gloriously in Larry Gatlin’s latest recorded effort.

However, like most intelligent people, Hargrove is often boring. That is why this album is such a very nice surprise:



LINDA HARGROVE
Impressions

Star-Crossed Lovers (a country singer who hyphenates!), *Mexican Love Songs*, and *Nashville, You Ain’t Hollywood* are first-rate examples of literacy-in-rein, of country songs that don’t read like rhymes from an elementary-school autograph book. Hyphenate on, Linda, you intelligent siren, you.

Buck Owens: Our Old Mansion. Norro Wilson, producer. Warner Bros. BS 3087, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M5 3087, ● M8 3087, \$7.98.

Anybody who takes out advertisements in newspapers begging his wife to come back home is okay by me, especially if he’s a country singer who dares to put *Let the Good Times Roll* at the opening of an album and who dares to sing almost-sick love songs such as *He Doesn’t Deserve You Any more* and *Let Me Touch You*. Just keep singing them like you do, Buck; she’ll have to come back.



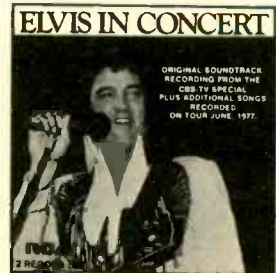
Dolly Parton: Here You Come Again. Gary Klein, producer. RCA APL 1-2544, \$6.98. Tape: ●● APK 1-2544, ● APS 1-2544, \$7.98.

This is Dolly Parton’s second post-Nashville album, and it is as tragic and pathetic as a 1978 flowers-in-hair pilgrimage to San Francisco. *God’s Coloring*

Book is a not unrepresentative title. After experiencing this dying fish of pious sentiment, one must admit that some spirits are best unfreed.

Elvis Presley: Elvis in Concert. Felton Jarvis, producer. RCA APL 2-2587, \$13.98 (two discs). Tape: ●● APK 2-2587, ● APS 2-2587, \$13.98.

Those who saw *Elvis in Concert* on CBS-TV last October know how bad Elvis sang and looked prior to his death. This two-record set represents the soundtrack of that special, along with some live performances taped in June of ’77. It is an inferior but morbidly alluring package. It’s disappointing to hear him sing *Jailhouse Rock* and *Hound Dog* so flaccidly, so empty of the fire of twenty years ago, as if they were little more than *My Way* or *Hawaiian Wedding Song* or any of the other Vegas floral displays on this album. On the other hand, the several episodes of *Elvis’ Fans’ Comments* bear witness to his absolute power, which puts him in the company of Christ and Hitler.



James Talley: Ain’t It Somethin’. James Talley, producer. Capitol ST 11695, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 4XT 11695, ● M8XT 11695, \$7.98.

James Talley makes the type of country music loved by people who believe there is a common bond between Kentucky coal-miners and the aborigines of Tierra del Fuego—people who took sociology courses and never threw away their notes. Talley maintains such a titanic sense of social conscience that his egalitarian odor can be detected at distances of up to thirty yards. The Brotherhood of Wimps has a voice: gravelly, sensitive, boring.

more gifted musicians, guitarists Kerry Livgren and Rich Williams and violinist Robby Steinhardt, play second fiddle to organist Steve Walsh, who doesn't pound a note that Matthew Fisher and/or Keith Emerson didn't pound ten years ago. His style—all bombast and bastardized Bach—is overbearing and outmoded. What's more, Walsh has assumed a major share of the songwriting chores, and none of his contributions or collaborations boasts the ingenuity of *Carry on Wayward Son*. Livgren's solo composition (and hit single) on "Left-overture."

One song here declares, "I am laughing/As it's meant to be," but "Point of Know Return" consists for the most part of humorless homilies along the lines of, "Don't hang on, nothing lasts forever/ But the earth and sky/It slips away, all your money won't/Another minute buy." The unnatural word order of that last line epitomizes the album's pretentiousness and stupidity. And it's a shame, because at their best these guys, as revealed in but fitful flashes (*Sparks of the Tempest* is intermittently galvanizing), can play up a storm. K.E.

Eddie Money. Bruce Botnick, producer. Columbia PC 34909, \$6.98. Tape: ●● PCT 34909, ● PCA 34909, \$7.98.

Eddie Money is a former New York policeman who says he's wanted to be a rock & roll star all of his life. From the sound of his debut album, he's wanted to sound a lot like Rod Stewart and a little like John Lennon all of his life. In any case, he's well on his way to wish fulfillment. Money plays keyboards and wrote all of the songs here save one, collaborating mostly with guitarist Jimmy Lyon. The tunes are good, as are the chances of



Ex New York cop Eddie Money

hitdom in some cases. I particularly like the ballads *Baby Hold On* and *Jealousys* (sic), both of which owe obvious debts to Stewart.

Whether he'll be anybody's "next big thing" is hard to say, but there's a good chance. Money's manager, Bill Graham, is nobody's fool. T.E.

Porter Wagoner: Porter. Porter Wagoner, producer. RCA APL 1-2432, \$6.98. Tape: ●● APK 1-2432, ● APS 1-2432, \$7.98.

Here in Nashville, one hears many remarks about Porter Wagoner. Two are agreed upon: Porter is crazy; Porter is the only singer in Nashville who could put a million dollars in cold cash on the table by merely making a withdrawal from his savings account. Porter, you see, may be crazy, but he's smart. Some say he's bitter, too. Ten years ago he found Dolly Parton and made her a star; now Dolly's deserted him and become a media darling.

But Porter will survive, even as the real Dolly Parton evanesces to something bland and grotesque, something between Linda Ronstadt and Kate Smith. Porter will survive, because he will never try to be anything other than what he has been since 1955: a country singer, a hillbilly with a guitar. And I'm happy that his new album is as good as Dolly's is bad.

In his version of the ancient *Hand Me Down My Walking Cane*, he plainly growls, "I got drunk/And I got in jail," and makes vast comments on the new pretentious ways of country music. Yes, Porter has always transcended frail metaphysics. And he knows it.

The Funky Grass Band is built upon a bunch of gossipy stories about country music's old blood, including the time Chubby Wise knocked off Hank Snow's toupee with his fiddle bow. *I Haven't Learned a Thing* is a killer booze song, as good as any he's sung in the past. *Crumbs from Another Man's Table* is about adultery and desperation. *Childhood Playground*, written by Porter, is a reminiscence so honest it's almost scary. Disc jockeys, that eerie race, are fond of asking the question, "What is country music?" If they played Porter's records instead of Larry Gatlin's, perhaps they wouldn't have to ask. N.T.

Dionne Warwick: Love at First Sight. Steve Barri & Michael Omartian, producers. Warner Bros. BS 3119, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M5 3119, ● M8 3119, \$7.98.

It's been two years since we've heard from Dionne Warwick. Alas, "Love at First Sight" is a limp return. Though most people probably associate her with black pop balladry, she comes, like so



Dionne Warwick—heavy on the strings

many, out of the churches. And the churches provide the best moments of this album: On *A Long Way to Go*, she decorates and intensifies a catchy, slightly folksy melody, kicking and shouting for joy as she builds and intertwines with backup voices as tight as lianas.

The balance of the LP is sweetish ballads, heavy on the strings, laidback in the vocals. This works on the title track and on the country flavored *Livin' It Up Is Startin' to Get Me Down*. Elsewhere the ailment is pretty clear—a sense of sameness, gradually lapsing into tedium. What's less clear is its cause. Warwick's singing can't be faulted technically, and her tone and phrasing are varied enough. But her emotional intensity (or lack of it) is too consistent, and the result is less cool than lackadaisical. Given that she has never been too good at transcending her material, the question is: Does the final effect of competent listlessness stem from innocuously banal production and arrangements, or is she the one who is just going through the motions? J.S.R.

Barbara Wyrick. Clayton Ivey & Terry Woodford, producers. Calliope Records CAL 7005, \$6.98.

Until now, Barbara Wyrick has been as obscure a singer as she has been a writer. Based in Muscle Shoals, she has managed to place a few album cuts and one hit country single—Sami Jo's *Tell Me a Lie*. She has also done some background singing and cut a few song demos, and even released a single or two under her own name, with nothing much happening. Her current producers have managed to sign Wyrick to a label, albeit a new one, and to get her first album released. It's a knockout, and letting it get

R&B

BY JOHN STORM ROBERTS

Ann Peebles: If This Is Heaven. Willie Mitchell, producer. *Hi Records HLP 6002, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 5357 6002H, ●● 8357 6002H, \$7.98*

All Right! A rich, tough, flexible voice, intelligent songwriting, and a tight band playing crisp arrangements all add up to classic soul/r&b. No new departures and none needed.



Esther Phillips: You've Come a Long Way Baby. Alfred Pee Wee Ellis, producer. *Mercury SRM 1-1187, \$6.98. Tape: ●● MCR 4-1187, ●● MC 8 1-1187, \$7.98.*

To say that Esther Phillips confuses style with mannerism is almost lese majesty, but it's the truth, as witnessed in particular

by her version of the Bessie Smith classic, *You've Been a Good Ole Wagon*. She's at her best fronting a big band, which she does on several tracks here, and her first Mercury album does her more justice than CTI records ever did.

The Sylvers: New Horizons. The Sylvers, producers. *Capitol ST 11705, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 4XT 11705, ●● 8XT 11705, \$7.98.*

Any tendency to put the Sylvers down because of their bubble-gum successes should be resisted. Great Art it ain't, but mass-appeal music with gusto it is.



Narada Michael Walden: I Cry, I Smile. Narada Michael Walden, producer. *Atlantic SD 19141, \$7.98. Tape: ●● CS 19141, ●● TP 19141, \$7.98.*

Don't we all? A mix of fluent guitar, the rather daffy Indianisms of California guru-rock, tight rock-oriented r&b, and other graceful touches (including a moment of Mexican) make for an album of surprising charm.

JE 34835



The Jacksons: Goin' Places. Kenneth Gamble & Leon Huff, producers. *Epic JE 34835, \$7.98. Tape: ●● JET 34835, ●● JEA 34835, \$7.98.*

What with those cute Jackson kids singin' and good ol' Kenneth and Leon producerin', ain't no danger the product won't be as expected—right

down to Gamble's cracker-barrelisms on the cover. Still and

all, the art is kind of endearing. And where there is no surprise there can be no disappointment.

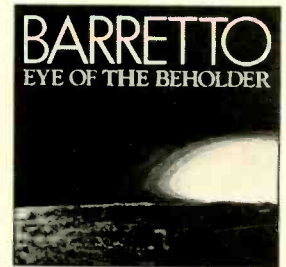
Cissie Houston. Michael Zager, producer. *Private Stock, PS 2031, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 5300 2031, ●● 8300 2031, \$7.98.*

The new black m.o.r. works in various ways. This version gives songs from Elton John to Burt Bacharach a treatment compounded of contemporary gospel and rather steamy mainstream balladry. At moments Ms. Houston gets so soulful she's positively sticky, but her vocal brilliance and the gospel-choir backups (almost totally neglected by r&b these days) usually achieve distinction.

Grace Jones: Portfolio. Tom Moulton, producer. *Island ILPS 9470, \$7.98. Tape: ●● 2C1 9470, ●● Y81 9470, \$7.98.*

Some things are silly, others are plain ridiculous. Ms. Jones, apparently the latest disco wonder, is said to have many talents. Singing isn't one of them. While she's in tune quite a lot of the time, she doesn't seem to have the slightest notion that the lyrics might mean anything. Best track is *La Vie en Rose*, and even there she sounds almost as mechanical as her clockwork-disco backing.

Ray Barretto: Eye of the Beholder. Stix Hooper, Joe Sample, & Wilton Felder, producers. *Atlantic SD 19140, \$7.98. Tape: ●● CS 19140, ●● TP 19140, \$7.98.*

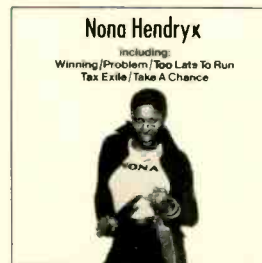


Former salsa bandleader Barretto has also been playing conga for other men's fusion for years. His own version moves between the Crusaders and the Fania All-Stars (recent version) in general ambience, with some strong Latin and jazz references. Key question: Can tightness, craftsmanship, and intelligence compensate for lack of vocals in Barretto's bid for the charts?

Ronnie Dyson: Love in All Flavors. Chuck Jackson & Marvin Yancy, producers. *Columbia PC 34866, \$6.98. Tape: ●● PCT 34866, ●● PCA 34866, \$7.98.*

The Svengalis to Natalie Cole's trilby strike again. Dyson sings in what has become a classic soul style, and while his phrasing doesn't float and sting like the best of type, he's a hefty cut above average. Production is the Jackson-Yancy double barrel: a mix of admirably simple and trendily cluttered tracks.

PE 34863



Nona Hendryx. Michael Sherman, producer. *Epic PE 34863, \$6.98. Tape: ●● PET 34863, ●● PEA 34863, \$7.98.*

The rock feeling here is so strong I'm not quite sure it really belongs in this column. In any case, it's a fine, varied, and smoking album, although Ms. Hendryx is a much better singer than she is a lyric writer. The jacket strikes me as less evil than dumb.

lost somewhere between the pressing plant and people's homes would be a pity.

Here are her current (as this is being written) single, *Left over Love*, her own strong reading of *Tell Me a Lie*, and six other professionally crafted originals. Also included are retellings of Luther Ingram's hit *If Loving You Is Wrong I Don't Want to Be Right* (also recently cut by Rod Stewart, an apparent coincidence of good taste) and the Rascals' *Groovin'*. That last, though sung well enough, may be the least successful cut on the album, if only for its slightly anachronistic lyric. Backing is by the usual Muscle Shoals musicians, who certainly know their way with a soul tune and who sound here as though they're working with an old-or young-friend. Which, of course, they are. T.E.

JAZZ

Buddy Emmons & Buddy Spicher: Buddies. Michael Melford, producer. *Flying Fish 041*, \$6.98.

For reasons that all but defy rationality, many Nashville studio musicians spend what off-hours they can find playing a kind of rapid pseudo-jazz. Flying Fish Records, a worthy independent based in Chicago, devotes a good deal of their catalog to just such sessions; it's the equivalent of Norman Granz or Orrin Keepnews putting together a bunch of jazz musicians, letting them blow for a couple of hours, and then putting out huge stacks of vinyl documentation of the time spent. Sometimes it works; sometimes it doesn't.

This one works. Buddy Emmons is, to many, the pre-eminent modern steel guitarist, developing techniques used by virtually every contemporary practitioner of the instrument. He was also one of the first Nashvillians to record in a jazz setting: On the sessions for "Steel Guitar Jazz," which he recorded in New York in the early Sixties, no one else knew any country material, so they wound up playing *Cherokee*, *Witchcraft*, and tunes by Sonny Rollins and Horace Silver. Which, of course, says more for Emmons than it does for Bobby Scott, Jerome Richardson, and the rest.

Fiddler Buddy Spicher is generally used to get a "traditional" sound on country sessions and Johnny Gimble for the swing and jazz sounds. Yet Spicher is quite capable in this pseudo-jazz idiom; certainly more so than Vassar Clements, another Flying Fish favorite. Of special note here is guitarist Lenny Breau, one of the most overlooked, brilliant musi-

cians in the business: he's a fine jazz player who is equally at home with Chet Atkins (as he often is) as he is with Anne Murray's band.

The songs are culled from the jazz and country books, with Bill Monroe's *Uncle Pen* following Neal Hefti's *Little Darlin'*, a version of Michel Legrand's *Watch What Happens*, and Clifford Brown's *Joy Spring*. Randy Goodrum plays fine piano, Charles Dungey (who should get more work) appears on standup bass, Kenny Malone is the drummer, and Bucky Barrett alternates lead guitar with Breau. Janie Fricke is heard briefly on vocals during *Broken Down in Tiny Pieces*, a 1976 hit for Billy "Crash" Craddock and the least indispensable piece here. T.E.

Joe Farrell: La Catedral y el Toro. Ralph MacDonald & William Eaton, producers. Warner Bros. BS 3121, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M5 3121, ● M8 3121, \$7.98.

Joe Farrell has been one of jazz's nonpareil saxophonists for as long as I can remember, but he has never really received the attention awarded some of his less gifted contemporaries. It's not hard to



Joe Farrell—buried talents

understand, then, why he would have jumped at the opportunity to make this record, with its attendant pop-style production and big-market distribution.

Alas, his gifts have been misplaced. Instead of the free wheeling, passionate tenor solos that sometimes bring John Coltrane to mind, Farrell gives us meandering forays through strung-together riffs that even a beginning jazz player would discard. Buried in production that

Continued on page 138



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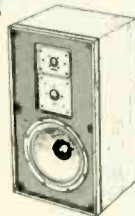
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Continued from page 135

is blatantly inappropriate, Farrell simply loses his way in a mire of uncharacteristic blandness. Some examples: *Promise Me Your Love* and *Is It Asking Too Much* are silly r&b-style songs that waste his fine soprano and flute; *Disco Dust*, a Farrell original, rolls along brightly, but he still sounds repressed—locked into a style not his own. *Cyclone Rider* is all production; his role could have been played by any competent horn player. Only his title composition rings true, and even here much of the fire is provided by other players, notably guitarists Eric Gale and Jay Berliner.

None of this would matter too much if Farrell were a second-rate talent looking for a fast buck. (And I don't deny the fact that first-rate talents should be making a few bucks, too.) But little Joe is one of the best there is at his craft. As such, he deserves a lot more consideration than he got here. It looks like the "creative" arbiters just couldn't see beyond the ends of their commercial noses. D.H.

Lee Konitz, Paul Bley, Bill Connors:

Pyramid. Paul Bley & Carol Goss, producers. *Improvising Artists IAI 37.38.45, \$6.98.*

Lee Konitz & Hal Galper: Windows. Nils Winther, producer. *Inner City IC 2057, \$6.98.*

The will-o'-the-wisp career of saxophonist Lee Konitz seems to be coming into focus again. The foundation that he had established in the Forties with Lennie Tristano and in the Fifties with Stan Kenton had evaporated to such an extent by the Sixties that he was a nonperson, musically. But his re-emergence is slow and steady (he now works consistently in the New York area in a variety of settings), and these two discs find him in strikingly different pianistic situations. With Paul Bley, he is willy-nilly an experimentalist as basically directed by Bley. With Hal Galper, he deals largely with standard material, but here he is the one who sets the tone.

In both settings he is provocatively creative. With Galper, *I'm Gettin' Sentimental over You* starts out deceptively Dorsey-like but soon falls gently and with no jarring breaks into totally Konitzian concept. On *Sweet and Lovely*, a tune that goes back to his Tristano days, he keeps the source firmly in view while adding fresh insight, which has always been the key to Konitz' improvisations. *Goodbye*, Benny Goodman's closing theme, is given a poignance that seems almost unbelievable after all these years of hearing the Goodman version's routine sentimentality.

On "Pyramid" he gets an opportunity to work in more impressionistic settings.

It is devoted to originals by Bley, Konitz, and guitarist Bill Connors, with Bley on both electric and acoustic piano and Konitz on soprano and alto sax. The playing is notably thoughtful—not that the Galper-Konitz performances aren't, but the thinking process is more strongly pronounced here. And it is mood music in the best and most refreshing sense: reflections and creations that shift, change, blend, pick up thoughts and toy with them, and then move on. It is charming and relaxed, neither of which qualities are usually associated with experimental music. But it all comes together in this set. J.S.W.

V.S.O.P.: The Quintet. David Rubinson & Friends, producers. *Columbia C2 34976, \$9.98 (two discs). Tape: PCT 34976, PCA 34976, \$9.98.*

The enormous success that V.S.O.P. has had in the last year has to be gratifying to jazz musicians who have rejected, for whatever reasons, the electronic route to the stars. It is, of course, the Miles Davis band of the mid-Sixties—Tony Williams on drums, Herbie Hancock on piano, Ron Carter on bass, Wayne Shorter on saxophones—with the addition of trumpeter Freddie Hubbard. And, although each of these musicians has alter-ego associations with electric jazz, each has chosen to stick with his acoustic instrument in V.S.O.P.

The result is not new jazz, not even avant-garde jazz, but it is jazz in its purest tradition because it energetically and spiritually plumbs the creative potential of each member of the ensemble. Almost without exception, they play at the peak of their skills, and contemporary multitrack techniques and high-performance microphones allow us to hear the group's inner working in a way that simply wasn't possible in the mid-Sixties.

I do have a few problems with the recording, however. It was taped in mid-1977 in Los Angeles before an enthusiastic audience, and the musicians generally respond well. But some of the numbers are extended beyond their natural productivity, and the slow ones in particular tend toward sluggishness. Another carp: Try as I might, I can't avoid missing the presence of Miles Davis. Hubbard doesn't try to imitate him and is a firm enough artist in his own right not to have to. But the group's sound, style, and general ambience are clearly drawn from the Davis aesthetic. Pieces like *Third Plane*, *Dolores*, and *Jessica* are virtually Miles Davis revisited. Only when V.S.O.P. pulls away from that and grooves into a kind of late-Fifties hard bop—as on Hubbard's *Byrdlike* and *One of a Kind*—does it really begin to find an identity of its own. D.H.

Jazz

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Ron Carter: *Piccolo*. A Retrac production. *Milestone M 55004*. \$9.98 (two discs). *Tape: ●● 5161 55004, ●● 8161 55004*. \$10.98.

Ron Carter seems to be going through an impressive renaissance as a creative jazz force. This is the third recording in a row in which he stretches and expands the potential of the string bass—an instrument that is not often heard in these days of high electronic energy. This time out, Carter concentrates on the piccolo bass, with Buster Williams backing him on the full-sized instrument (along with pianist Kenny Barron and drummer Ben Riley). The four-sided in-concert recording never loses interest. D.H.

Chick Corea, David Holland, Barry Altschul: *Arc*. Manfred Eicher, producer. *ECM 1-1009*, \$7.98. *Tape: ●● CF 1009, ●● 8F 1009*, \$7.98.

"Arc" was recorded in 1971 in Germany by ECM's prolific producer, Manfred Eicher. Viewed from the context of what Chick Corea, Dave Holland, and Barry Altschul are playing today, it is a strangely dated recording. Corea still sounds as though he is haunted by visions of Herbie Hancock, and Holland doesn't display the independence of his current playing. Valuable, I suppose, for historical purposes, but not terribly intriguing otherwise. D.H.

The Jerry Fuller-Don DeMicheal Swingtet: *In Concert*. A Do-It-Yourself Production. *Fleetwood BMC 5126*, \$7 (Swing Records, Rear 200 Endicott St., Danvers, Mass. 01923).

Any group built around clarinet and vibes inevitably invites comparison with the original Benny Goodman Quartet. In general, despite clarinetist Jerry Fuller's habit of falling into Goodman mannerisms, this quintet has enough individuality to create an aura of its own. Don DeMicheal's vibes build a hard-driving momentum that is totally removed from Lionel Hampton's riffing, and John Ulrich, on piano, plays with a vitalizing punch that would be totally foreign to Teddy Wilson. Bassist Eddie deHaas, drummer Wayne Jones, and Ulrich make up a full-bodied rhythm section that moves with a smoother sense of power than Wilson and Gene Krupa, with no bass, could provide. And even when Fuller is in his Goodman bag, he is a judicious follower and brings it off easily and naturally. The tunes, except for a sinuous *Peter Kelly's Blues*, are Swing Era standards. J.S.W.

Dave Jasen: *Rip-Roarin' Ragtime*. *Folkways FG 3561*, \$6.98.

Dave Jasen's piano explorations in the netherworld of ragtime take him from the lesser known works of Joplin, Lamb, and Scott through the latter stages of the rag era and into the novelty ragtime of the '20s. He also includes a couple of Jasen originals for good measure. The emphasis is on the 1910-20 decade, with performance ranging from the

classic manner of *Ophelia Rag* (1910) by James Scott to intimations of novelty rags with Arthur Morse's *Meteor Rag* (1920). Jasen has grown tremendously as a performer and plays with authority and flair here. He is supported by excellent and apt accompaniment—Ed McKee on tuba and Mike Schwimmer on washboard. J.S.W.

Listen: *Listen featuring Mel Martin*. Mel Martin & Listen, producers. *Inner City IC 1025*, \$6.98.

This is a San Francisco group that plays authentic, if not always remarkable, jazz. Unfortunately, Listen can't decide if it wants to be a second-generation offspring of Chuck Mangione or a mini-Weather Report. At times it sounds like both. Only in its better moments—when percussionist Richard Waters explores his exotic instruments, when Andy Narell improvises on steel drums, and when leader Mel Martin forgets about playing fast and far and plays with passion and fire—does the group begin to pique the imagination. D.H.

Charlie Mariano: *Reflections*. Esko Linnavalli, producer. *Catalyst 7915*, \$6.98.

So, even the Finns do it, although Cole Porter did not mention them specifically. This is Charlie Mariano in Helsinki, surrounded by a very able group of Finnish jazzmen who give his alto and soprano saxophone strong, vitalizing support and, in the instance of Eero Koivistoinen, present a challenging solo alternative. Koivistoinen has a hard, rough-edged tone that is ferociously commanding on tenor and sounds like a lyrical banshee on soprano. He provides the excitement, Mariano provides the assurance. J.S.W.

Rare Hot Chicago Jazz 1925(?)–1929. B. Klatzko, producer. *Herwin 109*, \$6.98.

This is the first LP reissue of a set of rough-toned exuberant Chicago South Side discs released in the late '20s, and it is considerably better than most small-group reissues from that period. Highlights include some glimpses of Frank Meltrose's joyful Jelly Roll Morton piano style; a superb, beautifully balanced trio with Henry McCord on trumpet, Ted Tinsley on guitar, and Kline Tyndall on piano; some identification puzzles (is that Freddie Keppard? Johnny Dodds? Jimmie Noone?); and a brilliant, anonymous alto saxophonist who is apparently doomed to go down in jazz history as "unknown white teenager." Transfers are relatively good for old 78 rpms of this type. There's only one really rough spot, but the band playing underneath it—the Original Midnight Ramblers—has such clean, driving power that it cuts right through the snaps, crackles, and pops. J.S.W.

The Jack Wilkins Quartet. Hank O'Neal & Fred Miller, producers. *Chiaroscuro CR 156*, \$6.98.

It's odd how difficult it is to find recordings by young jazz musicians that deal with the straight-ahead, basic elements of jazz improvisation. More than anything else, that is what this modest but always fascinating recording does. Guitarist Wilkins leads a group that includes Randy Brecker on flugelhorn (playing, for once, as though he cares), Eddie Gomez on bass, and Jack DeJohnette on drums and piano. Ironically, Wilkins—a tradition-based player—is the least-known of the four. But he sets a superlative playing level, especially on his own tune, *Fum*, that the others are hard-put to match. D.H.

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