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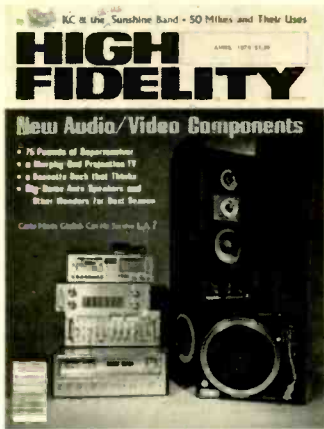
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1040, 1042, and All That

The first number in the above heading is the "title" of the most widely read piece of literature in the U.S. and, this month, possibly in the world. It is, of course, that of our federal income tax form. The second is the number of a House of Representatives bill submitted by Congressman Fred Richmond (D-N.Y.), unofficially called the "Richmond arts and education checkoff bill" and more colloquially just "the Richmond bill." (I can't help thinking of it as "the Chekhov bill.")

Basically, H.R. 1042 instructs the Internal Revenue Service to place three checkoff boxes on the first page of the income tax form, allowing the taxpayer to contribute to the arts (via the National Endowment for the Arts), to education (via the National Endowment for the Humanities), or to both. This would not be the same sort of arrangement as the current checkoff whereby you designate a dollar of your tax payment to a presidential campaign fund. In the new checkoff boxes, you would indicate how much, if anything, *extra* you would like to contribute to the arts or education and would add it to your tax payment (or deduct it from your refund).

There are, of course, all sorts of worthy causes. Why single out the arts? Why not science or medicine? First, Congress allocates \$10 billion annually to the sciences, 90% earmarked specifically for medicine. Second, there are well-organized institutions that easily and effectively reach the American public for other socially beneficial endeavors: the United Way, for instance. But there has never been a financially viable way to reach John \$ Public to invite him to become a patron of the arts. H.R. 1042 would reach almost everybody.

Back in 1973, and again in 1975, pollster Lou Harris made the startling discovery that most of the 80 million U.S. taxpayers would be willing to donate part of their tax refund, or add to their tax payments, to help support the arts: 64% would contribute at least \$5.00; 47% would contribute up to \$25; and 36% would give \$50 or more. That would net \$1.7 billion to support the arts in America; even if Harris were off by 40%, it would be more than enough to wipe out the debt of approximately \$1 billion that our arts organizations sustain each year. The bill specifies that none of the money collected through taxpayers' donations would be used for administrative purposes and that Congress will not cut its own annual allocations for the two Endowments.

When and if the bill passes the House, an identically worded companion bill, S. 1080, introduced by Senator Charles Mathias (R-Md.), waits in the Senate. H.R. 1042 has been languishing in the Ways and Means Committee for over a year, although ten of the thirty-seven committee members are sponsors (more than 130 congressmen have agreed to sponsor the bill). Hearings are expected (by the optimistic) this spring.

If you are at all sympathetic to the idea, please write to your congressman. Better yet, organize a letter-writing campaign. That's the way many of those sponsors decided to become sponsors; a few hundred letters from constituents—especially for such an apple-pie-and-Mom bill that will cost the government nothing—can do wonders to persuade congressmen to stimulate the arts in America.

Leonard Marcus

COMING NEXT MONTH

Spring is traditionally cleanup, paint-up, fix-up time, and in that spirit our May issue offers Howard Roberson's **How to Keep Your Stereo System Sounding like New**: tips on easy home maintenance, a step-by-step method for locating the source of any trouble, how to decide when professional service is necessary, and what to expect (and how to save money) when it is. Audio-Video Editor Robert Long assesses **The New IHF Amplifier Testing Standard**, and Joshua Logan helps us celebrate **Irving Berlin's Ninetieth Birthday**. Patrick J. Smith examines **The Music of Leos Janacek** for its lasting significance in this, the fiftieth anniversary of his death, a year that promises a fresh burst of recording activity for his important operas. In **BACKBEAT** our inquiring eye ranges from the recent National Association of Music Merchants, Inc. (NAMM), convention to **Roberta Flack** to the long and varied record-business life of Warner Bros. producer **Jerry Wexler**. Plus all our regular columns and features.

SOLUTION TO HIFI-CROSTIC NO. 33

ALAN WALKER

An Anatomy of Musical Criticism

Separating musical sheep from unmusical goats is basically an intuitive process. We sleepwalk our way observing, often with somnambulistic certainty, what is good and what is not. But we know next to nothing about the way in which we do it.

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Editorial correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, *High Fidelity*, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230. Editorial contributions will be welcomed, and payment for articles accepted will be arranged prior to publication. Unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by return postage.

Letters



Music Reproduction

It is inconceivable that a researcher as inspired as Andrew Kazdin, in "Toward a Super-Refined Music Reproducer" [January], could progress through that logical chain of developments in the art of the reproduction of sound and yet be totally blind to the one hurdle remaining. Listening to recorded music must be made participatory again. Clearly, the best way to do this is exactly as it was done in days gone by: eliminate the very inconvenient line cord and plug, so often the cause of nasty falls, and reinstitute the crank with which the listener can impress his own personality on the music to be played. Please don't let Mr. Kazdin put his machine into production without making a crank-wound spring-drive motor standard equipment!

Edgar R. Jones
Newington, Conn.

I couldn't sleep until I wrote to you about the article "Toward a Super-Refined Music Reproducer." I found it irritating but not surprising that the author—Andrew Kazdin, director of a&r production for Columbia Masterworks—would make light of the few small firms that are dedicated to making higher quality music available to the public.

While some of the small specialty firms go to unnecessary extremes—for example, completely eliminating tape recorders (I doubt that even the most critical ear could tell the difference between "source" and "tape" off an Ampex ATR-100)—their efforts and their products are to be commended. All I can say is: Thank you, Sheffield, Crystal Clear, and all the others for your fine recordings. You have proven that distortion, especially inner-groove, is not a concomitant of the disc medium. Keep it up!

Daniel C. Brayton
Covina, Calif.

Strong for Strauss

I second Scott Eggert's suggestion ["Letters," February] that more of the neglected late operas of Richard Strauss should be made available on disc. Conventional wisdom has it that Strauss wrote nothing of interest between *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1917) and the last few years of his life. However, Karl Böhm's recording of *Daphne* (1937) belies this assumption. *Daphne* is a charming, if not theatrically incisive, composition. Even if its chronological neighbors are not as inspired or satis-

fying, I would like to be able to judge for myself. I implore Angel to release its *Die schweigsame Frau* here and give Decca/London heartiest encouragement in its projected Strauss opera recordings.

In addition to the 1948 *Daphne* recording by Erich Kleiber, Educational Media Associates now offers a 1952 recording of *Die Liebe der Danae* conducted by Clemens Krauss (RR 464, available from Disco Corp., P.O. Box 771, Berkeley, Calif. 94701). Also of interest to the Strauss aficionado is its recording (IG1 301) of the early *Feuersnot* (1901), a 1973 concert performance conducted by Peter Maag.

Lee Parsons
Clayton, Ind.

For more on planned Strauss opera recordings, see "Behind the Scenes" this month.

Mistaken Identity

Sol London's article on Paganini, "The Devil in Paris" [February], was fascinating—not the least aspect being the "rare pre-Daguerreotype photograph" of the violinist in 1831. According to one source, this is not Paganini!

In Time-Life's distinguished art book devoted to Eugène Delacroix, the spurious photograph is reproduced along with Delacroix's portrait and Jean Ingres's sketch of the violinist. To quote the book, it is "a trumped-up photograph of a man impersonating the maestro," which was "circulated for years. . . ." Unfortunately, no further information is given.

Paul Morrison
Rochester, Mich.

So far we have been unable either to affirm or refute Time-Life attribution of the photographer. Can any reader help?

Faux Pas?

I really do like your magazine, but your February cover provoked me very much. For *HIGH FIDELITY*, the contents of which usually are on a high intellectual and affective plane, to put a picture of a short-skirted maid on the cover really shows a lack of taste. You've committed a great faux pas!

Bette Young
New York, N.Y.

Restoring Kromy Forest

David Hamilton's review of the "original" Boris Godunov [January] does your usual

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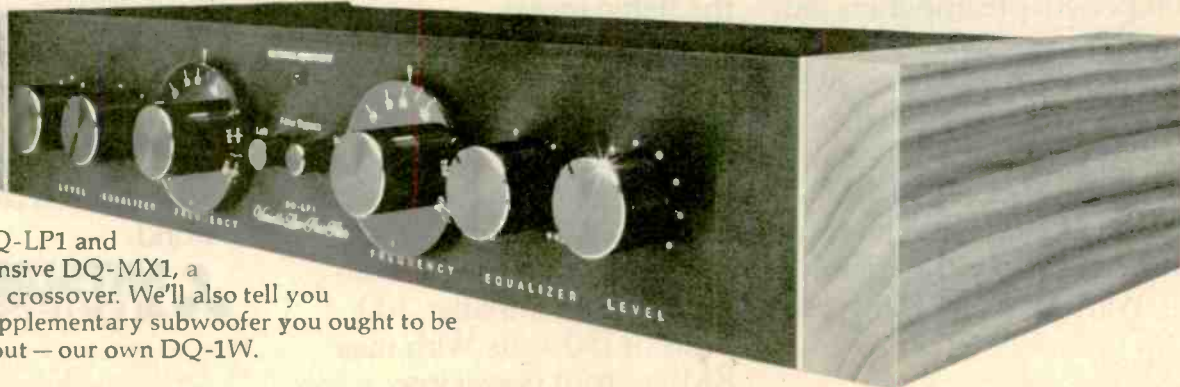
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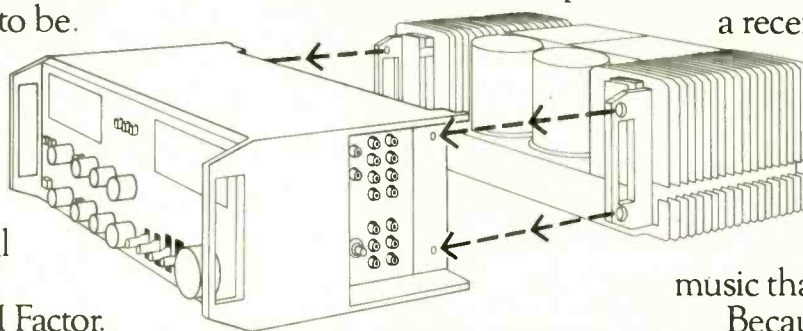
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competent job of putting the recorded edition into perspective, but it makes one statement with which one might take exception: "... it does not permit the listener to restore what the composer had in mind in 1872 by simply skipping [the] St. Basil's [scene] (unless he undertakes a tape-splicing job to put the Simpleton and the boys back into [the] Kromy [Forest scene])." What I take exception to is the implication that Mr. Hamilton's tape-oriented readers will not attempt the restoration and that, if we do, physical splicing is the only means available to us. He evidently has yet to discover the joys of the cassette-deck pause control.

But how exactly should the Kromy Forest scene be structured? The references to cue marks in the score, often present in your reviews, don't help if the would-be editor doesn't have that particular score before him. The notes in the album sketch in more or less what the review tells us (that alterations have been made, but not precisely where). Logic dictates that the Simpleton's exhortation to Boris must be abandoned with the St. Basil's scene. But all that is not enough. Can Mr. Hamilton offer a game plan for the reconstruction so we can listen to a close approximation of the 1872 version on tape, as dubbed from the mixed version represented by the recording?

A. Lissner
Dayton, Ohio

Mr. Hamilton replies: Perhaps too glibly. I assumed that readers interested in the Boris problem would be familiar with the Rimsky version, in which the sequence of episodes in the Kromy Forest scene conforms to Mussorgsky's intentions; thus, either of the Christoff recordings will serve as a good model for reconstructing the scene from Semkow's scrambling. (Rimsky-version recordings that include St. Basil's are not, of course, useful models, since they indulge in the same scrambling.)

Readers without such a model at hand should follow this game plan: Start with Kromy Forest, through the chorus in which the populace mocks the boyar. Then cut to St. Basil, at the entrance of the boys teasing the Simpleton ("Trrr, trrr, trrr..."). Stick with this through the Simpleton's song and the theft of his kopeck. Then he sings three lamenting phrases, each beginning "A! A!"; at the third of these, stop after the second "A!" and return to Kromy Forest for the sustained horn note just before Varlaam and Missail begin their off-stage chanting. (Strictly speaking, the Simpleton should sing a long "A!" in unison with that horn note—but you'll have to overdub that with the help of the nearest available tenor.) Then proceed with Kromy Forest to the end.

Correction

The price of the VOR Vac-O-Rec that appeared in Edward J. Foster's February article "Things to Keep Records Quiet" was incorrect. It is \$29.95, not \$44.95. We regret the error.

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Brisbane's Recording Studio: Right the First Time

by John Culshaw

BRISBANE, Australia—About five years ago the Australian Broadcasting Commission finally took pity on its Queensland Symphony Orchestra and decided to build a studio for broadcasts, recordings, and occasional television. For thirty years the orchestra had languished in small improvised studios or played in public in the City Hall, which has, in the very center of the auditorium, the most spectacular standing wave I have ever encountered. It does not trouble the orchestra up on the platform; but heaven help any member of the audience who, being centrally placed, happens to cough or drop a heavy object, because you could read the whole of Vol. 1 of Ernest Newman's *Life of Richard Wagner* by the time the sound has stopped bouncing back and forth between floor and ceiling. For this and all sorts of other reasons a new studio was justified, and when I was in Brisbane in 1976 it was already taking shape. It was completed in late 1977, and I went back to carry out the first orchestral tests.

I must admit that I approached the task with trepidation. I knew of modern studios all over the world that, though regarded as apples of delight

by the architects who designed them, had turned out to be acoustical horrors beyond any hope of redemption save that of tearing them down and starting all over again—a practice not unheard of with modern concert halls. So my only point in devoting a column to the new Brisbane studio is to report that those concerned have it very nearly exactly right the first time around.

Brisbane has a population of about a million, but as the studio is not intended for use as a concert hall it has been built in a quiet location a mile or two out of the city. Proper attention has been paid to incidentals that matter a great deal in a climate so extremely hot as Brisbane's: There is ample parking space close to the entrance (whereas the Sydney Opera House still has no car parking at all), and the air-conditioning is not only efficient, but silent. The dressing rooms are spacious, and there is a recreation area overlooking the river, all of which makes for good orchestral psychology: Contented musicians tend to play better. But of course what matters is the studio itself.

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Drive System	Single Capstan	Single Capstan	Single Capstan	Dual Capstan
Wow & Flutter	0.07% WRMS	0.06% WRMS	0.08% WRMS	0.05% WRMS
Total Harmonic Distortion	1.5%	(Not Available)	1.5%	1.4%
Frequency Response (CrO ₂ /FeCr)	30Hz-15kHz ± 3dB	30Hz-16kHz (Incomplete Spec)	30Hz-16kHz ± 3dB	30Hz-17kHz ± 3dB
Signal/Noise Ratio (with Dolby on @ 1kHz)	63dB over 5kHz	62dB	60dB over 5kHz	62dB
Dolby Noise Reduction	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dolby FM Circuitry	No	Yes	No	Yes
Pre-amps	2	2	2	4
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Price information from High Fidelity, August, 1977 issue

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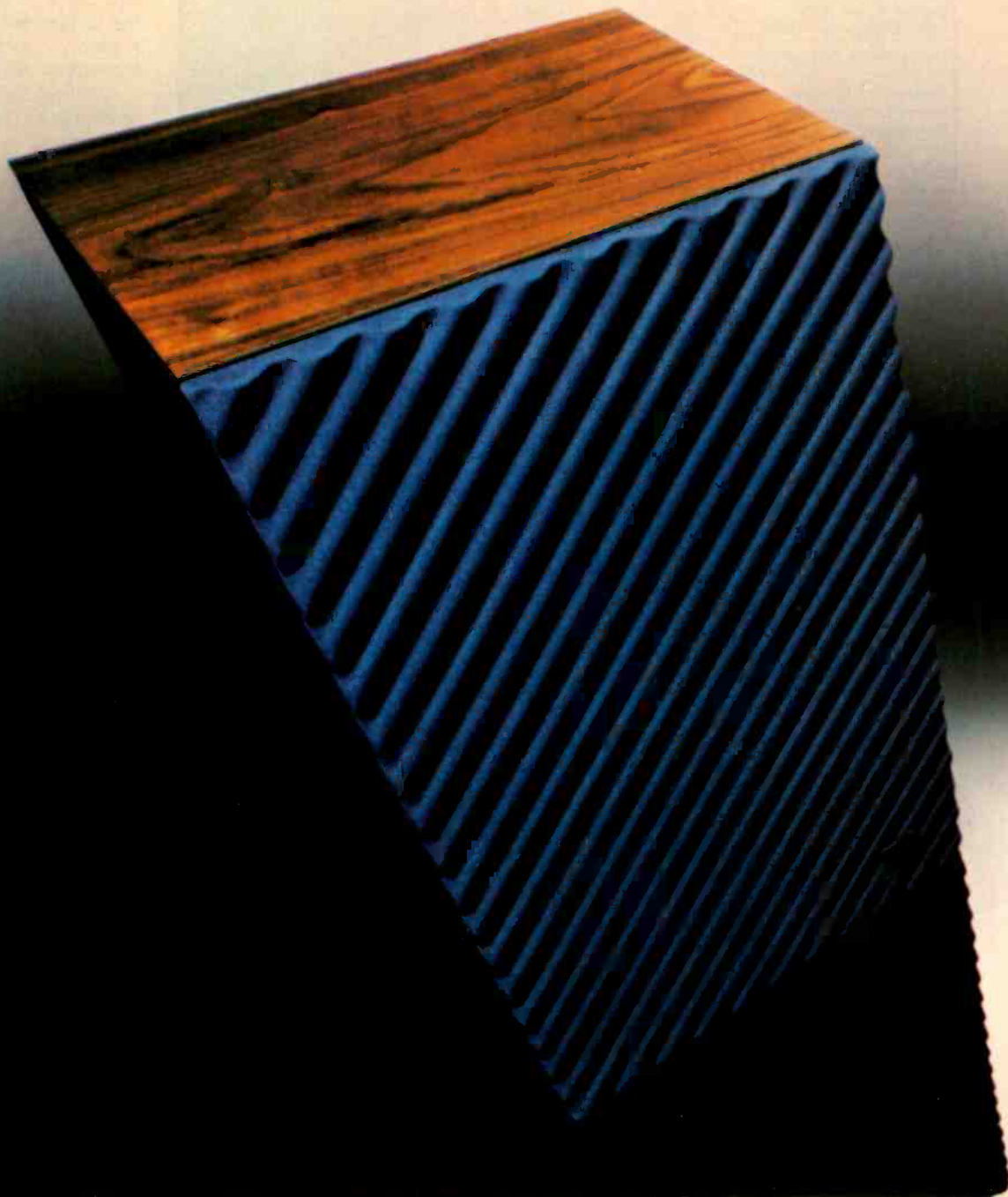
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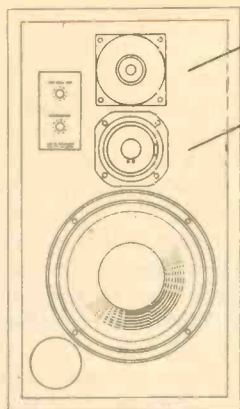
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and concrete, the studio interior is made almost entirely of wood. The result of so much wood is a warm, clear sound: firm bass, clean woodwind, and a solid ring to the brass. There is also plenty of room: The studio measures about 92 feet long by 65 feet wide and is 56 feet high. It had been calculated by Peter Knowland, acoustic consultant to the Sydney Opera House, and Warwick Mehaffey, the ABC's acoustical engineer, that the orchestra would sound best facing the control-room window, and this was confirmed by the tests I carried out. Not that it sounded bad in other positions, but it just sounded better there.

Inevitably there were snags. The musicians, accustomed for years to playing in much more confined spaces, complained at first that they couldn't hear one another. That was predictable, and within a week they had adjusted to the new conditions. Their attempts to be helpful by coming into the control room during playbacks merely confirmed a rather sad universal truth, which is that very few orchestral players have much idea of overall orchestral sound. What each one knows, and therefore expects to hear reproduced, is what he hears from the precise position in which he sits in the orchestra day after day and year after year. But at least they were keen on any experiments to get the best out of their new home.

The single miscalculation by the architects and acousticians arose directly from the best of their decisions—namely, that the interior of the studio should be made of wood. But then they feared that the result would be too long a reverberation period, which led them to cover some areas of the walls and ceiling with carpet; and the effect of the carpet was to deaden the sound of the upper strings, no matter where you placed them. As a temporary measure we covered the carpet—or as much of it as we could reach—with plastic sheeting, and the result was an immediate improvement in string sound. Steps are now being taken to replace the carpeted areas with wood, which will be neither difficult nor expensive (the entire complex cost the equivalent of about \$4 million), and when that has been done I think the Queensland Orchestra will have one of the finest modern recording halls in the world.

If anyone anywhere else in the world is in the planning stages of yet another concrete horror, I suggest that he suspend operations for a while and ask the ABC for permission to look at the Ferry Road studio in Brisbane. The air fare might save him a fortune in the future.

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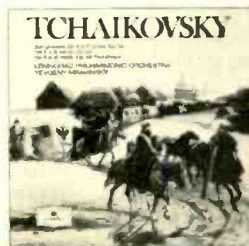
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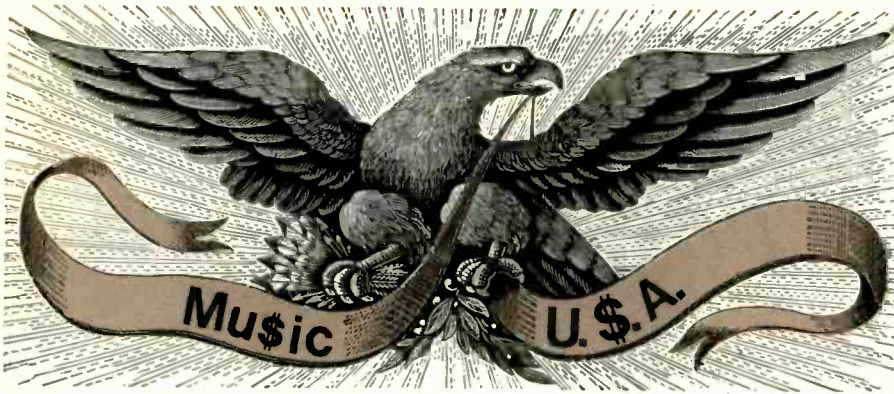
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14. Our English Roots— No Heart on the Sleeve

by Gene Lees

IF AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC in the first half of this century was substantially the achievement of minorities, the Anglo-Saxon majority emerged in the 1950s. One of their contributions was country and western music, still widely known then as hillbilly music. It had been around for some time but confined to a rural ghetto, as it were. Though urban educated Southerners liked jazz, the working people did not. Theirs was music of the Bible Belt. It was mostly music for the voice and guitar, a genre that never gave rise to an instrumental-ensemble tradition except for the striking and sometimes virtuosic bluegrass, which is fascinating if limited stuff. From hillbilly music and country blues evolved rockabilly and ultimately rock and roll.

Hillbilly music derived to a large extent from Appalachian folksongs, which in turn derived from English music. The term "English" refers precisely to descendants of the Anglo-Saxons, a group quite distinct from the Celts, who include the Irish, Welsh, and Scots as well as certain ethnic groups within England, such as the Cornish. The Angles and Saxons conquered the Celts, like themselves originally Teutonic. Later the Vikings made incursions into the British Isles, founding Dublin, Cork, and other Irish cities. Finally the Norman French—a Norse and therefore also a Teutonic rather than a Latin people—came, conquered, and stayed, completing the ethnic amalgamation known imprecisely as the Britons. To this day descendants of the Anglo-

Saxons and Normans constitute a substantial part of the aristocracy.

The term "Great Britain" is a political one, invented by the English to suggest a unified country and perhaps to assuage the resentment of the Celts. That it has not succeeded can be seen in the bloody civil war in Northern Ireland and in the intensifying Scottish moves toward autonomy. And that Celts of every stripe still have reason to harbor ill feeling against their longtime oppressors can be seen in a wry comment made by Richard Harris: "Whenever I receive an award, I'm an English actor. Whenever I get into trouble, I'm Irish."

The crown of the English culture has long been thought to be its literature, but even here a notably large part of it turns out to be Celtic. Sir Walter Scott, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Robert Burns, and Robert Louis Stevenson were all Scots. Thomas Moore, Oliver Goldsmith, and Jonathan Swift were Irish. James Joyce, one of the most influential novelists of the present century, was of course conspicuously Irish; no one has ever dared call him a "British writer."

Even in the theater, several of the greatest British playwrights are Celts, mostly Irishmen—perhaps because of their rapture with declamation, the almost intoxicated love of the sheer musical sound of words. (Joyce wanted to be a singer.) Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who brought Restoration comedy to its highest level, was Irish, as were—or are—Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, Sean O'Casey, John

Millington Synge, William Butler Yeats, and Samuel Beckett. Playwright/actor Emlyn Williams is Welsh. Harold Pinter is Jewish. (An exception: Tom Stoppard, one of the most gifted of contemporary dramatists, is by all evidence authentically English.)

Even among notable British actors, an amazing number are Celtic: Alec Guinness, Finlay Currie, Edward Mulhare, Richard Burton, Peter O'Toole, and Siobhan McKenna, for example. And many of the rest, it turns out, are Jewish.

It has always been recognized that the majority of the best jazz musicians in England are Scots. American jazz composer, saxophonist, and trumpeter Benny Carter recalls that, when he organized his celebrated jazz band in London in 1936, most of the musicians were from Scotland, including trumpeters Duncan Whyte and Tommy McQuater, clarinetist/saxophonist Andy McDevitt, pianist Eddy MacCauley, and the superb trombonist George Chisholm. The "English" arranger/composer Robert Farnon is a Canadian of Scottish and Irish parentage. The late and much-loved saxophonist Benny Weinstone, whose career ran from the cruise-boat dance bands following World War I through to Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, was a Glasgow Jew whose speech was a weird and delightful mixture of Yiddish, American bebop slang, and Scottish brogue.

At the studio-playing level, English musicians are known for a steady but uninspired competence. This was verified for me by an English record producer during a session in New York, for which he had hired some of the city's finest players. "Our lads are very good," he said, "and we have a lot of them. I think they do rather better at a first sight-reading than your lads. But the first reading is almost as good as it is ever going to be. On further rehearsal, it will improve only slightly. The American musicians, by contrast, will do a rather careless sight-reading, as if they are studying the arrangement. Then they will start saying, 'Would you mind if I do this at this point?' And they'll start making little improvements, as if they truly cared about the music, which I'm sure they do. Then the piece will continue improving until you get an absolutely brilliant performance."

In the recordings of the late Ted Heath's band, one hears a sterling attempt by an English band (some of whose best soloists, by the way, were Scots) to sound like an American band. It never quite succeeds. Heath was preoccupied with precision, whereas the best American bands take it for granted. He never achieved

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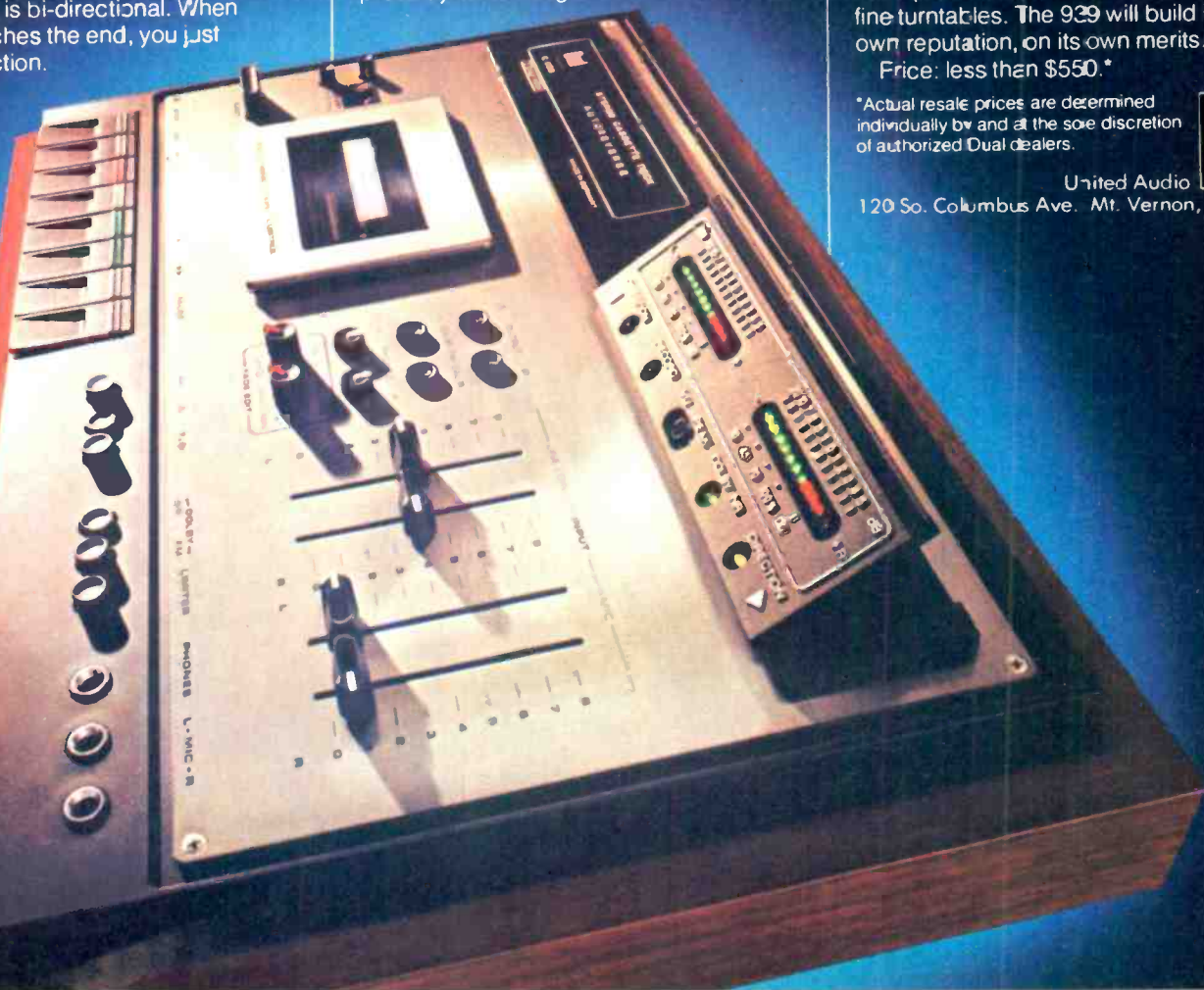
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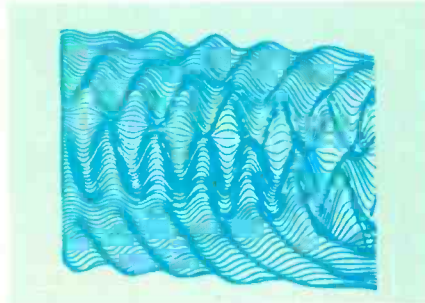
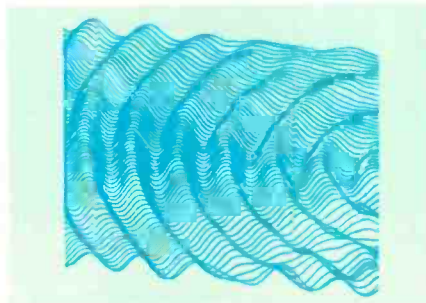
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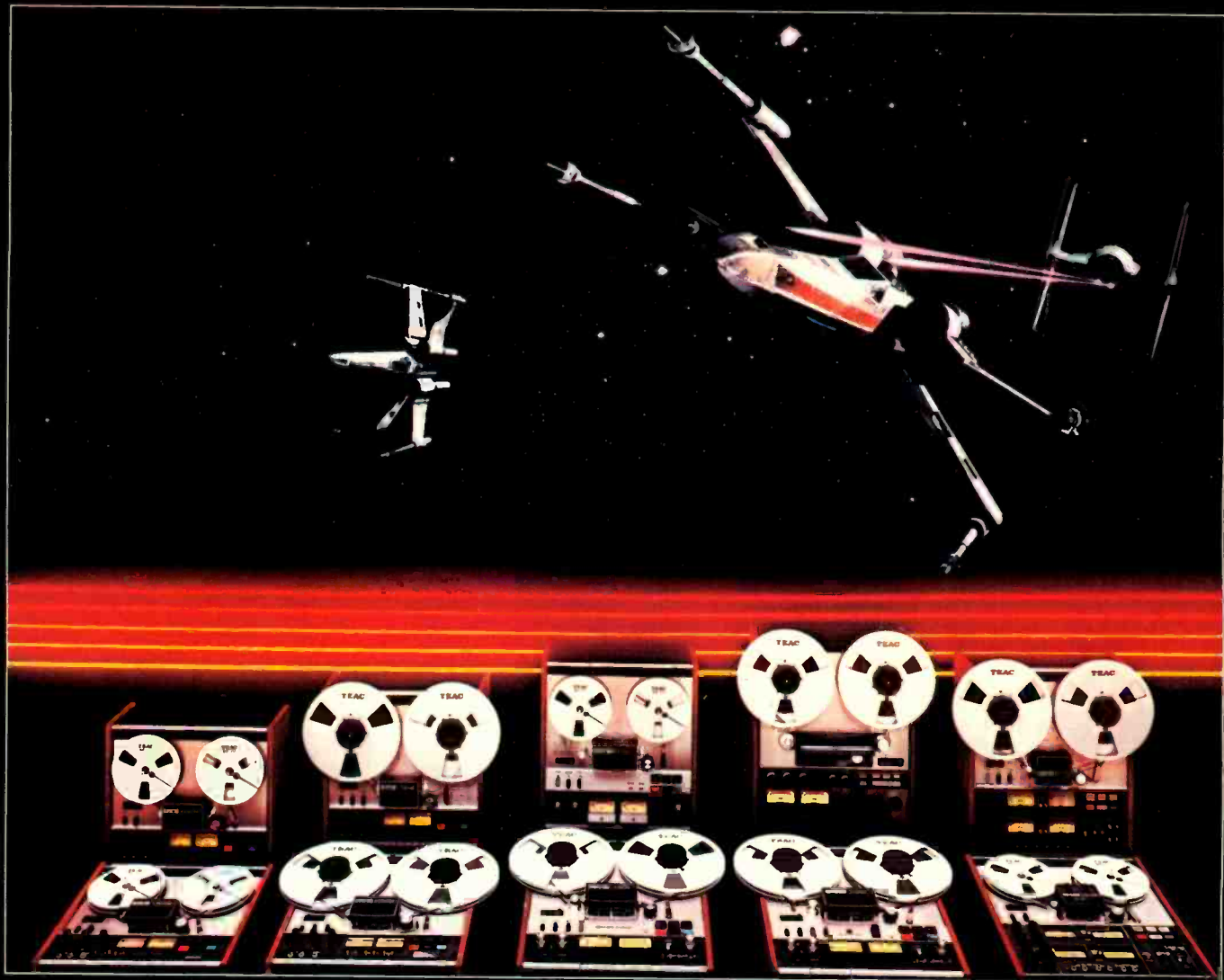
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the subtle looseness and certainly not the uninhibited intensity of his counterparts in this country. It is inconceivable that an English band will ever match the blinding fire and soaring freedom of, say, Woody Herman's.

Those in this music profession feel that the English are clumsy arrangers. (Douglas Gamley is an exception.) For reasons unknown, they do not seem to get the hang of good voice-leading. In fact, they do not even call it voice-leading; they call it "part-writing," as if the mere academic exercise were somehow of greater significance than the sound of the orchestral voices.

Their reputation as composers is little better. For example, although the British often make brilliant films, their musical scores are undistinguished. Says Terry James, the Welsh motion-picture composer and conductor now working in Hollywood, "The whole romantic movement, the wearing one's heart on one's sleeve and all that, never touched England at all. I can't think of one important composer who took part in it, except Elgar, and *The Dream of Gerontius* is rather watered-down Wagner."

The history of English classical composition is particularly barren. Early acclaim rests largely on the works of William Byrd and Henry Purcell. From the time of Purcell's death in 1695 until the twentieth century, the English took negligible part in the evolution of classical music, unless one considers Sir Charles Stanford or that master of tedium Sir Edward Elgar significant. Handel, of course, was German. Delius is often accounted an English composer, but his parents were German, he trained at the Leipzig Conservatory, and he lived most of his life in Paris, where he associated himself with French musical developments. Sir Arthur Sullivan was born in London, but both of his parents were Irish.

It was not until this century that the English began to regain an international reputation in classical music with Sir William Walton, Sir Arthur Bliss, Benjamin Britten, and Ralph Vaughan Williams. But the English have yet to produce a major classical composer. (Neither, for that matter, have the Scots or the Irish, whose considerable musical gifts seem to be channeled into smaller forms.)

Why should all this be so? The stiff upper lip, the tradition of masking emotion, of suppressing personal expressivity may have helped England through wars and other hardships, but it has done her music precious little good. The subject will be examined more closely in the next issue, for it has a bearing on the evolution of American music. ●

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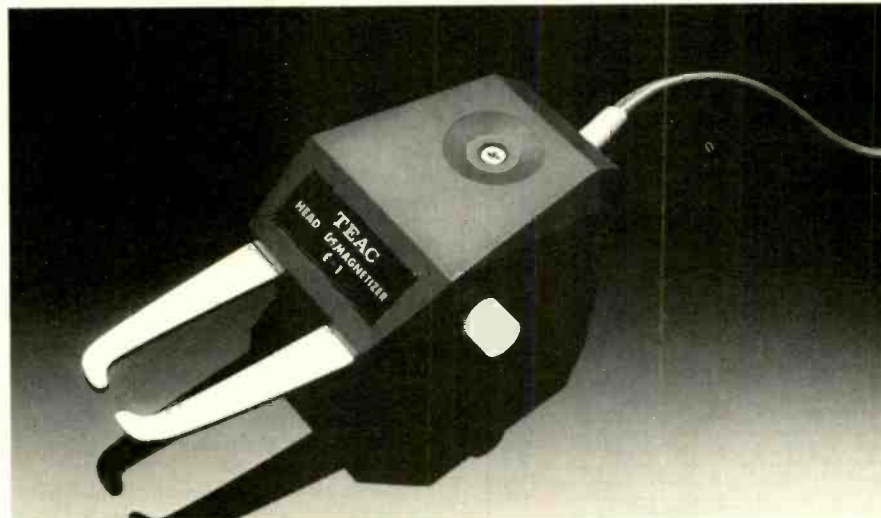
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CIRCLE 50 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Too Hot to Handle

You have suggested that the lowest price at which one can obtain an outboard subsonic filter is \$75, but this is not entirely true. The Cerwin-Vega Bass Excavator (costs \$39.95) incorporates a subsonic filter in addition to a boost of several dB in the 40- to 60-Hz region.

The only drawback is that the bass boost cannot be switched out.—O. C. Garza, Austin, Tex.

That's fine if you happen to want the boost and if your speakers can handle the extra bass power that will result from a 10-dB boost. A lot of small speakers (and some big ones) can't, and the drawback then becomes considerable.

On the strength of various test reports, I recently bought an Empire 2000Z cartridge to go with a Technics SL-1500 turntable. After a while I realized that something was wrong. Quite severe noise could be heard at the beginning of certain records. After investigation I noticed what should have been obvious all along: The underside of the stylus assembly, at the outside corner, was scraping on the lip of the record.

I contacted Empire Scientific Canada, and its spokesman told me about a new wedge mount that is being packed with the 2000Z to remedy the situation. He arranged to supply me with this mount. Isn't this a total afterthought that shows a serious problem in the original design?—Patrick Baillargeon, Longueuil, Que.

No; it's a total afterthought that fixes a minor glitch in the original design. The tolerances in records simply appear to have been overlooked. The cartridge should work as well with the modification as before, but it will also clear all records.

I just purchased a pair of AR-12 speakers, and I am totally confused about the power requirements for them. The dealer I purchased them from said my receiver (a Sansui 771) had enough power to drive them, but after reading the speaker brochures I have my doubts. The receiver will make the speakers play loud, but a friend says they would sound better with more power. Is this true?—David Melton, Greentown, Ind.

It depends on what you mean by loud and how absorptive your listening room is. The best thing to do is run the Sansui at a level that you think is as loud as you will ever want and observe its output on an oscilloscope. Flat tops on any waveforms indicate clipping (and excess distortion). Another possibility, if you can arrange it, is to borrow a more powerful amplifier and see if the ARs do, in fact, sound better with it at the volume level you like. If neither of these is possible, run the Sansui as loud as you would ever want to and listen awhile; then back off so that the level just barely seems to drop. (This will be a

2- to 4-dB reduction.) If the sound of the peaks is substantially cleaner in the second instance, the amp was clipping (or otherwise overloaded) at the higher level, and more power is very likely desirable.

During the last inch or so on an average LP, there is a significant amount of distortion, especially noticeable in piano music reaching its climactic finale. This distortion is not evident at all in any album I own until the end of the disc, and most of my records are in excellent condition. My cartridge is four months old and has been checked recently for stylus wear under the microscope in the local record shop. I own a Philips 212 turntable and Pioneer 650 receiver, and they are functioning quite well. Is it possible that a crucial wire of some sort is being stretched when the tone arm swings to the conclusion of the disc? Or could the problem be in record wear? My biradial stylus tracks at 1½ grams.—Steve Hamelman, Belfast, Maine.

The problem may be the decreased linear velocity and concomitant waveform compression at the inner-groove diameters (though it may be compounded by incorrect overhang adjustment of your pickup in the 212's arm). The wavelengths at high frequencies eventually become too short for the stylus to trace accurately. A biradial stylus is less affected than a conical, and the newer shapes (Shibata and its variants) should give better performance yet.

In a recent column [October 1977] you stated that "most listeners find an audio system most natural-sounding when the highs beyond 6 to 9 kHz are rolled off at about 3 dB per octave." I do not doubt the accuracy of your statement, but how can one reconcile it with the relentless pursuit by equipment manufacturers and listeners alike of flat response to 20 kHz? With such a rolloff, the response of a system at 20 kHz would be down about 5 dB. An amplifier, phono cartridge, tape recorder, or even speaker with specs like that would not be considered very good. Why even bother if the average ear finds a system most natural with the high end rolled off by an equalizer?—I. Franklin, Los Altos, Calif.

Our statement was accurate but not complete. We should have pointed out that listeners prefer the high-end rolloff when listening to close-miked program material. When material miked at greater distances is played, flat response is once again desirable. Note that, in traveling 50 feet through normally humid air, a 10-kHz tone is attenuated 2 dB more than is a 1-kHz tone. And we can think of a number of fine speakers that are 5 dB down at 20 kHz. Think of it this way: A flat speaker is most accurate and will make close-up miking sound close up; if you want to admire your music at greater distance (as

CIRCLE 26 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →

WHY MOST CRITICS USE MAXELL TAPE TO EVALUATE TAPE RECORDERS.

Any critic who wants to do a completely fair and impartial test of a tape recorder is very fussy about the tape he uses.

Because a flawed tape can lead to some very misleading results.

A tape that can't cover the full audio spectrum can keep a recorder from ever reaching its full potential.

A tape that's noisy makes it hard to measure how quiet the recorder is.

A tape that doesn't have a wide enough bias latitude can make you question the bias settings.

And a tape that doesn't sound consistently the same, from end to end, from tape to tape, can make you question the stability of the electronics.

If a cassette or 8-track jams, it can suggest some nasty, but erroneous comments about the drive mechanism.

And if a cassette or 8-track introduces wow and flutter, it's apt to produce some test results that anyone can argue with.

Fortunately, we test Maxell cassette, 8-track and reel-to-reel tape to make sure it doesn't have the



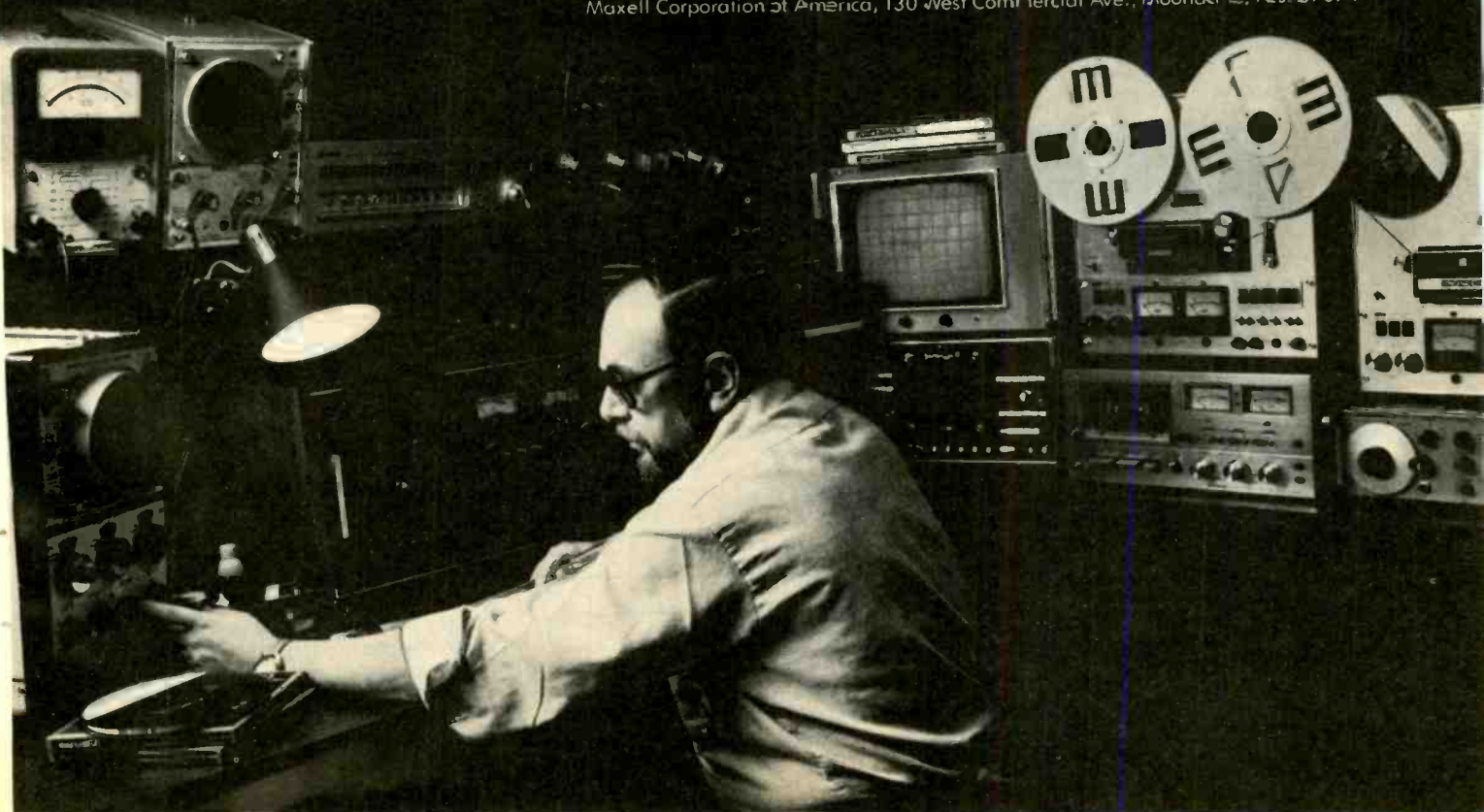
problems that plague other tapes.

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CIRCLE 27 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

you would in the concert hall), you will prefer some treble rolloff.

I have a Thorens single-play turntable that is about twelve years old. I need a new cartridge (or stylus) and, possibly, a new arm. (The arm is separately mounted and did not come with the player.) My amplifier is an H. H. Scott, also about twelve years old.

What cartridge or cartridges are capable of playing "those new limited-edition super-discs" Harold A. Rodgers wrote about in your December 1977 issue?—George Ensminger, Black Mountain, N.C.

Generally speaking, good reproduction of super-discs will require a top-of-the-line cartridge from a reputable manufacturer. (In our reviews of phono pickups, we usually comment on how well the unit performs playing such discs.) But you can't stop there. If the rest of your equipment isn't up to snuff, the wide dynamic range may either drive your amp to clipping or leave the soft passages buried in hiss from your preamp section. Your best bet is to make any changes you know you need, buy one or two specialty discs, and try them with your speakers and electronics. You may then want to make other changes.

It delights me to inform you that, in spite of what you and Technics said in last September's "Too Hot to Handle" column, it is possible to replace the Technics SL-1500 tone arm. I purchased a Grace 704 tone arm and was able to install it in the SL-1500 turntable without much difficulty. Only simple tools were required for the job (a hand drill was the most sophisticated), and I machined a new mounting plate from a thick sheet of acrylic plastic. The bottom of the turntable can be unscrewed safely. (Nothing's attached to it.) Once it is removed, the task of detaching the original arm assembly and replacing it with the new plate and arm is simple. Of course, one must pay close attention to avoid installation errors.

Before replacing the bottom cover, I decided to improve the SL-1500's feedback isolation by replacing its rubber feet with a set of Audio-Technica AT-605 insulators. The whole job took less than a day and set me back approximately \$200 for parts.

A final word of caution: Check the dimensions of the chosen tone arm, since some of its parts may extend beyond the SL-1500's base when installed. I had to replace the dust cover, since the original was too flat and tapered to accommodate my new arm.—Leopoldo L. Ibanez, Quezon City, the Philippines. We stand corrected. Congratulations on your enterprising project.

I have read that audio equalizers can have negative effects on phase coherency. As a prospective purchaser of such a piece of outboard equipment, I ask you: How serious are the effects, and how can they be corrected?—Andrew Goldman, Wincote, Pa.

The effects of an equalizer on phase are for all practical purposes inaudible—with the possible exception of a situation in which the two channels of a system are equalized differently and then fed to a quadriphonic decoder. The phase effects themselves are necessary concomitants of the changes in frequency response and are not subject to remedy.

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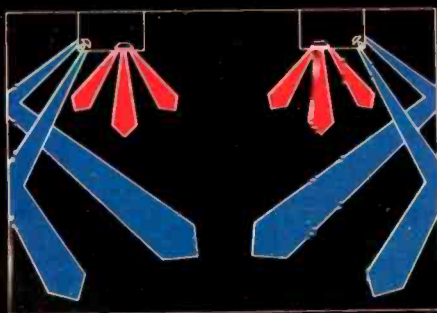
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The extended-range woofer faces forward, but the tweeter is angled sideward to bounce high-frequency sound off side walls. This produces the correct balance of reflected and direct sound that gives Bose Direct/Reflecting® speakers their live-performance quality.

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And unlike heavy, oversized, so-called bookshelf speakers, the Model 301 actually fits comfortably on a normal-size bookshelf.

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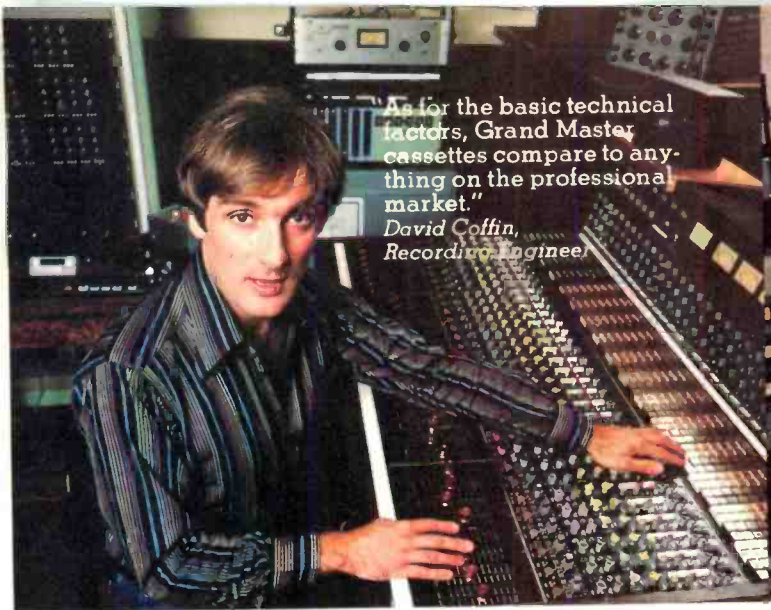
Head-cleaning leader tape keeps recorder heads clean.

Special shield protects tape from stray magnetic fields.

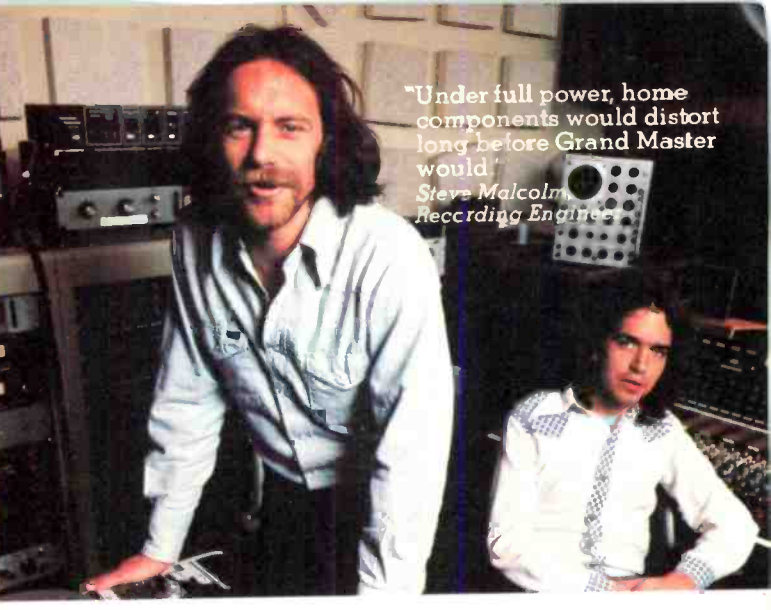
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Last year, Technics gave you everything you wanted in direct drive. This year we're giving you less.

Introducing three new Technics turntables: The SL-1600 automatic, the SL-1700 semi-automatic and the SL-1800 manual. All with the Technics direct-drive system. The system FM stations use and discos abuse. And all with performance specs even better than last year's.

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one-chip IC, you get infinitesimal wow and flutter, equal to Technics professional level. An incredible 0.025% WRMS.

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The less noise your turntable makes, the more music you hear. That's why professionals loved Technics last year. This year, we're even more lovable, because there's even less rumble, -73 dB (DIN B) to be exact.

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Even with features like oil-damped cueing. A computer-analyzed S-shaped universal tonearm with anti-skate control. Pitch controls variable by 10%. And detachable dust cover. Technics turntables cost less this year than last.

Technics. We're giving you less. And that means you're getting more.

Technics

by Panasonic



D	1	E	2	A	3		M	4	L	5	U	6	V	7	D	8	F	9	E	10	I	11	R	12		N	13	W	14	
M	15	T	16	L	17	A	18	J	19		O	20	B	21		E	22	F	23	D	24	G	25	K	26			C	27	
O	28	T	29	H	30	E	31	L	32	M	33	U	34	X	35	V	36		D	37	F	38	O	39	J	40	P	41	A	42
E	43	G	44		R	45	D	46	F	47		O	48	I	49	M	50	W	51	A	52	E	53			L	54	H	55	
T	56	F	57	S	58		U	59	R	60		M	61	I	62	C	63	L	64	A	65	E	66	I	67			D	68	
K	69	M	70	U	71		L	72	P	73	V	74	J	75	S	76		D	77	A	78			N	79	F	80	M	81	
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N	175	A	176	O	177		V	178	M	179	R	180	E	181		X	182	W	183			H	184	U	185	E	186	L	187	
O	188			D	189	J	190	A	191	R	192		V	193	M	194	E	195	J	196			K	197	A	198	O	199	I	200
		U	201	R	202	L	203	E	204	M	205	T	206	D	207	N	208	O	209	C	210	I	211	H	212	F	213		K	214
E	215	P	216	A	217	L	218	M	219																					

DIRECTIONS

To solve these puzzles—and they aren't as tough as they first seem—supply as many of the Output dashes 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. 34 will appear in next month's issue of HIGH FIDELITY.

INPUT

- A. Mahler song cycle (Ger.)
- B. Switch position
- C. Sir Edward Lewis' record company
- D. Bach Cantata No. 26 (3 Ger. wds.)
- E. Das _____ Wagner choral work (3 Ger. wds.)
- F. French woman composer (b. Algiers, 1922); *Chant de Courbes* for two ondes martenot and timpani (full name)
- G. Violinist Eugene _____
- H. Swedish jazz pianist (b. 1932); *Old Spice*
- I. Meyerbeer opera (2 Fr. wds.)
- J. British hall, often used for recording sessions
- K. English woman composer (b. 1907); *Ariadne*, for soprano and orchestra
- L. American composer _____ Kay (2 wds.)

OUTPUT

42	106	78	217	138	159	191	198
	18	176	142	65	128	118	151
						52	3
170	123	21					
101	136	63	27	210			
37	114	156	189	148	24	1	68
	8	172	131	46	207	77	99
104	10	43	147	22	174	181	66
	204	135	85	195	53	215	117
				2	186	162	31
							94
91	23	102	38	165	47	57	9
				146	133	153	80
							213
92	111	44	82	25			
55	30	152	212	110	184	130	98
49	200	134	67	93	169	108	62
						211	11
95	190	196	75	19	105	40	154
197	86	214	69	129	166	145	26
64	124	140	72	17	5	54	116
				187	168	203	32
						218	90

INPUT

- M. Soviet pianist (full name)
- N. Rock group: *Illusion*, recorded by Gull
- O. Pianist in trio with Casals and Thibaud
- P. "_____ in Love with Amy"
- Q. Datum
- R. German conductor, recorded Beethoven piano concertos with Gulda (full name)
- S. Naval abbreviation
- T. Absurdly; twaddle
- U. Harry Partch's book on his 43-tone scale (3 wds.)
- V. _____ Sibley, British ballerina
- W. Round start (2 wds.)
- X. The _____ System, 8-volume work on violin playing

OUTPUT

33	70	15	161	149	50	61	139
	103	194	219	205	4	179	120
						127	81
208	175	79	112	122	13	150	
188	28	199	107	20	177		
73	216	41	160				
48	115	209	39				
192	202	60	12	45	164	137	180
						125	84
141	58	76					
29	167	144	206	157	56	100	16
158	109	6	71	201	143	96	59
		126	88	185	171	34	119
89	36	7	132	113	74	163	178
						155	193
173	97	51	14	183	83		
87	35	121	182				

Solution to last month's HiFi-Croctic appears on page 6.

Phono Equalization: Fact, Fantasy, and Fallacy

Practically everyone familiar with the subject of high fidelity is aware that a phono preamplifier stage, in addition to amplifying the relatively weak signal from a pickup (2 to 6 millivolts nominally from most fixed-coil designs), corrects for recording pre-emphasis—an artificial alteration of frequency response, applied to the signal in mastering to improve the disc's signal-to-noise ratio and music-storage capacity. This complementary pre-emphasis/de-emphasis usually is called RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) recording and playback equalization. Beyond these basics, confusion seems to reign, lamentably even among people who ought to know better.

There is a rumor in the industry that the RIAA has revised the standard for playback equalization and, moreover, that the new playback curve is no longer the exact inverse of the recording curve. An article in a recent issue of a publication addressed to dealers, salesmen, and technicians defines the new curve and states that it is designed to reduce the boost an unaltered RIAA curve gives to subsonic frequencies (almost 37 dB at about 6 Hz). Because of this boost, the argument presumes, the "old" curve can do horrendous things with the subsonic signals generated by disc warps.

This interpretation of the playback curve is not really correct. While the amplitude of the signal cut onto the disc does rise continuously below 50 Hz, the output from a cartridge (which ideally is proportional to the velocity of the stylus tip as it traces the groove) is flat in that region. Since a music signal is boosted to correct for the velocity response and a warp signal is not, the combination of car-

tridge behavior and the present RIAA playback curve already discriminates against warp frequencies—though not sufficiently.

A new playback equalization standard does exist, but it has not been adopted by the RIAA, which gives no indication of plans to revise its disc-recording standards in the foreseeable future. The new standard is an amendment to the current RIAA characteristic proposed by the International Electrotechnical Commission. It is equivalent to the old curve projected up to 20 kHz and down to 20 Hz (officially, the RIAA standard is defined only from 30 Hz to 15 kHz, though behavior beyond that range is implied by the properties of the electrical network that serves as an alternative definition), with an added filter that reduces response by 3 dB at 20 Hz and rolls off at 6 dB per octave below that.

The curve proposed by the IEC results in an extra 12 dB or so of attenuation by 5 Hz and thus is effective as a warp filter. Its behavior in the audible range, however, is less than exemplary. Not only is an error of -3 dB introduced at 20 Hz—the recording equalization, remember, is to remain unchanged—but even at 60 Hz response is down by nearly 1 dB. Granted, this is not particularly serious and something useful is offered in trade. But to us it seems foolish to enshrine inaccuracy of reproduction, however slight, to achieve a benefit that can be had via a route—a low-cut filter that turns over lower (perhaps at 15 Hz) and rolls off more abruptly (12 dB per octave) would be the logical choice—at once more effective and virtually without side effects. Apparently the RIAA agrees.

CBS's New Pitch: DISComputer

Computer control of disc-cutting "margin" or "pitch" (the spacing between adjacent grooves on a record) is nothing novel, but CBS Records has ready for use a new system that is said to offer significant advantages over its predecessors. By adjusting groove pitch faster and more accurately, CBS claims, the DISComputer Mastering System allows an increase of 25 to 40% in the capacity of a disc. This increase can be used to provide more recording time, greater dynamic range (via higher levels), or reduced distortion (by not cutting as far into the center of the disc)—or all three, at the option of the producer and recording engineer. Included in the system is a method for suppressing pre- and post-echo of loud passages.

The DISComputer is currently in use at Columbia Recording Studios in New York and Nashville. More installations are being made in Canada, Europe, and Japan.

Standards for Digital Audio . . .

If anyone needs more evidence that digital audio is past the laboratory-curiosity stage, the Audio Engineering Society, the joint Committee on Intersociety Cooperation, the Electronic Industries Association, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, the National Cable Television Association, the National Association of Broadcasters, and the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers have jointly established a Digital Audio Standards Committee. Addressed to the task of minimizing unintentional incompatibilities among the various systems under development, the committee held its first meeting early last December under the chairmanship of John G. McKnight of Magnetic Reference Laboratory, Inc.

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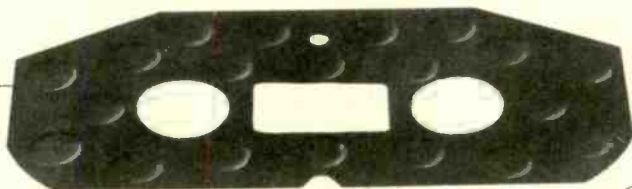
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Strauss operas. As we noted in the February "Letters" column, Decca/London is embarking on a series of operas by Richard Strauss. The project, which will use a variety of locales, has begun in London with *Ariadne auf Naxos*, in which Sir Georg Solti conducts members of the London Philharmonic and a cast headed by Leontyne Price in the title role, René Kollo as Bacchus, Edita Gruberová as Zerbinetta, Yvonne Minton as the Composer, and Walter Berry—who nearly two decades ago doubled the Music Master and Harlekin memorably in the Leinsdorf recording—in the former role. Late this year Solti is to record *Daphne* in Munich with an orchestra drawn from the Bavarian State Opera and the Bavarian Radio Symphony (no cast details are available yet), and in 1979 a new *Frau ohne Schatten* is to be made with the Vienna Philharmonic in Decca/London's usual Sofiensaal venue.

The most surprising of Decca/London's Strauss plans, certainly, involves *Die ägyptische Helena*, to be recorded in Detroit in 1979 with Antal Dorati conducting the Detroit Symphony, following a sequence of six concert performances. (In his early years Dorati worked with Fritz Busch on the opera's 1928 premiere.)

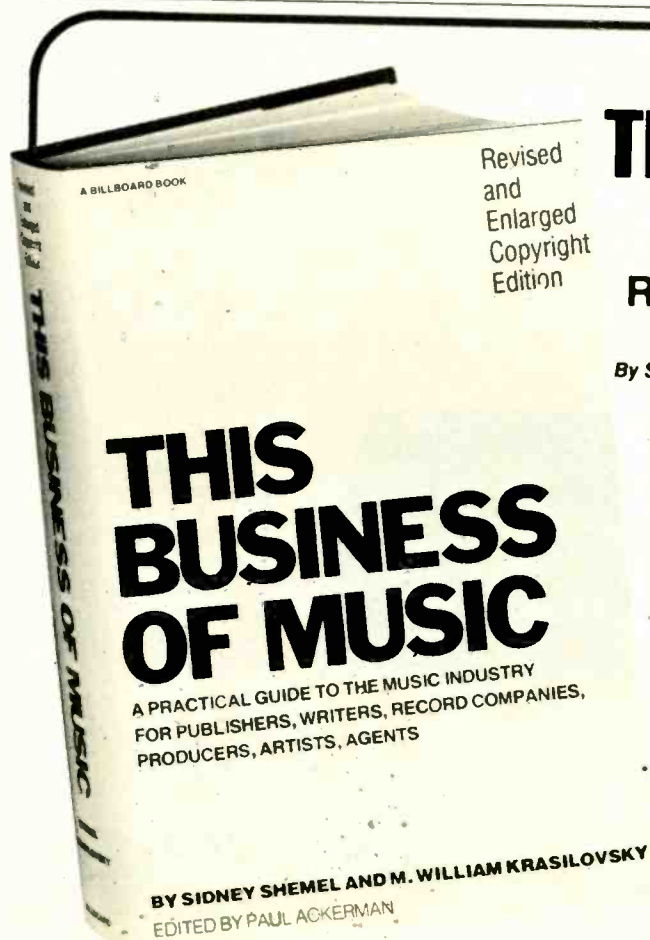
Behind The Scenes

Strauss opera discography. Speaking of Strauss operas, the discography promised some time ago in J. F. Weber's discography series ("Behind the Scenes," November 1975) has finally materialized, and it was worth the wait. In its fifty-plus pages, it gathers all the information that author Alan Jefferson—with the assistance of Weber, Peter Morse, and others—could assemble about commercial and pirate recordings of Strauss's operas (excerpts as well as complete sets), with an index of performers. (Of particular note is a detailed description, running to nearly two pages, of the sessions for the famous 1933 HMV *Rosenkavalier* excerpts with Lotte Lehmann—much of the information therein believed previously unpublished.) The Strauss discography is available for \$6 from J. F. Weber Discography Series, 310 Genesee St., Utica, N.Y. 13502.

Also currently in print are the following: Wolf (1975, \$4), Mendelssohn vocal music (1973, \$2), Strauss songs (1973, \$2), Loewe and Franz (a new edition scheduled for early this year, \$3), Mahler (also a new edition, \$4), Bruckner (1974, \$2), Debussy and Ravel vocal music (1973, \$2), Varèse (1975, \$1), Leonard Bernstein (1975, \$1), Berg (1975, \$1), Pfitzner and Marx (1975, \$1), and Britten (1975, \$3). Expected to be available shortly are two new discographies—one devoted to Janáček (\$4), the other to Carter and Schuman (\$1).

Nyiregyházi returns. In February, Harris Goldsmith noted that the International Piano Archives disc devoted to Ervin Nyiregyházi might prove our only recorded documentation of this remarkable throwback to the Romantic pianism of Liszt. That gloomy outlook has since brightened considerably. With the help of a Ford Foundation grant, Nyiregyházi in early January taped three sessions' worth of a varied repertory—straight through, without retakes. (The sessions went smoothly enough, we hear, except for the recording crew's considerable difficulty in coping with the pianist's astounding dynamic range.)

Continued on page 41



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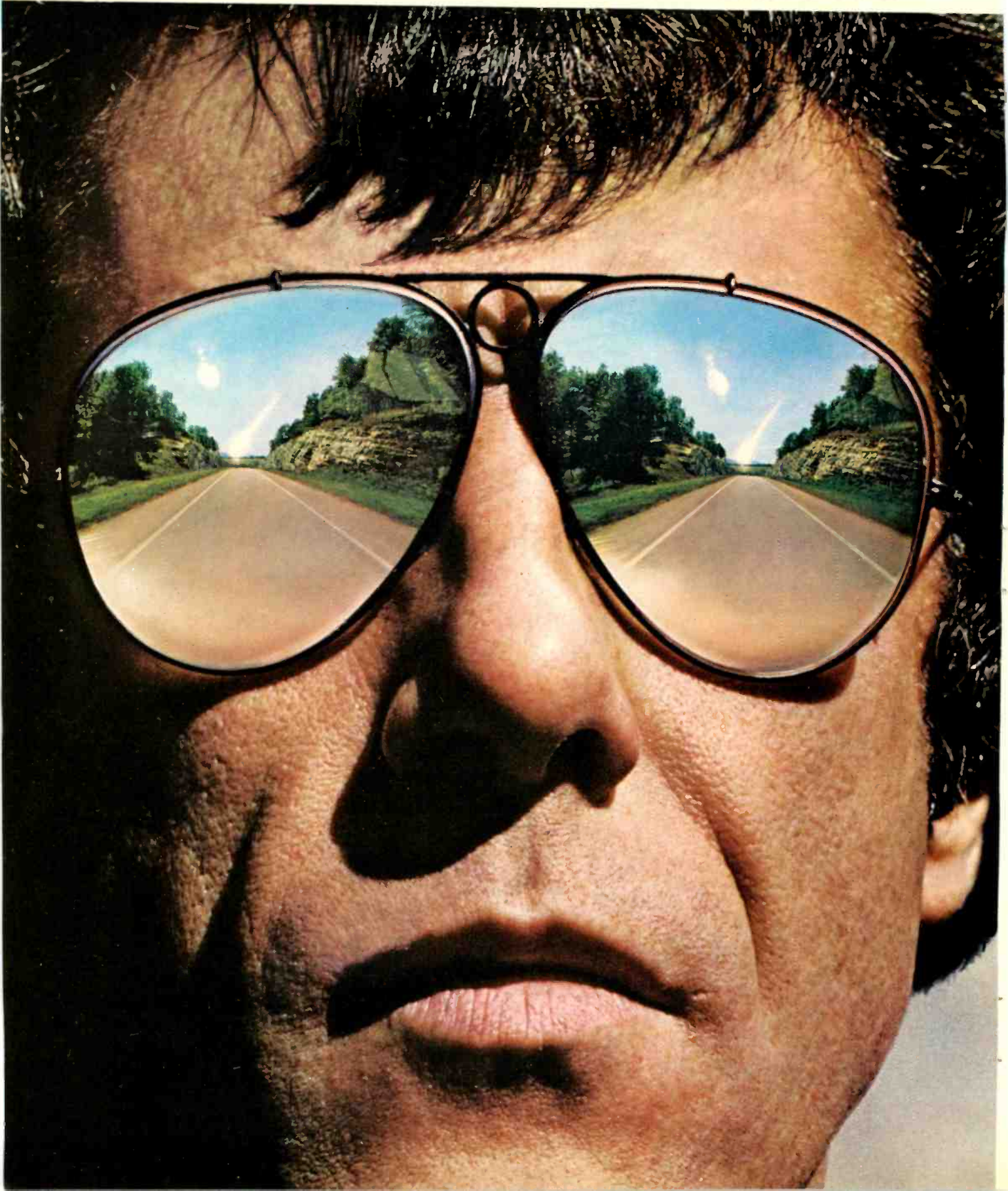


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Negotiations were being conducted with several record companies for commercial release of this material; one possibility under discussion is a three-disc set, with one disc drawn from each of the three days of taping. It was also hoped that Nyiregyházi would be persuaded to return to the studio.

Erato's operas. Surveying the Vivaldi discography last month, Paul Henry Lang noted the limited attention thus far devoted to the large-scale vocal works. Thus special interest attaches to Erato's premiere recording of the opera *Orlando furioso*, with a noteworthy international cast: mezzos Marilyn Horne, Lucia Valentini-Terrani, and Carmen Gonzales, soprano Victoria de los Angeles, tenor Lajos Kozma, baritone Sesto Bruscantini, and bass Nicola Zaccaria. Erato's resident Vivaldians, conductor Claudio Scimone and the Solisti Veneti, are joined by the appropriately named chorus Amici della Polifonia (Friends of Polyphony).

Not strictly speaking operatic, but still decidedly large in scale, is Berlioz' "dramatic symphony" *Roméo et Juliette*, which Alain Lombard has recorded for Erato with mezzo-soprano Nadine Denize, tenor Rémy Corazza, bass Pierre Thau, and the Strasbourg Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra. (Note: Lombard's Erato *Così fan tutte*, newly released by RCA and scheduled for review next month, was made with one major change from the announced cast as reported in November 1977. Those who were looking forward to hearing, at last, a bass Guglielmo will be disappointed, for baritone Philippe Huttenlocher replaced the originally announced José van Dam. Otherwise the cast is as reported: Kiri Te Kanawa as Fiordiligi, Frederica von Stade as Dorabella, Teresa Stratas as Despina, David Rendall as Ferrando, and Jules Bastin as Alfonso.)

The new (old) Philharmonia. It has taken more than a dozen years, but by now we've all gotten used to calling the Philharmonia Orchestra the New Philharmonia Orchestra. The London ensemble had to add the "New" when it reorganized in 1964 following the withdrawal of Walter Legge, who had run it virtually single-handedly since he assembled it in 1945, principally for recording purposes.

Well, forget it. The orchestra has regained the right to its original name, and all recordings made from this point on will bear the new (old) name—though of course we can still expect a fair number of (older) new

releases featuring the (old) New Philharmonia. (Be glad you're not our copy editor, who's going to have to keep these "three orchestras" straight!)

If you're still with us, rest assured that Riccardo Muti remains principal conductor of the (new) Philharmonia, with Lorin Maazel as principal guest conductor. The orchestra expects to be heard on records even more in the future than it has been in the recent past. Recent projects have included Haydn's *Creation* conducted by Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, with so-

prano Helen Donath, tenor Robert Tear, bass-baritone José van Dam, and (yes) the Philharmonia Chorus.

And now, Moody Blues in opera? Terry McEwen, well-known opera-ophile and longtime manager of London Records' classical division, has been named the company's executive vice president. This makes him the first classical man to become the chief executive of a major record company since the late Goddard Lieberson headed Columbia Records and the CBS-Columbia Group. ■

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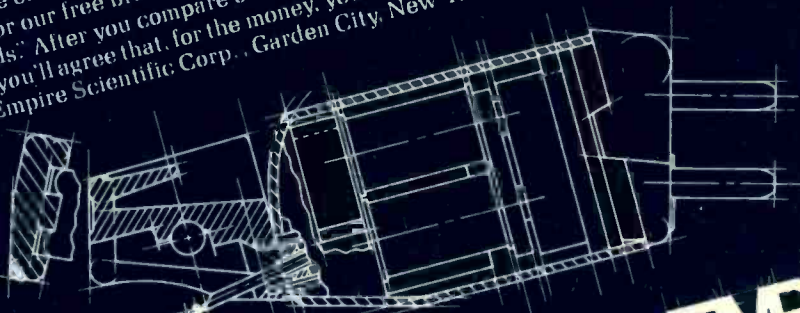
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TRACKING FORCE RANGE	1-1 1/4 gm	1-1 1/4 gm	1-1 1/4 gm	1-1 1/4 gm	1-1 1/2 gm	1-1 1/2 gm	1-2 gm	1 1/4-2 1/2 gm	1 1/2-3 gm
SEPARATION 15Hz to 1kHz 1kHz to 20kHz 20kHz to 50kHz 500Hz to 15kHz 15kHz to 20 kHz	28 dB 23 dB 15 dB	24 dB 20 dB 15 dB	20 dB 30 dB 25 dB	18 dB 27 dB 22 dB	20 dB 28 dB 20 dB	20 dB 25 dB 18 dB	18 dB 23 dB 15 dB	18 dB 23 dB 15 dB	16 dB 21 dB 13 dB
I M DISTORTION @ 3.54 cm/sec	2% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz	08% 2kHz-20kHz	06% 2kHz-20kHz	1% 2kHz-20kHz	15% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz
STYLUS	2 mil bi-radial	2 mil bi-radial	2 x 7 mil elliptical	2 x 7 mil elliptical	2 x 7 mil elliptical	2 x 7 mil elliptical	2 x 7 mil elliptical	3 x 7 mil elliptical	7 mil spherical
EFFECTIVE TIP MASS	4 milligram	4 milligram	2 milligram	2 milligram	6 milligram	6 milligram	6 milligram	9 milligram	1 milligram
COMPLIANCE	30x10' cm/dyne	30x10' cm/dyne	30x10' cm/dyne	30x10' cm/dyne	20x10' cm/dyne	18x10' cm/dyne	17x10' cm/dyne	16x10' cm/dyne	14x10' cm/dyne
TRACKING ABILITY	32 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 gm	30 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 1/2 gm	38 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 9 gm	38 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 gm	28 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 1/2 gm	28 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 1/2 gm	28 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 1/2 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 2 gm
CHANNEL BALANCE	within 1 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 1/2 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 1/2 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 1/2 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 1/2 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 1/2 dB @ 1kHz
INPUT LOAD	100k Ohms/ channel	100k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel
TOTAL CAPACITANCE	under 100 pF/channel	under 100 pF/channel	300 pF/channel	300 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel
OUTPUT @ 3.54 cm/sec	3 mV/channel	3 mV/channel	3 mV/channel	3 mV/channel	4.5 mV/channel	4.5 mV/channel	7 mV/channel	7 mV/channel	7 mV/channel

A CONSUMER'S GUIDE

New Equipment Reports



Interface D—Disco Muscle and a Delicate Touch

The Equipment: Electro-Voice Interface D, a floor-standing speaker system in wood case. Dimensions: speaker—21¾ by 32 inches (front), 15½ inches deep; equalizer—2 by 8 inches (front), 7 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$1,500 per pair including equalizer. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor for speakers only; "limited," three years parts and labor for equalizer. Manufacturer: Electro-Voice, Inc., 600 Cecil St., Buchanan, Mich. 49130.

Comment: When Electro-Voice introduced its Interface speaker series with Models A and B—both of which were meant to produce good bass from an enclosure of moderate size—we could not help but wonder what would happen if the same design principles were applied to a large driver and enclosure. Our question has been answered most elegantly and forcefully by Interface D, which, among its distinctive characteristics, has the capacity to play more loudly than most of the speakers we have heard.

The design principles in question are derived from the work of A. Neville Thiele and Richard H. Small in applying filter theory to loudspeakers. Seen in this light, the woofer

and vented enclosure of Interface D behave like a high-pass filter that rolls off fairly rapidly (at a rate approaching 36 dB per octave) below its cutoff frequency (50 Hz or so). Some of the low-frequency contouring on which the "assisted alignment" operation of the system depends is supplied by an external equalizer that must be used ahead of the power amp driving the woofer. (This model can be easily biamped.) The equalizer also attenuates subsonic noise. Omnidirectional anechoic frequency response data from the lab suggest that useful output is produced down to about an octave below cutoff.

Interface D, like just a very few other speakers, has one or two tricks up its sleeve when it comes to dealing with the vagaries of room acoustics and placement with respect to room boundaries. While the instruction manual does not categorically rule out any particular placement, it seems to suggest that preferred positions for the speaker are at least a couple of feet away from corners, either near (within 12 inches) or far from a wall. Since the woofer fires downward from the bottom of the enclosure, it is loaded in a way that, in theory, makes it 3 dB more efficient than it is in anechoic space. Placement near a wall further increases loading and adds another 3 dB. Thus, placing the unit near a wall-floor intersection offsets the drop in anechoic output below 350 Hz or so—the woofer crossover point. The ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL compensates for placement away from the wall by reducing output above 350 Hz by 3 dB.

The low crossover projects the semidirectional midbass frequencies into the listening area, rather than at the floor, but in so doing places strong demands on the power capability of the midrange driver. Electro-Voice has responded to this by using a vented midrange system—as much, we suspect, for improved control of cone travel (and hence lower distortion) as for the extra efficiency. The latter parameter, we should point out, is extremely well served by the total system: A 0-dBW (1-watt) input of pink noise, 250 to 6,000 Hz, results in an average sound pressure level of nearly 87 dB at 1 meter.

Matching its muscle against the test amp in the lab, Interface D soaked up a steady 20 dBW (100 watts) at 300 Hz and yielded an output of 112 dB SPL at 1 meter on axis. Pulsed at this frequency, the system delivers a 119½-dB peak output, unmatched at least in our recent memory, from an input of 27½ dBW (563 watts) peak. Technically, the speaker exceeds the 10% total (second plus third) har-

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monic distortion limit in the steady-state test, but the fact that the high-level sweep test (at a power equivalent to 100 dB SPL output at 300 Hz) reveals abrupt rises and falls in distortion suggests that this may be the result of cancellation effects on the fundamental when measured in the anechoic chamber. Additional support for this view comes from the fact that 300 Hz is near a crossover.

Overall, Interface D shows just about the lowest distortion we have ever encountered in a loudspeaker. In the high-level test, neither second nor third harmonic exceeds 2.8%, and at most frequencies both are well below 1%. Distortion is lower still at a 0-dBW (1-watt) input, as one would expect. More important, the distortion does not undergo the familiar low-frequency rise, and that is something one would not expect. Lest the clean reproduction of which the speaker system is capable tempt the user to destructive overapplication of power, the tweeter is protected by a circuit that disconnects it from excessive drive and lights a distress signal visible through the front grille.

Impedance works out to a nominal 6.4 ohms, a value typical of most of the bass and lower midrange. A few wide swings upward raise the average to something nearer the manufacturer's 8-ohm rating. Many amplifiers would probably accept two systems in parallel (hardly a necessity in domestic applications) without complaint.

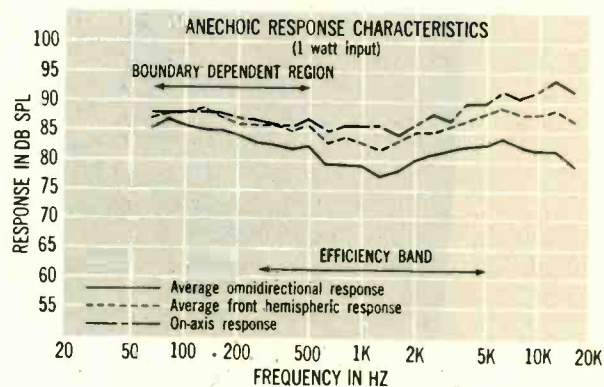
In addition to the ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL, there is a four-position switch that drops the tweeter level by about 3 dB per step above 9 kHz. A similar control on the external equalizer appears to be redundant, but the lab data show that the equalizer control works (despite the indications on the panel) in smaller steps. This turns out to be an unexpected benefit, for when the two are used in conjunction, high-frequency response can be tailored to about ± 1 dB.

The sound of Interface D is superb. Bass is solid, tight,

and very clean; midrange and treble are clear, sweet, transparent, and also very clean. And as the distortion and power-handling tests imply, the system accepts with poise input levels that lesser speakers would find brutal. We ran the speakers through the gauntlet of "concert hall volume" and then some, and our ears complained first, just as the discreet warning on the back panel suggests they might. Very likely because of the excellent dispersion, stereo imaging is striking and shows unusual depth.

In our estimation, Interface D belongs to an elite class of loudspeaker. It is one of the few that we have heard that are virtually free of obvious annoyances on first audition. Is it suitable for use as a monitor? That is a matter of opinion. But, if you want a speaker that is accurate, loud, and able to handle power, this is one to check out.

CIRCLE 133 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Pioneer's Super Cassette Deck

The Equipment: Pioneer Model CT-F1000, a stereo Dolby cassette deck with monitoring (separate recording and playback) head configuration, in metal case. Dimensions: 16½ by 7 inches (front panel), 13 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlet: one unswitched (300 watts). Price: \$600; optional JA-R102 rack-mounting adapter, \$30. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Pioneer Electronic Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 85 Oxford Dr., Moonachie, N.J. 07074.

Comment: We, who see a succession of basically similar products in any one category, come to expect those similarities when we encounter yet another exemplar. When a new model refuses to match the mold, we ask ourselves whether that is good or bad. Are we excited by the newness for its own sake? Are we, conversely, peeved by unfamiliarity, a feeling that would evaporate with longer use? We must, in short, beware of conditioned responses, of snap judgments, of values based on assumptions that do not apply to the new product. The CT-F1000 raises an unusual number of questions of this sort—some of which we will simply have to pass on to you to be answered on the basis of your intended uses and habits.

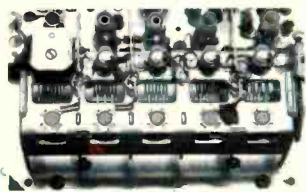
It is a beautiful machine. Not only does it glitter with Pioneer's traditional care in front-panel detailing, but without going beyond that panel the user can see the two-in-one head (with separate gaps for recording and playback to allow simultaneous tape monitoring with minimum delay and, more important, minimum tape skew between the

two) and feel the elegance of the click-stopped level knobs and of the solenoid-controlled drive system via the transport buttons.

And the promise of these considerations is maintained internally. The drive speed, for example, is unaffected by line-voltage changes and has extremely low wow and flutter in the lab's measurements. Not only that, but its playback speed is adjustable—from +13.4%, to -10.6% of normal, or approximately a whole tone in either direction (twice Pioneer's published spec)—to tune the recording to a live performance or to correct tapes made on off-speed machines. The adjustment system does not affect recording speed and has a very positive detent in the control at the normal playback speed, which, while 1.3% fast in absolute terms, matches the recording speed exactly.

Playback response from the standard test tape is unusually fine. (The bass rise, be it noted, is the result of the tape rather than the deck, since the Philips standard still has not caught up with the saner approach to bass equalization long since adopted by high fidelity equipment makers.) The chrome-tape record/play response (made with Scotch chrome) is extremely flat, with extended, smooth bass and a high end that remains very flat up to the beginning of rolloff, which occurs at a higher than average point. (Incidentally, cassettes with chrome indexing wells at the back will automatically switch bias and equalization to chrome, overriding the front-panel switches.) Ferrichrome response (with Sony Duad) is a little less flat across the band but is flatter than most ferrichrome curves and extends very high at the top end. With ferric

Nikko Sounds as Professional as it Looks



5-gang capacitor

If you thought Nikko only makes rock-solid, quality-built receivers, we have some pleasant surprises.

For the discerning listener, we present a selection of rack-mountable stereo components from Nikko Audio's Professional Series. The Gamma I FM tuner, The Beta I preamp and the

Alpha II amplifier.

One look at the front panel controls and it is obvious these units possess an unusual combination of creative features. Nikko engineers also developed the advanced technology you can't see.

Technology which makes these components truly professional in sound as well as appearance.

The advanced design 5-gang capacitor (highest rated capacitor available) gives the Gamma I tuner superior FM sensitivity (1.8 μ V) and selectivity (35dB wide, 85dB narrow). You get the signal you want, and

only the signal you want to hear.

The thinline Beta I preamp employs high voltage FET's for exceptionally fast signal reaction and extremely high efficiency and linearity in the high frequency range. A toroidally wound power transformer reduces hum radiation while the phono overload rejection capability is one of the highest ever measured.



Toroidal power transformer

On the Alpha II amplifier, totally independent, dual power supplies offer far greater dynamic range and lessened crosstalk than the usual split single power supply and significant headroom. (120 watts per channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms, from 15 Hz to 20 kHz with THD and IM distortion a phenomenally low 0.03%.)



Dual power supplies

These are but a few examples why Nikko sounds as professional as it looks. Nikko designs and builds all its stereo equipment with dedication to total reliability, highest quality and superb performance. And the price is

always affordable.

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Nikko Audio

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The super fidelity receiver

The Sansui G-9000

A lot of money? You bet it is. But that's what it cost Sansui to develop the world's most advanced receiver. The Sansui G-9000 super fidelity DC receiver. Never before has music reproduction been so clean, brilliant, and true. When you listen to a G-9000 you'll actually hear a difference. When you look at the specifications, you will understand why.

The amplifier section is DC and direct coupled to achieve the widest frequency response of zero Hz to 200kHz (from main-in, -3dB). A slew rate of $80V/\mu\text{sec.}$, achieved through unique Sansui amplifier circuitry (patent pending), ensures fastest response to all musical signals. And we have virtually

eliminated distortion. THD is all the way down to 0.02% at full rated power of 160 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20-20,000Hz.

The FM section offers selectable IF bandwidth, for greatest selectivity in crowded signal areas and lowest distortion (0.08% stereo) under normal listening conditions. Sensitivity is $1.5\mu\text{V}$ (8.7dBf), and capture ratio is a very low 0.9dB.

Sansui engineers have used independent power supplies with a dual-wound toroidal transformer to ensure minimal hum and channel crosstalk. Large oval capacitors provide a more-than-ample power reservoir. And the phono equalizer is de-



someone paid a million for. pure power DC receiver.

signed for extraordinary accuracy ($\pm 0.2\text{dB}$, 20Hz-20kHz) and high overload margin (330mV RMS).

The Sansui G-9000 is, all in all, more advanced than nearly every separate amplifier and tuner available today at any price. And certainly more convenient. Especially when you look at and handle the full complement of "human engineered" controls. They are beautifully positioned, superbly smooth and outstandingly accurate. We have even placed all the input, output and speaker terminals at the sides, with rails for hiding the cables.

Interested? Then visit your nearest Sansui dealer today. You'll be surprised to learn that our

suggested retail price is only \$1,050 and that we also offer the G-8000 pure power DC receiver, with nearly all the advantages of the G-9000, but with slightly less power, at the suggested retail price of only \$900. Which isn't a lot when you consider that these super fidelity components are easily worth a million.

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CIRCLE 35 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Introducing the Koss Theory of loudspeaker design and the three new Koss CM speaker systems that prove it.



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Here for the first time is the culmination of a world-wide search for the ultimate in loudspeaker design within the limitations of today's technology and within affordable price restrictions. Indeed it represents a breakthrough in loudspeaker technology of such significance that it heralds the second major revolution in loudspeaker design.

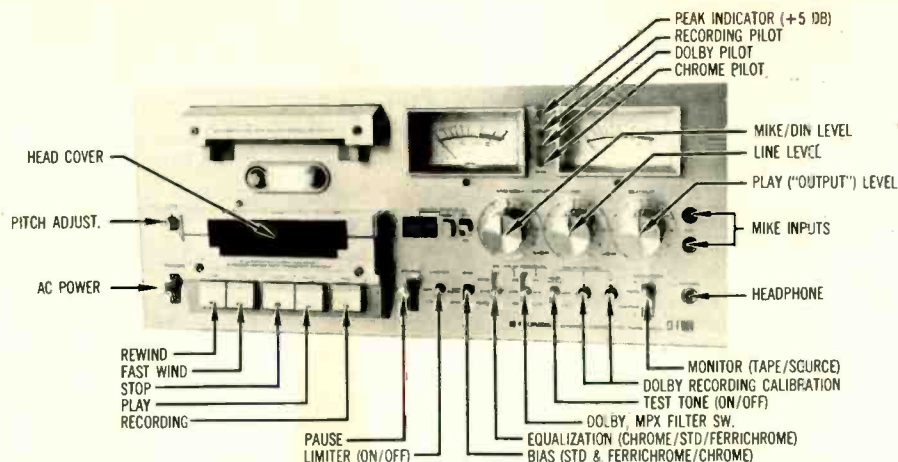
By utilizing a complex series of audio engineering formulas and the precise knowledge of computer science, Koss engineers are now able to derive and produce the optimum system parameters for any loudspeaker. The incredible result of this engineering achievement is the new Koss CM

1010, 1020, and 1030 loudspeaker systems. Each represents the ultimate speaker system available in its price range. And each represents a listening experience you'll have to hear to believe.

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tape (the lab used Ampex 20/20 +), the non-Dolby response is, again, extremely flat—and, predictably, a little less extended.

We're in doubt about why the Dolby curve for the same tape loses some of that superb flatness and gives up as much top-end response as it does. Since Pioneer would recommend no specific tapes for the lab tests, listing in the owner's manual a miscellany of ferrics that defies our picking one "typical" brand, the choice of 20/20 + was arbitrary. The Dolby curve might suggest that the deck is somewhat overbiased for the tape—but the non-Dolby curve seems to prove otherwise. In any event, this worst-case response still is better than curves we have seen with some similarly priced decks and using tapes that, according to the decks' manufacturers, should have been a perfect match.

Critical listening was, of course, done with chrome and chrome-compatible (TDK's SA, etc.) or with ferrichrome tapes, and the results were very good indeed. Pioneer provides separate equalization positions for chrome and ferrichrome; since the playback characteristic is the same (70 microseconds), the difference in the recording equalization is presumably responsible for the fine results with ferrichrome. With the separate playback gap in the head, adjustment for tape sensitivity (Dolby tracking) is simple: Turn on the built-in oscillator, record the tone, flick the monitor switch to compare recording and playback levels, and adjust the calibration controls until the two levels are the same. We found results most reliable when we also adjusted the LINE knob until we got a Dolby-level indication from the tone, though we do not understand why the level of the tone should be affected by any level control.

The three level-control knobs have plastic outer indexing rings that can be preset for the level you want to reach when you fade in the recording and have separate elements for right and left channels to correct any imbalance. Since there are separate MIKE (or DIN) and LINE controls, mixing is possible. The OUTPUT control actually affects playback only—not the source feed-through—so you can adjust playback levels to match either those of the source input or those within your stereo system, but not necessarily both.

The OUTPUT also affects playback metering, so the knob must be calibrated from a known signal level (you can use the test tone) if you want the meters to show the absolute level of the recorded signal. When the recording-calibration tone is turned on, however, the output control is bypassed so that the meters will give an absolute indication. We can't help wondering why Pioneer didn't simply put the playback metering ahead of the control, bypassing the

need both for the extra switching complexity and for meter calibration.

Among other benefits, the presence of solenoid controls makes automatic recording via a timer worry-free. When the power is off, the transport buttons can be depressed; but the solenoids will not engage the transport until the power comes on, so no damage can result. These controls are said to contain logic so that the user can jump from one to another ad lib (without going via STOP) for fast operation. Fast it is, but not foolproof. We created one tape in going directly from REWIND to PLAY, so we would suggest using the STOP anyway. The PAUSE also is solenoid-operated, giving it a lovely feel but slow response by comparison to typical mechanical pause controls. As with at least one other solenoid-controlled deck we can remember (and that at a higher price), the PAUSE therefore will not permit really tight editing; about a second of silence is left on the tape whenever the PAUSE is used to stop it during recording. The solenoid controls and logic also make possible a memory system that will stop at 000 on the counter if only REWIND is pressed, or automatically begin playback at that point if PLAY is pressed as well.

The intriguing cassette "well" is not a well at all, but a space between two structures protruding from the front panel. The upper one houses the recording-prevention and chrome-tape sensors and holds the cassette in position; the lower one houses the heads and tape-drive parts and is fitted with a flip-down cover with small windows. One big advantage of this scheme is that it makes head cleaning and demagnetization superbly easy. One disadvantage is that two small openings (whose function escapes us) may allow dust to bypass the cover and reach the heads and mechanical parts.

The metering system strikes us as very good, admirers of peak metering though we are. The meters themselves are of the averaging type with good ballistics and wide calibration range (from -40 to +5—the upper limit representing approximately DIN reference level). In addition, there is a peak LED that triggers at the +5 level. (The front panel specifies this useful piece of information, which goes unmentioned even in the manuals for most LED-equipped decks.) Curiously, with the monitor switch at SOURCE, the meter will register an incoming signal whether or not the deck is in the recording mode but the LED will not. To use the latter as an aid in presetting levels, therefore, you must put the deck in PAUSE.

The manual, we regret to say, is well below Pioneer's usual standards. It leaves unaddressed many of the relatively technical questions that we would expect purchasers of a \$600 deck to ask; worse, some of the language is quite

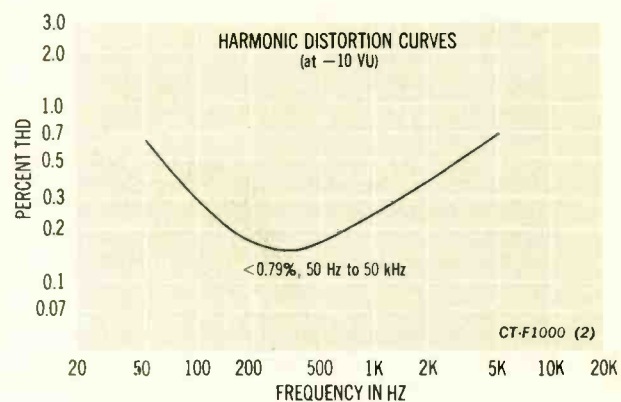
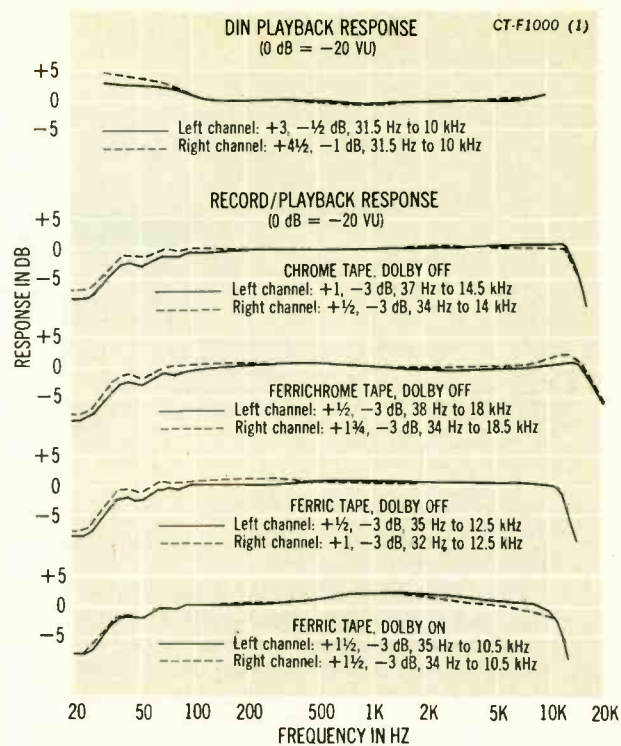
obscure. The discussion of tape types and switch settings is particularly wanting, partly because more than half of the specified tapes are not available on the American market. Surely a deck as fine as the CT-F1000 (and its purchaser) deserves better.

And, decidedly, it is a fine unit. The flat, ungimmicked response curves and excellent distortion curve are its hallmarks. And it has a fascinating collection of features. That each of these must be evaluated by prospective purchasers in the light of their own needs goes without saying in most cassette decks, but the complex implications of those in the CT-F1000 require special attention in this respect. It is a very individual machine. If one can generalize at all about it, we would say that it offers good overall value in a price class where that is rare—certainly no mean achievement.

CIRCLE 136 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Pioneer CT-F1000 Additional Data

Speed accuracy	record and detented playback position, 1.3% fast; no measurable difference at 105, 120, & 127 VAC	
Wow and flutter	playback: 0.05% record/play: 0.08%	
Rewind time (C-60 cassette)	58 sec.	
Fast-forward time (same cassette)	58 sec.	
S/N ratio (re 0 VU, Dolby off; CBS weighting)		
playback	L ch: 54 dB	R ch: 54½ dB
record/play	L ch: 50½ dB	R ch: 51 dB
Erasure (333 Hz at normal level)	70 dB	
Crosstalk (at 333 Hz)		
record left, play right	43 dB	
record right, play left	43 dB	
Sensitivity (re DIN 0 VU)		
line input	L ch: 64 mV	R ch: 67 mV
mike input	L ch: 0.33 mV	R ch: 0.33 mV
Meter action (re DIN 0 VU)		
	L ch: 6 dB high	R ch: 7 dB high
Maximum output (re DIN 0 VU)		
	L ch: 0.95 V	R ch: 1.0 V



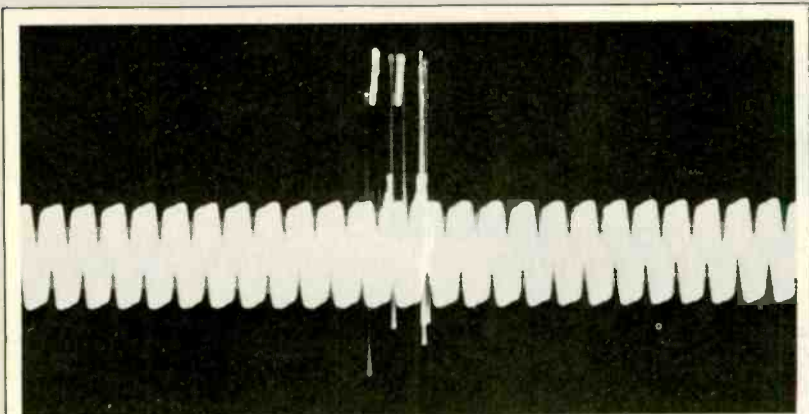
Nikko's Ultraquiet Gamma I

The Equipment: Nikko Gamma I, a stereo FM tuner in rack-mount metal case. Dimensions: 19 by 2½ inches (front panel), 9½ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$370. Warranty: "limited," 3 years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Nikko Electric, Japan; U.S. distributor: Nikko Electric Corp. of America, 16270 Raymer St., Van Nuys, Calif. 91406.

Comment: Continuing its course through the Greek alphabet, Nikko Audio has introduced the Gamma I FM tuner as a companion to the Alpha power amps and Beta preamps. Like its brethren, the Gamma I is available with rack-

mountable front panel in either brushed-aluminum or black finish. (While its 19-inch width is indeed a rack-mount standard, its 2½-inch height is not.)

The Gamma I offers a choice of wide or narrow IF bandwidths and includes a "high blend" switch to reduce hiss on marginal stereo broadcasts—a nicety that seems to have been neglected of late. Both fixed and variable outputs are provided, as well as a detector output (for a discrete-quadrifonics adapter, if and when the FCC goes that route). Outputs for an external oscilloscope multipath display are also provided, along with binding posts for both 300- and 75-ohm antenna inputs and a standard coax jack



Actual, unretouched photo of an oscillograph test.

The sound of a fingerprint

The oscillograph you see is an actual photo of a high-quality audio system "playing" a fingerprint.

You're hearing some now through your speaker system. Instead of the sound your precious discs are capable of. And no vacuum record cleaner, brush-arm or treated cloth will remove them. None.

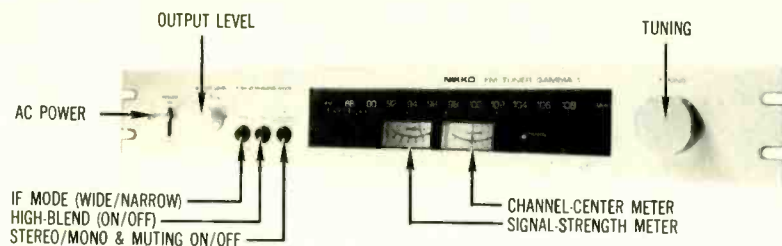
But Discwasher®—with new **D3** fluid—removes fingerprints completely. Along with dust. And manufacturing lubricants (added to make pressing faster) that can act like groove-blocking fingerprints. All this cleaning without pulling polymer stabilizers from your vinyl discs.

Discwasher®. The only safe, effective way to silence the printed finger. At Audio specialists world wide.

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duplicating the 75-ohm input. A back-panel switch alters de-emphasis to 25 microseconds for Dolby broadcasts to be decoded by an adapter. (No Dolby circuitry is included.) The dial is only 6½ inches long but is linearly marked every 0.5 MHz, and is very accurate across the band. The tuning knob feels smooth, if a bit stiff and springy.

According to the lab data, the quieting curves of the tuner are very steep (reaching 50 dB of noise suppression with a 12-dBf input in mono and 34-dBf in stereo). Really good listening—60-dB stereo quieting—requires a 45-dBf input. The ultimate mono signal-to-noise ratio is an extraordinary 79 dB. All these measurements were made in the wide IF mode.

Pilot and subcarrier suppression is very good, and the IM distortion is low indeed. Total harmonic distortion is much lower in the wide than in the narrow mode, of course; as Nikko suggests, the Gamma I should be operated wideband whenever possible. The alternate-channel selectivity (40 dB) in this mode is adequate for many, if not most, conditions, so one need choose the greater selectivity (and increased distortion) of the narrow mode only when hard pressed.

Frequency response is very good and is virtually as good in stereo as it is in mono. The stereo separation (especially in the high-frequency region) is predictably better with the wideband option, but even in the narrow mode the Nikko can outdo many phono cartridges in this respect.

During our fringe-area listening tests, we ran the Gamma I wideband whenever possible. The higher distortion of the narrow mode is audible, especially on heavily modulated transmissions, and to a greater extent than the lab data would suggest. Even with weak (but heavily modulated) stations, wideband sounds better. In crowded portions of the band, however, the narrow option is virtually a must.

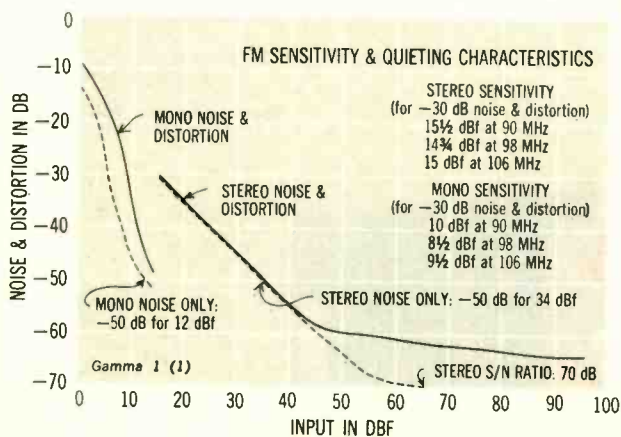
On strong local stations, the signal-strength meter reads higher in the wideband mode than in narrow, which hints

that some extreme sidebands may be lost in the latter position. With weak stations the more selective position shows a greater meter deflection. The signal-strength meter, though highly compressed in the upper reaches, is reasonably sensitive over much of its range, but increased sensitivity in the channel-center meter would make it more useful.

The unit combines muting-defeat and stereo/mono switches in a single button: In the mono mode, there is no muting; in stereo, muting cannot be defeated. The arrangement may be a bit inconvenient, but the circuitry works very well. Stations go in and out of mute cleanly and without annoying thumps. (In our sample there seemed to be some elusive interaction between the mute and other front-panel controls. When one of these buttons is pressed or released, the tuner mutes for a split second or there is a burst of noise.) Stereo imaging is left substantially intact

Nikko Gamma I Tuner Additional Data

Capture ratio	wide: 1¼ dB narrow: 2 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	wide 40 dB narrow 80 dB		
S/N ratio (mono, 65 dBf)	79 dB		
THD, wideband	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.08%	0.064%	0.065%
1 kHz	0.056%	0.060%	0.057%
10 kHz	0.14%	0.20%	0.21%
THD, narrowband	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.09%	0.77%	0.86%
1 kHz	0.14%	0.50%	0.48%
10 kHz	0.14%	0.66%	0.66%
IM distortion	0.05%		
19-kHz pilot	-65 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-67 dB		
Frequency response	mono +1, -2 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz stereo +1, -2¼ dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
Channel separation, wideband	>45 dB, 400 Hz to 9 kHz >35 dB, 90 Hz to 15 kHz		
Channel separation, narrowband	>40 dB, 190 Hz to 5.5 kHz >30 dB, 50 Hz to 10 kHz		
All data measured in wide IF mode except as specified			



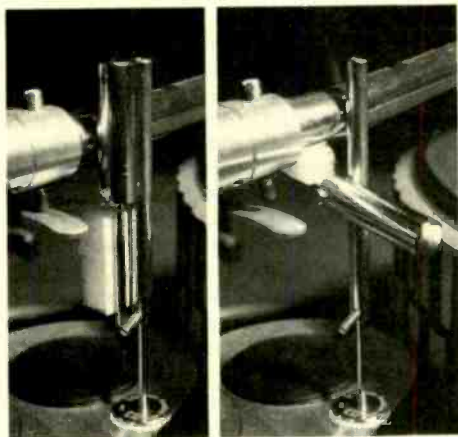
by the high-blend function; it has relatively little effect on noise, but, fortunately, with this tuner's steep quieting curve, stereo hiss is not a major problem.

The Nikko Gamma I has set out on a path of its own, with controls and cosmetics that are far from run-of-the-mill. By and large, its performance in the lab is very good and even exemplary in certain respects. In listening tests, the

unit exhibits its strong points, but falls short of what the lab data led us to expect. Of course, FM tuner design is sufficiently complex to defy unaided science, and the designer's aesthetic ideals must be involved as well. Seen in this light, Nikko's novel approach will certainly have its adherents.

CIRCLE 135 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Monitor Audio Stylift—A Blow to Spartans



The Equipment: Monitor Audio Stylift, Model AL-100, an arm-lifting device for single-play manual turntables. Price: \$20. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Monitor Audio, U.K.; U.S. distributor: Audio-Source, 1185 Chess Dr., Foster City, Calif. 94404.

Comment: There are some staunch souls who drink whisky neat and coffee black, wouldn't be seen dead in a sports car that doesn't jar the anatomy at the merest pebble in the road, won't swim in water warm enough to melt an ice cube, and otherwise take every available opportunity to display obdurate machismo, masochism, or whatever it is that motivates such extremes. We suspect that they will hate Stylift, a clever little device that takes one of the last bits of pain out of the manual single-play turntable.

Without it, the pickup stylus readily becomes rut-bound in the runout groove at the end of the music. If you aren't

reasonably quick, the stylus will proceed to work itself into a shape other than that intended by its designer, while exercising the speaker cones with sharp, high-level pulses. There are single-play models with automatic lift or return, but since the mechanism that accomplishes this function normally is integrated with both the tone arm and the platter drive it can't be adapted for use with a separate arm. The Stylift, however, will work with just about any arm.

The device is simplicity itself. It consists of a weight connected to a lever and balanced in such a way that the tone arm, on entering the runout groove, overbalances the weight, which in turn swings the lever around to lift the arm clear of the disc. An adhesive-backed foam pad attaches to the lever to cushion the action. The lever/weight combination is pivoted on an upright support, adjustable in height and secured to the turntable base by a double-sided pad. (The supplied pads work well enough, but for long-term tenacity we wonder whether silicone cement—which can always be removed if necessary—might not prove better.)

Installation of the device is a little fussy but not too difficult. Once the job is done, the Stylift works well, and there is virtually nothing that can go wrong with it. One important feature is that nothing touches the arm while it is tracking modulated grooves. We tested it with vertical tracking forces down to 5 millinewtons (0.5 gram) with good results in each case.

You must remember to reposition the weight each time you remove the arm; otherwise the weight will not be ready to trip when the arm reaches it, and, worse yet, the lever can contact the arm while the disc is still playing. But this is simply a matter of developing sensible habits—a requirement familiar to users of manuals. Also familiar is the slightly steep price for a signally simple mechanism. Suffice it to say that the price is not prohibitive and that the product is well made, functional, and unique.

CIRCLE 131 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Ohm L Challenges the Big Guys

The Equipment: Ohm L, a loudspeaker system in walnut-veneer enclosure, suitable for bookshelf placement. Dimensions: 19½ by 12 inches (front), 9¾ inches deep. Price: \$160. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Ohm Acoustics Corp., 241 Taaffe Place, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205.

Comment: Can a relatively small loudspeaker from Brooklyn make it in the big time? We can't say for certain,

but the designers at Ohm Acoustics have taken a good shot at seeing to it that the Model L does. And, on reflection, the unit has a lot of checks in its "plus" column.

The speaker should fit without difficulty on any bookshelf of reasonably solid construction. Three drivers are used in the system, which is closer to a two-way-plus-supertweeter design than to a conventional three-way. Working into a vented enclosure, the woofer is more efficient than it would be in a sealed box of equivalent size; but an



input of 0 dBW (1 watt) of pink noise, 250 to 6,000 Hz, produces an average sound pressure level of only 81½ dB at 1 meter, so system efficiency is on the low side.

Power handling and freedom from distortion are first-class. Driven with a steady tone at 300 Hz, the Ohm accepts 20 dBW (100 watts) without audible complaint—producing, in the bargain, an SPL of 105 dB at 1 meter on axis. With pulses at the same frequency, the speaker sucks the test amp dry and produces a peak SPL of 113½ dB from a peak power of just under 28½ dBW (686 watts). At a power input capable of driving the system to an output of 100 dB SPL at 300 Hz, second harmonic distortion is below 3% virtually from 50 Hz to 10 kHz, with third harmonic distortion lower still across the same range. Rarely does either harmonic exceed 1% with a 0-dBW (1-watt) input. Generally, the third harmonic predominates up to about 1 kHz, the second taking over above that.

At first glance, the impedance rating of the Ohm L seems conservative. The nominal impedance measured by the lab is 5.25 ohms, as contrasted with the manufacturer's rated 4 ohms. From 20 Hz to about 7 kHz the impedance remains above its nominal value—with some marked excursions upward. From 7 kHz up, the curve falls and reaches a low of 3.6 ohms or so between 15 and 20 kHz. This high-frequency dip could give some amps a problem with one speaker per channel, particularly in the event (admittedly somewhat unlikely) that the program material has a lot of energy in this range. That being the case, we advise against operation of paralleled Ohm L pairs.

The omnidirectional anechoic frequency response of the Model L is generally smooth and is characterized by a broad dip of roughly 7 dB centered at about 1,200 Hz. Whether or not by design, the slopes of the curve toward this midrange dip are well matched to the contours achievable via normal tone controls, which means that a judicious cut in both bass and treble will just about eliminate the dip. The three-position switch controlling the

high-frequency level is an aid in this respect as well. It is most effective in the range of 7 to 12 kHz, where the rated 3 dB per step is met.

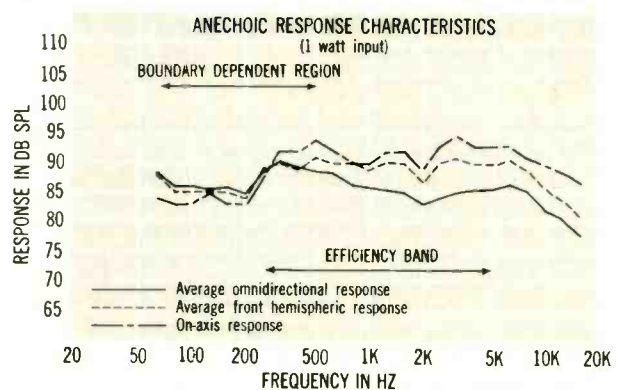
The front hemisphere curve generally parallels the omnidirectional, indicating that, while the tweeter is "hot" in the forward direction, dispersion at positions moderately off axis remains good. The irregularity of the on-axis curve above 1 kHz suggests that some roughness may be noticed by listeners seated precisely along this line.

In listening tests, the Ohm L's aspirations exceeded those expected of its price class by a notable margin. The overall sound is solid, yet transparent and detailed. Deep bass is tight and well controlled, with a sense of ease that is maintained to relatively high listening levels. The dip in the midrange seems to impart a slight hollowness to lower strings and male voices in particular, but not disturbingly so. Female voices sound incisive, while remaining safely short of edgy. Transients are sharp and crisp.

The rising high-end response and the tweeter's tendency to become beamy as it approaches the limit of the audio band can make the highs seem overbright, especially if one is seated on axis and the program material is loaded with high-frequency content. A touch of treble cut cures this handily, although it subdues the off-axis highs just a bit. Stereo imaging is excellent—to the point where the sound seems almost totally detached from the speakers.

Offering a big, high-quality sound in a fairly small, moderately priced package, the Ohm L strikes us as a particularly attractive speaker system. To be sure, it seems happiest with somewhat more power than is available in budget systems. But the speaker repays the few extra dB of drive it demands with impressive performance, and it is quite suitable for most types of music. Its idiosyncrasies are, moreover, easy to live with. From where we sit, Ohm appears to have another winner.

CIRCLE 132 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



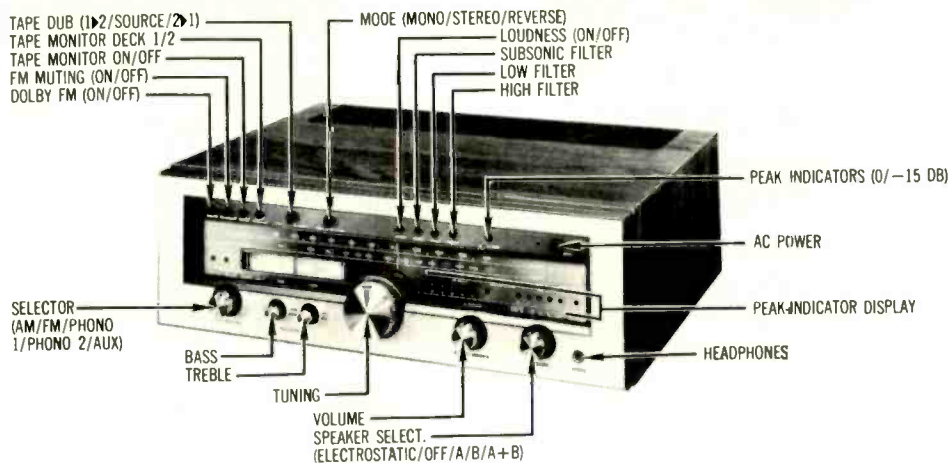
Luxman's "Tuner-Amp"—Getting It All Together

The Equipment: Luxman R-1120, a stereo FM/AM receiver in rosewood case. Dimensions: 19¼ by 6¾ inches (front), 16½ inches deep. Convenience outlets: one switched (100 watts), one unswitched (100 watts). Price: \$895. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Lux Audio, Japan; U.S. distributor: Lux Audio of America, 160 Dupont St., Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

Comment: When a company that has made its mark with

quality separates offers its first receivers, what does it call them? Lux Audio has chosen to avoid the term "receiver" and refers to its new products as "AM/FM stereo tuner-amplifiers" in the European style. The Luxman R-1120, at 20¾ dBW (120 watts) per channel, perches at the top of the new group and, like the Lux line in general, is as beautiful to behold as to hear.

Provision is made for two phono inputs and an auxiliary, as well as for two tape decks, and tape dubbing in either



direction is possible independent of the program being presented to the loudspeakers. Besides pin jacks for each tape recorder, a DIN in/out jack is available for the Deck-1 connections. Three speaker pairs may be wired to color-coded, spring-loaded terminals. (Interestingly, the third set of speaker terminals is designated exclusively for electrostatic panels.) A five-position rotary switch selects the electrostatic pair, either (or both) of the dynamic speakers, or no speakers at all. A six-LED array indicates the peak output power of each channel: -18, -15, -12, -9, -6 and 0 dB, referenced to either 20% dBW or 8 3/4 dBW (7.6 watts) into 8-ohm speakers. A back-panel slide switch quenches the display.

In addition to the 75- and 300-ohm FM antenna connections, there is one for an external long-wire AM antenna. The AM bar antenna pivots well out and away from the chassis and delivers much better than average AM reception in our locale. A rear-panel slide switch attenuates the FM signal to prevent overload in extremely strong signal areas, but with the dual-gate MOS-FET front end, it's unlikely you'll ever need it.

In lab tests, the FM tuner is impressive, to say the least. Stereo quieting is pushed to 60 dB by only 45 1/2 dB of input, which promises enjoyable listening in all but the deepest fringe areas. Selectivity should prove fine even for relatively crowded portions of the band. IM distortion is gratifyingly low, and THD (in the stereo mode especially) is excellent—much better than one might expect, considering the R-1120's selectivity. Surprisingly, the midband THD is even lower in stereo than in mono. The capture ratio is not quite as good as in less selective tuners—an almost inevitable compromise; frequency response and separation are very fine.

The power amp section, rated at 20 3/4 dBW per channel, seems somewhat more powerful on the bench. Clipping does not occur until 22 1/2 dBW (170 watts) and IM distortion stays low up to 23 1/2 dBW (228 watts). More than the 8-ohm rated power is available even into 16-ohm loads. THD remains below 0.05% throughout the audio band at any of our standard output levels. The adequate damping factor (47) stops short of the overkill found in some designs, and frequency response is down less than a decibel at 20 Hz and 100 kHz.

There are three filters, two at the low and one at the high end, all of them commendably sharp in their rolloff. The subsonic filter is useful in cutting record warp signals down to size and robs music of nothing; a second low-cut filter reduces the distraction caused by the rumble so many discs contain. (We doubt that anyone would mate a rumble-laden turntable with this excellent receiver.)

The phono preamp combines high sensitivity with a more than adequate overload point and low noise. Phono equalization is quite accurate, and signal-to-noise ratio, re-

ferred to a 10-millivolt input signal, is almost 91 1/2 dB on an unweighted basis.

The tone controls provide adequate range and reasonable flexibility—and then some. Two turnover frequencies are available on each control—200 or 400 Hz in the bass, and 2 or 4 kHz in the treble. The treble and bass themselves are rotary controls with center detents; the knob either pulls out or presses in to select the turnover frequency. At 100 Hz, the bass control offers a ± 6 dB or ± 11 dB range depending upon the choice; at 20 Hz, the range is about the same with either turnover (approximately ± 14 dB). The treble control delivers a ± 8 dB or ± 13 dB spread at 10 kHz. The loudness contour, however, struck us as bass heavy.

The phono preamp cooperated with our medium-impedance, high-output magnetic cartridge to produce a very clean, bright high end with excellent transients, depth, and center imaging. No signs of overload were detected on any disc we played, nor did we experience any lack of power capability. Larger-than-life sound levels were easily achieved with our medium-efficiency 8-ohm speakers without activating the 0-dB LED and without any audible sign of distress.

The FM tuner sounds as good as it looked on the test bench. The tuning action is smooth and somewhat light to the touch but with a tactile sense that the knob is going to spring back slightly when released. The dial is relatively long (8 1/2 inches), but its FM scale, with 1 MHz between divisions, is somewhat coarse, and on our sample the calibration was in error by almost 0.4 MHz in midband and more at the high end. Tuning and signal-strength meters are quite sensitive and, as far as we can tell, accurate.

Though the low switching threshold permits the R-1120 to enter the stereo mode on stations that are too weak for quiet reception, a threshold that is too low is better, in our view, than one that is too high—you can always switch manually to mono. The mute is effective (though on strong stations it releases with a mild thump). A Dolby-FM switch is on the front panel, but an optional Dolby-FM board (\$55) must be added to make use of this feature. Our only reservations concerning the human engineering of the R-1120 involve the array of buttons and switches above the dial: They are very small and not as well marked as we would like. We'd also prefer more legible graphics on the selector switch.

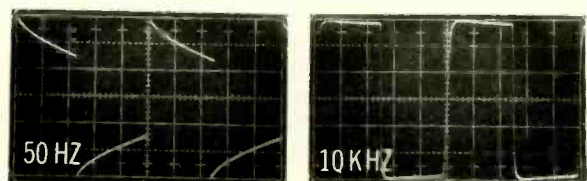
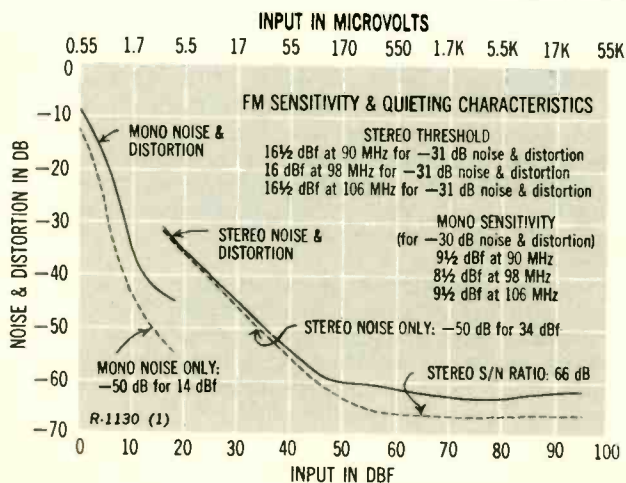
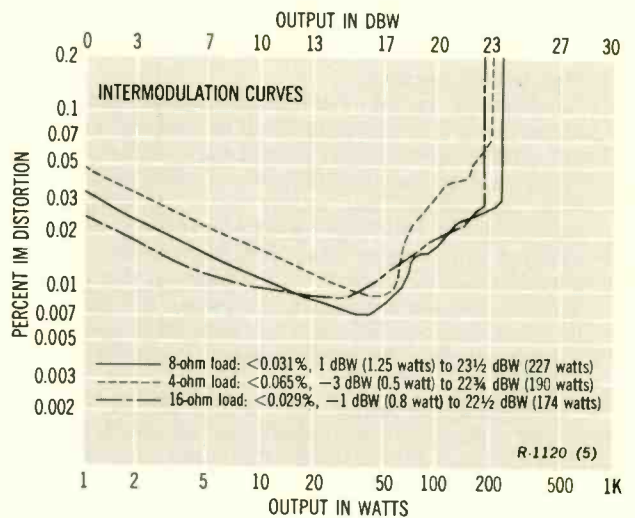
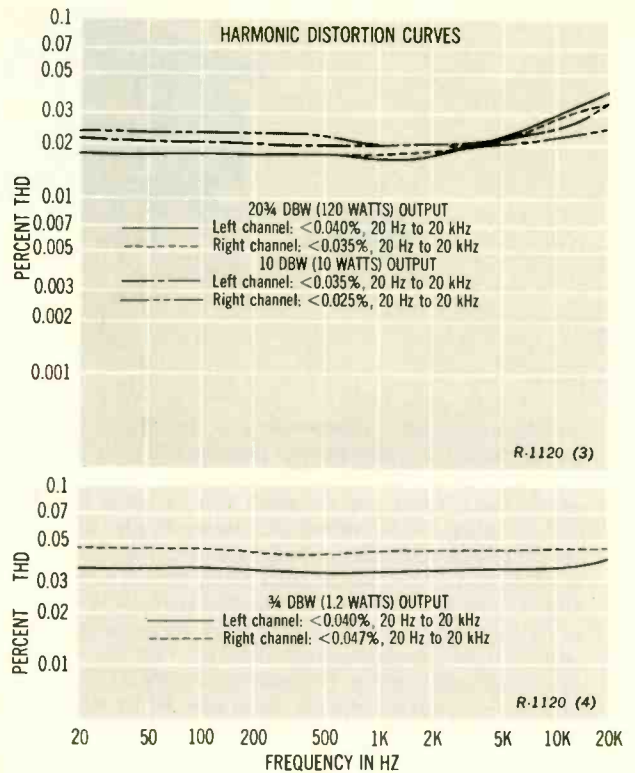
For such a powerful receiver, the R-1120 is compact and lightweight and remarkably cool in operation. There is an effortless quality to the sound that just radiates class, and the appearance of the product and its thoughtful constellation of features reinforce this impression. Here is a receiver—sorry, a tuner-amplifier—that the discerning listener will surely enjoy.

CIRCLE 134 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Additional data on next page

Luxman R-1120 Receiver Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	1½ dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	84 dB		
S/N ratio (mono, 65 dBf)	72 dB		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.21%	0.29%	0.30%
1 kHz	0.16%	0.065%	0.065%
10 kHz	0.19%	0.30%	0.32%
IM distortion	0.14%		
19-kHz pilot	-66½ dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-68½ dB		
Frequency response	mono + ½, -2¼ dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
	L ch + ¼, -2¼ dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
	R ch + ¾, -2 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
Channel separation	> 45 dB, 120 Hz to 1.8 kHz		
	> 35 dB, 20 Hz to 7 kHz		
Amplifier Section			
Power output at clipping (channels driven simultaneously)	L ch 22¼ dBW (170 watts)		
	R ch 22¼ dBW (170 watts)		
Frequency response	+ ¼, -¾ dB, 20 Hz to 100 kHz		
	+ ¼, -1 dB, 10 Hz to beyond 100 kHz		
RIAA equalization	± ¾ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz		
Input characteristics (for rated output at full gain)	Sensitivity Noise S/N ratio		
phono 1, 2	1.7 mV	-55¼ dBW	76 dB
aux	110 mV	-61¼ dBW	82½ dB
tape 1, 2	110 mV	-66¼ dBW	87½ dB
Phono overload (clipping point)	200 mV at 1 kHz		
Damping factor at 1 kHz	47		
Subsonic filter	-3 dB at 15 Hz; 6 dB/oct.		
Low filter	-3 dB at 80 Hz; 12 dB/oct.		
High filter	-3 dB at 7 kHz; 12 dB/oct.		



Square-wave response

For more reports on equipment, see BACKBEAT.

AR DOES IT AGAIN. INTRODUCING THE LIQUID COOLED SPEAKER.



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CIRCLE 1 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

New Products: 1978 Begins with a Bang

by Robert Long, Harold A. Rodgers, and Cynthia Pease

In Las Vegas in January, a sometime minor affair—the Winter Consumer Electronics Show—seemed to have recovered from its nearly terminal illness and showed evidence of more vitality than ever. Rather than the usual assortment of stand-pat product lines and afterthought fill-ins spiced with the merest soupçon of novelty, manufacturers brought forth some genuine surprises—and surprisingly many of them.

Despite an increasingly unfavorable drift in the value of the U.S. dollar vs. the Japanese yen, equipment imported from Japan maintained the trend of more power and more features for the same (or slightly less) money. There are indications that this state of affairs will not continue indefinitely. A spokesman for one major importer confessed that the technological resources of the Japanese parent company had been strained somewhat by this effort.

Some erstwhile exotica—ambience simulators, outboard equalizers, moving-coil pre-preamps, high-performance tone arms—are becoming commonplace. And, at the high end of the market at least, receivers continue to wipe out the few technological advantages separates have had in the past. The debut of a receiver that incorporates all the usual preamp functions, plus custom phono-cartridge loading, tone-control contour tailoring, noise reduction (including Dolby FM), and even ambience simulation, probably is not far off.

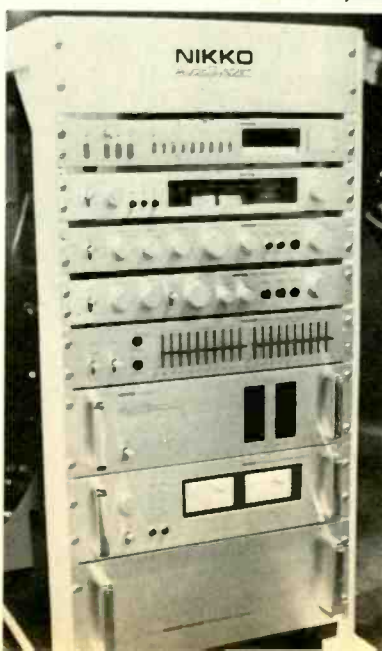
The catalyst that has generated all of this unaccustomed midwinter activity may very well be the increasing competitiveness of the electronic marketplace. Companies worried about saturating their present markets are expanding into new ones. Those that could once sit happily on their august reputations are reluctant to assume that consumers will remember who they are by next fall, so they are bringing some of their new ideas to light now. They want your attention and know that, if they don't work hard for it, their competition will.

In what follows we have isolated some fresh directions—at the expense, no doubt, of equally worthy alternative examples. Many of the latter, of course, will be treated in more detail in future issues.

Thorens Model AT-410 receiver
with Model TD-145IIC turntable



Nikko Audio System*



Though receivers (a strictly consumer commodity) remain the mainstay of high fidelity, more or less professional-looking rack mounts for components—including receivers—abound from Dynaco, Phase Linear, Audionics, and others, including the Japanese, of course, who started the trend. Even the new \$1,100 receiver from Thorens (yes, Thorens!) can be fitted with accessory brackets to integrate it with a turntable of the same brand, making a sort of super-compact ensemble. The Nikko Professional Series of separates, which is supplied with screw slots for rack mounting, is available in either black or silver finish; both are popular with most companies, though usually offered on an either/or basis. Small high-performance "packages" are increasingly common, yet a few components—receivers in particular—are more monstrous than ever.



Sansui Model AX-7

To demonstrate its new AX-7 home/disco mixer/reverb/control-amp unit at the Las Vegas show, Sansui asked two Ovation recording artists, singer Bonnie Ferguson and guitarist Mike Gerry, to perform their parts to a Music Minus One prerecorded accompaniment, while the mix was recorded on Sansui cassette equipment. More and more disco and semipro equipment of this sort is coming onto the market. Among the new brands in the field is Stanford, whose products are made in Belgium (by Nakamichi's Belgian distributor; hence the Model 600-compatible slope of some Stanford front panels) and sold here by Elpa Marketing Industries.



ADS Model T0 time-delay system



Soundcraftsmen Model EA-5003 amp/equalizer

There seem to be more and more nontraditional components. Here Soundcraftsmen has combined its equalizer with a stereo power amplifier to create the unique EA-5003. Ambience-simulation systems continue to appear: Phase Linear, SAE, and ADS all have new ones, while Audio Pulse has moved to a Model 2. American Scientific Corporation is selling (via Nautilus Recordings) the Audio Analyzer Model 910, which can be used both as a diagnostic tool for troubleshooting and as a setup instrument (for example, to adjust a room equalizer via the 910's pink-noise generator and frequency-band analyzer scope).

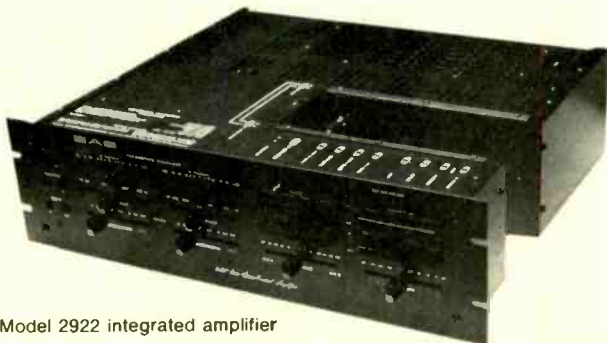


Revox Model B-760 FM tuner

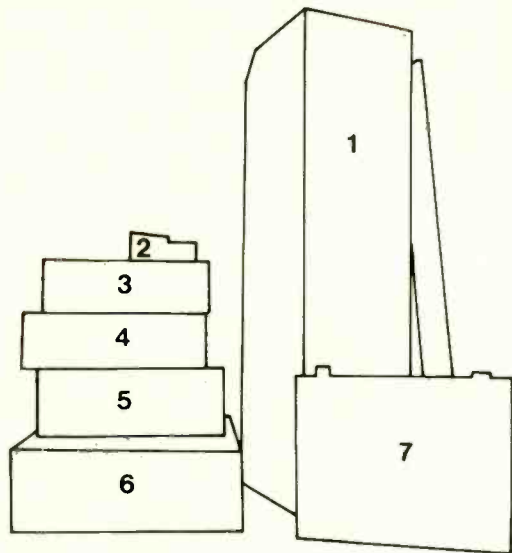


Hitachi Model HMA-7500 amplifier

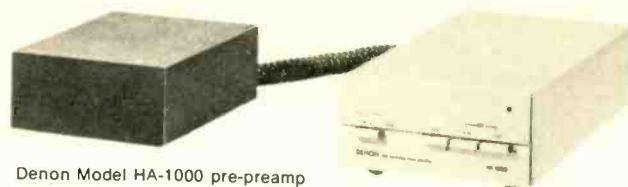
Unconventional approaches still are appearing in components of conventional format. The Revox B-760 Digital Synthesizer FM tuner will store the frequencies of up to fifteen stations for pushbutton selection; it tunes in 50-kHz steps (partly to encompass both U.S. and European station placements) with provision for 25-kHz "fine tuning" beyond the capability of typical synthesizer tuners. Major emphasis across the board in tuners (as in most components) is, however, specsmanship: low noise and distortion, excellent separation, response, and sensitivity. New amplifier technologies—the Hitachi HMA-7500 shown here is the first to use MOS FET power transistors—elbow raw power and the minimization of such esoteric forms of distortion as TIM (transient intermodulation) for attention. In separate amps, rack-mount handles and power meters have become virtually obligatory. The strange U-shaped chassis on the SAE derives from its integration of existing power amps and existing preamps (the back and front, respectively) with a "bridge" to separate them for minimum hum pickup in the preamp from the amp's power supply; connections are made in the "niche," at the back of the preamplifier module. An increasing number of separate preamps offer switching to match impedance, capacitance, and gain of the phono section to a wide variety of pickup types.



SAE Model 2922 integrated amplifier



ON OUR FRONT COVER THIS MONTH: 1) The AR-9 tower loudspeaker is the first from Acoustic Research in which the design presupposes a specific room placement and uses refined techniques of driver positioning and treatment to "fine tune" for the placement. 2) Ampex Grand Master—a name introduced last year on open-reel mastering tapes—appears now on its super-performance, normal-bias cassettes. 3) Optonica RT-650I cassette deck uses Sharp microprocessor chip for random-access playback, timed recording and play, electronic memory rewind, other functions—all displayed on liquid crystal readout. 4) Phase Linear has presented its ambience-simulation unit; note styling, typical of current generation of its components. 5) Of particular interest to home recordists is Rotel R2-8 control center, which includes mixer panel and built-in rhythm-section generator. 6) Pioneer SX-1980—at 270 watts per side (and \$1,250), billed as the world's most powerful receiver—is loaded with special features like built-in pre-amp and DC power amp. 7) Kenwood KD-750 quartz-controlled direct-drive turntable is the new top of that company's line and uses a decoupled counterweight to control resonance.



Denon Model HA-1000 pre-amp

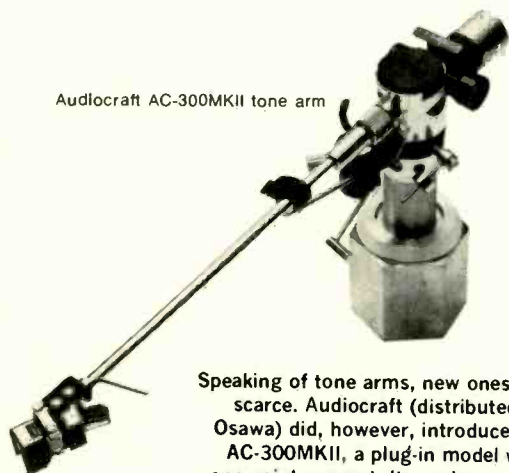
While many manufacturers are incorporating extra preamplification for moving-coil cartridges into their preamps, Denon offers the HA-1000 pre-amp, with switching for two degrees (24 and 32 dB) of gain—plus a feedthrough for moving-magnet pickups. Denon's re-entry into the U.S. audio market, through American Audioport, also adds a number of new turntables, cassette decks, and electronic components.



Rabco Model ST-8 turntable

Harman Kardon continues to be one of the few turntable manufacturers to offer straight-line tracking, under the Rabco brand name. The Model ST-8 represents the latest endeavor. Among many companies (Kenwood, Pioneer, Sanyo, and so on) to add pivoted-arm models, Lux Audio decided to challenge the one-arm bandit market; the PD-444 can accommodate two tone arms simultaneously, one of which can be 16 inches long. The platter of the PD-444 (expected retail, about \$795) is electronically braked when the unit is off—a new feature this year with other manufacturers as well.

Audiocraft AC-300MKII tone arm



Speaking of tone arms, new ones are scarce. Audiocraft (distributed by Osawa) did, however, introduce the AC-300MKII, a plug-in model with one-point support. Its exchangeable pipe arms, including S-shaped types, are said to tailor it for optimum arm/cartridge match.



Lux PD-444 turntable

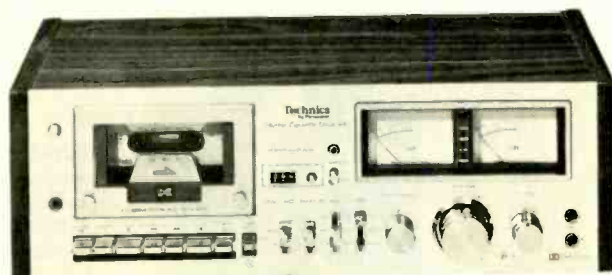


Teac Model A-6600 open-reel deck

There are few new open-reel decks, but those few generally are exciting. Teac's professionally styled A-6600 (\$1,300) is a quarter-track stereo model with such features as a full-logic control and automatic reverse, and such optional accessories as remote control, mikes, demagnetizer, and recorder maintenance kit.



Sony Model TC-K7II cassette deck



Technics Model RS-631 cassette deck



Fisher Model CR-4025 remote-control cassette deck

Convenience and versatility are the order of the day for cassette decks. For the first time since its products were introduced in this country, Sony is distributing its own decks, of which the TC-K7II is one new model. Features abound for the recordist who wants to make optimum use of the medium. Remote-control operation is possible via an optional unit. A wireless remote PAUSE also is provided with Fisher's \$250 CR-4025. Remote operation may be realized in other Fisher components in the future. Technics' RS-631 carries on the versatility trend by submitting its three-mode memory autoplay, cue and review, and timer standby system (besides its standard features), all for only \$50 more than the popular RS-630. Uher has added its name to Optonica/Sharp in offering a random-access function.

Using a technique perfected in its video tape, Fuji Film has introduced FX-II blank cassette tape. Formulated from a magnetic particle Fuji calls Beridox (for Berthollide iron oxide), the tape is designed to be used with chrome bias and equalization. The march toward ever-better cassette-tape performance goes on—Beridox being only one of several recent entrants, all of which are intended to match the capabilities of existing decks. But the often-rumored and sometimes-touted iron-particle tapes (which will require nonstandard bias, equalization, and head design for best use, by most accounts) remain in the laboratory.

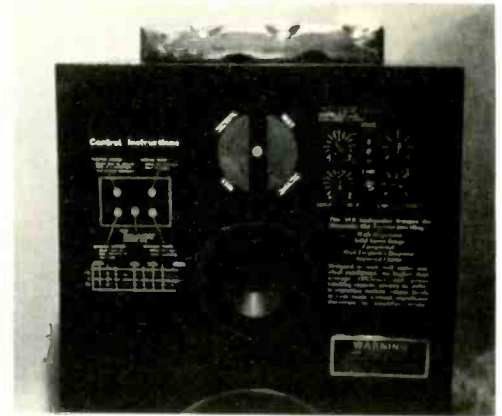


Fuji FX-II cassette tape



Infinity Quantum Reference Source speaker

Priced for people who don't have to ask about prices, the Quantum Reference Source (successor to the Quantum Line Source) is the latest of Infinity Systems' state-of-the-art loudspeakers. The Reference Source exceeds 6 feet in height and 3 feet in width and is 2 feet front to back. It retains the Infinity/Watkins dual-drive woofer and the EMIT tweeter, which uses a conductive membrane suspended in an intense magnetic field to form an electromagnetic analog of an electrostatic tweeter. The new model incorporates a midrange driver based on the same technology. Specifications from the manufacturer include a frequency response from 18 Hz to 32 kHz, ± 2 dB.



There seems to be a continuing interest in time-compensated (phase coherent) loudspeakers, though the pace of introductions is slowing. The STR PHD Gamma takes a unique approach that dispenses with staggered drivers and the "pregnant kangaroo look," retaining a conventional—and less costly—cabinet. Of its three drivers, a 10-inch woofer, a 4½-inch midrange, and 3½-inch tweeter, the two last are electrically adjustable for phase as well as level. The result is said to be an acoustic output that can be tailored for best time response anywhere in the listening room.



Tamon Model LB-103 speaker with Model LB-50 subwoofer

Subwoofers, those acoustic specialists that recognize only the gravest of musical utterances, have been rumbling along in various corners of the industry, surfacing every now and then as the bass underpinning of panel systems and in the "pygmy pair plus giant" configuration. The LB-103 from Tamon Audio, a compact two-way speaker that sells for \$189 per pair, is a late entry in the already heavily populated pygmy category. Like others of this type, the Tamon is available (as Model LB-1030) with mounting brackets for automotive installation. The Tamon subwoofer (Model LB-50) is designed to work with the LB-103 or other compact speakers and is said to extend system bandpass to 40 Hz or below.



KLH automotive speaker display

Car Componentry—Prestige

One big development at the winter show was the shock assault of major home-component manufacturers on the auto sound market. Not only are they jumping into the fray with both feet, but they are also emphasizing separates. Among the bold newcomers are Epicure and Marantz; both showed speaker lines. KLH displayed its speakers already sensually ensconced in a Lotus. (Electro-Voice, too, is experimenting with car speakers.) Jensen continued to add to its well-established speaker line and brought out electronics separates as well. Perhaps Royal Sound's EA-400 epitomized the degree to which mobile separates are taking off: The EA-400 is a five-band graphic equalizer/amplifier. Several other auto-sound companies have moved into equalizers. Sanyo has a new stereo FM/AM/cassette unit. The Model FT-490, with touch tuning and a digital FM display, dramatized how the cassette medium is taking over eight-track's dashboard domain. New cassette decks—sometimes with Dolby circuitry—far outnumber new eight-track decks in automobile hardware, particularly in the upper price brackets.

Stax Sigma Spatial Replication Earspeaker



The greatest departure in headphone design was achieved by Stax with its Sigma Spatial Replication Earspeaker. (The price is also something of a departure: \$387 for the Earspeaker alone; \$450 includes an adapter, which Stax advises using.) Intent of the design is to deliver the spatial imaging of true binaural listening (or of fine loudspeaker stereo) from regular stereo sources, dispensing both with full-size conventional speakers and with the orchestra-in-the-head syndrome of conventional headphones.

Consumer Electronics Shows always have displayed some rather razzle-dazzle television innovations.

This January's show had some extra excitement because of the upsurge in video cassettes and projection-television equipment. Recent VCR models (see our coverage of the field in last month's issue) were on view everywhere. Panasonic has expanded the versatility of its VHS system with an automatic programming system; a microprocessor in the Model TY-M100P control unit preprograms up to a week of TV recording or viewing and can be overridden manually should schedules change.

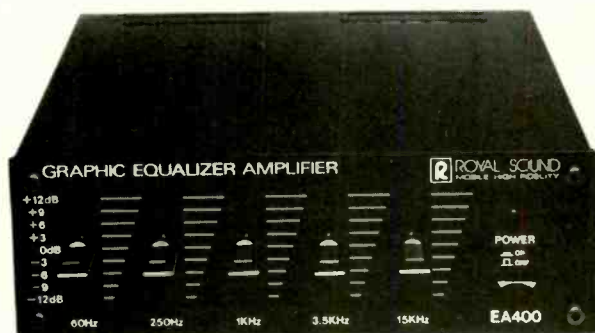
Panasonic and Quasar both have a compact, Matsushita-built projection-TV system that opens out like a Murphy bed and features a 60-inch screen. Mitsubishi (with the Model VS-700U) is among the other major contributors to projection TV. We note, however, that minor ones persist as well, with devices that, while far less costly than average in some instances, also are far less desirable in terms of screen brightness and resolution and in allowable viewing angle. One



Sharp Dualvision television set

screen (in this case, a conventional tube) of particular interest to recordists is the Sharp Dualvision: While one channel is being watched full size, another can be monitored (for example, so you can edit out commercials via the deck's PAUSE) in one corner of the screen. Also receiving considerable attention in the video field are video games; those from Atari are especially notable for their pleasant and positive use of color.

Names Make Inroads



Royal Sound Model EA-400 equalizer/amplifier



Sanyo Model FT-490 mobile radio/cassette player

The Scandinavian Thing

In which our audio-video editor fights the elements, common sense, and a recalcitrant motorcycle to experience firsthand the factors that make Viking high fidelity products so individual.

by Robert Long

Sunday, June 19: What am I doing here, on this hill next to the Autobahn, looking down at that rented Honda and talking into this cassette machine? The Danish border still lies almost 100 kilometers to the north beyond Schleswig-Holstein, shrouded by the misty afternoon. It doesn't feel like June; I'm cold. And I'm tired. The sputtering of the bike—the unanswerable question, whether it will take me where I have to go—is getting to me. Rest for a few minutes. Reflect.

I take out Fodor's *Scandinavia* and reread, for the benefit of the cassette, the passage on Scandinavian design: "Industrial art is to Scandinavia what painting is to Holland and music to Austria. A prime reason may be that the climate—the cold, long, and dark winters—makes the home an exceptionally important part of Scandinavian life. Another factor has been the government-supported campaigns aimed at developing and improving the tastes of the general public. The first of these was launched in Sweden in 1919 with the slogan, 'more beautiful things for everyday use.'" Does that really apply to high fidelity equipment?

Well, that's what I came to Europe to find out. We have all been rather nebulous about "the Scandinavian Thing," as we've come to call it for want of a better descriptive. An article? An adventure? A happening, perhaps? Whatever it is, it will let me experience Scandinavia for two weeks (and, for me, the most immediate way to do so is to ride through it on a motorcycle) in search of reasons why it has nurtured the world's most ruggedly individualistic school—or schools—of equipment design.

Down on the Autobahn, a Mercedes goes by, pushing 200 kilometers per hour. Maniacs. South of Hamburg, and doing only 140, the heavily loaded bike began to show signs of instability. The Germans in their Porsches and BMWs passed me like I was riding a dog cart.

Well, no: They're not maniacs. They move precisely, signaling every lane change and calculating the line of every curve like a computer. Very organized, very German—like a Telefunken front panel. Only the cars that can move safely over 150 (my God—what is that in miles per hour?) do. . . .

Miraculous, the way the sky cleared off just before I crossed into Denmark. I take up an easy amble on the gently rolling back road, headed for Ribe. How carefully built it is: The edge of the pavement at the shoulder is elegantly beveled, the markings all clear and une-

quivocal. All faceplates should be so deftly made, but many are not. . . .

The inn is clean and simple—and inexpensive. Huge tub in the hall bath. And it's pleasant out here in the late sun. It filters through Ribe's twisting streets. The shadows catch in the ancient brickwork and seem almost to make rattling, mouse-feet sounds as they cascade down the rough surfaces. Remember nubby speaker cloth in the heyday of the U.S. Danish-furniture boom? Even the Danes don't use it anymore. Over there is something I saw pictured in *National Geographic* when I was a kid: a triangular mirror outside the window so that the inhabitant can watch the street in both directions from inside. Ingenious: the sort of clever people-product the Danes have always been good at.

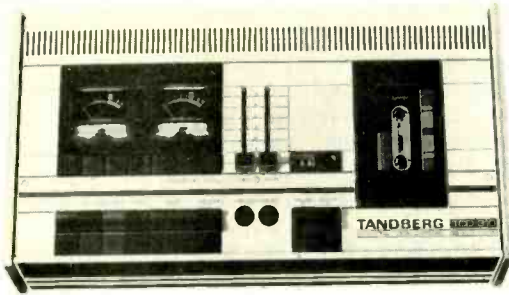
And on this charming little house, across from the cathedral, is a sign:

I dette Hus fødtes i 1849
Journalisten og Filantropen
JACOB A. RIIS
Død i Barre Massachusetts U.S.A. 1914
Sin Fødebyes trofaste Søn
Af Praesident Roosevelt Kaldet
Amerikas nyttigste Borger*

I stand for a moment, remembering the bold, stark photographs of the Mulberry Street slums Riis took as a New York reporter. Who would leave this tidy provincial paradise for the seamy, seething hell of late-nineteenth-century New York? Even for a bully friendship with a president to be? My boots scuff at the cobblestones, and I imagine myself a small Danish boy, dreaming of wide worlds to conquer far from the confines of the here and the now. It is, I suppose, in the nature of Vision to be dissatisfied with what is and, working from that dissatisfaction, to create what may be. That is how high fidelity came to be.

Monday, June 20: Again a leaden morning with a chill, moist wind coming in off the North Sea. The dunes on either side of the road separate the sea from Ringkøbing Fjord: How strange, having been brought up to associate that word "fjord" with the canyonlike Norwegian ones, to find that these sandy inlets share it.

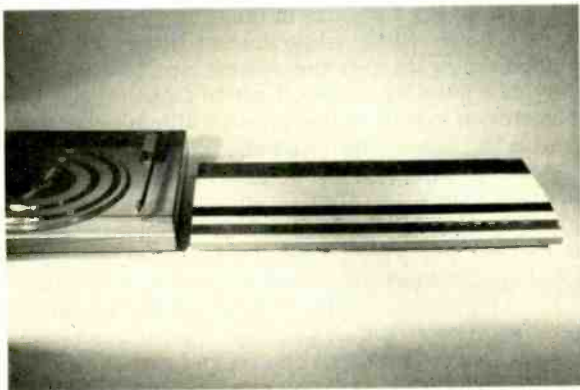
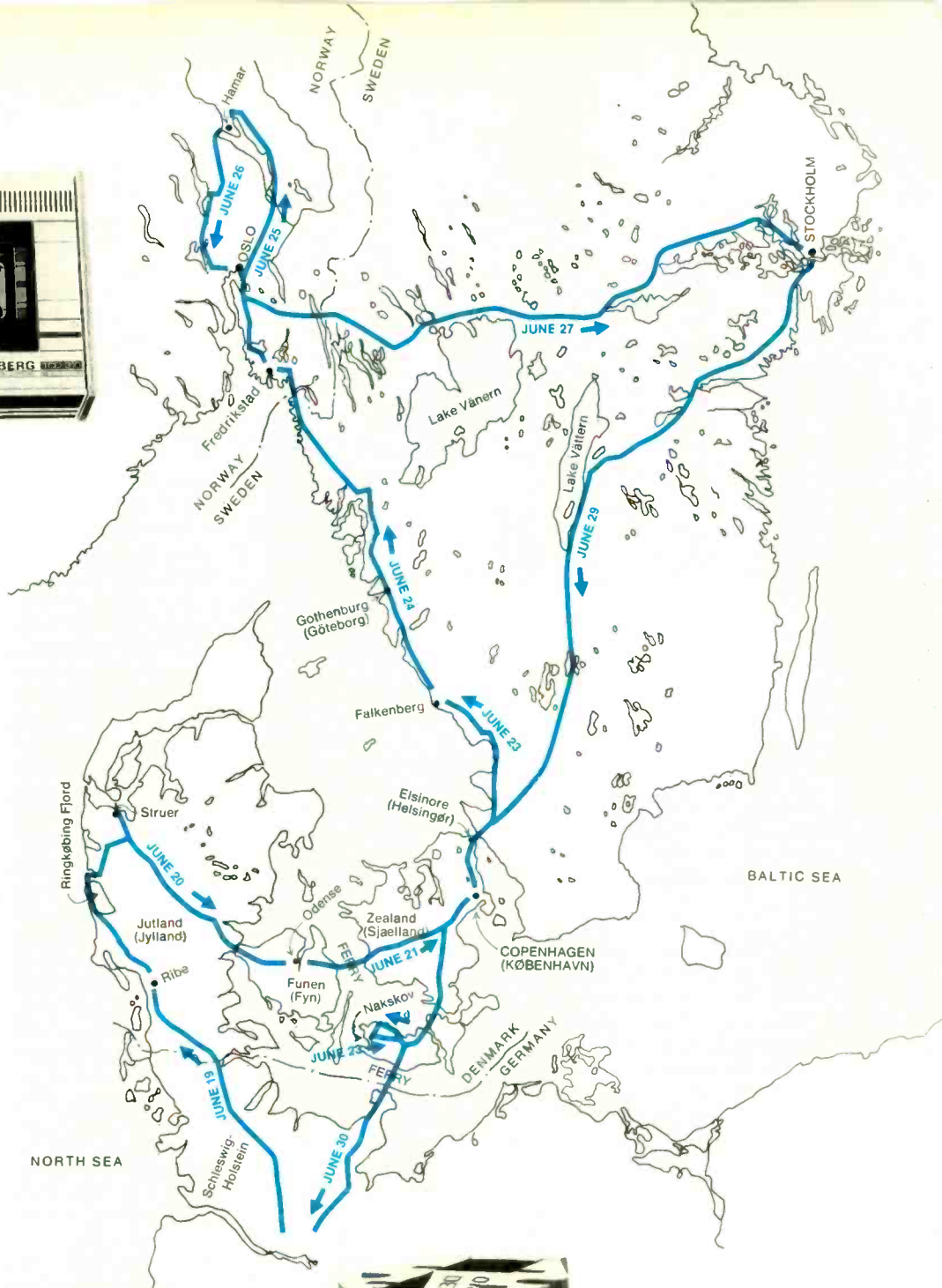
*In this house was born in 1849/journalist and philanthropist/Jacob A. Riis/ Died in Barre, Mass., U.S.A. 1914/Faithful son of his native town/Called by President Roosevelt/America's most useful citizen.



OSLO, NORWAY (Tandberg):
More concern "with innards
than with outards . . ."



STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
(Sonab speakers):
In search of the kernel
of essential truth . . .

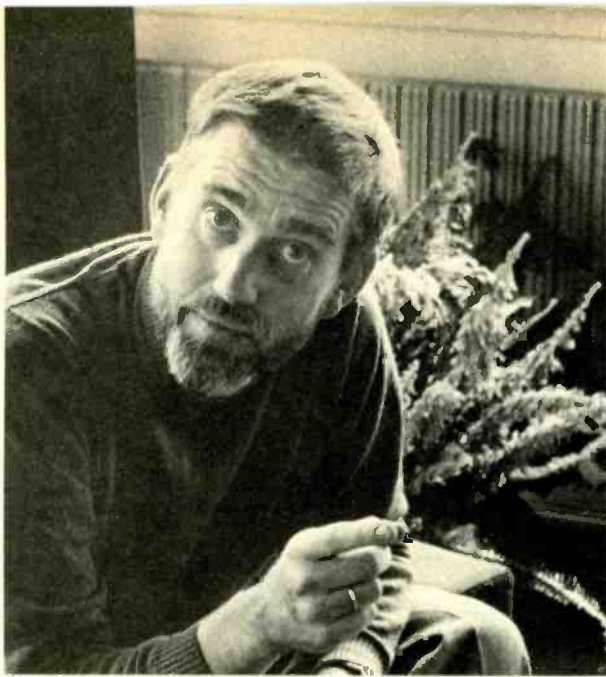


STRUER, DENMARK (B&O): Horizontal landscapes
and a stone ax . . .



COPENHAGEN, DENMARK (Ortofon):
The moving coil, VMS, the
lights of Tivoli . . .

Pictured, from top:
Tandberg's TCD-310 cassette deck,
Sonab's OA 116 speaker,
B&O's Beomaster 1900 receiver and Beogram 1900 turntable,
and Ortofon's M20E Super VMS pickup



Jens Bang is a designer and the son of a B&O founder.

Here, nestling into the edges of the dunes in places, are timber-cornered, thatch-roofed farmhouses and barns—sentimental architecture by today's standards, perhaps, but supremely apt in this setting: low and long, huddling beneath lambskin-collar eaves against cold winds, the soft lines of the thatching barely more geometrical than those of the dunes behind. Horizontal, but not unremittingly so. A little like a B&O front panel; or am I being fanciful?

* * *

The horizontals of the countryside, now patched with light under drifting fair-weather clouds, can be seen from the dining room in the Bang & Olufsen plant in Struer. Jens Bang—after the usual, slightly apologetic apostrophe to the joys of eating and to the Danish capacity for it—is barely touching his lunch, in his enthusiasm for his subject. "It was individuals who created our industry," he is saying, citing the long line of Americans—McIntosh, Fisher, Scott, Harman, Lansing, and so on—who gave their names to their companies. He points, in particular, to JBL as a company that has achieved continuing success by sticking to the vision of its founder: being "faithful to his vocation—his identity." Here in the Socialist countries of Scandinavia, he says, "you are in an environment where individuality as an ideal is much stronger than even in America." In America—where he lived and worked in the Fifties—he finds that the "melting pot" society automatically provides diversity and individuality, but that it also demands a certain conformity to weld social cohesiveness out of the diversity. The concept of conformity is trained in: Danish schools, on the other hand, encourage individuality almost *ad absurdum*. "We cultivated the idea of 'one man, one factory,'" he quips, looking at me slyly.

Across the table from us is Connie Carter, in charge of press relations for B&O. On the phone, she had been all bright business bustle; in person she radiates lithe charm. She is one of those women who wear informality like a coronet. Her features and accent are anything but Danish: cosmopolitan in a way that allows one to imagine any antecedents one chooses. But isn't that, in a sense, very Danish—very B&O? Bang mentioned the in-

fluence of Chinese and Japanese and Shaker furniture on Danish designers. . . .

He is talking about his return from America and his tour of Scandinavian sound-equipment manufacturers—which, in those days of high-tariff national boundaries, were numerous. One of his stops was at Tandberg. Mr. Tandberg ("and, again, there is only one Tandberg . . .") had abruptly said that, in ten years' time, there would be only three manufacturers left in Scandinavia but that he wasn't sure "who the third one would be." The young Dane was astonished at this statement, marveling that Tandberg could assume imminent failure in so many apparently successful enterprises, and wondered which the fortunate two might be: Tandberg itself and, perhaps, B&O? Tandberg promptly confirmed the identifications and explained that these companies would survive "because we have an idea: we have a purpose. The others don't." Vision again.

But where does that vision lead? On my last visit, the subject of B&O's potential role in the American market came up. A company located in northwest Jutland, with its limited work force, would have no way of producing for a mass market, it was suggested, and B&O—unless it were to scatter plants all over Denmark—was to remain a "specialist product" company.

Bang frowns for a moment at the comment. "Americans desire to be quantitatively big, but when you become quantitatively big you lose the ability to penetrate qualitatively. It's a question of the goals you set for yourself. I am not 'something for everybody,' but 'something for somebody.' Our customers don't buy our equipment; they select it."

By way of amplification, he delves into the company philosophy, which emphasizes (among other things) the communication that goes on not only between the equipment and its user, but between the user and the designer, who—in the way he shapes the equipment—makes a statement about the reproduction of music in the home: its pleasures and its priorities. "When you pick up a stone ax made thousands of years ago," Bang concludes, looking searchingly into my eyes to be sure I understand, "you feel the way it handles and you see the marks that were made in shaping it. The man who made it is communicating with you—about stone axes and how they are made."

Jutland deserved better than I gave it today, coming down from the lunch in Struer. Even here in Funen, I've stayed to the main road, ignoring the guidebook's exhortation about the pleasures of the rolling countryside just to the north. Little whitewashed brick churches show now and again over the nearest rise, teasing and taunting as I flash by. Unless I get to Copenhagen by early afternoon tomorrow I may have difficulty getting the service the bike seems to need. . . .

What was it Bang said about socialism in Denmark? Socialism. Paternalism. There is something of that element in B&O designs, come to think of it. Americans are taken aback when a B&O tone arm will accept only a B&O pickup, yet there are sound reasons why the two should be engineered as one and should not be interchangeable. "Here!" the design says. "We have saved you the necessity of making a choice, and we have given you exactly what you need—no more, no less." It gives one a comfortable security, not unlike social programs. It takes the worry out of being. Some of the joy too, per-

haps. Curious—it requires individualists to create systems for users who are not.

Tuesday, June 21: The Copenhagen Sheraton, where Ortofon is putting up an international group of equipment reviewers for a seminar on its new pickups, might just as well be in Atlanta or Tokyo or Frankfurt. Lots of German being spoken and some Japanese. Practically no Danish. Outside of that embarrassing incident in the ferry cafeteria—when the elderly man accused the cashier of not having given him his change, though his friends assured him that she had—these are the first American voices I've heard in four days. They are at once welcome and unwelcome, like an old friend intruding into a new romance. At any rate, I won't learn anything about Scandinavian high fidelity in this hotel.

Wednesday, June 22: We all have been brought to Nyhavn 71—a hotel converted from an old harborside warehouse—for breakfast. This is more my idea of Scandinavian design: stone, stucco, exposed wooden beams. More nubby grille cloth.

The reviewers are mostly from Continental Europe: there are two from England, three from North America. One was invited from Japan but was unable to attend. We all stand up and introduce ourselves. So do the crew from Ortofon. A jovial lot, it seems. By contrast, some of the European reviewers, though visiting from the south, radiate surprisingly little warmth.

What a pleasant morning it was. First, a sightseeing boat ride around Copenhagen; then a visit to a charming small studio in the south section of town; then a look in at the EMI mastering studio (where Ortofon cutters are used) in Valby, just outside Copenhagen proper: now lunch in a park near Ortofon's Valby plant.

Dave Hafler is here—now as a director, rather than as an owner of Ortofon, since Harman International has bought it. Is it still a Danish company within the definition of the Scandinavian Thing? All the other Ortofon people here are Danish. And surely the sense of individuality and vision applies, since this is the one company that kept the moving-coil cartridge alive in the years of its eclipse by the ever-improving, higher-output, less expensive moving-magnet designs. Now the moving coil is the darling of the high-end Japanese product lines. Yet, but for Ortofon, which now seems more interested in its Variable Magnetic Shunt principle. . . .

Erik Rohmann is a graceful guiding spirit—both to the amenities of this lunch and, presumably, to the company as its managing director. He and those who surround him certainly have the sense of purpose—of vocation—that Jens Bang talked of, though they seem to have less of his overriding individuality.

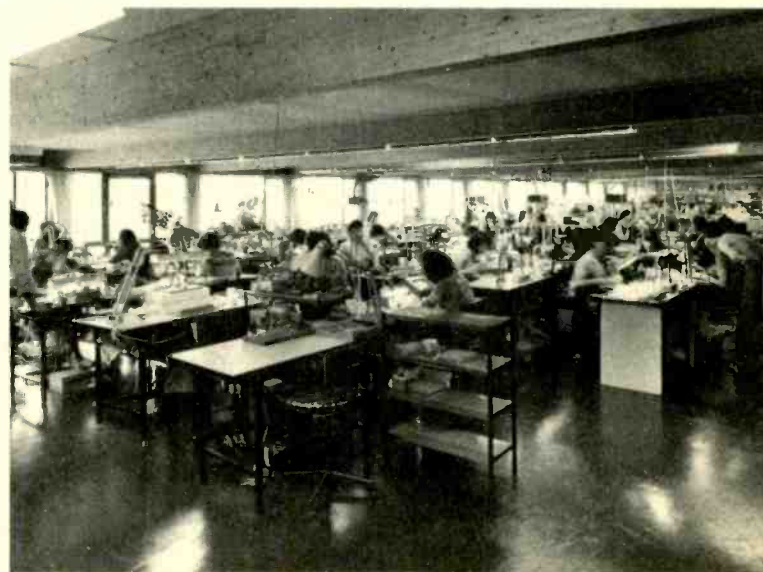
Perhaps, this noon, I underestimated the individuality of these men. It is quieter—less obvious—than the variety I've seen in Struer, but it may be no less real. Take Arne Jensen (product promoter—how harshly that title falls on American ears!), who has been talking for several minutes about Ortofon's new magnetic pickups.

His faith in these products is obviously genuine—and unrelated to the concerns of what we call a promoter. That a way has been found to improve an already fine product is the end and the triumph.

He turns the session over to Bjarne Solberg Hansen, the engineer in charge of developing these products. Again, the sense of conviction and of purpose. And a strong sense of craftsmanship—like the Danish roads. . . .

Tivoli is really rather overrated: a very pleasant place, but not quite so special as one has been led to believe. The dinner was good and the entertainment (a demonstration of mechanical musicmakers, including early phonographs, from a Copenhagen museum) delightful. Wish I had time to stop in and see the whole collection. . . . How does the playful glitter of Tivoli's lights relate to the relatively austere and subtle aesthetic of Danish industrial design? I suppose every nation displays its extravagances in its monuments to amusement. Look at Disneyland or Caesar's Palace or Newport. But if listening to music—and there is music everywhere in Tivoli—is considered as an amusement, why shouldn't the equipment designed to reproduce it share these extravagances? In the better equipment, at least, the emphasis is on the technology, rather than the fun. Priorities. The technology, in this case, must precede fun.

Thursday, June 23: The Ortofon plant in Nakskov is a neat affair: sunny, airy, pleasant. I look over the shoulder of a young woman assembling a pickup. She smiles back. How unlike most cartridge factories I've been through, where the workers seem to resent the intrusion of visitors. Is there really more handwork here than I'm used to? Yesterday somebody—Arne Jensen, I think—said that Ortofon has used automation (for magnetic pickups; little is possible in the moving-coil models) to increase production rather than to decrease payroll. But



Ortofon's pickup assembly plant in Nakskov is neat and airy.

while the operation seems efficient enough, it is quite unlike the conveyor-belt surrealism I've seen in Japan.

Though I'm nominally traveling north up the west coast of Sweden, the setting sun is directly ahead as I creep up the map toward the Arctic Circle. It's Midsummer: Behind, in Denmark, the festivities must just be starting; along the Norwegian coast, they're lighting bonfires. But Sweden won't celebrate Midsummer until tomorrow.

It has been a long trip from Nakskov, back past Copenhagen, across the strait at Elsinore by ferry, and on up the coast. Responses are dulling a bit. Maybe that's why it took me so long to get the hang of the Swedish roads, with their varying lane widths. They're not as neatly crafted as those in Denmark. . . .

Friday, June 24: Now this is what I call a fjord. Far below the bridge, the water sparkles in the late afternoon sun. (Two hours behind schedule. If only the bike hadn't died on the expressway south of Gothenburg.) Sweden is slipping away astern; a cleft in the steep cliff ahead cradles the Norwegian Customs building, now virtually unused since there are no routine customs or immigration inspections within Scandinavia.

The cobblestones look like gold bricks in the setting sun, which rusts the old wooden walls and doorways of Fredrikstad. What a striking difference between the wood of Norwegian architecture (particularly the Ibsen-esque nineteenth-century homes) and the sturdy stone of Sweden. Yet the forests along this coast are almost the reverse. In Sweden, the wraithlike birches dominate. One can almost imagine, across a meadow, Ingmar Bergman setting up a camera; and, when it is rolling, a young woman in white lace—or perhaps a dour black-clad man—would emerge from those birches, moving in counterpoint to their supple angularity. In Norway, the pines stand out, bold and staunch, engulfing the timid birches like virginal camp followers in the evergreen Viking host.

Saturday, June 25: The drizzle blows in under the awning; the table and the food glisten. The thunderstorm that hung over the lake and drove me to shelter in Hamar has moved on to the north—a Balrog harrowing the countryside in search of mischief. Even if the weather clears, I will never make it into the *real* mountains tomorrow. I am shivering.

Sunday, June 26: The farther the ferry gets from Hamar, moving west across the lake, the less I can deny that the drizzle is really rain and that the clouds show no sign of breaking. At least the fever has passed, but it will not be a pleasant ride.

On a clear day the view must be spectacular. It is even now, with the cliff falling sheer beside me to the water of the Tyrifjord, far below. Climbing, always climbing: The four lanes of traffic snake along the ledge, clinging

to the pavement with tortured treads. Work zone signs seem to be everywhere in Norway. Good reason, considering the roads' variability—potholes, sudden changes in the width and number of lanes. . . . Wow! Mine ends dead ahead! I signal and begin to move left; the cars open compassionately but without fuss, as though used to these unexpected necessities. The void where the right lane was flashes by beside me.

Curious, the way Bill Ausman's point of view alternates between that of a Norwegian (he lives in Oslo much of the year to be near the Tandberg plants) and that of an American (which he is). He also is exceptionally articulate about both points of view as we walk past the walls of Akershus Fortress. Norwegians, he is explaining, do not make purchases lightly; when they buy, they want products that will last virtually forever. This is why, he implies, Norwegian products lay relatively heavy stress on use and construction, rather than on cosmetics: "more concentration on innards than on outards."

He agrees with the guidebook's emphasis on the long winter nights and the consequent importance of the home and of products for use in the home. But the Norwegians don't spend all their time indoors. On winter evenings, he says, you will find whole families skiing by electric lights over the trails that wind through the forest areas with which Oslo is ringed and which, by law, must be preserved in given proportion to the developed areas. (Is this related to the Norwegian taste for natural wood finishes in furniture and sound equipment?) Even Tandberg's plants have been carefully situated to be "in touch" with the forest.

I mention studies of the elbow room needed by people of different races before they feel crowded—before their territorial space (in the animal-behavior sense) has been encroached upon. The Nordic peoples, it seems from those studies, need the most. "Yes," Ausman says, "and Mr. Tandberg has strong feelings about how much space each worker should have on the floor of the plant." Jens Bang had mentioned that each Tandberg plant is limited to the worker capacity that will allow everyone to fit into a single auditorium seating, say, 600 or so. Each plant has its own theater, usually an outdoor amphitheater, darkroom facilities for the workers, employee bands, and so on, says Ausman: Tandberg has, in fact, never been unionized because the employees generally have had benefits long before they came to be demanded by the unions.

We pause at the curb to consider the view: City Hall straight ahead; the fortress behind; to the left the shipyards where an offshore oil platform is abuilding and, beyond the harbor, the monuments to Norwegian daring and ingenuity—the ships of polar explorers Fridtjof Nansen and Roald Amundsen, Thor Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki*, three Viking ships. Doesn't Tandberg, as a man, share something quite Norwegian with the rugged spirits of Nansen and Amundsen and Heyerdahl?

Ausman is calling my attention to the oil-drilling platform. As we turn away, he observes, "The oil industry is really going to change Norway . . . already is. You have no idea the amount of activity going on. Norway used to be referred to, even by the Norwegians, as 'the quiet corner of the world.' The North Sea oil has made Norway more world-oriented." He cites the more international



Tandberg's founder remains the company's guiding spirit.

styling Tandberg has adopted, but says the products retain their "special difference."

An example: Tandberg uses aluminum extrusions extensively—not only for faceplates and trim, but also to construct its elaborately hinged chassis that allow free access to any of the circuit boards for quick, easy servicing without disassembly. "Norway is one of the largest producers of aluminum in the world, partly because of all the free water tumbling down that can be used to generate electricity; there are so many mountains they have to be stacked one on top of another."

We have entered the City Hall, and Ausman interrupts himself to point to some of the art. "Notice the wood carvings and the earth colors—ochres and burnt sienna and so on. That's very Norwegian." Yes, I suppose it is. The devotion to Norway to its earth—to the profusion of mountains and forests, to the oases of farmland in its hollows, to the very earthiness that goes with them—seems axiomatic. But at the same time the innumerable sea arms, creeping in by the fjords and permeating the countryside as if by capillary action, seem always to have been a counterpoise: a challenge and a promise, a womb of dreams. The Norse farmers, hemmed in by granite walls, were loath to subdivide the arable land; they left it all to their eldest sons while the younger ones followed the fjords—to the Grand Banks, to Vineland, to the conquest of Britain and Normandy and Sicily, to the antipodes like Nansen and Amundsen, to the North Sea oil fields. Is Tandberg himself a younger son or an older: are his plants, facing the forests, like his family domain, or are the quarter-track stereo tape medium and the crossfield head—both of which so startled American recordists when he introduced them to us—to be thought of as his Vineland and his Sicily? Perhaps the key is not in these polarities themselves, but in the dichotomy between them—in the interaction between sea and land, between adventure and husbandry, between challenge and acceptance, between new and old.

Monday, June 27: The two gentlemen sitting across from me to answer my questions addressed to Tandberg's receiver group seem nonplussed. Kare Eikseth, product manager, and Per Thorbjørnsen, product designer (for styling, rather than electronic design), struggle to determine what I mean by "Norwegian" elements in their designs. Evidently they have never thought of their work in those terms before. (That very unselfconsciousness may, in itself, be rather Norwegian.) They emphasize that the exterior of their products is, in a sense, a covering to the working parts and that the first criterion of good product design is that it in no way compromises what must go on inside the unit.

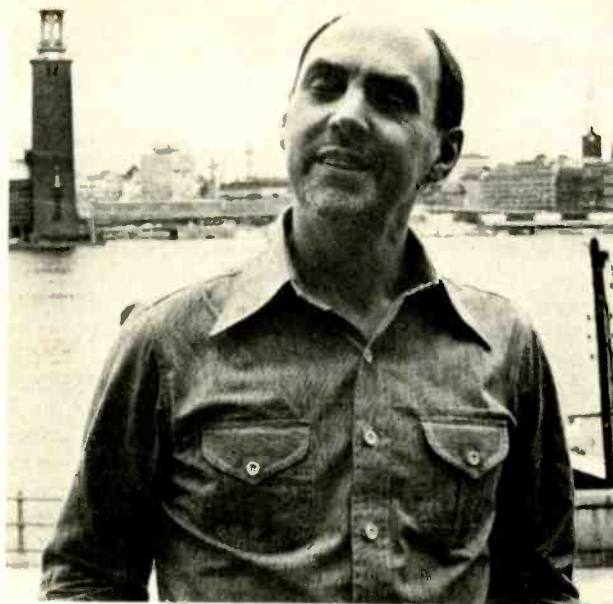
Suddenly the door opens; Bill Ausman is saying, "I want you to meet Mr. Tandberg." He is well along in years (and now in nominal retirement), but the cragginess of person I had heard of is there, in his eyes, in his bearing. He has just been told I am making the trip by motorcycle. "Ah, you are? In 1928 I took a motorcycle from Norway to North Africa. But I must say you have much better roads today!" Undoubtedly.

He continues. The voice is positive, assertive, enthusiastic, even joyful; but it is also difficult to follow for an ear untuned to its mountain-brook rhythms. I try to focus on his meaning as he talks of Tandberg's products and the process by which new ones are developed. His point seems to be that the trick is not in looking for what the public says it wants (since the public will want only what it can conceive, and that generally will be very close to what it already has), but in looking for uses that are not being satisfied and creating the conception to satisfy them. "So we have said for many years that you don't get what you ask for, but what Tandberg finds that you can use." Paternalism?

And, just as suddenly, he is gone. Still trying to assimilate the brief Presence, I hear, "Mr. Tandberg is almost as active as he ever was. He is a strong man, extremely strong. He would say, 'I don't allow you to make that. . . . I don't allow you to produce that. Stop it at once! I want it so and so and so.' And he got it as a result. But he also had the ability to listen to people. And he did not agree on the spot, but he went on and the whole thing circulated in his head for a long time. And then he suddenly could appear and say, 'You were right.' But in most of the cases he had his opinion very clear at once." Yes, I imagine he did.

The dark is closing in. Where am I? Somewhere in Stockholm, but where? I wring out the gloves again and rub my hands so the fingers will be limber enough to open the map. Five hours in the downpour, at least. Just hang in there a little longer. . . .

Tuesday, June 28: This is not at all how I had imagined Stig Carlsson. I had expected a shaggy giant—partly, I suppose, because of the immense gusto they say he brings to his work—but he is neither. He is intense, evidently possessed of much nervous energy and the aplomb and discipline to channel it toward positive ends. His house clings to a steep hillside and looks back toward downtown Stockholm; this living room is as big and bold as I had imagined the man himself to be, and is dominated by records and music-reproduction equip-



Stig Carlsson designed Sonab's line of loudspeaker systems.

ment (including, of course, a pair of his own Sonab speakers) and a furniture layout that seems to put listening above all other activities.

"I used to have a small flat," he says, "but I also had a laboratory at the Royal Institute of Technology, and I worked there from 1948 to 1965." The building we are in is his laboratory—as well as his home—today. At the Institute he spent much time working with speakers and microphones in the anechoic chamber, but eventually "I realized that the anechoic chamber is quite unsatisfactory for speakers. Speakers must be designed for a normal room. If you design the speaker to be measured in an anechoic room, you will necessarily do it wrong." He picks up copies of Roy Allison's technical papers on room effects and some earlier ones of his own, then changes his mind and leads me into the next room to see his test equipment and present work space.

"This room you see here is intended to be my version of a monitoring room. The acoustic properties of European monitoring rooms I don't like: They have too much damping material. . . . You can get low reverberation time in different ways. With normal methods, you get very little early reflections also; here I have early reflections, but the later reflections are damped." He shows me the Helmholtz resonators, stuffed with a half-meter of mineral wool, that are used to control the bass and the rock-wool absorbers for the midrange. Carpeting traps the treble, while strategically placed panels provide the early reflections.

We return to his living room: "Here I just use furniture for damping—as in any normal room. And as in any normal room, you will notice that there are some problems in the bass."

He tells me he wants me to do some listening: "Of course you cannot discuss loudspeakers without discussing program materials." By way of explanation, he cites the fact that, in the recording process, some loudspeaker must be used to monitor the recording and judge whatever corrections must be made in the sound. But since speakers are, by definition, imperfect, imper-

fections are thereby introduced into the recording. "This area of sound reproduction has nothing fixed to stand on," he remarks, adding that he thinks I will find that the accuracy of his speakers will make plain some shortcomings of common recording practices that, presumably, the monitors used by their producers obscured.

Then, evidently realizing that I may have heard something of the sort from other speaker designers, he says pointedly, "I don't think you should describe my work and my speakers as typical of Scandinavia, because they aren't. My measurements, which I use as an aid in designing loudspeakers, are my own. . . ." Indeed. He has taken his own route, painstakingly dissecting the onion of sound reproduction, peeling away layer after layer of supposition in search of the kernel of essential truth at the center. He is an original. But is not that, in itself, "typically Scandinavian" in a way?

The sunset colors the sky behind the Royal Palace, lighting up the clouds like a Maxfield Parrish painting. Seen across the water from this vantage and in this light, the city is fantastically beautiful—though I cursed it as I sat, the rain falling around me, in the parking lot across from the palace this afternoon, fuming from an hour of unsuccessful attempts to get the engine started.

Wednesday, June 29: Out to the right must be Lake Vättern, though I can't see it through the rain and fog. It looks like it will never stop. Nothing to do but just keep going and try to think of anything but the water that, by now, has soaked into everything. . . .

Another truck moves over onto the shoulder to allow me to pass without crossing into the oncoming lane. Unthinkable at home, but a regular occurrence here. It seems to be the Swedish Way: a thoughtfulness about others, a habit of allowing. The roads have neither the superb craftsmanship of those in Denmark nor the ruggedly ad-hoc quality of those in Norway. National habits of design. . . .

The first wedge of blue sky appeared just before the ferry docked at Elsinore. Now the Danish countryside is all soft blues and greens and grays—like Royal Copenhagen figurines. The excitement of Norway's mountains and fjords, Sweden's starkness mitigated with patches of quiet humanity—both are behind.

A Norwegian once told me a joke about a group of Scandinavians cast up on a desert island. The Danes, he said, immediately organized a party; the Norwegians began building a boat for escape; the Swedes stood about waiting to be introduced. The same joke, he said, existed in other versions in the other two countries, though I would expect many Danes to accept the Norwegian's as is. There certainly is some truth to it.

Thursday, June 30: The ferry from Rødby Havn to Germany is filled with voices that grate on the ear after the Scandinavian lilt. There is a heartache at being separated from friends even if one does not know them. Only two weeks? It seems like a lifetime. But what have I learned? What have I learned? ■

Urbanity Amid Urban Sprawl



Christian Steiner/DC-Polydor

Giulini in Los Angeles

He becomes music director of the L.A. Philharmonic this fall. Is Chandlerland ready for his special blend of civilized spirituality and musicianship?

by Robert C. Marsh

MANY MEN of sixty-four are thinking of retiring. Carlo Maria Giulini is thinking of his new job. This autumn, in the twenty-third year of his American career, he will become music director of an American orchestra—the Los Angeles Philharmonic—succeeding a man almost twenty-five years his junior, Zubin Mehta. For those who know him, it is no surprise that Giulini has waited so long.

In his view, the music director of a major orchestra in this country usually has three fundamental obligations: to conduct a very large number of concerts, to deal with administrative problems, and to participate socially in fund-raising activities. These are the very reasons he has not taken such a job before. "It was impossible for me to do these things," Giulini says. "First of all, I don't want to conduct too much. Second, I have absolutely no talent for administration. In my fam-

ily, my wife deals with these problems. I don't even know what I have in my pocket. Finally, I have never lived a social kind of life. I have a few good friends, but that is something different. This is not a criticism of this type of organization. It is my problem. But at my age, I must live with it." Los Angeles succeeded in getting his signature on a contract (which he probably will never read—a lawyer friend conducted the negotiations) because it met his artistic conditions and promised him a situation in which he was convinced he could remain happy.

The American orchestra with which he has been most closely associated is, of course, the Chicago Symphony. He first came to the U.S. when Fritz Reiner brought him to Chicago in 1955 to direct some concerts. Giulini was then in his second year in the prestigious position of music director of La

Scala, Milan. The Chicago concerts were a success, and he became a frequent and welcome visitor; he was offered full leadership of the orchestra upon Reiner's retirement in 1963 but declined. When Georg Solti assumed musical direction six years later, Giulini accepted the title of principal guest conductor, but after three years he gave it up—without in any way lessening his ties to the city and the orchestra. He had become Chicago's second conductor and the last great bond to the well-remembered seasons of the Reiner era.

As he wished, his obligations in Chicago began and ended with making music. "A musician has very special conditions of work," Giulini says. "He works with Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms. It is no ordinary job but a great privilege that the activity of a musician is to realize the marvelous thing this music is. To work with something that can give back in spiritual rewards all that you put into it is very unusual."

The son of a lumber merchant, Giulini was born in Barletta, a small city on the Adriatic almost directly east of Naples, of a family of both Italian and Austrian bloodlines. (He speaks German fluently.) His young manhood was spent under Fascism, but he was repelled by Mussolini's philosophy and immersed himself in music. In 1930 he went to the Academy of Santa Cecilia in Rome, where he studied violin and, still young, became a violist in the Augusteo Orchestra. But it soon was clear to him that to realize his goals he must lead instead of follow. He turned to the study of conducting, eventually winning a competition that would have given him a concert in Rome in March 1944. But in March 1944 he was a wanted man, identified by posters all over the city as someone to be shot on sight.

In July 1942, Giulini had become a second lieutenant in the Italian army and was sent to fight the partisans in Yugoslavia, a bitter, bloody campaign for which he and his men had no heart. He took pains to miss every time he returned hostile fire. Taking leave in the autumn to marry, he returned to the front in time to be caught up in the collapse of the campaign. A year later his regiment was sent to defend Rome against the Americans, and Giulini decided he could no longer even pretend to fight for Fascism. With three other officers, he took refuge in the attic of an old Roman house, awaiting the arrival of the U.S. Fifth Army. It turned out to be a nine-month wait. But he used the time to advantage, learning music for the concert he hoped he might still direct. While the city was scoured in search of deserters, Giulini's wife, Marcella, borrowed scores from the Academy library, ostensibly for her sister, and smuggled them to Giulini. In June 1944 the American tanks finally entered Rome. The military was eager to stabilize the life of the city as quickly as possible, and, with credentials as a musician and non-Fascist that could

hardly be improved upon, Giulini got his prize concert and, very soon, his new career.

He has never been an international musical celebrity of the Solti/Karajan/Bernstein variety. In talent and musicianship he is fully the equal of these men as well as a complex, urbane, and civilized human being. His problem—he would not see it as one—is that he is known more by reputation than deed in many parts of the world. His performances in this country since 1974 have been limited almost exclusively to those with the Chicago Symphony. New York last heard him in 1975 when Solti was on sabbatical leave and Giulini led the orchestra on its fall tour. His recordings suggest, but do not fully document, the range of his achievement, especially in the past decade.

One can anticipate a gradual change, from a situation in which musically knowledgeable people regard Giulini as their private discovery (he is constantly talked of as being "underrated," although no one seems to rate him other than highly) to one in which his place among the most distinguished conductors is generally acknowledged. But this change will be produced by the Los Angeles management and Deutsche Grammophon (which has his exclusive recording contract) rather than by Giulini himself.

To understand this man, one must realize that none of the stereotypes of the matinee idol or superstar apply to him. He is handsome and magnetic, but he doesn't work at it and can even find it embarrassing. Blessed with natural elegance (and a good tailor), he presents a striking appearance, but he is totally without vanity. He is probably the only conductor of great reputation who can say, "I have no personal ambitions," and make it convincing. "I am not important," Giulini has said. "It is enough that my art is important. A conductor is someone who arrives and departs. Someday I will stop conducting. But the orchestra has a long life. It must look into the distance, far beyond the life of any one person. We must work with good spirits toward these distant goals."

Other conductors have aggressive managers; Giulini has none. He tries to limit his work to six months of the year—or less. He will be with the Los Angeles Philharmonic for five months of each of the next two years and has withdrawn from all guest conducting commitments for that period. "If God gives me life in 1979-80," he says, "I will do my Los Angeles concerts and a European tour with them and nothing more. I will go to Italy, explore the countryside, especially in Tuscany and Umbria, in a manner never possible to me before—the churches, the small villages, the wonders of painting and architecture. Life there is very simple. The wine is good. The sense of the past is authentic, and the landscape is unbelievable. Last spring I conducted the Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* in Perugia. On the street by the cathedral, every build-

Giulini on Records: a Personal Selection

CARLO MARIA GIULINI rarely listens to records, least of all his own. When it comes to making records, he is completely at the mercy of recording directors. But in his association with Deutsche Grammophon, he is blessed with Günther Breest, a relaxed, competent, affable young German who knows how to produce the sort of atmosphere in which Giulini is at ease, happy, and prepared to give his all for the microphones.

Their work together on the Mahler Symphony No. 9 (DG 2707 097) is probably the greatest recording Giulini has ever done. The music is fully worthy of his talent, the performance well represents his mature artistry, and the sound of the Chicago Symphony is impressive for the accuracy with which it reproduces the concert hall experience. The fact that the set has won two major awards—the International Record Critics Award and the Prix Mondial du Disque de Montreux—is no surprise. His Chicago performances of the Mussorgsky-Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition* and the Prokofiev *Classical Symphony* (2530 783), another collaboration with Breest, are exceptionally fine-sounding and restore freshness to two overplayed scores by the simple process of slowing them down and permitting their genuine musical values to capture the ear.

[Giulini's recent Bruckner Ninth Symphony and Brahms violin concerto (with Itzhak Perlman)—his last Chicago Symphony recordings for EMI—were reviewed last month. By the time this appears DG should have released his latest Chicago projects, the Schubert Ninth Symphony and Dvořák's *New World*; these will be reviewed in the near future.—Ed.]

Giulini began his recording career with British EMI in the Fifties. Some of the best of this material, such as the Haydn *Surprise Symphony* (Angel S 35712), remains out of print. Among recordings still available is his Verdi Requiem, with Schwarzkopf, Ludwig, Gedda, and Ghiaurov (SB 3649). Although less than perfect, it documents his performance of music that has been central to his career. Perhaps more important is his account of the *Quattro Pezzi sacri* with the Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra (S 36125). An early version of Stravinsky's 1919 *Firebird Suite*, along with works by Bizet and Ravel (Seraphim S 60022), shows his skill in handling orchestral color and texture.

To appreciate his later treatment of the German Romantics, it is valuable to hear Giulini's early recording of the Brahms Third Symphony coupled with the *Tragic Overture* (Seraphim S 60101).

His first Chicago Symphony recording in 1967, the Schumann Piano Concerto with Arthur Rubinstein (RCA LSC 2997, produced by Max Wilcox), is notable for a fine romantic performance and the rare opportunity it provides to hear him on disc with a piano soloist. Angel recordings with Chicago that are of continuing interest are a ripe, romantic Brahms Fourth from 1969 (S 36040) and the prizewinning 1971 Mahler First (S 36047), both recorded with Peter Andry in charge and the company's Hollywood man, Carson Taylor, the chief engineer. Although Beethoven has figured in Giulini's repertory from the start, the finest and most characteristic recordings are those of Symphonies Nos. 8 and 9 with the London Symphony (S 3795). Indeed, this is one of the best Beethoven Ninths made in the stereo period.

Despite his importance as an opera conductor, he has made very few operatic recordings. There are two good reasons for this: Giulini finds it difficult to think of opera apart from stage performance, and he is not easily pleased. His new *Rigoletto* for DG is thus to be anticipated. An earlier *Don Carlos* (Angel SDL 3774), using the first act of the original Paris version, I find one of the most effective recorded statements of this music. And I have a very high regard for his Angel accounts of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (SDL 3605) and *The Marriage of Figaro* (SDL 3608), like the *Don Carlos* made in London but employing international casts. The Italianate quality of Mozart's scores is beautifully revealed, and the recorded sound has held up exceptionally well. R.C.M.



With Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (c.) and Christa Ludwig during recording sessions for Verdi's Requiem (1964).



Giulini at a London press conference last year with Deutsche Grammophon producer Günther Breest, and in the EMI studio with Mstislav Rostropovich and the LSO to record the Dvořák Cello Concerto and Saint-Saëns's Concerto No. 1, to be issued this month.



ing was a miracle. Inside the church there were so many wonderful things I did not know where to look first."

Other conductors have press agents; Giulini has none, and he is delighted if the press, especially the gossip columnists, ignore him. Indeed, he gives them nothing to write about. Married for thirty-six years to Marcella, who is a talented amateur painter in addition to being a good cook, he is an eloquent advocate of the family as a social institution. As he describes it, "We were a typical Italian family—very close—with three sons. We had a classical Italian family life."

That family life is quite different now that the sons are grown and embarked on their own lives. Giulini and his wife will have an apartment in Los Angeles. (Even in his short stays in Chicago, Giulini always rents an apartment—at the Ambassador East—with the stability of a home, rather than a hotel room.) They also retain a small apartment just around the corner from La Scala in Milan and another in the first village across the frontier on the road to Lugano, Switzerland, where Giulini is a legal resident. His favorite place, however, is Limnos, one of the northern Greek islands, where he spends part of each year in a rented bungalow. Notoriously slow and meticulous in his preparation of scores, he retires here to study and think. "The people are very poor," he says, "but very intense, very kind, very happy, with absolute respect for the privacy of those who go there seeking peace."

Giulini is very much a part of the older European tradition when it comes to rehearsals. He does not believe in delivering great performances in empty halls. If the orchestra knows the music securely, the rehearsal is to take it to the point where it can respond with energy and enthusiasm

in concert. "I prefer rehearsals that are very concentrated and short," the conductor says. "I like to work very intensely. When you know what you have to do, it is much better to have rest, to be fresh for the performance, than to play repetitions of what you have already grasped."

For this reason, Giulini performances are rarely note perfect but can be extraordinarily exciting as the ensemble members interact with him, and each other, in a spontaneous manner. "I come from the orchestra," he adds, "and my best feeling is when I forget I am a conductor and be just a musician. I can bring to these musicians the experience I had because of my age. When I was a young man I played in the Augusteo Orchestra with conductors like Walter, Klemperer, Furtwängler, Strauss, and De Sabata."

He will also bring to Los Angeles—and the city should find it dazzling—a mature, romantic viewpoint combined with the distinctive Italian flair for lyric drama. Like Toscanini, Giulini always strives for orchestral song, but the intensity with which Toscanini propelled a melodic line is replaced in a Giulini performance by a passionate flow of phrases that have been artfully shaped to produce the maximum impact on the senses. In the finale of the Brahms First Symphony, for example, his statement of the chorale theme is slower than even Klemperer's or Furtwängler's, but he sustains this tempo and makes it work.

Los Angeles does not look very much like Limnos, but this does not mean Giulini cannot thrive there. He lives in his own world, a world of music, art, philosophy, and literature. After years of working in Solti's shadow, content to simply be a guest, Giulini will now be Numero Uno. One suspects that his lack of vanity will not prevent him from enjoying the situation. ●

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The New Releases



All Leonore photos: Mirschel/EMI

Conductor Herbert Blomstedt and soprano Edda Moser

Fidelio Unrevised

The fascinatingly different original (1805) version of Beethoven's only opera is heard in EMI's premiere recording made in Dresden.

by David Hamilton

"THIS OPERA will win for me a martyr's crown," wrote Beethoven in 1814 to Georg Friedrich Treitschke, who had been fixing up the libretto for the third and final version of *Fidelio*. Even the title gave him trouble: He wanted to call the opera *Leonore*, but the operatic authorities, fearing confusion with Ferdinando Paer's 1804 setting of the same subject, insisted on *Fidelio* (in modern times, Beethoven's preferred title has been assigned to his earlier versions).

As first presented at the Theater an der Wien in November 1805, during the French occupation of Vienna, it was a failure, withdrawn after three performances. The following month, a committee of

Beethoven's friends pressured him to revise and shorten the work. He reluctantly consented, but in the end carried out the abridgment rather differently than had been agreed at that conclave. Whether this abbreviated version, staged in March 1806, would have made its way we shall never know, for Beethoven quarreled with the theater's Intendant over what he supposed to be hanky-panky with the box-office takings, and demanded his score back after only two performances. This is generally now regarded as a fortunate happenstance, for had the opera established itself in that shortened form, we might never have had the present version of 1814.

This last form came about when three singers at



Blomstedt confers with Karl Ridderbusch, who sings Rocco

the Kärntnertheater requested that the opera be revived for their benefit performance—perhaps inspired by Beethoven's recent celebrity from the absurd affair of *Wellington's Victory*. Beethoven was willing, provided he could make some revisions: not all of them were ready in time (the familiar E major overture wasn't finished for the opening night, and an earlier overture was substituted), but the opera's third premiere, in May 1814, was a distinct success. Though still, by common agreement, a flawed masterpiece, *Fidelio* has remained in the repertory ever since.

This checkered history—admirably told, in much greater detail than I have space for, by Winton Dean in his chapter for *The Beethoven Reader*, a 1971 symposium edited by Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune—had as one of its consequences a considerable uncertainty over just what music the 1805 opera did contain, for the source material was twice reworked by the composer and then scattered among various libraries; some of it has never been found. An incomplete vocal score of the 1806 opera was published at the time, but nothing of the first form. In 1853 Otto Jahn brought out a complete vocal score of the second version, including also as much as he could locate of its predecessor. The major research on the problem was done by Erich Prieger, who in 1905 published his reconstruction of the original in vocal score; the orchestral score was also printed, but only in a limited edition, and it wasn't publicly available until 1967, when the Swiss scholar Willy Hess reprinted it with corrections resulting from more recent research.

Some matters still remain unclear, and the Prieger/Hess reconstruction (the basis of Electrola's first commercial recording) is partly conjectural. For ex-

ample, some evidence points to an early F major version of Leonore's great aria, using the words of Sonnleithner's original libretto, which differ from those used in the first known setting; if such a version did exist, it has now been lost. The march that begins the second act of the 1805 version (which was in three acts) may have been the same then as later, but this isn't certain. And the second-act spoken melodrama, which as we know it includes a reference to the final part of Florestan's 1814 aria, cannot have done so in 1805—but no earlier sources survive (the piece was dropped entirely in 1806) and so the modern editors are forced to use the anachronistic 1814 version. And there are various alterations in the manuscripts that cannot be firmly dated: Were they made before the 1805 premiere or after? It seems possible that the current flurry of activity in Beethoven scholarship may turn up some new material, lead to some new conclusions (another manuscript for the 1814 libretto, annotated by Beethoven and hitherto unknown, turned up in 1969).

In its main lines, at least, the Prieger/Hess reconstruction is obviously sound. It was first performed in Berlin on the 100th anniversary of the opera's premiere; Richard Strauss conducted. Sadler's Wells mounted it in 1970, and there have been several concert performances, some of which have circulated in the underground.

At least two good reasons suggest themselves for this attention. First, *Leonore* contains some fine music by Beethoven that didn't survive the rewrites of 1806 and 1814; second, we are naturally curious about any aspect of Beethoven's stylistic development and working methods. The *Leonore/Fidelio* comparison casts a good deal of light on such matters; an absorbing exercise is to listen to *Leonore* while following the parallel numbers in a score of *Fidelio*, watching the older Beethoven breaking up the literal symmetries of phrase and layout that his younger self had favored (although not all such changes can be attributed to 1814, some having been made at the intermediate stage in 1806).

Leonore begins, as it ends, in C major—with the familiar *Leonore Overture No. 2* (No. 1 was already discarded by the time of the first performance, having been tried out in a reading at Prince Lichnowsky's and found "too light, and not sufficiently expressive of the nature of the work," in Schindler's words; in 1806, the formally more conventional *Leonore No. 3* was used). Marzelline's aria in C minor-major then follows, further anchoring the sense of a central key, which in 1814 is weakened by the reversal of the first two numbers and the substitution of an overture in E major, a key whose primary reference within the opera is to Leonore's big aria. After the Marzelline/Jaquino duet comes a trio for the two and Rocco (in which Jaquino's suit is pretty firmly squelched by both father and daughter); the Canon Quartet, Rocco's aria, and the *Fidelio*/Marzelline/Rocco trio follow as in 1814, though (like almost all the retained numbers) not without alterations of length and detail.

At this point in 1805 came the end of Act I. The March serves as prelude to Act II; Pizarro reads his mail, lays his plot, sings his vengeance aria, and assigns Rocco his duties—with the significant differ-

ence that Leonore isn't eavesdropping on this last interview, as she does in 1814. Instead, the tension that has finally begun to accumulate in the central plot is totally dissipated by a duet for the two women on the joys of married love, an expansive piece with concertante parts for violin and cello. It leads to some dialogue (omitted in this recording) during which Marzelline reveals that she has heard "Fidelio" talking in his sleep, and this has to be explained away. At last Leonore sings her aria, after a brief accompanied recitative—not at all like the famous "Abscheulicher!" that in 1814 burst in on the heels of the Pizarro/Rocco duet, for the movement of the tension is here in the opposite direction. The aria is more florid in 1805, the fast section beginning with a striking excursion into C major and ending more expansively and showily.

A scene change follows, to another courtyard in the castle, and now the prisoners emerge—but not as a result of any special request by Leonore; it's just part of the regular prison routine, and when Pizarro comes raging in, he's simply annoyed that Rocco hasn't yet gotten down to his grave-digging assignment. The others go off, leaving Pizarro and the chorus to make the finale with another vengeance aria, followed by a lengthy and vigorous but theatrically awkward orchestral coda.

The difficulties with these two acts are fairly obvious. Primarily, the subplot has been allotted too much time; some of this the librettist Sonnleithner took over from the French libretto by Bouilly that served as his source, but the Marzelline/Jaquino/Rocco trio was his own invention, further extending the delay before the real action gets under way. And Beethoven's expansive musical treatment of all these numbers makes matters still worse; the omission of that trio and of the Leonore/Marzelline duet was urged upon Beethoven at the 1805 post-mortem and he agreed—only to back off later, sacrificing Rocco's aria instead. Finally in 1814 he scrapped the offending numbers, as well as rewriting the finale into an ensemble piece to replace Pizarro's redundant second aria. Here Treitschke's superior theatrical sense was obviously helpful, though some improvements along these lines had already been effected by Stephan von Breuning in 1806.

The sequence of numbers in the final act of *Leonore* is essentially that of *Fidelio*, but the musical and dramatic emphases are significantly different. Florestan's recitative is simpler, and instead of the visionary 1814 fast section, his aria ends with a more resigned episode in F minor, addressed to a portrait of his wife. From here the action proceeds familiarly, the music with various differences of detail. There is no spoken interruption by Jaquino after the second trumpet call, no escort of soldiers for Pizarro—in fact, we are not yet sure of Rocco's position, for at the end of the quartet (a big diminished-seventh chord, not a tonic) he grabs the pistol from the fainting Leonore and follows Pizarro upstairs.

Thus the dramatic situation at the start of the Leonore/Florestan duet is quite different from 1814: the couple do not know that they are safe, and Leonore has fainted. A long accompanied recitative follows, carried by a plaintive, aspiring melody for solo oboe, as Florestan expresses his bewilderment and

his wife returns to her senses: This is the single most moving episode among the music that was later scrapped. The subsequent duet is more expansive and more powerful—if also more strenuously written for the voices, carrying the soprano frequently to B and twice to C. Bear in mind, too, that here Leonore and Florestan are as yet celebrating only their reunion, not their freedom.

There is no scene change at this point. A chorus off-stage is heard demanding vengeance, to the consternation of the Florestans, but when the crowd pours into the dungeon carrying torches, Florestan recognizes Don Fernando and all is well. The solemn ensemble celebrating Leonore's unshackling of her husband is more extended, but the final celebrations are less elaborate.

In this act, there is a good deal to be said in favor of both forms, each a valid treatment of a rather different dramatic curve. The first version is more personal, the last more monumental, stressing the ethical conceptions more than the fates of the individuals. In the final version, the dramatic knot is essentially tied up by the start of the Leonore/Florestan duet, and the finale (beginning as well as ending in C major) is a hymn to freedom, human brotherhood, and womanly virtue. In 1805 it begins in C minor and only gradually works its way—through A major (the recognition of Don Fernando) and F major (the unchaining episode)—to the key of triumph and celebration.

It is for this "new" final act that *Leonore* is particularly to be valued, though there is also much music earlier that is beautiful and interesting. And this recording does a good job of setting it forth, even though it doesn't achieve that sense of utter commitment and intensity that we find in those recordings of *Fidelio* that, directly or indirectly, were related to



An exercise in coordination: For this *Leonore* session, Blomstedt is surrounded by orchestra and chorus, apparently distributed to suit the exigencies of four-channel recording.

stage performances. Two of the principals took the same roles in Karajan's sleek recording of the 1814 version (Angel SCL 3773): Helen Donath (Marzelline) is her usual reliable self, and Karl Ridderbusch is an exceptionally smooth and genial Rocco—perhaps too much so for the rather crasser character of Sonnleithner's libretto. Theo Adam, who was also Pizarro for Karl Böhm (DG 2709 031), is harsh in tone but eminently forceful.

Edda Moser's flexibility of voice is particularly apposite in the higher, more florid writing of 1805, but she sometimes pushes it out of tune. (A curiosity: Her father, the musicologist Hans Joachim Moser, in 1925 proposed a conflation of the "best" passages from the first and third versions of the opera—not, one must conclude, a feasible proceeding because of their fundamental differences of style, scale, and emphasis.) Richard Cassilly is a strong if sometimes raw-toned Florestan, and the minor parts are acceptably taken.

Performing a "half-familiar" work such as this cannot be easy. As well as learning all the variants from the well-known work, performers have to re-think the shape of numbers, with new emphases and formal articulations. That hasn't always worked out here, although in general I am impressed by Herbert Blomstedt's direction. One example: At the end of Leonore's aria, after the familiar ascending chromatic line ("der Pflicht der treuen . . .") and the scales ascending to high B, Beethoven originally back-

tracked to the octave G sharps on "Ich wanke nicht" and continued with an elaborate flight of coloratura before ending. In this performance, there is a disastrous lapse of tension after the high B is achieved, so that the original continuation sounds illogical. But these moments are few; in most respects, these performers do very well by the piece.

Not so satisfactory is the sound, which is somewhat veiled and unvivid, though not actually unclear. The spoken dialogue, though abridged, is for the most part really spoken (apparently by the singers themselves; if so, I am impressed by the quality of Cassilly's German diction), rather than whispered at the microphone. The British pressings that are being distributed here include a translation of the libretto as performed—important because, as noted above, many details of plot and character are not the same as in the familiar *Fidelio*. (Ideally, we should have been given a really complete libretto, with the omitted bits of dialogue indicated.)

BEETHOVEN: Leonore (1805 version).

Leonore	Edda Moser (s)	Don Fernando	
Marzelline	Helen Donath (s)	Hermann Christian Polster (bs)	
Florestan	Richard Cassilly (t)	Rocco	Karl Ridderbusch (bs)
Jaquino	Eberhard Buchner (t)	Prisoners	Reiner Goldberg (t)
Don Pizarro	Theo Adam (bs-b)		Siegfried Lorenz (bs)

Leipzig Radio Chorus, Dresden State Orchestra, Herbert Blomstedt, cond. [Bernd Runge, prod.] EMI/CAPITOL SLS 999, \$23.98 (three SQ-encoded discs, manual sequence; distributed by Capitol Imports).

Herrmann and Hitch

Mercury reissues the Vertigo soundtrack (now in stereo), while Elmer Bernstein salvages Herrmann's unused Torn Curtain score.

by Royal S. Brown



AN EMBARRASSMENT OF RICHES! Almost simultaneously, Mercury and the Elmer Bernstein Film Music Collection have released two recordings that fill important gaps in the growing Bernard Herrmann discography. They also stand, for different reasons, as milestones in the history of film scoring. The music for Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* becomes available for the first time in (genuine) stereo on a disc that documents what is, to my mind, the greatest film score ever composed, written for what I (and many others) consider the best American film ever made. So bitter, however, was the clash between Herrmann and Hitchcock as to the type of music called for in *Torn Curtain* that that score was never used. As far as I know, the Bernstein recording of it is the first disc ever to retrieve an abandoned film score from limbo.

After *The Trouble with Harry*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, and *The Wrong Man*, the 1958 *Vertigo* was the first Hitchcock film to allow Herrmann to pull out all the stops. For instance, here the director went to an elaborate title-credit sequence, a stunning, slowly changing series of multihued whorls designed by Saul Bass to evolve from the opening close-up of an eye. As the principal musical figure to accompany this, Herrmann devised a rising and falling broken seventh chord punctuated by an occasional thematic motive and by short outbursts from an orchestra made ominously resonant by the

presence of harps, a vibraphone, and an organ. The combination of the Herrmann prelude and the Bass titles creates an overture in sound and sight that abstractly evokes the no-exit fatalism of the story that follows. It is interesting that, contrary to usual practice, none of the prelude is heard again in the film proper, save a brief hint during the scene involving the transformation of Judy Barton (Kim Novak).

Also, the dream sequence gave Herrmann the chance to compose a particularly elaborate musical passage taking only dialogueless pictures into consideration. Since the nightmare has its source not only in the apparent death of Madeline (also Novak), but also in the hero's (Jimmy Stewart) obsessive love for her, "Nightmare and Dawn" is framed by the love theme, one of Herrmann's most captivating lyrical inventions. The music for the nightmare itself, on the other hand, is basically a frenetic reworking of the "Carlotta's Portrait" theme, built around a series of parallel thirds over a D ostinato in a habanera rhythm. (Nowhere is the brilliant simplicity of the composer's film-scoring aesthetic more in evidence.) And since Madeline's obsession with the deceased Spanish woman, Carlotta Valdez, is linked directly with her suicide, the distorted Hispanic flavor of the music succinctly summarizes the fatalistic convolutions of the narrative that come together in the the scene's sounds and images.

It is not only the broader musical backdrops that make this a great score. Even the themeless drones (not recorded) that accompany Stewart as he follows Novak in his car add an immeasurable depth to the atmosphere. It would be foolish to suggest that *Vertigo* would not have been a great picture without Herrmann. (Certainly, *Strangers on a Train*, a piece of quintessential Hitchcock, managed to survive a mediocre Dimitri Tiomkin score.) But it would not have become a complete work of art, acting as profoundly and in such a multilayered way on the viewer/listener, had there not been such a total coming together of a composer and director at the peak of their talents.

It is obvious that Herrmann and Hitchcock were not in sync on their final collaboration, *Torn Curtain*. This is particularly apparent in the "Killing" sequence, in which Paul Newman and a woman finish off a wounded secret-police officer by forcing his head into a gas-filled oven in an isolated farmhouse. The music, while brilliant, comes on with all the rush of a Shostakovich climax: the scene for which it was written, however, has the agoraphobic quality of the plane-attack sequence in *North by Northwest* for which no music was used (and rightly so). If we must defer to the composer's judgment in insisting that music be used for the murder scenes in a film such as *Psycho*, it seems to me that his solution for "Killing" amounts to overkill.

But there is no question that most of Herrmann's music would have benefited the film immensely. By the time he wrote this score, he was so much in tune with the *cinéma selon Hitchcock* that he was able to write a crackling prelude that could only have been intended for one of this director's nightmare-tinged adventures. And if the heroic horn theme introduced in the prelude is a bit facile, a three-note motive heard later on provides an intriguing tie-in with a

somewhat similar motive heard in *Psycho* and sardonically revived in Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, Herrmann's last score. Certainly, most of the musical sequences, whether lugubrious, sostenuto suspense passages or the mellow love music to accompany the "Hill" scene, suit the picture better than John Addison's anodyne strains.

All considerations of the film aside, *Torn Curtain* makes for fascinating listening on its own. It is one of those scores in which the composer went out on a limb in the instrumentation, here deploying no fewer than twelve flutes (doubling on piccolo, alto flute, and bass flute), while reducing the strings to eight cellos and eight contrabasses. (Prokofiev, in his *Ode to the End of the War*, likewise wiped out all conventional high strings, plus the cellos, replacing them with eight harps and four pianos!) The brass section, furthermore, is augmented to include sixteen horns and nine trombones, with trumpets eliminated.

Fortunately, the superb sound quality of the Film Music Collection release allows the listener to fully partake of the treats offered by this orchestral banquet. I might add that the resonant sonic ambience perfectly suits the score. Bernstein conducts the music as well as I imagine it could ever be conducted, and he gets obviously committed playing from the Royal Philharmonic and the extra musicians that must have been engaged for this project. (But what happened to the final band on the disc, which is listed as a reprise of the prelude but is not included?)

Made from the twenty-year-old music track for the film—the master tapes for the original recording could not be located—the *Vertigo* album does not dazzle sonically the way *Torn Curtain* does; nor does Muir Mathieson project the sensitivity as a Herrmann conductor that Bernstein does. But Mercury has done an admirable job of getting the music to sound bright and realistic, and it performs an invaluable service by restoring the disc to the catalog, this time as a classical release. (The original was issued in the pop series, which shows how far appreciation for film music has advanced.) I do wish that more of the score had been included on the disc, and the appalling cover art is yet another proof of the pre-eminence today of the aesthetics of the ugly. (They just couldn't use the Stewart-Novak still from the original cover, somebody at Mercury told me. Heaven forbid.) But these are minor quibbles.

I would like to make two pleas: 1) that the Herrmann revival not be allowed to die before a decent recording (of *Torn Curtain* quality) is made of *North by Northwest*, another landmark Hitchcock/Herrmann product; and 2) that Hitchcock please stop sitting on *Vertigo*, a film that should be seen by as many people as often as possible.

R **VERTIGO.** Original film soundtrack recording. Composed by Bernard Herrmann; Sinfonia of London, Muir Mathieson, cond. MERCURY SRI 75117, \$6.98 [from MERCURY MG 20384, mono, 1958].

TORN CURTAIN. Original film score by Bernard Herrmann. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Elmer Bernstein, cond. and prod. FILM MUSIC COLLECTION Album 10, \$8.00 plus 60¢ handling, to members only (annual membership \$5.00; Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Collection, Box 25198, Los Angeles, Calif. 90025).

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A fund is being established to preserve the memory and musical heritage of the great Danish tenor Aksel Schiøtz (1906-1975). This fund will provide for scholarship awards, art-song workshops, and perhaps art-song commissions.

A committee consisting of Gerd Schiøtz, Aksel's widow; Robert S. Clark, editorial director of HIGH FIDELITY; Richard Dyer-Bennet, balladeer; Maureen Forrester, contralto; George Jellinek, music director of Station WQXR (N.Y.); Irving Kolodin, music critic; Gerald

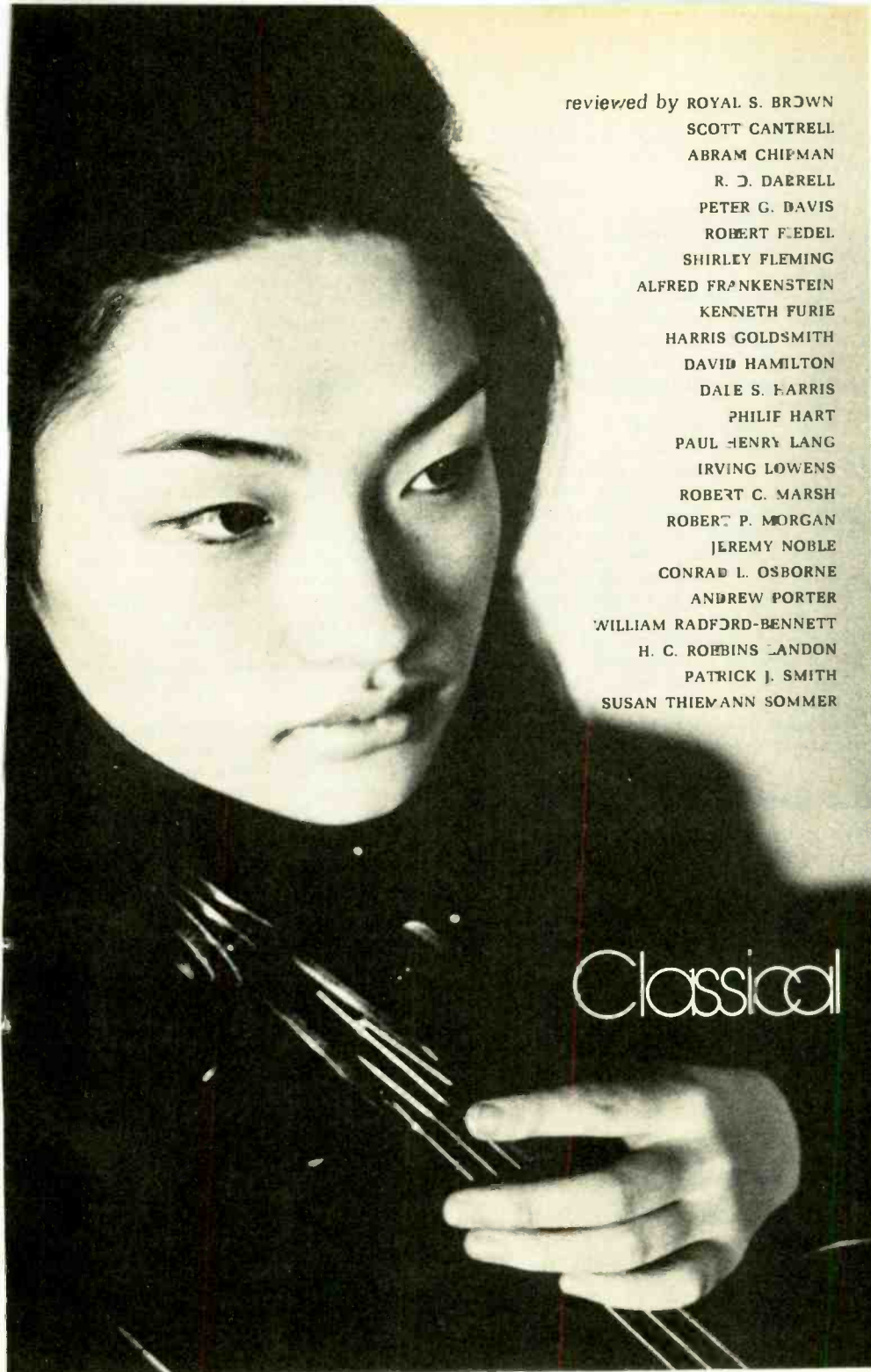
Moore, accompanist; Conrad L. Osborne, music critic; Gérard Souzay, baritone; and Warren B. Syer, publisher of HIGH FIDELITY will direct the use of the gifts collected, in order to further Aksel Schiøtz's memory through the best living means.

The fund will be administered by the Schubert Club, a venerable recital-sponsoring and scholarship-granting organization established in 1882 in St. Paul. The club and the singer were closely associated when he was living in Minneapolis/St. Paul in the 1950s.

One of the most highly revered artists of our time, Aksel Schiøtz vaulted to international renown just after World War II, when a treasured series of 78-rpm HMV discs from England brought to music lovers worldwide his warm and plastic tenor voice, his assured command of many styles, and his all-encompassing intelligence and artistry. Though he was at home in oratorio and opera as well, it was as a master of the classic song literature of many nations that he most distinguished himself. Born and trained in Denmark, he spent much of the last two decades of his life in the United States and Canada, where he appeared in concert, taught, and conducted master classes. His book, "The Singer and His Art" (Harper & Row), was published in 1970.

Please address contributions and any inquiry concerning the fund to:

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Kyung-Wha Chung—triumphing over Bartók's fearsome pyrotechnics

reviewed by ROYAL S. BROWN
 SCOTT CANTRELL
 ABRAM CHIPMAN
 R. D. DARELL
 PETER G. DAVIS
 ROBERT FEDEL
 SHIRLEY FLEMING
 ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN
 KENNETH FURIE
 HARRIS GOLDSMITH
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 WILLIAM RADFORD-BENNETT
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 PATRICK J. SMITH
 SUSAN THIEMANN SOMMER

Classical

BACH, C. P. E.: Concertos for Harpsichord and Orchestra: in E, Wq. 14; in G, Wq. 43, No. 5. **BACH, J.C. (arr. Mozart):** Concerto for Harpsichord and Strings, in D, K. 107, No. 1. English Concert, Trevor Pinnock, harpsichord and cond. [Simon Lawman and Roy Carter, prod.] CRD 1011, \$7.98 (distributed by HNH Records).

Trevor Pinnock is a deft, cleanly articulating soloist, and if neither he nor the capable English Concert (founded as a septet in 1973, here expanded to sixteen players) demonstrates any notable powers of personality projection, their attractively recorded lightweight performances radiate a disarming, quite contagious music-making relish.

I can't trace, offhand, previous recordings of these two examples of Carl Philipp Emanuel's some fifty concertos; in any case, neither is currently listed in Schwann. They rewardingly illuminate two different periods in the composer's keyboard-concerto oeuvre: The three-movement Concerto in E was composed at Potsdam in 1760; the much more distinctively "modern" four-movements-in-one Concerto in G was published at Hamburg in 1772 as part of a set of six. This was before Bach was writing expressly for the pianoforte, yet to my ears the rococo, even romantic, spirit of this highly idiosyncratic and original music not only calls for an early piano, rather than harpsichord, but also makes the present decidedly baroque string timbres seem pedantically if not anachronistically "antique."

More familiar, from a number of earlier recordings, is the young Mozart's revamping (with orchestral ritornellos, soloist's cadenzas, etc.) of the Op. 5, No. 2 Harpsichord Sonata by his idol, Johann Christian Bach. Here, too, use of a pianoforte and modern strings might have been preferable. As it is, however, the gleamingly bright up-to-date recording is this version's main attraction in its competition with the 1969 Turnabout set of all three J. C. Bach/Mozart concertos, or with the 1965 Musical Heritage disc (MHS 619), which augments a piano version of this concerto with a harpsichord account (by a different player) of the original Bach sonata. R.D.D.

BARTÓK: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 2. Kyung-Wha Chung, violin; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. [Christopher Raeburn, prod.] LONDON CS 7023, \$7.98. Tape: ●● CS5 7023, \$7.95.

Comparison:
 Perlman, Previn/London Sym.

Ang. S37014

Explanation of symbols

Classical:

- B Budget
- H Historical
- R Reissue

Recorded tape:

- Open Reel
- 8-Track Cartridge
- Cassette

This splendid performance would rate unhesitating recommendation were it not for the even more spectacular Perlman/Previn version, which I reviewed at some length in January 1975. Chung emerges victorious from her battles with Bartók's fearsome pyrotechnics, while Perlman gives the impression that he's hardly struggling. Her glissandos, for example, are comparatively a shade timid, and her tone thins out a bit in the stratosphere (as at bars 155-60), where Perlman manages both kinetic ferocity and kittenish seductiveness with equal aplomb.

Solti underlines points of transition more than Previn, which sometimes helps define basic pulses (e.g., the recurring tempo primo of the first movement) but at other points merely creates an episodic effect. Surprisingly, Previn occasionally phrases with more swagger (e.g., the passage beginning at bar 64 of the finale), and the London Symphony's brass chording is particularly impressive—note those yelping trombone glissandos. Solti's London Philharmonic plays well too, and the Decca/London engineering spotlights more instrumental detail than the EMI (at least in the latter's Angel edition). A.C.

BEETHOVEN: Leonore. For a feature review, see page 77.

BEETHOVEN AND SCHUBERT: Vocal Works. Janet Baker, mezzo-soprano, English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard, harpsichord, piano, and cond. PHILIPS 9500 307, \$8.98.

BEETHOVEN: Egmont, Op. 84: Die Trommel gerührt: Freudvoll und leidvoll. No. non turbati, o Nice, WoO. 92a. Ah, perfido! Op. 65. **SCHUBERT:** Zögernd leise, D. 920 (with English Chamber Orchestra Chorus and piano). Rosamunde, D. 797: No. 3b, Der Vollmond strahlt. La-

zarus, D. 689: Ach, so find ich ihn noch... So schlummert auf Rosen... Nun entfloß auf schnellen Schwingen. Alfonso und Estrella, D. 732: No. 15, Konnt' ich ewig hier verweilen.

As Karl Schumann's liner notes for this record point out, both Beethoven and Schubert studied the setting of Italian words with Salieri, and both set texts by Metastasio. The comparison this suggests isn't actually carried out by the repertory, for none of Schubert's Italian efforts are included, but the program does present an interesting mixture of familiar and unfamiliar music.

Janet Baker's resources are rather severely taxed by Beethoven's Italian settings. "No, non turbati" is evidently a first recording; dating from about 1801/2, the manuscript was actually corrected by Salieri. A pleasantly varied piece, it is rather less striking than the earlier, better known "Ah, perfido," which lies still farther outside the singer's range. I'm sorry to report that, for all her warmth and fervor, she doesn't sing these arias well, and elsewhere in the program her intonation is less reliable than one would wish. The Egmont songs go better, though the second has been transposed down from A to G, resulting in a darkening of the orchestral color (and some

slight doctoring of the violin parts).

The Schubert side is more satisfactory. The Grillparzer serenade, "Zögernd leise," is sung in the version with male chorus; most other recordings (including the recent ones by Christa Ludwig and Brigitte Fassbaender) have used the revision for women's voices. The performance is on the choppy side. Also in the alto range, and finding Baker most comfortable of all, is the Rosamunde romance. Though it ends inconclusively, the excerpt from the unfinished cantata Lazarus contains some expressive recitatives and striking harmonies (there is a complete recording on Schwann Verlag 1-512, which I haven't heard). Somebody at Philips must have a hot spot for this aria from Alfonso und Estrella—it turned up only a few months ago on the Ameling/Ahnsjö/De Waart "Schubert on Stage" disc (Philips 9500 170), which also included the preceding and subsequent numbers. The tempo marking of andantino is interpreted rather more slowly by Baker and Leppard than by Ameling and De Waart, whose choice strikes me as more in keeping with the marking and the spirit of the wistfully pastoral music.

The orchestral playing is sensitive, if not always as neat as it might be (e.g., the two clarinets in the Rosamunde number). Texts and translations are included. D.H.

Critics' Choice

The most noteworthy classical releases reviewed recently

- ARNE:** Symphonies. Montgomery. HNH 4041, March.
BACH: Harpsichord Partitas Nos. 3, 4. Kipnis. ANGEL S 36098, March.
BACH: Violin Sonatas and Partitas. Luca. NONESUCH HC 73030 (3), March.
BEETHOVEN: Piano Concertos (5); Choral Fantasia. Brendel, Haitink. PHILIPS 6767 002 (5).
 Piano Concerto No. 5. Fischer, Furtwängler. TURNABOUT THS 65072, Feb.
BEETHOVEN: Symphonies (9). Karajan. DG 2740 172 (8), Feb.
BLOCH: Sacred Service. Lawrence, Abravanel. ANGEL S 37305, March.
BORODIN: Symphonies (3); Polovetsian Dances. A. Davis. COLUMBIA M2 34587 (2), March.
BRIAN: Symphonies Nos. 6, 16. Fredman. HNH 4029, Feb.
BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 7. **WAGNER:** Siegfried Idyll. Karajan. DG 2707 102 (2), Jan.
BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 9. Giulini. ANGEL S 37287, March.
CHOPIN: Preludes. Argerich. DG 2530 721, Feb.
DONIZETTI: L'Elisir d'amore. Cotrubas, Domingo, Wixell, Evans, Pritchard. COLUMBIA M3 34585 (3), March.
DVOŘÁK: Overtures; Legends. Kubeik. DG 2530 785, 2530 786, Feb.
HANDEL: Messiah. Handel and Haydn Society (Boston), Dunn. ADVENT (cassette) EE 1061, SINE QUA NON SA 2015/3 (3), Jan.
HANDEL: Oboe Concertos. Holliger, Leppard. PHILIPS 6500 240, March.
HANDEL: Royal Fireworks Music et al. Mackerras. ANGEL S 37404, March.
HINDEMITH: Four Temperaments; Nobilissima Visione. De Preist. DELOS DEL 25440, Feb.
LISZT: Piano Works. Nyiregyházi. IPA 111, Feb.
LISZT: Transcendental Etudes; Concert Etudes. Arrau. PHILIPS 6747 412 (2), Feb.
OCKEGHEM: Vocal Works. Pomerium Musices, Blachly. NONESUCH H 71336, Feb.
RACHMANINOFF: Piano Concerto No. 3. **MOZART:** Piano Concerto No. 12 (second and third movements). Kapell, MacMillan, Monteux. IPA 507, Feb.
RAMEAU: Harpsichord Works. Gilbert. ARCHIV 2710 020 (3), Jan.
SCHOENBERG: String Quartets (5). Juilliard Qt. COLUMBIA M3 34581 (3), March.
SCHUMANN: Papillons; Symphonic Etudes. Perahia. COLUMBIA M 34539, Jan.
SESSIONS: When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd. Ozawa. NEW WORLD NW 296, Feb.
SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 1; Swan of Tuonela. Stokowski. COLUMBIA M 34548. En Saga; Ta-piola; Swan of Tuonela; Finlandia. Karajan. ANGEL S 37408, March.
PHILIP JONES BRASS ENSEMBLE: In Switzerland. HNH 4037, Feb.

BRAHMS: Orchestral Works. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Eugen Jochum, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL SDC 3845, \$23.98 (four SQ-encoded discs, manual sequence).

Symphonies: No. 1, in C minor, Op. 68; No. 2, in D, Op. 73; No. 3, in F, Op. 90; No. 4, in E minor, Op. 98. Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80. Tragic Overture, Op. 81.

BRAHMS: Orchestral Works. Cleveland Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, cond. [Michael Woolcock* and Ray Minshull*, prod.] LONDON CSA 2405, \$23.94 (four discs, manual sequence). Tape: ** CSA5 2405, \$23.95.

Symphonies: No. 1, in C minor, Op. 68* [from CS 7007, 1976]; No. 2, in D, Op. 73*; No. 3, in F, Op. 90*; No. 4, in E minor, Op. 98*. Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80.* Tragic Overture, Op. 81*. Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a*.

Comparisons:
 Sanderling/Dresden State Orch. Eurodisc 85 782 XHK
 Abravanel/Utah Sym. Van. Card. VCS 10117/20

Jochum's readings have some of the freedom of meter of Furtwängler's Brahms, but without a consistent commitment to the latter's weighty, spiritualized slow movements or big, bronzen Wagnerian sound. Indeed, Jochum gets from the London Philharmonic woodwinds—particularly the oboes—playing as smiling and chirpy as in Beecham's Handel.

The First Symphony, neither monumental nor especially incisive, is the weakest performance in the Jochum set. The Third is briskly joyous, and the Fourth recalls some of the musing gravity and sensuousness of his excellent DG mono Berlin Philharmonic version (once available here on Decca). The Second has a fast and thrilling finale and an opening movement with some of the widest tempo variations around. The two overtures are well if not memorably done; the Haydn Variations, which Jochum recorded recently for DG, are not included here. All exposition repeats are taken in the sym-

phonies, and Angel's sound is clean but not very vivid.

Lorin Maazel's Brahms cycle was preceded by a single issue of the First Symphony (reviewed in May 1977) that didn't leave me holding my breath for the rest, and I continue to miss a planned and balanced contouring of the music's peaks and valleys, of its varying tension. The imposed-from-without distensions of line and the sudden floods of tonal mush from the strings sound almost like a parody of a nineteenth-century conducting style. In fairness, the sound of the newer Maazel performances (all, that is, except the *Academic Festival Overture*, which was recorded at the same time as the First Symphony) is less thick and gelatinous, but I am surprised by the number of minor imperfections in the playing of the Cleveland Orchestra, from which we once expected such superhuman precision.

Those who want to acquire the Brahms symphonies in packaged form are directed to Abravanel and Sanderling. Abravanel's Vanguard Cardinal set offers unpretentiously bright-eyed if not virtuosic performances of the symphonies, both overtures, and the Haydn Variations at budget price. Sanderling's Eurodisc set has a degree of musicianly dignity, moderation, and splendor of orchestral sound unmatched by any other set available domestically, although it faces a stiff challenge if the still unreleased half of Levine's RCA cycle lives up to the First (ARL 1-1326) and Third (ARL 1-2097). A.C.

BRAHMS: Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano, No. 1, in B, Op. 8*; Intermezzos (3), Op. 117. Eszter Perényi, violin*; Miklos Perényi, cello*; Gyula Kiss, piano. [János Mátyás, prod.] HUNGAROTON SLPX 11796, \$7.98.

It would be interesting to hear Brahms's Op. 8 Trio in its original 1853-54 version, but as usual we have another recording of the substantially recomposed work that Brahms fashioned in full maturity from his youthful indiscretion. These youngish Hungarian artists opt for a reserved style, with generally brisk tempos and a tendency to lighten textures and preserve classical decorum. If you want blood and thunder or meditative breadth, you had better look elsewhere, but in its patrician way the performance could hardly be bettered. And certainly there is none of the glib, salonish dropping of phrase endings that characterized the series of Brahms trios recorded for London by Suk, Starker, and Katchen. The exposition repeat is observed in the first movement.

Gyula Kiss plays the three intermezzos from Op. 117 tastefully and directly, if without the light and shade and the subtlety of feeling that other artists—for example, Kempff (DG, deleted)—have managed. H.G.

B **BRITTEN:** *St. Nicolas*, Op. 42. Bruce Russell, boy soprano; Robert Tear, tenor; Andrew Davis and Ian Hare, pianos; Cambridge Girls' Choir, King's College Choir, Cambridge, Academy of St. Martin-in-



Benjamin Britten
Music of openness and spontaneity

the-Fields, David Willcocks, cond. SERAPHIM S 60296, \$3.98.

Some of the best music of the late Benjamin Britten has a remarkable power of attraction that seems to transcend distinctions between such apparently disparate audiences as children and music critics: it is music of openness and spontaneity that perhaps speaks to the "child" in each of us. Britten could treat even religious subjects with marvelous freshness, and it is in just such a work as the cantata *St. Nicolas* that I am repeatedly struck by his rare ability—rare indeed in this century—to project sensitivity without self-consciousness.

Using a libretto by Eric Crozier, Britten composed *St. Nicolas* for centenary celebrations at Lancing College, Sussex, in July 1948. The scoring is for treble and tenor soloists (representing Nicolas as boy and man, respectively), main chorus, a gallery choir of female voices, two pianos, organ, strings, and percussion: except for the demanding solo-tenor and percussion parts, though, the work is basically designed for amateur performers. Opening with a vision of Nicolas in episcopal glory, the cantata's ensuing eight sections recount the legends surrounding the saint's birth, his consecration as bishop of Myra, his imprisonment by the Romans, his miracles, and finally his death. The score includes a number of those deftly dramatic effects that were a virtual trademark of Britten's music dramas, the inclusion of the noble hymn "God moves in a mysterious way" at the end being a case in point.

The present performance, which has been available in England since 1970, is both fastidious and committed, and Robert Tear is superb. The recording, obviously made in the sumptuous acoustics of King's College Chapel, Cambridge, is vivid and

spacious; the balances are less than ideal, though, favoring soloists and instruments at the expense of the choirs. Alec Robertson's very fine sleeve notes include a synopsis of the cantata's action but, alas, no libretto. S.C.

CHARPENTIER: Louise.

Louise	Beverly Sills (s)
The Mother	Mignon Dunn (ms)
Julien	Nicolai Gedda (t)
The Noctambulist; The King of the Fools	Maryn Hill (t)
The Father	José van Dam (bs-b)
The Ragman	Jacques Mars (bs)

(plus numerous smaller parts)

Maîtrise de la Résurrection, Paris Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Julius Rudel, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL SCLX 3846, \$24.98 (three SO-encoded discs, automatic sequence). Tape: 4X3S 3846, \$23.98.

Comparisons:
Cotrubas, Domingo, Prêtre Col. M3 34207
Vallin, Thill, Bigot (abr.) EMI 2C 153 12035/6

This recording is not the answer to the Louise problem, but it has important strengths that somewhat complement those of the Columbia set (which Conrad L. Osborne reviewed at length in February 1977).

Angel's cast is strongest where Columbia's is relatively weak—in the parents, particularly José van Dam's Father. Van Dam is a rather unimaginative singer, and so he misses much of the good-natured humor and tenderness of Act I, but he also has his lovely, full-bodied bass-baritone under exceptional control and the role suits his voice ideally. It requires considerable ease and power above the staff (which explains why, despite its clear indications for bass, it has often been taken by baritones), and Van Dam supplies them in abundance all the way up to a resonant high G. In Act IV, as the Father's long-smoldering bitterness and rage erupt through his ferociously maintained veneer of contented resignation, Van Dam pours out a stream of sound astonishing in quality and quantity. I won't part with Pinza's 1943 Met air check with Beecham, particularly for Act I, but in Act IV Van Dam sets a standard of his own (the Pinza of 1943 couldn't match him on top). An outstanding piece of work.

Mignon Dunn, while less remarkable, is still impressive as the Mother. The range and power of an Ortrud prove most helpful for this treacherous role, and from a vocal standpoint it would be hard to think of a more suitable singer. But the Mother also carries a weighty interpretive burden. She is the most difficult of these characters to make, if not sympathetic, then at least human and credible, for both her shrewishness and her brutal philosophy of child-rearing must be presented as plausible manifestations of wifely and motherly love. Dunn does well with those moments when she can express untwisted affection, including the whole of her appearance in the Act III night street scene, coaxing Louise back to her ill father's side. She plays that scene absolutely straight, which is a legitimate choice—even if the Mother is knowingly lying about her willingness to accept the liaison with Julien (as Louise accuses in Act IV), it can be argued that she

José van Dam and Mignon Dunn
Impressive vocalism as
Louise's parents



Brissaud/Angel



must lie awfully convincingly to deceive someone who knows her ways so well.

It is in those two scenes—the street scene of Act III and Act IV—that Beverly Sills makes her strongest impression, since here the enfeebled state of her voice matters less than the fact that she knows what she wants to do with it. At full voice and above the staff she is largely reduced to shrillness, but it should be noted that Columbia's Ileana Cotrubas is also weak in those departments and that below the break, where Louise has much important conversational writing, Sills has the greater solidity. And at almost every juncture it is Sills who understands the character, who communicates that craving for larger horizons and the bitterness at her parents' narrowness and, finally, deceit.

A pity, of course, that Sills could not have recorded Louise a decade or more ago, but her artistry does offer compensations. Not so with Nicolai Gedda, whose sour-toned Julien I found unendurable. Generalized as Plácido Domingo's grasp of the role may be, his handsome tenorizing gives the Columbia set one substantial edge. Purchasers of the Angel set can plug this gap somewhat by adding the early-Thirties French Columbia recording with Ninon Vallin and Georges Thill (available in a two-disc French reissue imported by Peters International), though the role of Julien suffers horribly from the brutal cuts, made for the recording by the composer himself. (Had anyone else performed this "abridgment," the only word for it would be "vandalism," which may be the appropriate word in any case.)

The large supporting roster is somewhat more idiomatically filled in the Angel recording, though one can cite instances of individual superiority for both Angel and Columbia and neither cast more than suggests the magically atmospheric possi-

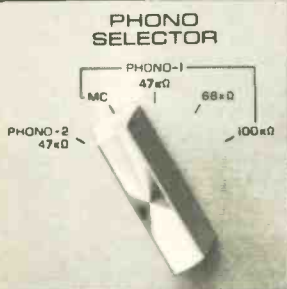
bilities of the piece. Similarly neither conductor is well served by the engineering, which in both cases is on the vague and colorless side, though Angel's balances are more plausible than Columbia's.

Julius Rudel gives a surprisingly straight reading—surprising in that the score provides abundant opportunities for the emphatic contouring to which he is prone, which might have worked well here. The virtues of Rudel's sober, respectful approach come to the fore in those last scenes, where the performers settle into their parts most comfortably. Columbia's Georges Prêtre has a more imaginative sense of the music's flow, but he has been sabotaged by the sound; indeed the most vivid and sensuous realization of Charpentier's orchestration that I have heard occurred at Columbia's recording sessions—I can't recognize in the washed-out finished product the vibrant, colorful playing I heard from the New Philharmonia in the studio.

Louise obviously poses huge problems for its performers, what with its four difficult principal roles, more than two dozen important supporting parts, and challenging orchestral and choral writing. But those problems will be surmounted only with increased and enlightened performance. In that 1943 Met air check, for example, Beecham has moments of insight that illuminate sections of the score—most notably the Father's entrance in Act I, where the plodding rhythm in the lower strings is executed firmly yet flowingly, even gracefully, capturing the character's drudgeline existence but also his tenderness and sensitivity. What Pinza then achieves with his entrance "lines"—"Bon soir. . . La soupe est prête?" ("Good evening. . . The soup is ready?")—could stand as a textbook definition of great operatic art.

All of the commercial recordings contain some of the truth about Louise, but until we

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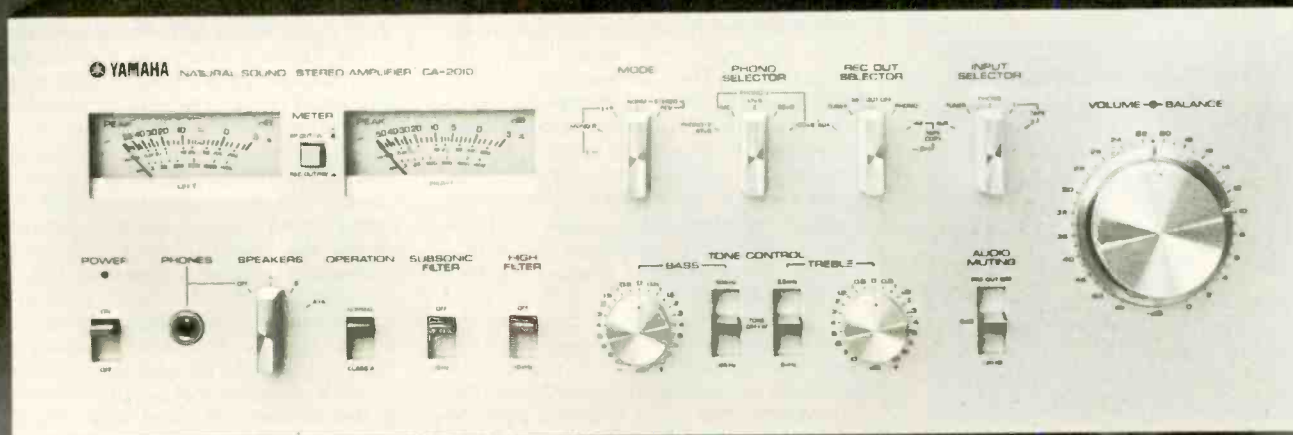


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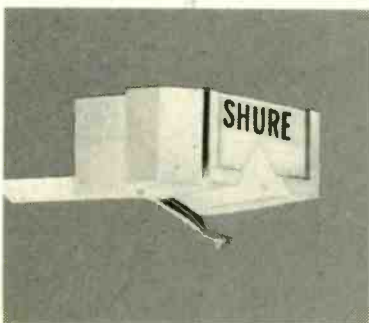




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hear its possibilities more fully explored I don't think we'll know just how good it can be.
K.F.

DEBUSSY: *Printemps*. Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien; Symphonic Fragments (arr. Caplet); Two Fanfares. Orchestre de Paris, Daniel Barenboim, cond. [Wolfgang Stengel and Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 879, \$8.98. Tape: ●● 3300 879, \$8.98.

Barenboim stumbles through *Printemps* bar by bar, seemingly without concern for shaping its thought units, the ebb and flow so impressively realized by Jean Martinon (Angel S 37124, with *Lo Boite à joujoux*). Nor do I hear the sharp delineation of textures achieved by Pierre Boulez (Columbia M 30483, with the *Clarinet Rhapsody* and the *Nocturnes*).

Both Martinon's and Boulez' *Printemps* have the additional advantage of valuable couplings for the basic Debussy collector, whereas Barenboim offers the Caplet-arranged "symphonic fragments" from the exalted and sensuous incidental music for D'Annunzio's *Martyre de Saint Sébastien*. The fragments cover barely a third of the score and give in purely orchestral dress much that is meant for, and palpably more effective in, vocal form. Even if this is all you want of the *Martyre* music, Barenboim quite misses Ansermet's subterranean bleakness of atmosphere and Munch's thrilling incisiveness and virtuoso clarity in their deleted early-stereo recordings of the oratorio version, for London and RCA, respectively. The score would be better served by rerelease of one or both of them—and perhaps one of Columbia's short-lived two-disc concert editions (by Ormandy and Bernstein).
A.C.

DURUFLÉ: *Requiem*, Op. 9.* *Trois Danses*, Op. 6: No. 2, *Danse lente*. Kiri Te Kanawa, soprano*; Sigmund Nimsgern, baritone*; Desborough School Choir*, Ambrosian Singers*, New Philharmonia Orchestra, Andrew Davis, cond. [Paul Myers, prod.] COLUMBIA M 34547, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

Comparison—*Requiem*:
Bouvier, Depraz, Duruflé/Lamoureux Concerts Orch.
Erato STU 70010 or MHS 1509

In many ways, Maurice Duruflé (born in 1902) could have been the logical successor to Debussy and Ravel. One has only to listen to the captivating "*Danse lente*," the second of the *Trois Danses*, Op. 6 (1936), with its subtle, modal exoticism, its mysterious atmosphere of stasis even in the midst of a dance form, and its marked deployment of subdued orchestral colors, to become aware of yet another direction that musical "impressionism" might have followed. Yet he has limited his output to a handful of compositions, many of them for organ, his instrument.

It is a shame that Andrew Davis and the New Philharmonia did not give all of the Op. 6 *Danses*, still not obtainable in toto, for there is nothing to recommend this recording of the Op. 9 *Requiem* over the composer's, available both as an Erato import (from Euroclass Record Distributors,

155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10013) and from Musical Heritage Society. Davis and his forces seem inspired only during those rare moments when the *Requiem* rises above the sad quiescence that dominates most of it. Otherwise, sameness masks the understated but deeply felt religiosity that is one of the work's most touching qualities and that is apparent throughout the Duruflé/MHS version. And in a work pervaded by piano and pianissimo dynamics, more sonic clarity than Columbia provides is needed to give the music texture and definition.
R.S.B.

DVOŘÁK: *Stabat Mater*, Op. 58. Edith Mathis, soprano; Anna Reynolds, mezzo; Wieslaw Ochman, tenor; John Shirley-Quirk, bass-baritone; Elmar Schlöter, organ; Bavarian Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik, cond. [Hans Weber and Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 099, \$17.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

DVOŘÁK: *Stabat Mater*, Op. 58. Drahomíra Tikalová, soprano; Marta Krásová, alto; Beno Blachut, tenor; Karel Kalaš, bass; Czech Singers Chorus, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Talich, cond. REDIFFUSION HERITAGE COLLECTION HCN 8011/2, \$15.96 (two discs, mono) [from URANIA URLP 234 et al., recorded 1952] (distributed by Qualiton Records).

Comparison:
Smetáček/Czech Phil.

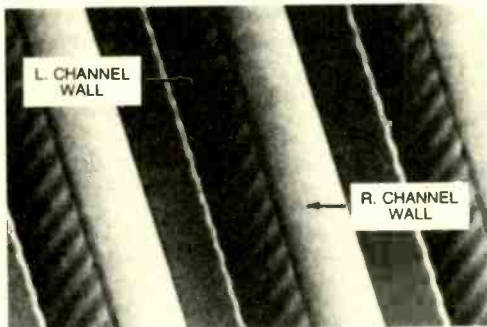
DG 2707 014

Conceived in crushing tragedy (the successive deaths of his three children in the late 1870s), Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* gave consolatory birth to much of his international reputation, and it remains perhaps the greatest of his choral works.

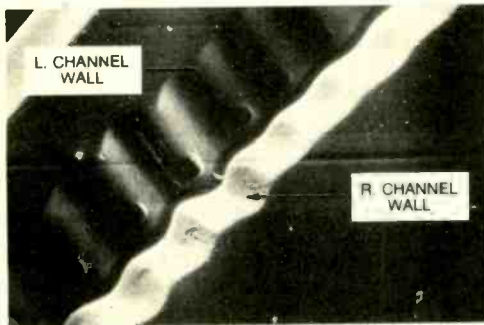
Setting aside the deleted (and unlamented) Vox recording conducted by Hubert Reichert, DG has monopolized the stereo market for the *Stabat Mater*, with the release of this new Kubelik performance and the continued (one hopes) availability of its early-Sixties coproduction with Supraphon featuring Václav Smetáček and the Czech Philharmonic. The excellent new British Rediffusion reissue (imported by U.S. Qualiton Records) of the earlier (1952) Supraphon recording, with Václav Talich leading the Czech Philharmonic—a classic that has circulated domestically on the Colosseum, Urania, and Artia labels—now gives the buyer a choice of three compellingly meritorious versions.

The *Stabat Mater* poses a challenge to the conductor similar to that faced by performers of Haydn's *Seven Last Words* and Shostakovich's *Fifteenth Quartet*: It's not easy to maintain formal cohesion in a work that is, in effect, ten slow movements. Dvořák (or the editor of the 1958 Artia score) placed metronome marks that match clearly the verbal tempo indications for each section, so that is some help. Although Smetáček strikes me as a bit slow in the opening and closing *Andante con moto*, he seems right on the mark elsewhere and, most importantly, maintains throughout a rocklike consistency of gait that is essential in this somber and grand score. Talich is very nearly in the same league, though his slowish tempo for the vast opening move-

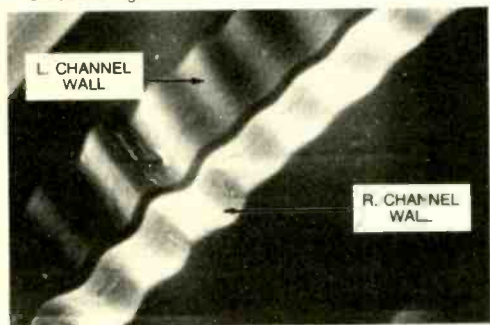
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The Terrible Truth:

The middle photomicrograph shows a record of musical material cut at today's "hotter" velocities after only one play with a well-known competitive cartridge at its rated tracking force. This cartridge mistracked the record. Clearly, critical damage resulted. Notice the deep gouge marks on the groove walls.

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The bottom photo shows the same groove played 50 times with a V15 Type III at a record- and stylus-saving force of only one gram. Clearly, there is no cartridge you can buy — for any amount of money — that will protect your record collection more from the damage of mistracking than the Shure V15 Type III.



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ment is badly misbalanced by the faster (and, taken by itself, preferable) reading of the cyclically related finale. Kubelik heeds Dvořák's directions closely in the outer movements and isn't significantly off the mark in the eight interior ones, but within movements his reading suffers from various disorganizing ailments: a tendency to anticipate ritards and fermatas; a habit of speeding up and slowing down, respectively, for crescendos and diminuendos; a willingness to let his soloists pull him back; and a general slackness that is notably bothersome in the second movement.

The Bavarian Radio Symphony, if not as obviously to the manner born as the Czech Philharmonic, acquits itself well on the

whole; indeed, in the fifth movement it is more attentive to changes of dynamics and bowing. The Munich players fail, however, to differentiate between *ffz* and *fp* in such places as bars 43 and 45 of the first movement. For the darkest and weightiest brass sonority (e.g., in the tenth-movement Allegro molto) one must go to the Talich recording, while Smetáček coaxes the most limpidly poetic wind playing.

In the Talich/Supraphon set, the Czech Singers Chorus under Jan Kuhn is incisive and full-throated. Basses are heard with great vigor; altos are heard, period—no mean achievement: sopranos tend toward some insecurity of pitch in the rougher tessitura. Ensemble is a little loose. In the

Smetáček set, the same chorus, now under Josef Veselka, is smoother and more accurate but hews to a somewhat boring middle course in dynamics and expression. The Bavarian Radio Chorus under Josef Schmidhuber is expressive, sensitive to the text, and nicely on pitch—note the lovely *pp* interjections of "Sanctus Mater" in the fourth movement, so surprisingly indelicate with Talich. Unfortunately, DG has balanced the chorus distantly, and basses and altos get short shrift.

It is in the solo quartet that the Smetáček recording, with not a single weak link, establishes a palpable lead. Contralto Věra Soukupová sings the most inflammatory "Inflammatus" (ninth movement) of all, and bass-baritone Kim Borg is at his patrician best. Talich's quartet also is impressive. Marta Krásová may actually possess a truer and richer contralto than Soukupová, though her "Inflammatus" is more sedate and runs into breath problems (and she begins flat in the second movement). Draho-mira Tikalová is a good dramatic soprano of the old Slavic school, but I don't care much for her sobs in the eighth-movement duet or her noticeable discomfort above the staff in the finale. Karel Kalaš is a tough, blunt bass, which is fine for this music, but he is also a woolly-sounding one. Tenor Beno Blachut sometimes sings too loudly yet delivers a splendid solo in the sixth movement, where the strings effectively alternate their *p* and *f* dynamics in the opening bars.

The new recording benefits from solo singers who, in quartet writing, can subdue their individual personalities to work as a team, but when heard separately they are disappointing. Soprano Edith Mathis, for example, starts out impressively, floating a truly seraphic sustained G beginning at bar 106 of the second movement. But by the time we get to the eighth-movement duet, she is fighting to keep on top of the notes. Anna Reynolds is actually too lightweight a mezzo to contrast effectively with Mathis, and her thirty-second notes drag in places (e.g., bar 16 of the second movement). The "Inflammatus" is rough and coarse. Wieslaw Ochman has a good sense of the style, an appreciation of the text, but his basically pleasant tenor lacks power here. While John Shirley-Quirk's usual wobble is relatively controlled, his work is tentative and stodgy.

I find little to choose between the engineering of the two stereo sets. The harmonium is more pronounced in the new DG, but otherwise the texture is as effectively reproduced in the older one—the recording team in Prague seems to have benefited from a site acoustically more open and enveloping than the Munich one. It should be noted that the 1952 recording, for all its limited response and periodic overloading, reveals details not heard as prominently in either of its successors: Viola lines are more prominent (their pizzicato conversation with cellos near the opening of the eighth movement is evenhandedly balanced); the fugal chorus entries and the brass interjections in the tenth-movement Allegro molto are strikingly differentiated from the general texture.

In sum, Kubelik's *Stabat Mater* is a cred-

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itable job—light weight and lyrical but with more than its share of executant problems and lacking the decisive sonic advantage one would expect from the first recording in more than a dozen years. It is a pleasure to have the Talich performance back with us—incisive, warmly felt, and invigorating, in engineering that wears its age gracefully. But for a single overall choice the balance sheet points toward the Smetáček version, a serious, unified, devoted, and technically skilled statement; I hope that U.S. record buyers will apply some of their dollars toward assuring its survival in the DG catalog. A.C.

ELGAR: *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* (5), Op. 39; *Cockaigne Overture*, Op. 40. **ELGAR (arr.):** *God Save the Queen*. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. LONDON CS 7072, \$7.98. Tape: ●● CS5 7072, \$7.95.

Comparisons—Pomp and Circumstance: Barbirolli/New Philharmonia Ang. S36403 Bliss/London Sym. Lon. Treas. STS 15112

Since Sir Georg Solti has done so much to promote the music of Elgar outside England and has also proven that the great Edwardian composer can be played idiomatically by a non-English conductor, I'm sorry to report that I find his *Pomp and Circumstance* Marches much too hard driven—so much so that they seem faster than other versions, although they are actually somewhat slower. To be sure, this music needs a certain amount of urgency, energy, and dash, but it must also be highly agreeable and seem virtually to play itself.

Barbirolli's Angel recording strikes just the right balance, and it is my first recommendation, even though none of its three overside fillers is comparable in quality to Solti's *Cockaigne Overture*. But the Angel disc (unlike the London but like all the other current listings of the complete Op. 39) fits all five marches on a single side, which makes for more satisfying listening. Another version worth noting among the *Pomp and Circumstance* listings is the fine London Treasury disc conducted by the late Sir Arthur Bliss. Also, EMI has just issued a new recording by Sir Adrian Boult and the London Philharmonic—(Angel S 37436). W.R.B.

B EWALD: *Symphony for Brass, in B flat*, Op. 5. *Quintets for Brass: No. 2*, Op. 6; *No. 3. Empire Brass Quintet*. [Peter F. Ross, prod.] SINE QUA NON/SUPERBA SA 2012, \$4.98.

Victor Ewald (1860–1935) was one of those dichotomous composers who somehow managed to combine professional non-musical and musical lives, exhibiting such distinctive personality and aptitude that one can only wonder how much greater their achievements might have been had they devoted themselves entirely to art.

Ewald was a professor of civil engineering at a St. Petersburg high school who composed chamber music on the side. Although he wrote sparsely in a rather conservative late-nineteenth-century idiom,

and although he dropped into near (musical) oblivion even before his death, he made several significant contributions to the scanty brass-quintet repertory. One of these, the B flat Symphony, Op. 5, was resurrected some years ago and has already been recorded several times, most notably by the Philip Jones Ensemble for Argo. But the new release apparently is the first to present the later Second and Third Quintets in an all-Ewald program.

The Empire Brass Quintet (including three Boston Symphony members) is so patently the ablest of any such American ensemble that I was bitterly disappointed by its recent early-music program (SQN SA 2014, reviewed separately in this issue), which foolishly combined ultrabright recorded playing with completely anachronistic notions of renaissance and baroque-era tonal qualities and interpretative styles. Here, however, the group is properly at home with both the deftly, often imaginatively constructed music and the exact sonic blends and contrasts prescribed by the composer.

Don't write off this disc as being of only highly specialized historical interest. It's rewarding musically; its bravura performances are dramatically gripping; the glittering "ring" of its solo and ensemble brass timbres is an audio-engineering triumph.

R.D.D.

FALLA: *Seven Popular Spanish Songs*. **GRANADOS:** *Tonadillas al estilo antiguo*. Victoria de los Angeles, soprano; Gonzalo Soriano, piano. ANGEL S 37425, \$7.98.

FALLA: *Seven Popular Spanish Songs*. **LORCA:** *Old Spanish Songs* (13). Teresa Berganza, mezzo-soprano; Narciso Yepes, guitar. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 875, \$8.98.

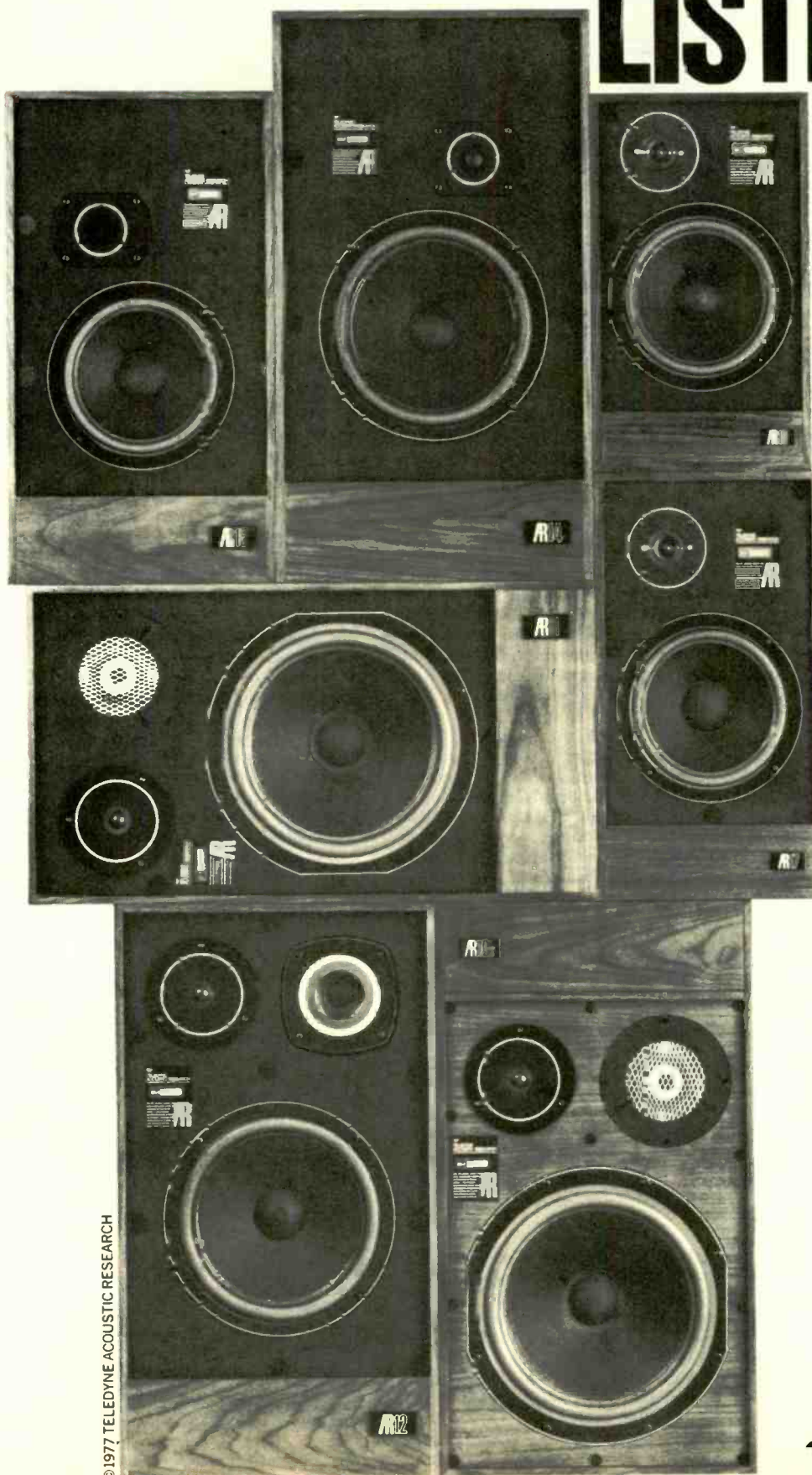
The waning vocal powers of Victoria de los Angeles are much in evidence on her latest recital. Not only does she find it increasingly hard to negotiate notes at the top of the staff, but she also finds it impossible any longer to maintain a really steady, well-supported tone in sustained passages.

Nevertheless, this record strikes me as artistically rewarding, principally on account of its striking interpretive warmth. Fast-moving, extrovert songs like Granados' "El Majo tímido" are particularly effective, and even the slower, more reflective ones—where the soprano's current vocal problems inevitably force themselves on one's attention—are marked by an air of conviction that is hard to resist. Gonzalo Soriano's accompaniments are first-rate.

Teresa Berganza, now in the plenitude of her powers, needs no excuses, especially since she demonstrates ever-increasing interpretive skill as a song recitalist. Her performance of Falla's *Seven Popular Spanish Songs*, while it lacks nothing in earthiness and strength, is full of subtleties and sudden flashes of insight, features enhanced by the delicate, transparent playing of guitarist Narciso Yepes.

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Berganza is even more persuasive, bringing to these strophic, and therefore potentially monotonous, pieces an unfailingly intriguing blend of lyricism and drama. Notable, above all, is the range of tone colors and verbal emphases she is able to call upon for such things as the eleven verses of "Los Pelegrinitos" or the twelve verses of "Los Mozos de Monleon," the latter a particularly attractive song, with its two extended passages of poetry spoken over guitar music after the fourth and eighth verses. (The speaker is Yepes.)

Both recordings are closely miked, though the sound of the Berganza is cleaner and DG's pressings are a great deal smoother than Angel's. Both releases include texts and translations. D.S.H.

FAURÉ: Sonatas for Cello and Piano: No. 1, in D minor, Op. 109; No. 2, in G minor, Op. 117. *Elégie*, Op. 24. *Sicilienne*, Op. 78. Thomas Igloi, cello; Clifford Benson, piano. [Simon Lawman and Roy Carter, prod.] CRD 1016, \$7.98 (distributed by HNH Records).

Comparison—sonatas, *Elégie*:
Tortelier, Hubeau

MHS 833

In listening to Fauré, one generally has the impression of a smooth, continuous lyrical flow. Even in his earlier works, this sense of continuity tends to be an illusion skillfully created through the gradual accumulation of fragments that ultimately form long, convoluted patterns that are quite hard to break down. Occasionally, though, the fragmented side of Fauré's musical language wins the upper hand, and such is the case in the First Cello Sonata (1917), especially in its first movement. Indeed, there is little in Fauré that sounds as "modern" as its opening—the jerky interplay between the thematic shards heard in the cello and the open fifths in the piano. The sonata as a whole proves one of the composer's less accessible pieces, yet moments of subdued lyricism abound, and repeated hearings reveal an emotional as well as musical unity that reward the extra effort it takes to get beneath the work's surface.

The Second Cello Sonata (1921), one of Fauré's last works, has an immediate appeal, and I am surprised that it has not gained more popularity. Not only does the first movement contain two of his loveliest melodic inventions (the first of them particularly striking—a mostly rising figure, typical of the composer, intricately fragmented between cello and piano), but the second-movement funeral march has all the intensity of the famous Op. 24 *Elégie* (c. 1883) also recorded here, along with the Op. 78 *Sicilienne* (1893) later incorporated into the *Pelléas et Mélisande* incidental music. Rich harmonic invention also pervades the sonata, whether in the sometimes melancholic chromaticism of the first movement or in the strangely truncated progressions that pop up in the finale.

Beautiful coordination constantly marks the performances by the late Hungarian-born cellist Thomas Igloi and the British pianist Clifford Benson. In his duo sonatas, Fauré almost breathlessly weaves his themes and figures between the two instruments, and there must be a special affinity



Teresa Berganza—Falla and Lorca sung with great skill

between the two performers—which Igloi and Benson obviously have—in order for that characteristic lilt to be maintained. I was also impressed by the subtle dynamic shading through which they heighten the music's soft contours. Here and there the playing gets a bit superficial, and the performance of the *Sicilienne* seems rather uninvolved. I also found myself wishing for more color in Igloi's-cello tone.

Those wanting a fuller cello sound should investigate the somewhat more frenetic performances of the same works (minus the *Sicilienne*) by Paul Tortelier and Jean Hubeau on Musical Heritage Society. But by and large this release, which has an apropos chamber music presence to its sonic ambience, is most attractive for both repertoire and performances, and it should prove a revelation. R.S.B.

FELD: Various Works. Czech Philharmonic Orchestra; various other performers. SERENUS SRS 12074 and 12075, \$6.98 each. SRS 12074: Symphony No. 1 (Antonio de Almeida, cond.); Concerto for Flute and Orchestra (Jean-Pierre Rampal, flute; Václav Jiráček, cond.). SRS 12075: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (Božena Steinerová, piano; Otakar Trhлік, cond.); Sonata for Piano (Steinerová); Quintet for Winds, No. 2 (Prague Woodwind Quintet).

HANUŠ: *Musica Concertante*, Op. 67*; *Noturni di Praga*. Josef Chuchro, cello; Jan Panenka, piano; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Neumann, cond.* Prague Chamber Orchestra.* SERENUS SRS 12065, \$6.98.

These three discs, devoted to compositions by two prominent contemporary Czech composers, were recorded and originally released in Czechoslovakia. Jan Hanuš, born in 1915, and Jindřich Feld, born in 1925, are obviously composers of solid accomplishment who have thoroughly mastered their craft. Yet I find it difficult to believe that there will be much interest in their music in this country, except perhaps purely as a cultural phenomenon. Both

work in an eclectic manner, making use of various stylistic approaches that were accepted currency during the first half of this century. The influence of Bartók is especially strong, but there are also hints of Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Debussy, etc. Judging from these compositions, Feld and Hanuš favor large-scale works in multi-movement forms. Everything is stated in broad strokes, with large and straightforward gestures, and all of these pieces are composed in a kind of extended tonal style. But to my ears there is little evidence of a distinctive compositional personality.

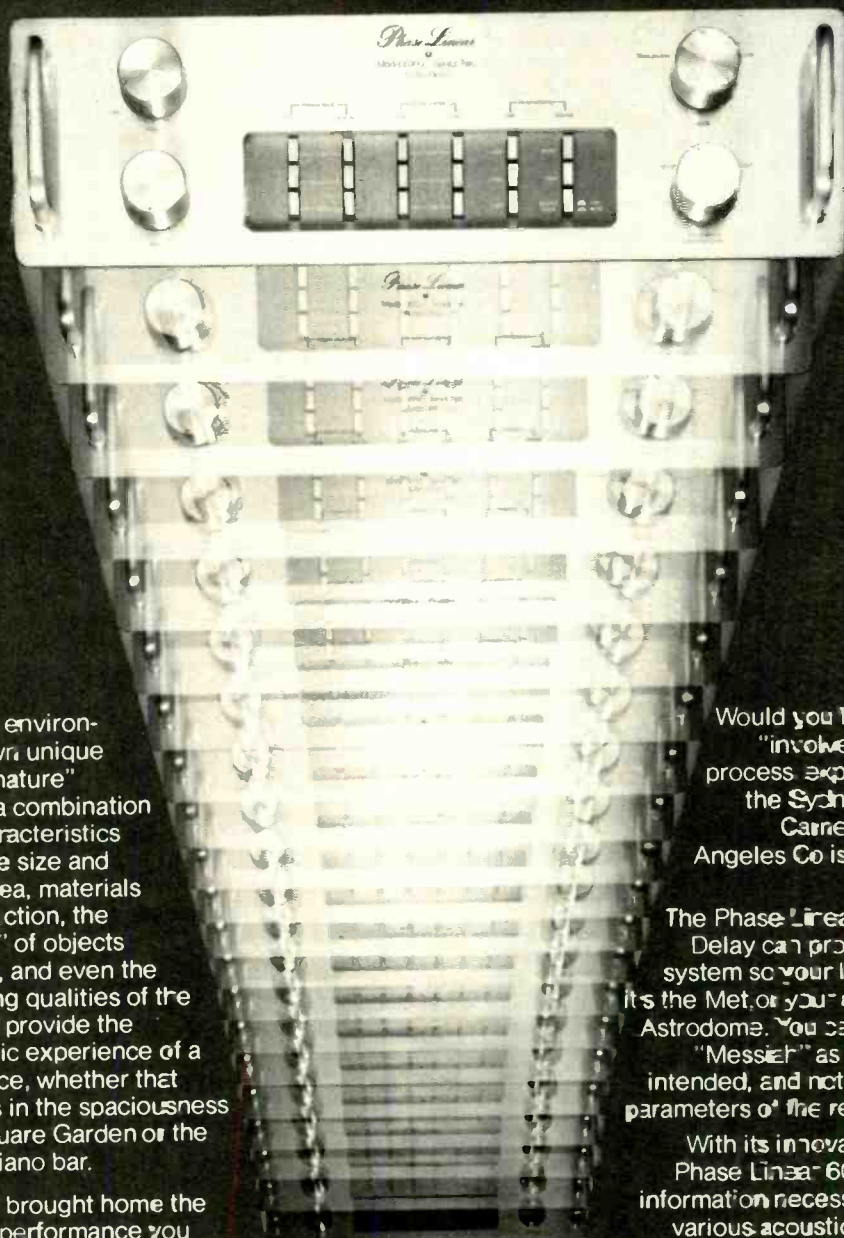
The performances, however, are quite good, and the recorded sound is fine. The liner notes, on the other hand, are inadvertently hilarious. I cannot resist ending by quoting the following comments made in reference to Feld's flute concerto (composed in 1954), which strike me as an unintended but nevertheless classic instance of the velvet-gloved knockdown: "We have included only the first and third movements because 1.) the total length of the work would demand more record space than Serenus can provide; 2.) the movement is so reminiscent of the symphony of another great earlier composer that, as capably as it is written, it might be subject to critical misinterpretation, something we believe Feld does not deserve; and 3.) the work has enough slow, moving [sic] parts in the two present movements that a slow movement might actually seem redundant; plus the fact that parts of the second movement are repeated in the third." R.P.M.

GERSHWIN: Overtures (arr. Rose). Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Michael Tilson Thomas, cond. [Steven Epstein, prod.] COLUMBIA M 34542, \$7.98. Tape: MT 34542, \$7.98.

Oh, Kay! Funny Face: Girl Crazy; Strike Up the Band (second version, 1930); Of Thee I Sing; Let 'Em Eat Cake.

The overtures to Gershwin's Broadway

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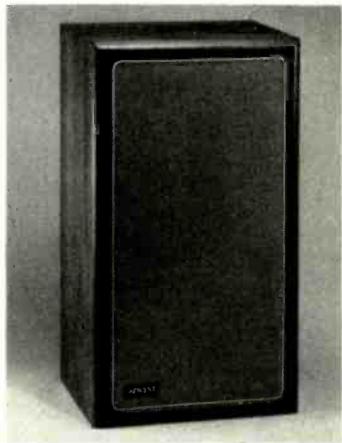
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shows are essentially medleys of the hit tunes, strung together with suitable expectation-rousing fanfares, standard modulations, and sequences derived from the tunes. They were originally scored (not by Gershwin himself, but by a professional Broadway arranger) for a pit orchestra of twenty-some players; in at least one case (*Let 'Em Eat Cake*), not even that orchestration survives. What Don Rose has done is to make full-symphony-orchestra versions of six of these overtures, and I'm sure they will be welcome additions to the limited repertoire available for those all-Gershwin concerts that crop up every summer.

Inevitably, the sound is lush, the articulation less snappy than the originals must have been, but Rose has managed to retain the theatrical flavor within an orchestral layout similar to that of Gershwin's concert works. Barring a few slight weaknesses in the solo department, the Buffalo Philharmonic brings them off with plenty of panache. The tunes hardly need recommendation at this date, but there are a few less familiar ones, and the only criticism I might have of the record is that the liner doesn't identify the songs used in each overture.

Even though there are quite a few "original-cast" recordings from these shows, they don't yield very conclusive evidence about tempos. Consider "Do-Do-Do": It was recorded by Arden and Ohman, the two-piano team who played in the pit for *Oh, Kay!*, at a very up tempo of quarter note equals 264. I haven't heard Gertrude Lawrence's 1926 American recording of the song, but when in London for the production there the following year, she and Harold French recorded it at about 144. In 1936, as part of a medley of her song hits, she took it at a rather faster 192. Finally, in the 1940s, she did one chorus at 144, a repeat at 192! And Gershwin's own piano solo version goes at a steady 192. As the man says, you pay your money and you take your choice. (Actually, the Arden and Ohman disc was probably intended for dancing rather than as a documentary, so that extreme possibility can be removed from consideration; there is no vocal on that record, either.) Michael Tilson Thomas takes it around 192, which seems perfectly reasonable in this context, and I have no quarrels with the choices that he (no doubt in consultation with Rose) has made throughout the record.

The recorded sound is big and solid. The liner notes are by Kay Swift, Gershwin's closest musical associate (it is safe to surmise that she, too, was consulted about the style of both orchestrations and performances). D.H.

GRANADOS: *Tonadillas al estilo antiguo*—See Falla: *Seven Popular Spanish Songs*.

HANUS: *Musica Concertante; Notturmi di Praga*—See Feld: *Various Works*.

HUMMEL: *Sonatas for Piano: in F sharp minor, Op. 81; in D, Op. 106*. Malcolm Binns, pianoforte. [Raymond Ware and Peter Wadland, prod.] OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 530, \$7.98.

Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778–1837) was one of the most highly regarded musicians in an age that counted among its notables Beethoven, Schubert, and Weber. As a composer he was rated as their equal, and as a pianist he had scarcely a competitor. Mozart spotted the young man's talent and not only accepted him as a pupil, but took him into his own household for two years. Hummel received further training from such outstanding teachers as Clementi, Albrechtsberger, and Salieri. Chopin and Schumann admired him, and Haydn recommended him as his successor at Esterházy.

Hummel was indeed an accomplished composer: secure in form, facile in counterpoint, and idiomatic, notably in his pianistic writing. He was also prolific, composing in many genres. I have known a couple of his nice piano concertos, as well as a fine Mass, and his engaging septet was a staple of chamber music concerts in which I participated in my youth. Yet I must confess that I had difficulty keeping an attentive mind on my work on this review, though the day before I reviewed a pile of Haydn sonatas without losing track for a moment.

This music is well made, broad beamed, but of shallow draft; it is full of Chopinesque pianistic fireworks, but you can touch the fire without getting burned. The garlands of highly ornamented passage-work influenced Chopin, but there is a certain indolence in this gracefulness that one never encounters in Chopin; and while Hummel was obviously capable of inventing some good melodies, the virtuoso with his fretwork usually gains the upper hand. Hummel was devoted to Mozart, and much of his pianism palpably goes back to the years spent in the master's proximity, but while he spoke Mozart's language, he was not touched by his great mentor's spirit. It is good to have this recording as a historical document showing how the bridge was built from Mozart to Chopin, but I am afraid that, my duty done, I won't again place this disc on the record player just for the pleasure of it.

It is a typical sign of our time that the notes spend as much space on the description and pedigree of the two vintage pianos used for the performance as they do on the music itself. The first one of these, hailing from 1825, is not bad in the bass and the middle range, but the seedy-sweet treble makes the melodies thin and brittle. The second piano (1830) is much better equalized, which raises a question: Why not use a good Steinway or Bösendorfer? Malcolm Binns is not inhibited by the ancient instruments; his performance is excellent and elegant.

Not so the notes. If the Florilegium series of Oiseau-Lyre wants to present such historical recordings, it should engage persons as competent in history, geography, and languages as the soloist is in his field. The present annotator speaks of "strict fugal expositions," not realizing that this is really a pejorative statement; a strict fugue is an unimaginative one—students write them for exercise. Hummel was born in Pozsony, the Roman Posenium; it is only the Germans who call it Pressburg (and now the

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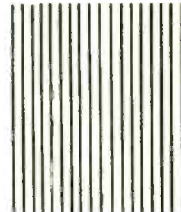
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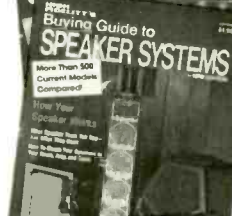
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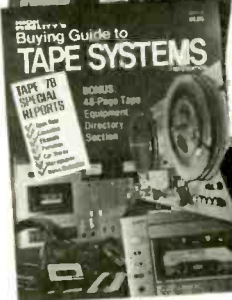
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Czechs have renamed it Bratislava). Zseliz is not "in Austria," but in the Hungarian county Bars where one of the Esterházy's had his domain. And a Kappelmeister is one who makes caps and capes; the conductor sports only one *p* (and two *ls*). P.H.L.

LORCA: Old Spanish Songs—See Falla Seven Popular Spanish Songs.

MOZART: Mass in C, K. 317 (*Coronation*); *Vesperae solennes de confessore*, in C, K. 339. Edda Moser, soprano; Julia Hamari, mezzo; Nicolai Gedda, tenor; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Bavarian Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Eugen Jochum, cond. [Friedrich Welz and John Willan, prod.] ANGEL S 37283, \$7.98 (SO-encoded disc).

On paper this looks like a sure thing, what with a stellar cast and a distinguished conductor, but it turns out to be a loser. First of all, the sound is bad: The chorus seems to be singing in the next studio with the door left open, everything except the *tutti* is distant and gray, and there is a dull echo. Edda Moser wobbles all over the place. Julia Hamari's sturdy voice comes across, but it also dominates the unbalanced ensembles. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau hasn't enough voice in the bass region to support the solo quartet. And the tenor—why, it just dawns on me that I hadn't even noticed Nicolai Gedda!

Eugen Jochum, known as an able interpreter of this style, is rigidly metronomical, the dynamics have few shades (the pianos sound as if encountered through the wrong end of a pair of musical binoculars), and the tempos are uniform. The performances in Colin Davis' set of Mozart sacred works (Philips 6707 016, four discs—also available singly) may not be ideal, but they are certainly preferable. P.H.L.

MOZART: Sonatas for Piano and Violin, Vol. 3. Szymon Goldberg, violin; Radu Lupu, piano. [Christopher Raeburn, prod.] LONDON CSA 2245, \$15.96 (two discs).
Sonatas: in F, K. 377; in G, K. 379; in A, K. 526; in F, K. 547.

Vol. 3 of the Goldberg/Lupu traversal of the mature Mozart sonatas for piano and violin bears out the comments I made in reviewing Vols. 1 and 2 (CSA 2243 and 2244) in June 1977. Comparison with the Philips performances by Henryk Szeryng and Ingrid Haebler, discussed at some length in that review, reveals a simple enough fact of life: that even though Mozart designated the piano first on the title page, a violinist of marked presence can hold his own with the most assertive of pianists.

Szeryng does so, for he is a bold and projecting kind of performer. Goldberg is lower-key and is, to boot, paired with a pianist who approaches the music with a breadth of line and a joyous sense of song. These performances are, therefore, weighted toward the piano, and Lupu is the dominating personality. This is appropriate in some instances—in K. 547, which Mozart labeled "Clavier Sonata for Beginners with

a Violin," or in K. 379, in which the piano is allotted all the dramatic utterances, in addition to cascades of scales in the Allegro that overshadow whatever the violin might have to say.

K. 377, positively boiling with energy in its opening movement, brings the two instruments more equally into play, and K. 526—one of the three "big" sonatas and one often performed in recitals, with good reason—marks a culmination in Mozart's handling of the medium. The elegance and spirit of the *Molto allegro*, followed by the wondrous travels of the middle movement and the exhilarating surge of the *presto finale*, leave both listener and performers with nothing more to desire. Goldberg and Lupu rise to the occasion and play it with abandon and fire.

When all is said and done, however, the collector will probably want to decide between the Goldberg/Lupu partnership and the Szeryng/Haebler. (Of the six discs recorded by the latter, only three are listed in the current domestic catalog, with seven of the sonatas overlapping those on London.) My own vote goes to Szeryng, who invests every phrase, even "insignificant" ones, with a shape and meaning that surpass the more earthbound statements of the competition. S.F.

PARRY, STANFORD: Part Songs. Richard Hickox Singers, Richard Hickox, cond. [Martin Palmer, David Slaymaker, and Robert Walker, prod.] PRELUDE PRS 2506, \$7.98 (distributed by Qualiton Records).

Choirmasters in Episcopal churches will recognize them as composers of anthems and canticle settings, but to most other Americans the names of C. Hubert H. Parry (1848-1918) and Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) are hardly household words. In late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century England, though, the two men were respected composers and made particularly important contributions as teachers—Parry at Oxford, Stanford at Cambridge, and both at London's Royal College of Music. Among their pupils were such men as Vaughan Williams, Bridge, Bliss, and Howells, and it is virtually impossible to imagine the great British musical renaissance of the twentieth century without their profound influence. Although their personalities and teaching methods were quite different, they were both enormously influential in raising English musical standards, especially in the field of church music.

While Stanford and Parry were prolific composers in a variety of forms (among other works, Parry produced five symphonies and Stanford seven), it was for their choral music that they were most widely known even in their own lifetimes. Choral societies enjoyed a tremendous vogue in England from the end of the nineteenth century, and part songs were much in demand; many composers duly obliged, but few maintained such high standards as Parry and Stanford.

Superb musical craftsmen that they were, they had a firm understanding of the technicalities of writing choral music—they

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Renata Scotto, Carlo Bergonzi, and Gwendolyn Killebrew—bringing Edgar back to life

knew how to make it at once interesting and marvelously singable—and they were unusually sensitive in “translating” textual ideas into music, so their settings remain quite charming even today. While the predominant stylistic influence on their music probably derived from Brahms, both men projected an “Englishness”—as distinctive as it is difficult to define—quite unlike anything to be found in Continental music of the time. Being more strongly melodic, Parry’s part songs are probably more immediately accessible, but the subtleties of harmony and voice spacing in Stanford’s settings repay close attention.

The present recording offers quite a pleasing selection, and the Richard Hickox Singers (four sopranos, three altos, two tenors, and three basses) give thoroughly satisfying performances. Even allowing for the singers’ generally superb diction, the lack of texts is regrettable. The recording, made in a warmly resonant church, is most sympathetic, although the surfaces of the review copy were a bit noisy. S.C.

PROKOFIEV: Symphony No. 5, in B flat, Op. 100. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. [Jay David Saks, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-1869, \$7.98. Tape: ARK 1-1869, \$7.98.

Comparison: Ormandy/Philadelphia Odys. Y 30490

Ormandy’s Columbia Prokofiev Fifth was made at the dawn of the stereo era and sounds it, with its rather metallic brilliance and “hole-in-the-middle” separation. The performance, moreover, was dutiful but stodgy. The principal improvement in the remake is sonic: Without sacrificing brilliance, RCA has provided an outstanding top-to-bottom fullness and clarity.

Ormandy still reads the outer movements with unbending complacency: everything is shipshape and the execution gleams, but there is little exuberance or biting wit. His new treatment of the Adagio,

however, is one of the best on records—weighty and emphatic, yet thoughtfully introspective. The previously uneventful scherzo is now hoked up by the fairly conventional, though I believe incorrect, slow-down and stretto beginning at No. 48.

Overall a solid recording, but not one to displace my previous favorites, those of Ansermet (London CS 6406), Bernstein (Columbia MS 7005), and Previn (Angel S 37100). I am curious, though, about Walter Weller’s Decca/London recording, as yet unreleased domestically. A.C.

Puccini: Edgar.

Fidelia Renata Scotto (s)
Tigrana Gwendolyn Killebrew (ms)
Edgar Carlo Bergonzi (t)
Frank Vicente Sardinero (b)
Gualtiero Mark Munkittrick (bs)

New York City Opera Children’s Chorus, Schola Cantorum of New York, Opera Orchestra of New York, Eve Queler, cond. [Steven Epstein and Paul Myers, prod.] COLUMBIA M2 34584, \$15.98 (two SQ-encoded discs, automatic sequence) [recorded in concert, April 13, 1977].

This is a valuable addition to the catalog. I succumbed to *Edgar* when I first heard it in the theater ten years ago: my admiration remained firm through a BBC performance with Pauline Tinsley in 1972, and grew at Eve Queler’s Carnegie Hall performance in April last year—the source of this recording. In an age increasingly disenchanted with *verismo*, *Edgar* may have a future. Previously, apart from isolated arias, there was nothing on record except Act II, fourth side in the RCA album of *Le Villi* (LSC 7096, February 1973). Act II, which is essentially a tenor aria followed by a love duet, by no means conveys the full flavor of this extraordinary score.

It was Puccini’s second opera, first performed at La Scala on Easter Day 1889, and is a work of a different kind from that of his popular successes—more ambitious and, by intention at least, more elevated. It has its

roots in the Milanese intellectual ferment of the 1870s and 1880s when—to Verdi’s disgust—young composers and librettists were looking northward for ideas that might raise Italian opera to loftier heights. Ferdinando Fontana, Puccini’s librettist, based his work rather freely on a Musset play, *La Coupe et les Lèvres* (or *Many a Slip ‘twixt the Cup and the Lip*), and he made an odd play odder still by cutting out all the reflective passages and reshaping it as an abrupt, violent, existentialist drama.

In Act I, Edgar abandons the faithful Fidelia and, having set fire to his house, goes off with the tigerish Tigrana. In Act II, on the terrace of a palace “from which come the echoes of a nearly finished orgy,” Edgar recalls “the angel who loved me” and in a duet repels Tigrana’s offer of “new raptures of lust.” Soldiers come marching by, led by Frank, a frank fellow from Edgar’s village, and Edgar—a Rinaldo deserting Armida—goes off with them. Act III is Edgar’s funeral: he is mourned as a national hero by Fidelia and the chorus. (At Puccini’s own funeral, Toscanini conducted this Requiem music, with Hina Spani as soloist.) A mysterious monk blackguards the departed; Tigrana seconds him; Fidelia protests. The monk reveals himself as Edgar, and is about to go off with Fidelia when Tigrana “with feline motions” approaches the girl and stabs her.

Nothing is explained. Actions occur unmotivated. The libretto is prefaced by a highfalutin poem: “Edgar are we all, for Fate leads everyone to the crossroads—shadow and light, love and death . . . Woe, if, to the light of serene love, which can on mighty pinions raise souls aloft, we prefer the obscene flame that kindles the senses,” etc. *Carmen* has been crossed with *Tannhäuser* to produce a curiously modern, Artaud-like drama, one often declared absurd and yet possessing—if one accepts it on its own terms, as an ambitious product of fevered symbolist straining—undoubted vigor. Edgar, Fidelia, and Tigrana are poster-colored type-figures enacting a

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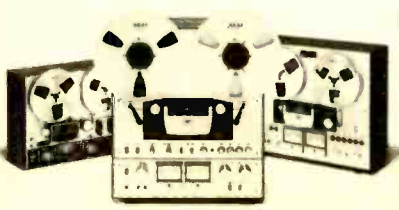
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drama of small credibility but, on a non-realistic plane, of high poetic power.

The first *Fidelia* was *Aurelia Cataneo*, Italy's first *Isolde*. The first *Tigrana* was *Romilda Panataleoni*, an *Aida*, a *Gioconda*, and the first *Desdemona*. In revivals, *Tamagno* and *Zenatello* undertook the title role. That shows the sort of scale Puccini had in mind, and it is easy to understand why he was reluctant to abandon the work and, in repeated revisions, sought to give it currency. Queler uses the third and briefest version of the score, prepared in 1905, after *Tosca* and *Butterfly*. Comparison with the earlier versions (1889 and 1892) shows how considerably Puccini reworked the opera in his maturity. It does not sound like apprentice work. There are influences from Verdi, Wagner, Ponchielli, Berlioz, and Meyerbeer; shadows are thrown forward to *Turandot*, to which *Edgar* is closer in tone than to the other Puccini operas.

The scoring is filled with interesting and characteristic ideas, and the vocal lines with memorable turns of phrase. Sometimes the music becomes inappropriately jaunty and pretty—when the chorus, in Act I, attacks *Tigrana* as "symbol of every kind of filthiness," or when *Edgar* and *Frank*, in Act III, tempt her with jewels to slander the departed. (The album should perhaps carry the warning "This Opera Is Insulting to Women"—but then what Puccini opera is not?) There is zest in the score. It is, obviously, a less successful piece than are *Bohème*, *Tosca*, and *Butterfly*, but it is fresh, vivid, and attractive. We meet not a finished master, certain of all his effects, but, as in *Manon Lescaut*, a daring enthusiast, prolific and ambitious.

In his successive revisions, Puccini reduced the role of *Tigrana*, leaving *Fidelia* as in effect the prima donna. *Renata Scotti* is in good voice; she sings with warmth and intensity and, except when the line goes loud and high, in pure, lovely tones. The mixing was evidently very close; one hears rather too much of her breathing. The interpretation is closely studied, in *Scotti's* familiar manner, sometimes to the point of self-consciousness, and the best-known aria, "*Nel villaggio d'Edgar son nata anch'io*," tends to lose rhythmic impetus. The *ralls*, and *rits*, and *tenutos* are all there in the score, but there is also an overriding instruction, *con molta semplicità*, that goes unobserved.

Gwendolyn Killebrew is appropriately fiery and voluptuous as *Tigrana*, though the focus of her voice is not always sharp. *Carlo Bergonzi* produces a splendid stream of effortless, beautiful tone and joins his notes in velvet phrases. *Vicente Sardinero* as *Frank* displays a fresh and well-founded baritone.

The recording is the best so far of the Queler/Carnegie Hall series (*Le Cid* and *Gemma di Vergy* preceded it), although again the sound is oddly unlike that I heard in the hall itself. Hall sound, Carnegie ambience, was, I suppose, eliminated because it would also bring audience noises. There is applause at the end, but otherwise one would hardly know it was a "live" performance. Orchestra and chorus are good, and so is the balance, except in "*Nel villaggio*," where the accompanying harp—admittedly

the marking is "ppp, il più piano possibile"—sounds faint and insubstantial. In another sense the performance is certainly "live"; it displays all Queler's flair and energy.

In the accompanying booklet, B. K. Scherer has translated Fontana's libretto into blank verse, rather successfully. The stage directions should have been given in full; and in Act I *Edgar* should appear not "brandishing a poker," but holding a firebrand, *un tizzone acceso*. The Italian text has been printed without respect for the original lineation: *Fidelia's* opening quatrain is divided into six lines and its rhyme scheme is obliterated.

In a copy of the score that Puccini gave to Sybil Seligman, he expanded the EDGAR on the title page into "E Dio ti GuARdi da quest'opera!" ("And God preserve you from this opera"). In Act III, where the hero throws back his cowl and cries "Edgar lives!" the composer added the comment "Untrue!" But "Edgar lives" in this Columbia recording. A.P.

R Puccini: *Il Tabarro*.

A Lover	Giorgetta	Margaret Mas (s)
La Frugola		Sylvia Bertona (s)
Luigi		Miriam Pirazzini (ms)
Tinca, A Lover		Giacinto Prandelli (t)
A Song Seller		Piero de Palma (t)
Michele		Renato Ercolani (t)
Talpa		Tito Gobbi (b)
		Pinlio Clabassi (bs)

Rome Opera Orchestra, Vincenzo Bellezza, cond. [from RCA VICTOR LM 2057, 1956].

R Puccini: *Suor Angelica*.

Suor Angelica	Victoria de los Angeles (s)
Suor Genovietta, First Alms Collector	Lidia Marimpietri (s)
Suor Dolcina	Anna Marcangeli (s)
Suor Osmilina, Second Alms Collector:	A Novice
	Santa Chissari (s)
First Lay Sister	Sylvia Bertona (s)
La Zia Principessa	Fedora Barbieri (ms)
Mother Superior, Mistress of Novices	Mina Doro (ms)
Sister Monitor	Corinna Voza (ms)
Nursing Sister	Teresa Cantarini (ms)
Second Lay Sister	Maria Huder (ms)

Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Tullio Serafin, cond. [from CAPITOL GAR 7115, 1958, and ANGEL 35748, 1961].

R Puccini: *Gianni Schicchi*.

Lauretta	Victoria de los Angeles (s)
Nella	Lidia Marimpietri (s)
La Cieca	Giuliana Raymond (s)
Gherardino	Claudio Cornoldi (boy s)
Zita	Anna Maria Canali (ms)
Rinuccio	Carlo del Monte (t)
Gherardo	Adeio Zagonara (t)
Guccio	Paolo Caroti (t)
Gianni Schicchi	Tito Gobbi (b)
Marco	Fernando Valentini (b)
Betto di Signa	Saturno Meletti (b)
Pinellino	Virgilio Stoco (b)
Simone	Paolo Montarsolo (bs)
Maestro Spinelloccio, Ser Amantio di Nicolao	Alfredo Mariotti (bs)

Rome Opera Orchestra, Gabriele Santini, cond. [from CAPITOL SGAR 7179, 1959, and ANGEL SX 35473, 1961].

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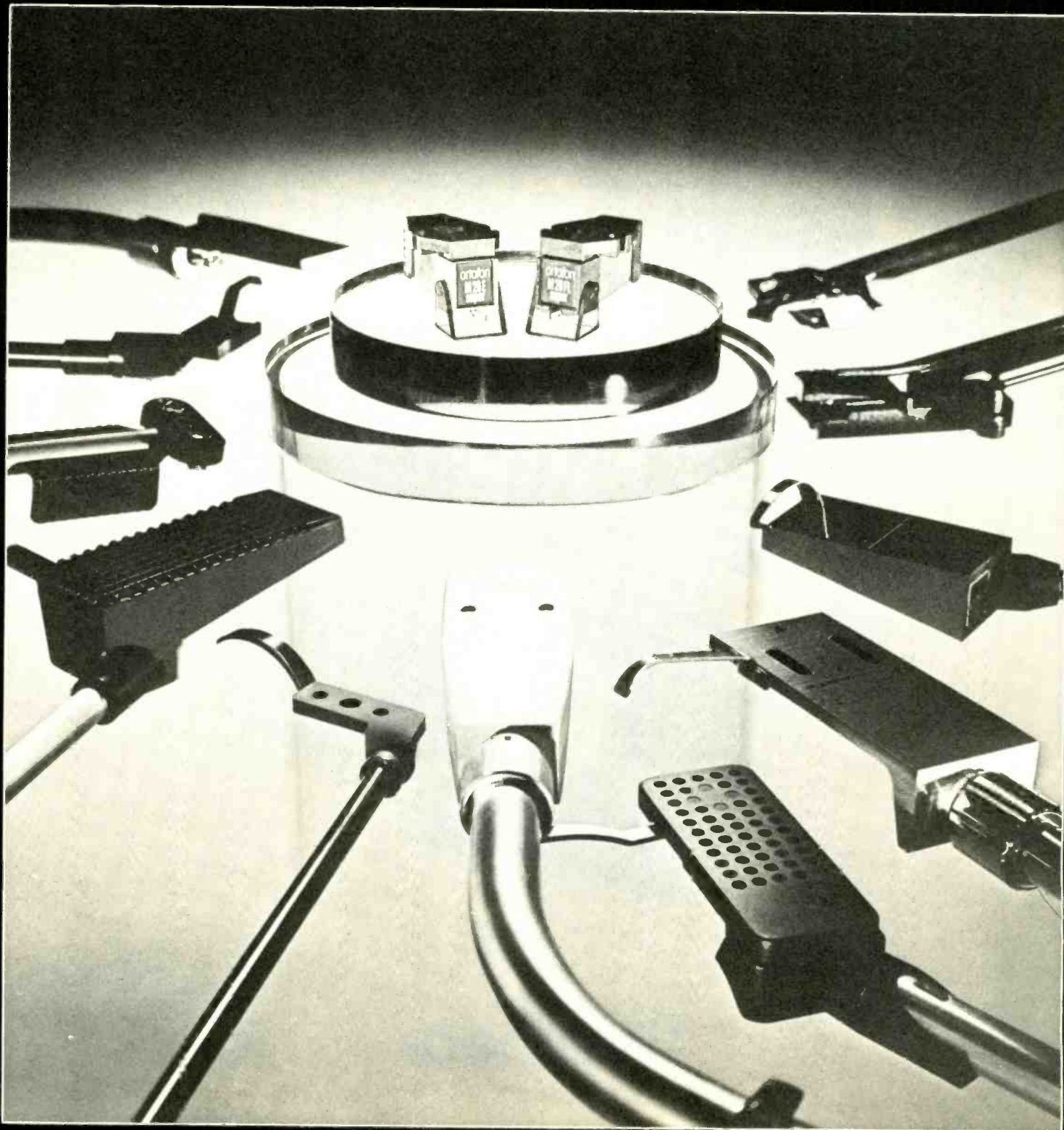
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sound but idiomatically sung—is counted), a fact that suggests a long overdue rise in the fortunes of these masterly works.

Angel's single-album packaging emphasizes the benefits to be derived from hearing all three operas together, each one gaining a great deal, it seems to me, from the contrast provided by the others. The Angel performances, however, suffer from inconsistent conducting: When, in *Suor Angelica*, Tullio Serafin takes over from the excellent Vincenzo Bellezza, who conducts *Tabarro*, there is a disconcerting loss of vitality and vividness. Not that Serafin is anything but a superb musician (his beautiful shaping of the score's final pages is proof enough of that), merely that on this occasion he meanders excessively. Nor is Gabriele Santini, who conducts Gianni Schicchi, as satisfying as Bellezza.

Apart from the fine work of Bellezza, the set is distinguished by splendid ensemble playing—all the small roles being characterized with impressive spiritedness—and by the brooding power of Tita Gobbi as the murderous husband in *Tabarro*. (His Schicchi, too, is an outstanding performance, though he sounds even more comically resourceful in the recent Columbia album, M 34534, December 1977.) Another notable feature of the set is Fedora Barbieri's convincingly icy Principessa in *Suor Angelica*.

Drawbacks include Margaret Mas (Giorgetta in *Tabarro*, temperamental enough but vocally weak in the lower and higher reaches of the music; Carlo del Monte (Ri-

nuccio in *Schicchi*), whose tenor I find too unsteady for comfort; and, above all, Victoria de los Angeles as Suor Angelica, not only "white" in sound, but emotionally shallow, especially when compared to Renata Scott's Columbia portrayal (M 34505, July 1977).

Angel's sonics are variable. *Tabarro* and *Suor Angelica*, originally mono recordings, have been rechanneled; the former sounds more congested than before. Gianni Schicchi, an authentic stereo recording, comes up fresh and full. The Italian texts are accompanied by "singing" translations that sacrifice accuracy to form. D.S.H.

RACHMANINOFF: Symphony No. 3, in A minor, Op. 44; *The Rock*, Op. 7. Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Edo de Waart, cond. PHILIPS 9500 302, \$8.98.

Comparisons—symphony:
Previn/London Sym. RCA Gold AGL 1-1527
Previn/London Sym. Ang. S37260
Sanderling/Leningrad Phil. In Ev. 3363/3

De Waart's reading of the episodic, intensely ambivalent Third Symphony is lithe and supple in outline, clean and well highlighted in its internal balances. No thick and oozing tonal bog here, and the only conspicuous rhetorical device is the ritard at the Dies Irae quote in the final coda, which I rather enjoyed. So sane is this interpretation that any impression of madness is from the music itself, one of Rachmaninoff's most personal and deeply troubled utterances.

De Waart does not take the first-movement repeat; those to whom this is essential can rest content with the Previn recordings—the earlier one (now at midprice on RCA Gold Seal) cheaper and a little more heated in spirit, the Angel remake lusher in sonority, with perkier woodwinds. All three of these are good recordings, and I'm not inclined to advocate one over the other. The interpretation that still electrifies and moves me most is the astonishingly imaginative (and letter-faithful) live performance by Sanderling and the Leningrad Philharmonic, available only in wretched rechanneled stereo in Everest's set of the Rachmaninoff symphonies.

The early fantasy *The Rock* (after Chekhov)—all nationalistic color and verdant fantasy—is an effective foil to the crushing melancholy and gallows humor of the Third Symphony. De Waart's reading is lean and retiring, somewhat like Previn's (the filler for his Gold Seal Third). For a more voluptuous and freely arching approach the choice is Svetlanov (Melodiya/Angel SR 40252), with an even rarer coupling, the tone poem *Prince Rostislav*.

These performances speak creditably for the Rotterdam Philharmonic's polished sound and well-disciplined response to its gifted conductor, and I like the middle-auditorium perspective of the sound. A.C.

RAMEAU: Suites for Harpsichord: in A minor, in E minor. Trevor Pinnock, harpsichord. [Simon Lawman, prod.] CRD 1010.

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Gilbert

in Arch. 2710 020

This disc is projected as the beginning of a complete recorded edition of Rameau's harpsichord works, in performances by the young Englishman Trevor Pinnock. This first issue, including the E minor Suite from the 1724 *Pièces de clavecin* and the A minor Suite from the *Nouvelles suites de pièces de clavecin* of 1728, shows Pinnock superbly qualified for such an undertaking; his technique is suitably brilliant, his sense of style is exemplary, and he responds to the music with obvious sympathy. He is particularly sensitive in shaping phrases and delineating musical structures—most pointedly in "Le Rappel des oiseaux"—and his occasional decorations (as in the Sarabande of the A minor Suite) are applied quite tastefully.

Pinnock plays a lovely harpsichord ("after Taskin") made by David Rubio, who seems to be the pre-eminent British builder these days. The instrument, which is pictured on the record jacket, is the epitome of visual elegance, and its sound is of comparable beauty. I was particularly impressed by the refinement of the four-foot register—often too aggressive on modern harpsichords—and by the wonderfully mellow sound of the *peau de buffle* stop discretely used in "La Fanfarinette." The recording, by the way, is thoroughly satisfying, and the surfaces are commendably silent.

For all the outstanding qualities of this album, there is formidable competition in Kenneth Gilbert's three-disc Rameau set for Archiv (reviewed in January). The differences are subtle indeed—amounting to tiny fractions of seconds in timing—but somehow Gilbert's playing seems to go just a bit farther in achieving absolute polish and naturalness. Fine as Pinnock's harpsichord is, too, the three historic instruments that Gilbert plays offer yet another dimension in authenticity. Neither Pinnock nor his instrument needs any apology, though, and CRD's individual-disc format will be an important attraction for some collectors. In addition, CRD offers some valuable notes on the individual pieces by Nicholas Anderson.

S.C.

B SAINT-SAËNS: *Orchestral Works.* Luxemburg Radio Orchestra, Louis de Froment, cond. Vox QSVBX 5144, \$11.98 (three QS-encoded discs, manual sequence).

Symphonies: No. 1, in E flat, Op. 2; No. 2, in A minor, Op. 55; No. 3, in C minor, Op. 78 (*Organ*) [from Turnabout QTV-S 34600, 1976]. Symphonic Poems: *Le Rouet d'Omphale*, Op. 31; *Phaeton*, Op. 39; *Danse macabre*, Op. 40; *La Jeunesse d'Hercule*, Op. 50. *March héroïque*, Op. 34.

Charles Camille Saint-Saëns is probably best known as a painter of musical pictures, such as the famous *Danse macabre*, one of his four symphonic poems, all of which are included in this Vox set. Although owing a great debt to Liszt, these works lack the latter's spectacular dramatic impact, offering instead subtle interplays of delicately orchestrated rhythmic and harmonic figures that frequently progress for long periods



Charles Camille Saint-Saëns
More than a painter of musical pictures

without any true theme. One also finds more than a token amount of contrapuntal textures, with fugatos popping up all over the place, even in the *Danse macabre*. All of these qualities perhaps best come together in Saint-Saëns's first work in this genre, *Le Rouet d'Omphale* (my personal favorite), which uses a musical pretext—the hypnotic movement of the spinning wheel—that inspired a number of other composers. The drama here lies beneath the surface and rises only occasionally in a murky theme in C sharp minor, introduced in the low strings.

But Saint-Saëns had his more "absolute" side as well. He tried his hand at the symphony no fewer than five times, although two of his symphonies—one composed before, the other after, the official First—were judged unworthy by the composer, whose will forbade their publication. This did not, however, prevent them from being recorded by the late Jean Martinon from hand-copied parts (Angel S 37089, August 1975). The other three symphonies are contained in this set, which was recorded in 1974.

The First (1853) pays its respects to Mendelssohn and Schumann before making a deep obeisance to the Beethoven *Eroica* in the finale, and I'm not sure the work deserves all that much attention. But the Second (1859) is an exciting symphony whose

first and third movements are as vigorous and dynamic as anything the composer ever wrote, with the transparent and charming second movement (strongly recalling the second movement of his First Cello Concerto) providing a brief break in the tension. Only the Schubertian fourth movement seems out of keeping with the rest of the work.

In the Second Symphony, as in the symphonic poems, Saint-Saëns often works for many pages without a true theme. The introduction to the opening movement, for instance, is built around a rather audacious broken chord in sequential thirds that often produce some startling harmonic clashes. This figure is then ingeniously transformed into the movement's first theme, initially presented as a fugato. In style, this symphony remains a gap-bridger between the classical and Romantic periods. The famous Third (1866), with its limpid themes, final fireworks, and more obvious dramatic impact, represents the composer's principal contribution to the Romantic symphony.

It is nice to have all these works collected in a single, inexpensive set, which also includes the often Lisztian *Marche héroïque* (1871). But it is too bad that Vox could not have used one of its better orchestras, such as the Minnesota Orchestra, for the endeavor. Although often playing with a good deal of vigor and feeling, the Luxemburg Radio Orchestra has too much trouble staying together and making accurate entrances (and exits) to be completely convincing in these showpieces. Certainly, the recording of the First and Second Symphonies by Martinon and the Orchestre National (Angel S 36995, July 1974) is to be preferred to Froment's, not only for the better orchestral playing (and the bigger ensemble sound), but also for Martinon's stunning interpretations.

Froment handles all the works here quite adequately, but he is scuttled by his forces. The Third Symphony fares especially poorly. An organ sounding like little more than a harmonium makes the crashing entrance to the finale sound ludicrous, while the pianist in the scherzo movement never does quite manage to get the fast scales put together properly. The recorded sound, furthermore, suffers from bad balance, with the strings tending to dominate everything. Once again, the Third Symphony suffers most, with shrill, depthless sound marring most of the bigger moments. All in all, an attractive set because of its repertoire but certainly less than a satisfactory one in the realization.

R.S.B.

SAINTE-COLOMBE: *Concerts for Two Viols.* Wieland Kuijken and Jordi Savall, viole da gamba. TELEFUNKEN 6.42123, \$7.98.

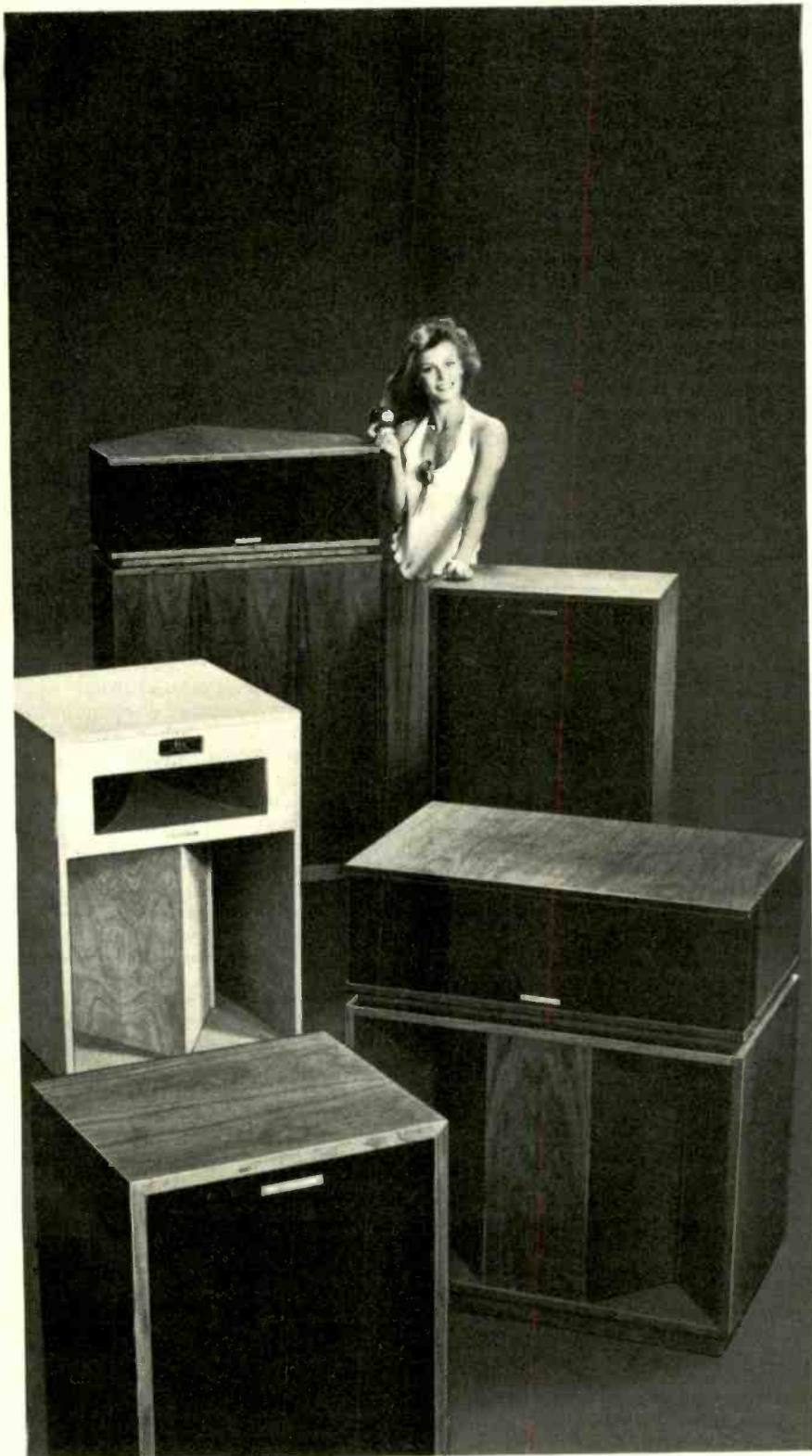
Concerts: No. 27, *Bourrasque*; No. 41, *Le Retour*; No. 44, *Tombeau les regrets*; No. 48, *Le Raporté*; No. 54, *La Dubois*.

Dear Editor:

Sorry, but I just can't review this disc—the consequence of a hitherto unsuspected personal aural allergy.

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was a once-noted seventeenth-century Parisian gamba virtuoso and teacher of the greatest of all gamba players/composers Marin Marais. He wrote no fewer than sixty-seven two-gamba concerts, or miniature suites, each with a programmatic subtitle, of which five are played here.

And I started out listening okay, noting that the little pieces seemed well varied and the players stylistically authoritative, and that the vivid recording put the gruffly sonorous, doggedly digging-in gambas right in the room with me. But that turned out to be the trouble: After a minute or two the aural strain became more than even so catholic a sound-fancier as I am could stand. I stuck it out to the end of the program of more than fifty-two minutes, but I simply couldn't force my mind to concentrate on the music itself.

It was only later that, frustrated and exhausted, I began to realize the reason for so unprofessional and personally uncharacteristic a reaction. Either I have some Choctaw Indian blood in my veins, or I suffer empathically from a close variant of that tribe's peculiar sonic allergy. The syndrome is described in Vance Randolph's *Who Blowed Up the Church House? and Other Ozark Folk Tales*:

A fiddle-tune sets an Indian's teeth on edge just like these here steam whistles will run a dog crazy. Them Choctaws set around all night sometimes a-thumping on drums, and they like lute music when the moon is right for it, but they can't stand no goddam squeaky fiddling!

Yours apologetically,
R.D.D.

SCHUBERT: Vocal Works—See Beethoven: Vocal Works.

STANFORD: Part Songs—See Parry: Part Songs.

STRAVINSKY: L'Histoire du soldat (in English).

Narrator	Glenda Jackson
The Soldier	Rudolf Nureyev
The Devil	Micheal MacLiammóir

Instrumental ensemble, Gennady Zakowitsch, cond. [Alan Sievewright, prod.]
ARGO ZNF 15, \$7.98. Tape: ♪ KZNC 15, \$7.95.

Comparisons—in English:
Glegud, BSO Chamber Players DG 2530 609
M. Milhaud, Stokowski Van. VSD 71166

Comparisons—in French:
M. Milhaud, Stokowski Van. Card. VCS 10121
Cocteau, Markevitch Phl. (see text)
Comparison—Suite only:
Stravinsky Col. MS 6272 or 7093

When reduced, as it inevitably is on records, to the status of a radio play with incidental music, *The Soldier's Tale* is certainly diminished. The words must bear a greater burden than their homely charm easily supports without the visual counterpoint of mime and dance. Translation adds further distancing, for the current English versions—the familiar Flanders/Black text used in earlier recordings and the new one by Nigel Lewis that Argo introduces—belong to a decidedly British tradition, more prim and proper than one imagines Ramuz

and Stravinsky to have intended.

In this context, one may perhaps count it a virtue of Rudolf Nureyev's performance of the Soldier that he doesn't sound at all British—his only real virtue. I'm afraid, for his resources of timing, pacing, tonal variety, and accenting are very limited. This might matter less if the original distribution of lines were retained, but here many of the lines that Ramuz assigned to the Narrator speaking on behalf of the Soldier are given over to Nureyev. Since the DG recording sticks to the original, Nureyev faces comparison not only with DG's Soldier, Tom Courtenay, but with one of the most resourceful and virtuosic speakers in the English theater, Sir John Gielgud, who has a fine old time with the narration.

Glenda Jackson, rather sterner in tone, also has some fun with the narration, mimicking Nureyev's accented English; the general effect of her skillful performance, and of Micheal MacLiammóir's subdued one as the Devil, is to underline their colleague's flatness. I can't detect great virtues in the new translation, either—it's marginally freer than the Flanders/Black and rather more pretentious, frequently abandoning the rhymed style of the original. If your primary interest is in a lively presentation of the spoken text in English, then DG will probably be your best bet: the Gallic accents of the Vanguard team (reading Flanders/Black) have a certain charm, but only Mme. Milhaud is really comfortable with the English language, and they are all better in the matching French recording (recently reissued in Vanguard's Cardinal series). The most flavorsome French version, however, is still the Cocteau/Ustinov/Markévitch, which you may be able to find in import shops (Philips 6580 136 is its English number, 6500 321 the French).

musical values stack up rather differently. Stokowski's performance is deficient in snap and humor, and the same may be said of the extremely accurate work of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players on DG. Argo's team (which includes Erich Gruenberg on violin and Gervase de Peyer on clarinet) offers much more bounce, though also some sloppy ensemble. And Markevitch's virtuoso team could be more relaxed. For the best performance of the music, you had better go to Stravinsky's Columbia recording of the suite. D.H.

Recitals and Miscellany

MAURICE ANDRÉ: Trumpet Concertos. Maurice André, trumpet; English Chamber Orchestra, Charles Mackerras, cond. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 792, \$8.98. Tape: ♪ 3300 792, \$8.98

STÖLZEL: Concerto for Trumpet and Strings (arr. Thilde).
TELEMANN: Sonata for Trumpet, Strings, and Continuo, in D.
TORELLI: Concerto for Trumpet and Strings, in D.
VALDI: Concerto for Two Trumpets, Strings, and Con-

tinuo, in C, P. 75. **VIVIANI:** Sonata for Trumpet and Organ, No. 1, in C (with Hedwig Bilgram, organ).

André's prodigious flood of recordings, primarily from Erato of France, has recently come most often from RCA and Musical Heritage Society, for one or both of which all five of the present works have previously appeared in versions with various other collaborating ensembles. But occasionally the French master shifts briefly to other labels—here to DG for the first time since his transcribed Handel/Telemann concerto program with Richter in 1967.

Here, however, he plays legitimate trumpet originals: familiar Torelli and Vivaldi concertos (the latter with his own dubbed doubling of the second trumpet part); the less well-known but occasionally recorded Viviani First Trumpet/Organ Sonata; the now jolly, now sighing Stölzel concerto revised and orchestrated by Jean Thilde; and the Telemann D major Sonata for strings with trumpet obbligato, which was discovered in relatively recent years. A fine, strongly Vivaldi-influenced work, the Telemann probably is played here in the same reconstruction credited to Oubradous in André's earlier version (in MHS 1189 and RCA CRL 2-7002).

As might be expected, Mackerras and the English Chamber Orchestra provide more distinctive support than André has always enjoyed in the past; for that matter, he has seldom been as brilliantly and cleanly recorded as he is here. His pre-eminence as a supremely bravura virtuoso is convincingly demonstrated anew; and only a purist can faintly protest that, flawless as the executive technology may be, neither André nor Mackerras can be credited with any authentically baroque stylistic insights. In the Vivaldi C major Two-Trumpet Concerto I'm reminded once again that, whenever done, via dubbing, by the same player, not all the precision in the world (and André's is breathtaking) can compensate for the loss of true differentiation, rather than homogeneity, of tone coloring and phrasing that is surely what the composer had in mind. R.D.D.

EUGEN DOMBOIS: Baroque Lute, Vol. 2. Eugen Dombois, lute. ABC CLASSICS/SEON AB 67019, \$7.98.

BACH: Suite in G minor, S. 995. **CONRADI:** Suite in C. **WEISS:** Tombeau sur la mort de M. le Comte de Logy.

No one who was as impressed as I was by the exceptionally virile strength of Dombois's lute playing in the initial ABC Classics/Seon releases (March 1977) will need to be urged to hear his second program in what I trust will be an extended series. Here again the relatively familiar selections are by Bach and Sylvius Leopold Weiss: the former's G minor reworking of his C minor Cello Suite, S. 1011; the latter's somberly eloquent elegy for a once-noted Czech lutenist who died in 1721. This time the novelty is a rhapsodically improvisatory suite by a Johann Gottfried Conradi, who is remembered only for a collection of "New Lute Pieces" published at Frankfurt an der Oder in 1724.

As before, Dombois's arrestingly big-toned instrument is a replica, by Nico van der Waals, of one dating from around 1700.

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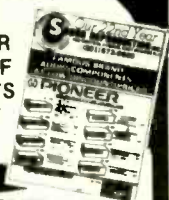
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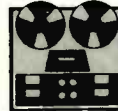
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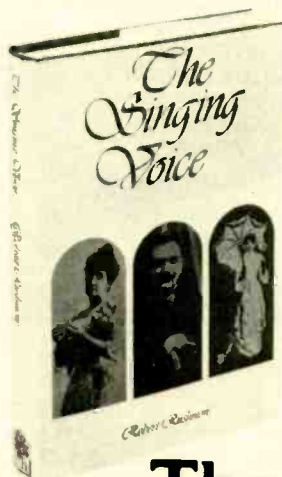
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And again it is recorded with such power and vivid presence that considerable volume reduction is advisable. There are admirably informative notes on both the music and the nature of the baroque lute itself.

R.D.D.

B **EMPIRE BRASS QUINTET:** Baroque Brass. Empire Brass Quintet and Friends. [John Newton, prod.] SINE QUA NON/SUPERBA SA 2014, \$4.98.

I'm perhaps unfairly reminded here of the term idiot savant, which, if I understand it right, denotes someone who combines phenomenal mathematical, musical, or other genius with an otherwise distressingly low or near-lacking mentality. For we have on the one hand a quintet of exceptionally gifted musical executants (three of whom are Boston Symphony members) in technologically superb recordings of short works by some of the greatest composers of the Renaissance and baroque eras. On the other hand, these technically impeccable performances are stylistically downright idiotic.

Not so many years ago, only fanatical purists were disturbed by the allotment to modern valved trumpets of parts intended for cornetti—and outraged by giving parts written for serpents or other low-register period instruments to a tuba or euphonium, both of which were unheard of, indeed undreamed of, before the nineteenth century. But nowadays surely only musicologically unenlightened players and listeners can tolerate such barbaric anachronisms.

For the factual record, the known composers represented here are Albinoni, Bach, Byrd, Josquin Desprez, Gabrieli, Handel, Holborne, Palestrina, Pezel, Purcell, Scheidt, and Schein—all with more-or-less familiar little pieces. The novelties are canzonas by Giovanni Priuli (an Italian who died c. 1629) and Paul Puerli (whom I can't find in any handy reference book). Ironically, John Daverio's jacket notes make some obeisance to scholarship, yet include few or no detailed source identifications and no clues at all to the composers' original scoring specifications.

R.D.D.

DIETRICH FISCHER-DIESKAU: French Vocal Works. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Wolfgang Sawallisch, piano, soloists from the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. HNH RECORDS 4045, \$7.98.

FAURÉ: La bonne chanson, Op. 61 (version for voice, piano, and string quartet). **RAVEL:** Chansons madécasses. **POULENC:** Le Bal masqué.

The obvious remark about Fischer-Dieskau's excursions into the French literature is doubtless Doctor Johnson's about the dog walking on its hind legs: "It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all." His stylistic distance from native practitioners of this music can most easily be measured in the exposed quasi-parlando writing of Ravel's *Chansons madécasses*, where he invests the line with a degree of portamento, a repertory of swells, accents, and other emphases that quite unsettle what clearly should be a very elegantly vocalized form of patter: Ravel's naturalistic lines are unconsciously in-

vested with a great deal of emotional freight. In most respects, this new version is quite similar to Dieskau's earlier one for DG, now out of print, though the high Gs and A flats are now even more precarious.

Fauré's *La bonne chanson* is also a remake, though with a difference. The older Electrola recording, with Gerald Moore, was a subdued, gentle performance, rather in imitation of the traditional French style of singing this music. Now we have the alternate scoring for piano and string quartet (recorded once before, by Martial Singher and a Marlboro group, on Columbia MS 6244, deleted) and, perhaps in keeping with the larger instrumental scale, it's a larger performance, with more rhythmic impetus and, unfortunately, a good deal more vocal roughness. Though the accompaniment, which affords interesting new motivic and linear emphases, is well played by Sawallisch and the Berlin strings, the singing simply isn't stylish and falls unpleasantly on the ear.

The amiable grotesqueries of the Poulenç-Max Jacob cantata suffer not only from the singer's tone-heavy articulation, but also from the excessively sober rhythmic address of the instrumentalists: the effect is often closer to Kurt Weill than to the French music-hall idiom that inspired Poulenç. (A much better choice is Souzay's version, on EMI/Pathé 2C 065 12158, with a selection of Poulenç songs.)

Good, clear recording, pressed on perfect surfaces—the best I've encountered from an American source in some time. Texts (not free of misprints) and translations are included.

D.H.

H **GOLDEN AGE OF VIENNESE OPERETTA.**

B Helge Roswaenge and Marcel Wittrisch, tenors; Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, Victor Reinshagen, cond. LONDON TREASURY R 23253, \$3.98 (mono) [from DECCA/LONDON originals, recorded in the late 1940s].

Roswaenge; LEHÁR: Die lustige Witwe: Sieh' dort im kleinen Pavillon. Der Graf von Luxemburg: Bist du's, lachendes Glück (with Lisa della Casa, soprano). Schön ist die Welt: Liebste, glaub' an mich. Gluditte: Du bist meine Sonne; Freunde, das Leben ist lebenswert. **J. STRAUSS:** Der Zigeunerbaron: Wer uns getraut (with Della Casa).

Wittrisch; KÁLMÁN: Die Zirkusprinzessin: Zwei Marchenaugen. **KÖNIGKE:** Der Vetter aus Dingsda: Ich bin nur ein armer Wandergesell. **LEHÁR:** Die lustige Witwe: Lippen schweigen (with Julia Moor, soprano). Fräsqulita: Hab' ein blaues Himmelbett. Paganini: Niemand liebt dich so wie ich (with Moor). Der Zarewitsch: Wolgalied.

These items derive from 78s made by English Decca in Zurich in the late 1940s, when that young and ambitious company was starting to build up an important new international catalog after the depredations of World War II. Both Roswaenge and Wittrisch had been popular recording artists before the war, when in addition to many operatic sides each made several operetta ones. Perhaps that is why the postwar operetta recordings were so well received, the authors of *The Record Guide* awarding some of them two stars, their highest rating.

Listening to them today I find it hard to understand why, Wittrisch, though still under fifty at the time, sounds at ease only when singing mezzo-forte in the middle of the voice. By then he could no longer spin out with security his once-celebrated soft

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by David Hamilton

Benita Valente and Richard Goode: A Remarkable Partnership

One of the bright and cheering sounds at the start of the Sixties was the voice of Benita Valente, whom we first heard singing Schubert's "Hirt auf dem Felsen" and "Auf dem Strom" on a couple of Marlboro records (Columbia MS 6236 and MS 6243, respectively) with limpid tone and sterling musicianship, if not yet a markedly individual treatment of the words. Since then, Valente has sung frequently with orchestras, in contemporary music (Dallapiccola on *Candide* CE 31021, Del Tredici on CRI 243, and most recently Schoenberg's *Second Quartet* with the Juilliard in Columbia M334581), and at the Metropolitan Opera as a poised and heartfelt Pamina, a touching Nannetta. Now she is back to the Lied, in a recital program that surely ranks among the finest achievements by an American singer in this difficult literature.

Valente's sound is as lovely as ever, and now commands more variety of color. Her diction is clearer and livelier, responsive to character and mood. She never falls into quasi-parlando: There is perfectly tuned pitch and well-supported tone on every syllable, so that we don't have to infer the conords and clashes of voice and piano—we really hear them. Valente doesn't just sing a vocal line; she takes part in an ensemble performance, and the recording honors that by giving equal prominence to Richard Goode's piano playing, which is always as supportive of the music's direction as it is of the singer. All too many "accompanists" seem concerned only with the welfare of their employers, but when, as in Brahms's "Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht," the climax of a line is shared by the two parts, Goode weighs in with as much tone and fervor as the singer; if that extra surge is reduced to a pale echo, the song is immeasurably diminished.

Because of this fine balance (and the superb registration of the piano, with a distinctive and welcome clarity in the upper range), the Brahms and Wolf groups are perhaps the most interesting—which is not to denigrate the work of these artists in Mozart and Schubert, merely to note the greater importance of the piano in the later songs. The subtle rhythmic variations of the piano part in Brahms's "Nachtigall" are etched with great clarity, and Wolf's sudden harmonic veerings are always deftly balanced. In her winning group of songs from Wolf's *Italian Songbook*, Valente suggests plenty of character without resorting to the matronly chest sounds that Schwarzkopf is so fond of when she wants to suggest pique or ruefulness—or to that lady's scoopy portamentos, either, with their Valkyrian overtones.

There are a few flaws: In Mozart's "Un moto di gioia" (not really a song, but a substitute aria written to replace Susanna's "Venite, inginocchiatevi" in *Figaro*), the runs aren't articulated as cleanly as they might be. And here and there the notes around the passage to the upper voice aren't quite as well focused as the rest of the voice. But it is a rare singer who can compete with Valente in the poise and repose of "Nacht und Träume," the wit of the *Italian Songbook*, the simplicity and subtle coloring of "Das Veilchen," the intensity of feeling that surges through the bigger Brahms songs. If she and Goode were to give us a recital disc every year from now on, they would make many people very happy.

Texts and translations are included. The discs, manufactured in West Germany by Teldec, are extremely quiet.

BENITA VALENTE: Song Recital. Benita Valente, soprano; Richard Goode, piano. [Max Wilcox, prod.] DESMAR DSM 1010, \$8.98.

MOZART: Un moto di gioia, K. 579; Als Luise die Briefe, K. 520; Das Veilchen, K. 476; Der Zauberer, K. 472. **WOLF:** Italian Songbook: Auch kleine Dinge; Mir ward gesagt, Wer rief dich denn?; Du denkst mit einem Fädchen; Wie lange schon, Ihr Jungen Leute; Mein Liebster singt; Schweig' einmal still; Ich hab' In Penna. **SCHUBERT:** Heidenroslein; An die Nachtigall; Nacht und Träume; Rastlose Liebe. **BRAMMS:** Therese; Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht; Meine Liebe ist grün; Nachtigall; Auf dem Kirchhofs; Vergebliches Ständchen.



Sandy Goldstone

head tones. But for all his vocal debility he had preserved a lot of his former ingratiating manner, whereas Roswaenge, though much stronger vocally, had not. Then in his early fifties, he sounds stiff, ungainly, and noisy. Indeed, the performances of Lehár and Strauss heard here must be among the most charmless ever made. A further impediment to enjoyment is the foursquare conducting of Victor Reinshagen, who, puritanically inflexible in rhythm, takes all the lilt and headiness out of the music.

The Roswaenge Graf von Luxemburg and Zigeunerbaron duets with Lisa della Casa, then at the start of her international career, are as unsmiling and graceless as the tenor's solos. The soprano sounds no less ill at ease than her partner, as well as hooty on top notes and undernourished in the middle. In her Lehár duets with Wittrisch, Julia Moor, though no great shakes as a vocalist, shows herself to be far more at home in this music.

London's re-recordings are by no means first-rate, the sound being very congested, even at times distorted. There is also a disconcerting amount of pre-echo. No texts are supplied. Anyone interested in the young Roswaenge and Wittrisch could do worse than get hold of Eterna 735—a Lehár recital that includes more winning examples of their art as well as Julius Patzak's delightful "*Bist du's lachendes Glück*" and three fine Tauber sides. There is also a most enjoyable operetta recital by Wittrisch on Rococo 5223. Records like the latter pair throw an entirely different light on music of this sort. D.S.H.

H THE RECORD OF SINGING. Various performers. EMI ODEON RLS 724, \$107.76 (twelve discs, mono, plus book) [from various originals, recorded 1899-1919] (distributed by Peters International).

Since this set is published in a limited edition of only 2,500 copies worldwide, and because its sheer magnitude precludes any quick review, I shall restrict myself to a description and a note of urgency—there aren't many copies around, and if you are interested in the history of singing this will be pretty close to indispensable.

The twelve discs contain 234 tracks representing the work of 210 singers active before the First World War. A full list of contents is out of the question, but only voluminous collections, long in the gathering, are likely to include many more than half of these tracks (my own score was 105—many of them in dubbings rather less good than those Bryan Crimp has done here). The singers range in age from Antonio Cotogni (b. 1831, the earliest singer known to have recorded) to Frieda Hempel (b. 1885); the bulk of them were born between 1850 and 1875.

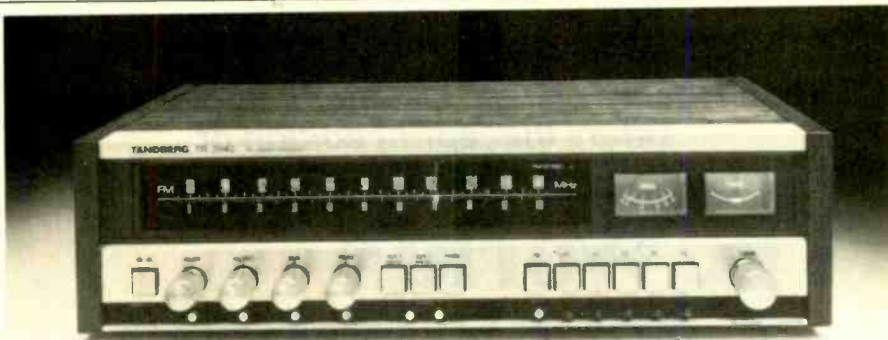
The earliest items are three 1899 Berliners by Ellen Beach Yaw, the latest Emma Calvé's 1919 *Perichole* aria (only a very few selections are later than 1914). Most of the material is, logically enough, from the files of the Gramophone Company, but the catalogs of Victor, American Columbia, Pathé, Odeon, Fonotipia, Zonophone, Favorite, Anker, Edison, and Syrena are also repre-

sented. Many of the actual copies used for dubbing come from the Stuart-Liff collection. Quite a few tracks are marked as "unpublished," although at least some of them have had circulation in unofficial dubbings (e.g., Anna Bahr-Mildenburg's only recording, the "Ozean" recitative from *Oberon*). No attempt has been made to survey in depth the major figures whose work is in wide circulation: two tracks each for Patti and Melba (for the latter, two unpublished Victors, thus not duplicating EMI's recent package of her London recordings), one each for Caruso and Tamagno (who is heard in an unpublished third version of *Otello's* death).

Out of curiosity, I compared this roster of singers with the Kutsch/Riemens Concise

Biographical Dictionary of Singers; for the first three letters of the alphabet, some fifty singers who made records during this period are not included in the record set, but few of them are major figures—the notable exceptions being those who recorded only on Mapleson cylinders, none of which are included here. On the other hand, three singers (Andrew Black, Ivan Alitchevsky, and Waclaw Brzesinski) heard on the records are not found in the *Dictionary*. Since this is only the first of three projected sets covering the history of singing on records, doubtless some of the apparent omissions—e.g., Julia Culp—will turn up in the next volume.

The singers are grouped essentially by national schools. After a single track by



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Professor Moreschi, the only castrato to record, comes "The Old School"—Patti, Albani, Sembrich, Melba and other Marchesi pupils; then the Anglo-Saxons, French, Italians, Germans, and Russians. This corresponds to the organization of Michael Scott's book of the same title, a paperbound copy of which is included in the mammoth (two inches thick) box: it will also be available separately in a clothbound edition. Along with a biographical sketch of each singer represented in the set and commentary on his recordings (usually with specific attention to the selections in the set), the book propounds a critical history of singing that is bound to arouse a good deal of discussion. For the moment, though, the im-

portant thing is the records: a word to the wise. . . . D.H.

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BEN-HUR. Original film score composed and conducted by Miklós Rózsa. National Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra. [Raymond Few and Tim McDonald, prod.] LONDON PHASE-4 SPC 21166, \$7.98. Tape: ● SPC5 21166, \$7.95; ● SPC8 21166, \$7.95.

Comparison:
 Vol. 1—Savina/Rome Sym. MGMS 1E1
 Vol. 2—Kloss (?)/Frankenland State Sym. (see text)
 MGM/Polydor (U.K.) 2353 075

Miklós Rózsa's music for William Wyler's 1959 *Ben-Hur*, in which he masterfully and uncompromisingly integrated his neo-classical Hungarian modal idiom with the spiritual narrative, may well be the masterpiece among his film scores. Although excerpts from this lengthy score have received frequent recordings, it is easy to understand why Decca/London chose *Ben-Hur* to launch a new series devoted to Rózsa's film scores. (The composer's preference was to begin with his 1951 *Quo Vadis* score, filling a desperate need. He has now done a *Quo Vadis* disc, with *King of Kings* scheduled next.)

The obvious question is what the new *Ben-Hur* disc has to add to the two soundtrack volumes, still in print (Vol. 2 only from England) and in quite acceptable stereo. The answer, I'm afraid, is not much.

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There is some previously unavailable music: the fanfare that precedes the Prelude: "Friendship" (a different sequence from the one so-titled on the soundtrack in Vol. 1); and, most importantly, "Ring for Freedom." London also deserves credit for presenting "The Star of Bethlehem" and "The Adoration of the Magi" in sequence, as they are heard in the film. (On the soundtrack LPs the former appears in Vol. 2, the latter in Vol. 1.)

Unfortunately the now-complete Nativity sequence is heard after instead of before the Prelude. (The awesome fanfare should provide a dramatic contrast with the tranquillity of the Nativity.) Also, the spiritually soaring, Hungarian-flavored "Ring for Freedom" cue is actually only the second half of an elaborate musical sequence; the first half, "The Love Theme of Ben-Hur" (included on Vol. 1), is absent. Most of the remaining selections are presented out of order, and of course the single-disc format makes it impossible to include some of the score's finest moments.

The recording's most conspicuous (and surprising) shortcoming is Rózsa's uninvolved, often lethargic conducting, which suggests that his perspective on, and rapport with, the score has changed considerably over the years. For example, the tortured "Procession to Calvary," performed by the composer on the film's music track and by Carlo Savina on Vol. 1 with overwhelming anguish and intensity, is devoid of these essential values in the new recording. This lack of feeling and inspiration is felt nearly everywhere, notably in the Nativity sequence and "The Mother's Love." Rózsa's serviceable but rather tame new interpretation of "The Parade of the Charioteers" pales in comparison with the sharp phrasing, martial ambience, and pomp and ceremony of the thrilling performance on Vol. 2. (Rumors persist, undenied by the composer, that he—not the credited Erich Kloss—conducted Vol. 2.)

There is even outright misinterpretation in the famous "Rowing of the Galley Slaves," originally intended and performed as an accelerando tour de force, based on an ostinato timpani figure. Here Rózsa starts much too fast and concludes at barely a faster clip, thereby losing the accelerando effect. Savina, on Vol. 1, never quite gets as fast or frenetic, but he does a fine job of observing the accelerando, making his performance much more absorbing and satisfying.

The final disappointment is the recorded sound. While all the foreground instruments are rendered with sharp definition and sufficient brilliance, most of the middle voices are reproduced with a muddled, indistinct quality that obscures much textural detail, most damagingly in "The Lepers' Search for the Christ" and "The Parade of the Charioteers." R.F.

R THE BUCCANEER. Original film soundtrack recording. Composed and conducted by Elmer Bernstein. COLUMBIA SPECIAL PRODUCTS ACS 8013, \$7.98 [from CS 8013, 1958].

R THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA. Original film soundtrack recording. Com-

posed and conducted by Dimitri Tiomkin. COLUMBIA SPECIAL PRODUCTS ACS 8013, \$7.98 [from CS 8013, 1958].

Not all out-of-print recordings are masterpieces, so it is not surprising that this pair of reissues is of marginal interest to all but dedicated film-music scholars and collectors.


Cecil B. DeMille's 1958 *The Buccaneer* (a remake of his 1938 classic) was his last active film project, on which he served only as executive producer. His failing health forced him to turn over his usual producer/director duties to Henry Wilcoxon and Anthony Quinn, respectively, and the general apathy for the production after his withdrawal is evident in every facet of the film, including the music.

Elmer Bernstein, who had earned the gratitude of film-music devotees for composing the magnificent score for DeMille's 1956 epic, *The Ten Commandments*, was the obvious choice to score *The Buccaneer*. But Bernstein was apparently as uninspired by this misbegotten, often silly film as were

audiences and critics. His score suffers from weak thematic material, loose structure, and a nonintegral, detached quality. (It's unlikely that any other composer would have fared much better.)

By then, Bernstein had already begun to develop his characteristic, strongly Coplandesque sound in such films as *Men in War* and *The Tin Star* (both 1957), but for *The Buccaneer* he reverted to the Wagnerian form and extravagance of *The Ten Commandments*. (Not coincidentally, the immediately obvious influences on the score are *The Flying Dutchman* and *Ten Commandments*, from which the leitmotiv representing God is borrowed in its entirety.) Doubtless this was in accordance with the wishes of DeMille. As Bernstein acknowledges, the director wisely intuited that the full-bodied romanticism and quickly identifiable leitmotifs of the Wagnerian approach were the perfect counterparts to his heavy-handed Victorian dramatics and visual style. And while Bernstein usually prefers to avoid having his scores restate the obvious or using music as an "adjunctive

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story-telling device," this method was appropriate for the two DeMille films.

In contrast to *The Buccaneer*, Dimitri Tiomkin's 1958 Oscar-winning music for *The Old Man and the Sea* is entirely representative. The problem here is the Tiomkin style itself, which typically features incoherent and rambling melodic contours (the constant use of the run-on cadence is his most irritating characteristic) and a confused amalgam of popular and symphonic idioms. Though this score's quasi-Impressionistic rendering of the sea, Caribbean local color, and warmly sentimental ambience make it more interesting than many of his efforts, the overall effect is diminished by sounding too much like Debussy filtered through Nelson Riddle.

The disc surfaces for both reissues are quite acceptable, and the remastering of the Tiomkin achieves a sparkling clarity not present on the original. The remastering of the Bernstein score, however, is too shrill and harsh for my taste. R.F.

THE SPECTACULAR WORLD OF CLASSIC FILM SCORES. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Gerhardt, cond. [George Korngold, prod.] RCA RED SEAL (Great Britain) RL 42005, \$8.98 (distributed by Peters International).

VARIOUS COMPOSERS: Five Fanfares for Motion Picture Studios. **AMFITEATROF:** Salome; Dance of the Seven Veils. **HERRMANN:** Citizen Kane; Salammbô's Aria. The King of the Khyber Rifles; Attack on the Mountain Stronghold. **KORNGOLD:** Captain Blood; Overture. The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex; Elizabeth's Theme. **RÓZSA:** Julius Caesar; Overture. * Knights of the Round Table; Scherzo—Hawks in Flight. **STEINER:** Now, Voyager; Love Scene and Finale. Gone with the Wind; Polka. The Caine Mutiny; March. **TIOMKIN:** The Guns of Navarone; Prelude. The Thing; Suite. **WAXMAN:** Peyton Place; Main Title. * Objective, Burma!; Parachute Drop. [*: not previously released.]

It may at first seem redundant of British RCA to have released this collection of snippets from the distinguished Classic Film Score series, but a closer examination reveals a benign method in this madness. Actually, this anthology was the only practical means of finally making available six previously unreleased selections (five, really, discounting the fifteen-second Universal Pictures fanfare) intended for earlier discs in the series.

The first of the new selections, Miklós Rózsa's *Julius Caesar* Overture, is unfortunately the one disappointing performance here. Gerhardt's treatment is surprisingly pedestrian, with its languid tempos and overall lackluster quality doing the dynamic set piece a serious injustice. For comparison's sake, there is Rózsa's own vibrant and far superior performance on British Polydor's recent "Rózsa Conducts Rózsa" (2383 440), in which he breathes life into the work. Gerhardt has unintentionally smothered it.

But Gerhardt and the National Philharmonic return to peak form for the four others, starting with the complete main title sequence from Franz Waxman's *Peyton Place*. In clever contrast to the film's sensational (at the time) nature, Waxman's opening music is a sunny, spacious, and entirely romantic evocation of the infamous New England town. Particularly impressive are the dazzling staccato trumpet fig-

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ures and the lilting, well-known theme, making one regret the brevity of this excerpt. (It would be marvelous, indeed, if RCA would reissue the long out-of-print original Peyton Place soundtrack album, LOC 1042.)

The highlight of this collection is the generous ten-minute suite from Dimitri Tiomkin's trend-setting science-fiction score for the 1951 film classic, *The Thing*. Considering Tiomkin's (often damned) predilection for the theme-song approach to scoring, the most remarkable thing about this music is that there isn't a single recognizable theme to be heard. Instead, he has fabricated an electrifying, unconventional accompaniment from fragmented motifs and a plethora of avant-garde effects. The score thereby concentrates on establishing an appropriate other-worldly ambience without being hindered by gratuitous thematic development—an eminently successful turnabout for Tiomkin.

Equally unconventional is the orchestra required to achieve the music's startling effects. Gerhardt enumerates this incredible contingent in the liner notes as follows: "a very large group of woodwinds and brass, no strings except double-basses, five percussion groups including two sets of timpani, flexatone, wind machine; two pianos, three harps, Yamaha organ, pipe organ, and, to replace the extinct theremin, the ondes martenot. . . . I also used a group of five counter-tenors who helped to support the unwieldy vibrato that was one of the theremin's foremost characteristics." If all this sounds like the makings for a sonic spectacular, it is!

Not to be outdone in the field of orchestral pyrotechnics is "Attack on the Mountain Stronghold" from Bernard Herrmann's *The King of the Khyber Rifles*. In typically eccentric Herrmann fashion, this percussive, diabolical scherzo calls for an orchestra of fifteen timpani, three tam-tams, three bass drums, muted brass, woodwinds, and organ.

The last of the new excerpts is the "Dance of the Seven Veils" from Daniele Amfitheatrof's *Salome*. This is a rather predictable musical interpretation of Salome's often-filmed romp (this 1953 version featured Rita Hayworth in the title role) replete with the standard assortment of pseudo-Middle Eastern embellishments. The strength of Gerhardt's interpretation, though, somehow manages to make it all convincing and good fun besides.

These five selections have been grouped together on Side 2, conveniently isolating them from the previously issued material. While Side 1 was intended to offer a representative sampling of the Classic Film Score series, its truncated excerpts only epitomize the bits-and-pieces format that is the series' most frustrating feature, and the disc's crackly surface and conspicuous high-frequency rolloff offer no compensation. But considered solely for the new material, this disc is an indispensable supplement to the earlier records. R.F.

VERTIGO: Original film soundtrack recording. **TORN CURTAIN.** Original film score. For a feature review, see page 80.



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But bigger isn't necessarily better. Even the tiny cassette nowadays seems caught up in the cult of bigness. Since its physical dimensions are fixed, growth must be realized not only in repertory expansion and ever-more-ambitious recording projects, but also in oversize packaging of multicassette sets. RCA's new six-by-twelve-inch monsters (so sized, according to a press release, to fit in side-by-side pairs in dealers' disc browser bins) pose a storage problem different from those of the long, narrow DG and Philips boxes and the more squarish London ones. The RCA format would accommodate four cassettes reasonably efficiently, but it is wasteful with the three- and two-cassette offerings that make up the dozen-item initial release. Delighted as all of us must be to get more sets that include proper background materials, librettos, etc., some collectors may be provoked into a new Boxer Rebellion.

And of course everyone is most likely to be disappointed when Big Projects fail to measure up to expectations. That's regrettably true of Georg Solti's new Verdi Requiem (RCA ARK 2-2476, two cassettes, \$15.96), in which the sonic grandeur of the superbly recorded Chicago Symphony Chorus and Orchestra scarcely can compensate for an insufficiently noble reading and less than satisfactory singing by soloists Leontyne Price, Janet Baker, Veriano Luchetti, and José van Dam. There's no challenge here to the great Giulini/Angel Requiem of 1964—and that, lamentably, is unavailable in any tape edition.

It's far easier to put up with storage or other problems when one is more consistently rewarded, as in two other new RCA sets: the intoxicating Offenbach *Périchole* by an idiomatic French cast starring Régine Crespin (FRK 2-5994, \$15.96) and Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* with Price and Richard Tucker (ARK 3-2540, \$23.94). The *Butterfly*'s return to tape (replacing the long-OP 1963 reel edition) will be particularly welcomed not only by the stars' fans, but also as the historically significant, still impressively recorded first production of the RCA Italiana studio. (The *Périchole* recording, by the way, is also available in a small-box set, without notes and libretto, as Musical Heritage MHC 5518/9, \$13.90 list, \$9.90 to the society's members. But unless you can follow Alain Decaux's narration, you may be confused by the erroneous side-numbering; as now numbered, the correct sequence is 1, 3, 4, 2.)

Blockbusters. The biggest of all cur-

by R. D. Darrell

The Tape Deck

rent tape productions, both packaged as economically as possible, are mightily impressive musically and technically, yet each raises some critical questions. Herbert von Karajan's third complete cycle of the nine Beethoven symphonies, his second on tape (Deutsche Grammophon 3378 070, six cassettes, \$53.88), has already been widely acclaimed as a triumph. But I still find Karajan's readings—except momentarily, especially in the Sixth and Seventh Symphonies—too often brutally vehement. Listeners will have to decide for themselves about this milestone production.

The other blockbuster is the first in many years to appear in the open-reel format: Wagner's *Meistersinger* in the 1976 Solti/Vienna version (London/Stereotape OSAO 1512 Z, three reels, \$38.75, with extremely small-type notes-and-libretto booklet). Here again, many listeners may be so carried away by the robustly recorded, golden-sonorous Vienna Philharmonic playing that they will overlook the vocal and dramatic limitations of Norman Bailey's Sachs, René Kollo's Walther, and Hannelore Bode's Eva. But that's impossible for anyone who remembers Schorr, Melchior, and Schumann! However, even we must concede that the big crowd scenes never before have been given such sonic justice. (There is also an imported London cassette edition, OSA5 1512, four cassettes, \$39.95, which I haven't yet heard.)

New Illuminations—interpretative, technical, or both—patently can make the problems of bigness relatively or wholly immaterial. Sticking for another moment to the recently revitalized open-reel format, the 1975 production of the complete Monteverdi *Vespers* by Hanns-Martin Schneidt and the Regensburg Cathedral Choir (Archiv/Stereotape 2710 017 V, two reels, with fine notes and texts, \$31.95) is big in many ways, including price. But it is not only the first version on tape; it is the first in any format to cover everything in the original 1610

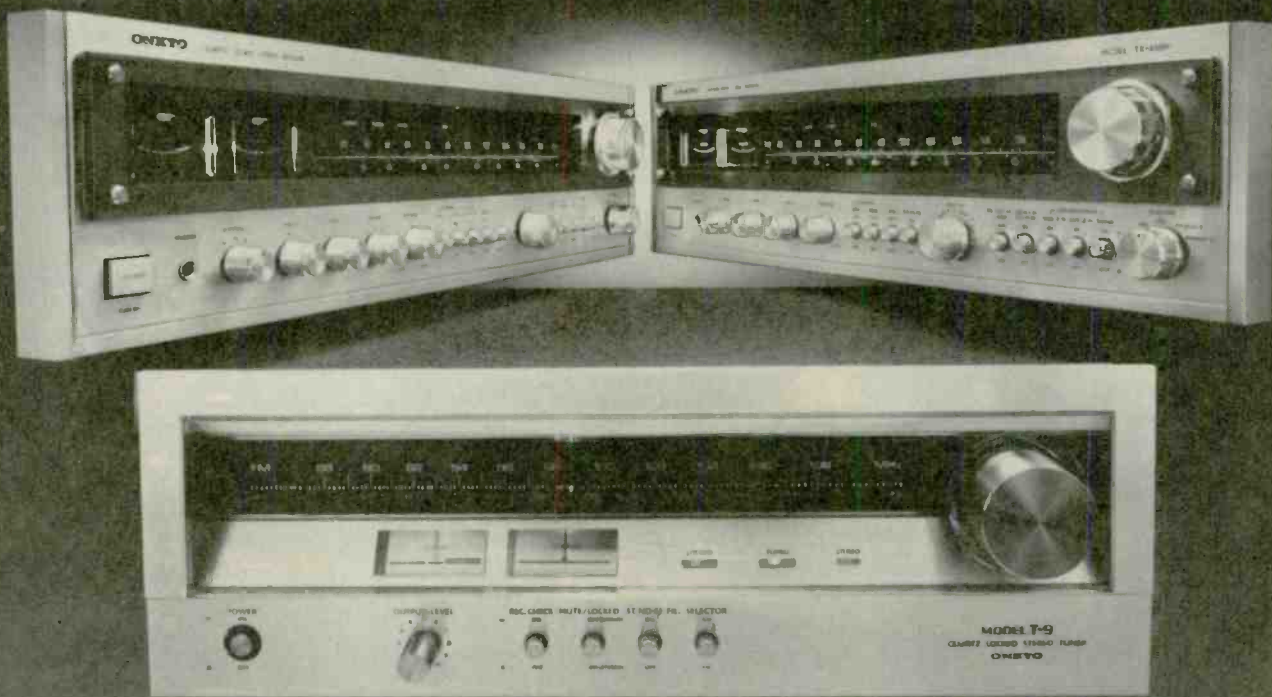
publication; the twelve *Vespers* psalms and "concertos," plus the Mass "*In illo tempore*" and both settings of the Magnificat (one elaborate, one simplified). Much more significant than its scope, however, is the fact that it is magnificently sung and played according to the originally prescribed scoring. (Stereotape reels, incidentally, are available by mail order only from Barclay-Crocker, 11 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004, and the Reel Society, Box 651, Arlington Heights, Ill. 60006.)

Returning to musicassettes, what's biggest about the new Handel and Haydn Society *Messiah* (Advent EE 1061, two cassettes, \$17.90; notes-and-texts booklet on special order, \$2.00) is the astonished delight with which one hears scholar/conductor Tom Dunn's zestfully invigorating chamber-scaled approach to a work that has suffered from elephantiasis for so many years—not least in bygone performances by Boston's H&H Society itself. The delectably intimate nature of this treatment was so aptly described in the January 1978 review of the *Sine Qua Non/Superba* disc edition of the same performance that I can find no better praise for it. But I do have to question Kenneth Furie's finding that the cassette edition "adds a fierce, even strident, edge." That surely must be the consequence of misaligned chrome-equalization (or Dolby-B) circuitry. On my own (Advent, to be sure) cassette playback equipment, the sound is essentially identical with that of the disc edition, while surfaces are even quieter.

Radical textual changes can also illuminate new facets of a long-familiar work: Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, which Jesús López-Cobos' version returns to the original scoring, keys, and freedom from elaborations (Philips 7699 056, two cassettes, \$17.90). Some details, and the choice of Montserrat Caballé for the title role, may startle. But almost everything really works. José Carreras' Edgardo is superb, and so are the recorded sonics.

The great Strauss polka mystery of what's actually played by Robert Stolz and the Vienna Symphony on Olympia 8138, \$5.98, was solved with outside help. Side A contains Johann II's *Tritsch-Tratsch, Elektro-Magnetischer, Champagner, Pizzicato*, and *Tik-Tak* and Josef's *Frauenherz*. Side B contains Josef's *Galopin* and Johann II's *Leichtes Blut, Unter Donner und Blitz, Egyptischer Marsch*, and *Annen*. Several of these will be novel even to Straussian specialists. ●

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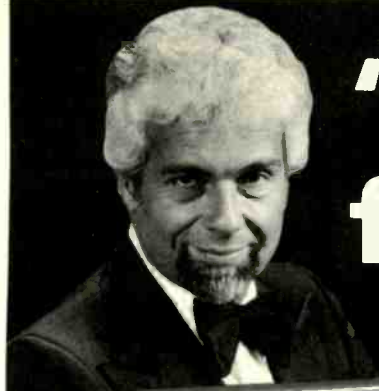
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Backbeat

KC and the Sunshine Band: Not for Teenyboppers Only

by John Storm Roberts



KC, or Harry Wayne Casey, at the keyboard

Even in the dog-eared storybook world of the record business, it's exceedingly rare for a band to come from Nowhere and score four hit singles off two albums in successive years. KC and the Sunshine Band, the brainchild of Harry Wayne "KC" Casey and bassist Rick Finch, swarmed out of Miami (which is not far from Nowhere on most r&b maps) to take a very basic funk/rhythm and blues sound to the top of the singles charts with (in 1976) *That's the Way (I Like It)*, *Get Down Tonight*, *(Shake, Shake, Shake) Shake Your Booty*, and (in 1977) *I'm Your Boogie Man*. The first two are from their second album, "KC and the Sunshine Band (Part 2)," which went platinum. The other two have come off their third album, "KC . . . Part 3," which at the time of this writing looks like it will go double platinum, having been on the Top LP charts for more than seventy weeks.

Casey and Finch met in 1972 as lowly staff members of TK Records in Miami, the company to which they've since given a reserved seat on the charts. Casey, who was fresh out of high school, was working in the warehouse of TK's distributor, Tone. Finch, an electronics freak, had landed a part-time job as a maintenance engineer at the label's studio. Both performed locally on the side until 1973, when their gofering paid off and they released their first TK single, *Blow Your Whistle*. Both the song and their original name—KC and the Sunshine Junkanoo Band—were inspired by Casey's addiction to junkanoo, a Bahamian carnival music that uses a whistle in its percussion instrumentation. *Blow Your Whistle* went to the Top 15 on the r&b charts, as did the followup, *Sound Your Funky Horn*. *Queen of Clubs* (from the 1974 album of the same name) followed suit in the U.K.

Sales figures and radio play don't necessarily weigh with the critics, of course, and KC has taken a fairly uniform beating from the musical press—a beating that seems more a result of sociocultural prejudice than musical evaluation. Casey and Finch are white, and, as Casey comments with only the slightest edge of resentment, as a result “the band hasn't been accepted in all categories of the r&b field. It's coming across now, but we still don't get mentioned in a lot of the r&b polls and r&b magazines. Yet our records go to No. 1 in r&b all over the nation.”

The reason for this is hard to pinpoint, since the “blue-eyed soul brother” has been old news at least since Steve Cropper and Joe Cocker proved more than ten years ago that whites could sing—and play—rhythm and blues. Nor did KC sneak onto the r&b charts by the strictly studio group backdoor route. They have done the r&b show circuit, sharing the bill with such names as the Jacksons, Earth Wind & Fire, and Santana.

But there is another obstacle to respectability, and that is KC's image as a teenyboppers' band. True, they have many fans from the junior set. But this is only circumstantial evidence of musical culpability, not proof positive. Teenyboppers relate to accessible music, which doesn't necessarily mean bad music. The fact that they chew beastly bubblegum does not rule out their appreciation of good ice cream. And KC's real market—like the market for good ice cream—crosses all demographic lines. “Everybody comes up to me and says they like our music,” says Casey, “from three-year-olds to adults . . . even old people. Each record changes our demographics, and we seem to have gotten to pretty much everyone—except for people who are into acid rock or whatever.”

KC's most successful—and accessible—music is about as basic as you can get. The vocals on most of those No. 1 singles have minimal lyric content. Any verses there may be—in *That's the Way*, for example—are essentially fillers between the hook choruses. The horns bounce jaunty but standard r&b licks off a

Latin-flecked funk rhythm section that struts onward with little apparent variation.

Casey's and Finch's aims are as simple as their stark sound. “We're just trying to record our own true feeling of soul and rhythm,” Finch says. “It's not something we formulate. Our idea was to create something that everybody can relate to. We want everyone to be able to sing our songs and to be involved in them. Besides, even though they sound simple, I feel they're really very complicated. When other bands try to do our material it seems they have a harder time than they do with other people's.”

“The hooks cling to the mind like burrs.”

That's not really surprising, because this apparently artless music is, in truth, a lesson in subtlety. The hooks cling to the mind like burrs, and the arrangements are as tight as clams. The exuberance—a major part of the band's success—sounds spontaneous but rests solidly on skill. The tension of *Get Down Tonight*, for example, has an almost visceral effect as it builds inexorably via thickening textures. Such technique belongs in any University of Rhythm and Blues course on Funk Dynamics.

That effectiveness comes directly from the writing. Bands that play tight are two a penny these days. Casey and Finch *write* tight. Listen to the interlacing of drumkit and conga on *Let It Go* or of horns and drums in *Wrap Your Arms Around Me*. Listen, above all, to their vocal writing. The grab-you quality of those devilish hooks comes from a built-in rhythmic anticipation: “*That's the way, un-huh, uh-huh, I like it, uh-huh, uh-huh.*” And the simple “aahs” and “come on nows” on *Shake Your Booty* create an almost tangible sense of urgency.

Their melodies commonly contrast a chanted monotone with a rising or swirling response. *Let's Go Party* does it beautifully, with a swaying melody whose every phrase is punched home with a “go-get-down” on three staccato rising notes. Another favorite KC effect, the key to the infectiousness of *Baby I Love You (Yes, I Do)* and *I Like to Do It*, is a passage of long, leaping seven-league-boot held notes that sweep you up like a wave, deposit you on the next jagged staccato, then pick you up in another surge.

KC's instrumental sound is strongly influenced by Miami's distinctive cultural mix. In a city whose population is more than half Cuban, salsa and other Latin sounds are everywhere—and so are West Indian. And long before the Cubans came, southern Floridian blacks played junkanoo, whose rhythms have stronger links with the Caribbean than with the mainland.

KC came by the Bahamian tinge naturally. Drummer Robert “Shotgun” Johnson's parents are from the islands, as is guitarist Jerome “J” Smith's father. Casey and Finch were grabbed by junkanoo the first time they heard it, and its rhythms are scattered



Rick Finch at Sunshine's console

throughout their work—most notably on *Blow Your Whistle*, more subtly in the guitar pattern on the more recent *Come on In*. It adds a flavor rather like that of the Meters' New Orleans Creole music. Latinisms are also abundant: *Shake Your Booty* has a strong feel of *clave*, the offbeat two-bar *tum, tum-tum, tum-tum* rhythm basic to Cuban music. And *That's the Way* builds as much like a salsa number as an r&b one, with an inexorable midtempo beat kicked on by contrasting riffs from vocalists, brass, and saxes.

The fact that they record for a small company in a city that the heavy hit-hunters visit only on vacation has also contributed to their success, since it protects them from the formulas of high-powered producers. KC does their own production and—Finch having learned the ropes at TK's studio—their own engineering. Their recording technique is of the standard piecemeal sort. "When Rick and I come up with a song, we go into the studio with the guitarist and the drummer," says Casey. "We do the rhythm section first," adds Finch, "and everything else is overdubbed. Then we spend lots of time mixing...."

"It depends how it all flows," continues Casey. "Sometimes we might do it all in one day, and other times we might take a long time. We don't like to rush into it—we like to sit back and think."

Finch says he mixes vocals, brass, and percussion pretty equally. If anything predominates, it's usually the percussion. "I try to make the sound as real and as lively as possible. It's very important to make music sound exciting. But there are things you can and cannot do [in the mix]. Sometimes you can help it, and sometimes you can't."

All those fat hits have brought the pair enough money to set up their own 24-track facilities, Sunshine Studios. But their slogan remains, "Keep it simple." "We felt that a small studio fit our needs better," Casey says. "You're able to get a closeness. It's a better feeling."

The hardware, Finch adds, is "all very basic—very few gadgets. The most outrageous thing we have here is a DDL—digital delay line—and that hasn't

"They record in a city that the heavy hit-hunters visit only on vacation."

been used since *Get Down Tonight*."

Finch's sound isn't squeaky clean, though it does always get its points across. Despite the vocals' relative lack of weight in the mix, for instance, their meaning is never lost. He also plays things almost entirely straight in the editing. His first noticeable doctoring shows up on the last tracks of "KC . . . Part 3" where *I'm Your Boogie Man* segues into *Keep It Comin' Love* in an abrupt jump-cut—the first piece of fancy in four albums. It's a typically simple yet effective flick from a heavy full-band riff into an identical pattern played



KC at Sunshine's cutting lathe

by guitar, drums, and piano. Those were the last tracks cut for "Part 3," and, according to Finch, "they weren't transferred from 16- to 24-track like the others, because they were cut on 24-track."

"We cut most of the tracks at TK's studio, and overdubbed the horns, voices, and percussion here [at Sunshine]. This next album will all come from our studio, and we have our own mastering facilities, which enables us to experiment a bit further."

That new LP, "Who Do Ya' Love?," breaks away a little from the band's almost entirely "up" reputation. "This is a little bit different," says Casey, "though it's still in the dance vein. We're adding different instruments, trying different tempos. We put a number in there called *The Same Old Song* that was originally done by the Four Tops. And there's a song that's kind of islandlike—it's reggae—called *How About a Little Love?*," which, he says, is quite different from anything they've done on past albums.

Simplicity—be it ever so subtly skillful. But that wasn't all that turned this group of relative unknowns, out of a city peripheral to the music biz, into the right band in the right place at the right time. Behind that lies the mass "mainstream" audience acquired by rhythm and blues over the past fifteen years. As soul was gradually taken over by money and the rise of the funk sound, it became more of a Vegas-and-TV pop style and lost the mix of simplicity, joy, and truth that was its strength. Albeit the music of the big-city funkmasters, from James Brown on down, was simple and truthful, but it was also disquieting, with a vaguely threatening edge: it was tight and driving, but alarmingly heeavee.

KC and the Sunshine Band are funky and tight, but they are exhilarating rather than overtly exciting, light rather than heeavee. Yet not too light: Those hooks are more than merely catchy, they're emphatically compelling. And that seems to be the combination that grabs black audiences and white, teenyboppers and country clubbers alike. ■

Input Output

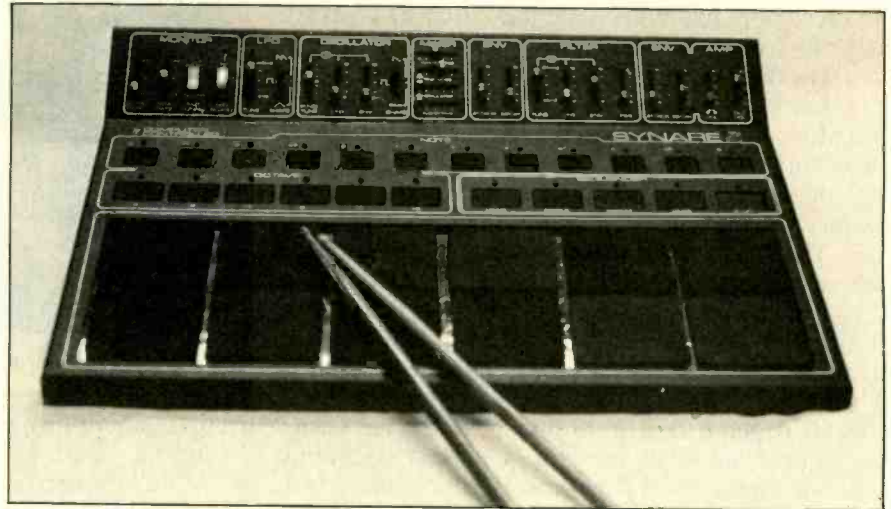
Instruments and Accessories

Synare 2 Percussion Synthesizer. Percussion synthesizers have over the last few years been through several incarnations. Depending on who's talking, a percussion synthesizer is anything from a rhythm machine with preset switches for mambos, cha-chas, and fox-trots to a Moog percussion controller or a set of electric bongo drums. Synare 2 is first of all a synthesizer, though it is unusual in having touch-sensitive pads instead of a keyboard to control its oscillators, filters, and sequencer. Actually, it is closer in concept to the earlier synthesizers by Moog and Arp than many of the small "performance" machines currently enjoying popularity.

In the early days of the art, it was always carefully pointed out that a synthesizer keyboard was not like that of a piano. It was a controller in the sense that it could initiate events inside the synthesizer that might be totally unrelated to the notes of a piano. (In fact, early models offered keyboards only as an extra-cost option.) The Synare returns to that concept.

This will be good news to hard-core synthesists who feel that the performance synthesizers are no more than glorified electric organs. The fact that Synare 2 uses rubber pads as controllers and, furthermore, lays them out in a way that bears no resemblance to a keyboard, encourages the user to think of it in an entirely different way, which could give comfort to composers of *musique concrète* and other less commercial genres.

The unit has one basic oscillator and a low-frequency oscillator to be used as a modifier for signals created by the main oscillator and its associated components (a filter, envelope shaper, and noise generator). The basic oscillator offers a choice of square, triangle, sawtooth, and pulse waveforms and is fine-tuned by means of a control near the top of the front panel. The mixer section of the panel offers a suboctave pot, which will add tone an octave below what is programmed without the need for a second oscillator. The white- and pink-noise generators are accessible via the mixer section. The envelope shaper, which is of the attack/decay type, is simple in design but effective for most situations; the filter section includes a resonance control; and the amplifier section controls the final envelope of the signal as well as the



Synare 2—the un-cola of synthesizers

output level to lines and headphone jack.

The unique pad board ranges in semitones over six octaves. By touching the note you want to play, then the octave in which you want to play it, and the pad you would like it to come up on, you are able to program any of ten large rubber pads that serve as your playing surface to sound any note in the range. Or you can use the built-in switch to preset the pads to a chromatic sequence that is easily memorized and logical.

Having programmed the pads for pitch or percussion sounds, you can use the sequencer in a number of ways. In its simplest mode, it can store from one to 125 events and give them back to you exactly as you entered them into the computer. Older sequencers required that rests in the musical pattern be treated like notes. That is to say, they were events without sound and were easy to forget when programming a sequence. But the Synare's sequencer is like a rhythmic blank check: You play anything you want, and the machine practically hears your intentions.

A program is entered by touching the load pad in the sequencer section, after which it can be repeated any number of times by pressing another selector. Your sequence can be available at any of the pads in the main group or can be activated by a specific one, leaving the other nine open for other possibilities. A SEQ/RATE potentiometer in the upper left-hand corner enables you to vary the speed of the repetitions.

I like the Synare 2 for a number of reasons. First, it works well and is comfortable to use. (A full complement of LEDs indicates status of all the pads—one instance where status lights are welcome; the oscillators are stable; and the sequencer is reliable and logical.) Second, I like the fact that musicians other than keyboard players will use it. Drummers, string players, and wind players will not be intimidated in the least. Also, there is a completely different feeling when you touch those rubber pads to play your music. If you use drumsticks, you're reminded of a drummer's practice pad—and for a drummer, that will have a wealth of comforting associations. If you play the pads with your fingers, the sensation is unique, at least in my experience. It's like playing musical sponges. But however you play the Synare 2, it's not like any other synthesizer. It's guaranteed to make you approach music differently. And that's got to be good.

On the back panel, there are three phone-jack outputs, one for a headphone and the other two for feeding stereo amps or mixer (HI) or performance amps (LOW). The unit runs on standard power. It is light enough to be fully portable and can be set up in less than a minute. The steel case appears to be ruggedly built. The suggested list price is \$1,395. It is an instrument worthy of your close attention. Synare 2 is the un-cola of synthesizers.

CIRCLE 121 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

FRED MILLER

Microphones: The Buck Starts Here

by Dick Rosmini

There is an old Japanese proverb that refers to an Oriental board game called "go" or "go-moku": "Oh, how sad a sight it is to see a player who does not know if his move is good or bad." The game's strategy requires several years of study to grasp and is so complex that the beginner almost always loses but seldom understands why. "Where did I go wrong?," the novice asks, to which the expert replies, "Everywhere." Very frustrating.

Buying and using your first quality microphone can be just that perplexing and frustrating. "How do I get a perfect piano recording?," the novice asks, to which the audio expert replies, "You can't." "Well, at least tell me what microphone you use on a piano." The old goat engineer takes pity, asking in return, "Who's the artist, what's the music, what kind of piano, and where are you recording?" What a mess.

Mike selection is not a simple process and, even if the old goat does suggest one, odds are good that the novice will neither like the results he gets nor know what to do about it. And, since no one can alter the laws of acoustical physics, all the books on recording technique tell us that time, experience, and liberal applications of J. P. Morgan's magic ointment (money) are the only possible solutions. You must learn by doing, and there are no shortcuts. None? Well, maybe we can come up with something.

Microphones are made for many reasons, and their manufacturers do make suggestions as to their broad applications. So we can eliminate the Citizens Band radio mikes, the underwater mikes, and so on. Narrowing the field down further, let's ignore for the moment radio, television, and the motion picture industry with their specialized problems. We are now down to about fifty possibilities, out of which the average professional multitrack (16 and up) studio will usually have twenty to thirty, though at least half of that number will be duplicates and seldom will all be put up at once. For a working studio to operate profitably with fewer than ten different kinds of mikes, even an experienced engineer would have to be some kind of magician. Anything that makes music can come in that door at any time—from a steam calliope to a set of Irish war pipes—and a pro studio is always expected to

be ready for it. Diversity is the key: Many studios have more mikes on hand than inputs on their consoles.

So we ask the old goat engineer to open up his mike locker. Oops, now we're in trouble again. Many of the mikes he uses every day are no longer manufactured and may be anywhere from ten to forty years old. Some discontinued models are still very much in demand and sell at prices well in excess of their original list. Vintage wine, an old Rolls Royce, and a warm Telefunken 251 complete with power supply and 7-pin cable—a true paradise for the recording engineer. But wait a minute: *You're* going to record at home. Just looking for a couple of good mikes, right? The prices on the old goat's "first choices" list look pretty steep, and, besides, you're not going into the record business.

Well, consider this: Every time you record off a disc or FM radio you are, in effect, making use of the studio mike locker. Most people have no great difficulty in getting good results with their tape equipment in doing so. But when it comes to live recording it's a different story altogether. People will plug in a cheap mike, get poor results, and immediately assume there is something wrong with their recorder. It seems that somewhere along the way they have lost sight of the price they paid for their gear. Turntable, cartridge, preamp, tuner—it adds up to a tidy sum. It's unreasonable to expect your \$6.00 drugstore special to perform as well as all of the rest of your system put together. There is no magic—just common sense: The price you pay for your mike will affect the result you get. It doesn't matter whether you're recording jazz, rock, or classical.

Which brings us back to the old goat engineer's list, even if he won't give us specific applications for each brand name. (As we leave the studio we see that he is having a fistfight with the young Turk engineer over what bass-drum mike to use on the next session. There also seems to be some difference of opinion regarding the piano mikes. *Chacun à son goût*, fellows. Hope the client pays cash.) His list is by no means comprehensive: The mikes are *among* those that a professional engineer will choose from. If you are serious about your recordings, we suggest you do the same. But we single out several mikes that seem cost-effective and well suited to home use, in case your budget is limited. They are all cardioids, since we think their ability to reject unwanted sounds will help you.

Dick Rosmini is BACKBEAT's Studio Equipment Consultant.

Model	Manufacturer	Pattern	Price*	Primary Use	Secondary Uses	Comments	Power Supply	
LARGE DOUBLE-DIAPHRAGM CONDENSER								
1.	U-87	Neumann	multi	\$890	vocals	everything	Benchmark sound. The ubiquitous king of the studio.	Battery (internal) or 48-volt
2.	U-47 FET	Neumann	card	833	vocals	single instruments	A re-engineered U-47—the original Neumann condenser. Very high overload level.	48-volt
3.	C-414 EB	AKG	multi	495	vocals	orchestral sections; single instruments	Very good low end. Snappy midrange, slightly rough—peps up dull sound.	7.5 to 48-volt
4.	C-38B	Sony	multi	450	vocals	orchestral sections	Smooth, tame, calms down gritty sounds.	Battery or 48-volt
5.	C-37P	Sony	multi	400	orchestral sections	vocals	Universal mike. Smooth. Power supply has eq.	Special
6.	U-67	Neumann	multi	600–1,000 (available on special order)	vocals	very powerful singers; everything	Enormous headroom—Linda Ronstadt's vocal mike for recording. The original vacuum-tube U-87.	Special supply & cable
7.	U-47	Neumann	card/omni	400–600	vocals	powerful singers	The original vacuum-tube Neumann. Its introduction in the late '40s changed the industry.	Special supply & cable
8.	U-48	Neumann	card/bi-directional	400–600	vocals	powerful singers	With exception of pattern, same as above. Rare, but a dream.	Special supply & cable
9.	M-49	Neumann	multi-remote	Bids (very high)	symphony	everything	A dream. The last of the vacuum-tube Neumanns. Remote switching of pattern allows for aerial mounting without loss of control.	Special supply & cable
10.	C-12	AKG	multi-remote	Bids (500 and up)	vocals	everything	A vacuum-tube C-414. One of the best low-end mikes ever. Peps up dull singers; enormous headroom.	Special supply & cable
11.	C-37a	Sony	multi-remote	200–400	Any signal from screaming rock & roll to symphonic		Universal mike. The original vacuum-tube Sony. Smooth. No vices.	Special supply & cable
12.	251	Telefunken	multi	Bids	orchestral sections	vocals	Endless headroom. Vacuum-tube. Parts are scarce, may be hard to repair.	Special
13.	C-500	Sony	multi	500–800	orchestral sections	vocals	Sony's best double-diaphragm mike ever. Very high headroom. Beautiful sound.	Transistor mike: 48-volt

gray-screened mikes are no longer in production, but can still be found on the marketplace

*Prices are manufacturers' list prices as of January 1, 1978.

Bids—not a sufficient quantity on the marketplace to approximate a price.

Multi—the mike is switchable between more than two patterns.

Multi-remote—a multi mike with remote switching capability.

Orchestral—any ensemble that is nonsymphonic, specifically pop and jazz groups.

Special—the mike has its own DC requirement. It will not run on DIN standard or AB standard.

System mike—interchangeable capsules and other accessories such as windscreens, plugs, etc.

Universal mike—a mike that the profession has been known to use on literally anything audio.

Model	Manufacturer	Pattern	Price*	Primary Use	Secondary Uses	Comments	Power Supply	
SMALL DOUBLE-DIAPHRAGM CONDENSER								
14.	Km-86	Neumann	multi	871	strings	orchestra	Very wide polar plot for a 3-pattern mike. Quite flat. Good for moderately distant pickup. Vocals tricky; pops easily.	48-volt
15.	Km-88	Neumann	multi	871	symphony/ orchestral sections	guitar/ banjo	Brilliant sound. Superb distant pickup. Great banjo mike.	48-volt
16.	CMT-26u	Schoeps	multi	550	symphony		Very flat. Extremely low-noise mike. Wide dynamic range.	Special
17.	Km-56	Neumann	multi	400-600	guitar	piano	Original vacuum-tube KM-88. Enormous headroom.	Special supply & cable
SMALL SINGLE-DIAPHRAGM CONDENSER								
18.	Km-84 (Km-83) (Km-85)	Neumann	change capsule	298, caps 90	everything		System mike, recommended for home recording . Least expensive Class A mike, fine sound. Extra capsules are economical method for pattern selection—buy what you need. Vocals are tricky; pop sensitive. More accurate on transients than its larger cousins.	48-volt
19.	C-450 system	AKG	change capsule	230, caps 75+	everything		System mike. Best buy for home recording . Very similar to KM-84 but slightly rougher, zippier. More parts than above but power supply more expensive.	Many different power systems available
20.	MKH-406	Sennheiser	card	529	symphonic sections	drum/ overhead	Sennheisers are engineered to make up for the loss of highs caused by distant pickup. Extremely bright sound. Highest output of all mikes mentioned here (-20 dBm). Excellent low-frequency response, slightly more fragile than most.	Special
21.	MKH-106TU	Sennheiser	omni	472	symphony	close-miked guitar		Special
22.	System C	Electro-Voice	change capsule	236, caps 80-300	everything at home		System mike. Recommended for home recording . Highly directional capsules. Very reliable; very flexible. Electret mike.	Battery or 48-volt
23.	C-60	AKG	card	175-300	everything		The original vacuum-tube C-451; was only available as a cardioid.	Special supply & cable
24.	U-64	Neumann	card	225-500	everything		The original vacuum-tube KM-84. Very high output, very wide polar plot, very flat. Pop sensitive.	Special supply & cable
25.	Km-53	Neumann	card	200-500	single instruments	close miking	The original Neumann vacuum-tube miniatures before capsules became removable. Nickel diaphragm. Very brilliant sound.	Special supply & cable
26.	Km-54	Neumann	card	150-350	single instruments	close miking		

	Model	Manufacturer	Pattern	Price*	Primary Use	Secondary Uses	Comments	Power Supply
27.	404	Sennheiser	card	175	orchestral sections	distant pickup	The early MKH-406. Need special transformers for standard American mike inputs. Excellent, currently going for bargain prices. Slightly fragile and require a little extra care.	Special
28.	104	Sennheiser	omni	175	orchestral sections	distant pickup		Special
29.	405	Sennheiser	card	275	orchestral sections	distant pickup	See MKH-406 for comments. Drive standard inputs without troubles.	Special
30.	105	Sennheiser	omni	225	orchestral sections	distant pickup		Special
31.	M-30	Altec	card	100-200	piano	guitar	American-made vacuum-tube miniature that compares favorably with the imported units. Excellent.	Special supply & cable
32.	M-49	Altec	card	75-175	piano	guitar	Transistor version of the M-30. Less headroom but very flat. A good buy at current price but needs an old battery that is hard to find.	Special
33.	N-21BR	Altec	omni	100-150	piano	everything	One of the all-time classics. Absolutely flat response. Developed from a test mike with very few changes. Parts hard to find. High voltage; takes 20 minutes to warm up. Very high overload factor.	Special supply & cable
LAVALIER								
34.	ECM-50PS	Sony	omni	200	guitar	internal placement	Extremely small. Not designed for use specified here, but generally considered the mike for recording acoustic guitar when drum leakage is a problem.	Battery or 48-volt
DYNAMIC								
35.	RE-20	Electro-Voice	card	315	everything		Recommended for home recording. Very close to a condenser in sound with the added advantage of a dynamic's superior headroom. Very smooth. Absolutely bulletproof mechanically. Superb pattern control.	No power supply required for dynamic mikes
36.	D-224E	AKG	card	280	everything		A best buy. Best cardioid pattern of all mikes here including condensers—stone deaf from the rear. A little brighter and zippier than the RE-20 but not quite as durable.	
37.	D-202E	AKG	card	155	drums/guitar		A lower cost version of the engineering principle used in the D-224. Slightly more ragged response but just as deaf from the rear. Also a best buy.	
38.	MD-421U	Sennheiser	card	265	everything	bass drum	Recommended for home recording. Rising response. Very high overload capability. Brightest and cleanest of the dynamics.	

	Model	Manufacturer	Pattern	Price*	Primary Use	Secondary Uses	Comments	Power Supply
39.	RE-15	Electro-Voice	card	180		snare drum cello	Very distinctive sound. Excellent drum mike and general midrange enhancer. Very reliable.	No power supply required
40.	SM-57	Shure	card	100	electric amps	drums	The well known PA mike. Very smooth. Usable on vocals; blast and pop proof.	
41.	635A	Electro-Voice	omni	65		bass drum	Does everything well, but the mike of choice for bass drum—indestructible.	
42.	RE-55	Electro-Voice	omni	210	piano	sibilant vocals	E-V's best omnidirectional mike. Smooth and trouble free.	
43.	666	Electro-Voice	card	100-175	electric guitar	drums	Strong personality. Still well thought of and well understood.	
RIBBON								
44.	77dx	RCA	multi	425 new 250 used	everything except closely miked drums	section vocals/ brass	Recommended. The king of the ribbons; very high output for a ribbon mike. Not hard to repair. Buy an old one and save. Best French horn mike still.	
45.	M-160	Beyer	card	334	brass	sections	Recommended. Extremely smooth modern mike. Low output; low distortion in midrange; better than most condensers.	
46.	SM-33	Shure	card	201	section brass	solo brass	Smooths out twangy speakers: the Johnny Carson desk mike. Very low output (-60).	
47.	300	Shure	bidirectional	138	solo brass	section brass	Excellent pattern. Light weight, small size. Low output, low distortion.	
48.	BK-5	RCA	card	100-150	solo brass	section brass	Excellent pattern. More durable than most old ribbons, smaller and lighter. Moderate output.	
49.	44	RCA	bidirectional	150-250	French horn	orchestra	Largest and heaviest mike still in use, also the most fragile ribbon. Be careful: The case cannot be damaged but the ribbon blows out easily. Repairable but expensive.	
STEREO								
50.	SM-69 FET	Neumann	multi-remote	2,229		stereo	Very expensive but a cost-is-no object solution to stereo.	Special supply & cable
51.	C-24	AKG	multi-remote	1,495		stereo	The Harry James direct-to-disc mike. The last of the vacuum-tube AKGs. Soon to be out of production.	Special supply & cable
52.	SM-2	Neumann (miniature)	multi-remote	Bids (very rare)		stereo miniature	The rarest of all the Neumanns. Name your price. Two KM-56s on one chassis. Very brilliant.	Special supply & cable

On our list, cardioid-pattern mikes outnumber omnidirectionals by a very large margin. In fact there would be no omnis at all if there weren't some problems that couldn't be solved without them. If you look at the frequency-response curves on cardioid mikes, a curious similarity emerges. They all show rising high-end characteristics, but when you audition the sound they pick up in actual practice, they don't seem that much more brilliant or snappy than the omnis (which, by and large, are much closer to flat on the graphs).

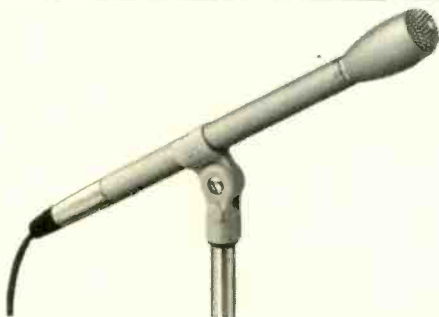


Electro-Voice RE-20: cardioid, can be used on "everything"

There is a reason for this oddity, and it's not just an academic consideration; it will influence every decision you make in selecting a mike for a particular job.

Frequency-response and polar-plot diagrams (off-axis response curves) are measured in an anechoic chamber, with the sound source 1.5 meters (about 5 feet) from the mike. At this distance even a 10-inch loudspeaker looks pretty much like a point source to the mike, and since sound waves in an anechoic chamber don't "bounce," they enter the mike from just one direction. In normal use, sound will enter the mike from many different directions at once. A mike that shows a big drop in high-frequency off-axis response will require a compensating boost in its on-axis highs to avoid sounding dull. The amount of boost can be reduced if the polar plot is more uniform with respect to frequency. But even well-designed cardioid mikes will show some loss in highs as you get farther and farther off axis.

Remember the phrase "angles of incidence." If we place a cardioid mike 9 feet away from a 9-foot



Electro-Voice RE-55: Omnidirectional, good on piano

grand piano, the basic sound minus room reflections will come from an angle of incidence subtending approximately 30 degrees. Check the polar plot: Are we still in the uniform area with all frequencies at the same level? Wonderful, but the drums are right behind a gobo to the left of the piano. We'll have to get closer if we want any isolation at all. But at 8 feet, 7



Sony C-37P: multidirectional, good on orchestral sections

feet, 6 feet, and so forth, angles of incidence will increase, making the polar-plot problem worse as our isolation gets better.

So let's place the mike inside the piano. Some angles of incidence now approach 180 degrees, and our problems are further complicated by the differing path lengths and arrival times of the sound and by the differing reflective properties of the various internal parts of the instrument. Located 1 foot from the sounding board, the mike "hears" other parts of the instrument radiating sound from 4½ feet away, and they all count. Sound takes roughly 1 millisecond to travel a foot, so the interior of the piano is now acting as complex time-delay network. Time delay means



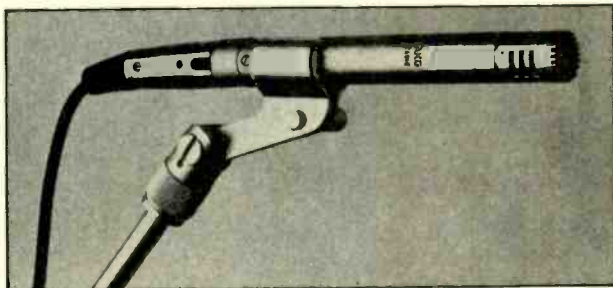
Shure SM-57: cardioid, good on electric amps

phase shift: Certain frequencies cancel out, and others combine and produce unpredictable peaks and dips in the frequency content of the signal. Even a 1-inch movement of the mike can produce marked changes in the tonal balance. And there's another problem.

The acoustic systems that give a microphone a cardioid polar pattern work best when the sound source is small enough to look like a point to the mike. When the source is close, it takes on the aspect of a radiating plane, which, for reasons too complex to detail here, "confuses" the mike and makes its output increase as frequency goes down. This is the well-known

proximity effect, and the fat bass boost it delivers will do nothing at all to help the flavor of our stew. Since all of this mess stems from microphone characteristics, you will have to listen via a loudspeaker to see what has happened to the sound. These effects are not completely detectable by listening from the mike location, because your hearing won't have the same polar plot as the mike you are using.

The audio purist hears the result and says, "How can you stand it? It sounds nothing like what I heard



AKG C-451E: one of the C-450 system mikes

in the studio." The young Turk engineer says something like "far out," or whatever means "wonderful" this week, and starts the recorder. The seasoned engineer wanders toward the mike locker, mumbling something about an omnidirectional mike.

Good idea. Since an omni has a uniform polar plot, it is affected only by phase shifts from differing path lengths and may produce a far less colored sound than the cardioid. From inside the piano, the amount of drum leakage may be insignificant. Sheer volume will provide enough isolation to substitute for a selective polar pattern, and we will get a more accurate sound.

Angle-of-incidence effects, a function of the width of the musical source relative to mike distance, have been known to erase the smug smile from the face of many a purist confronted with a symphony orchestra to record. Rare indeed is a hall with sufficient height to allow the mikes to be backed up far enough to get the pickup angle right without reflections from the ceiling turning the sound to mush. You could call this "far



Sennheiser MD-421U: cardioid, good on "everything"

field salad," and it is the reason for the endless discussions of "this hall" over "that hall" in classical recording. Get the mike too close and the balance is wrong, too far and the hall "talks" too loud. The audio purist nods sadly (he's been there); the old goat looks sympathetic (he's been everywhere); the young Turk wanders away bored—but he'll be back right after his first



AKG C-414: multidirectional, good on vocals

big string overdub. Studio, home—it makes no difference. The moral is that problems occur no matter where you are recording. Your leakage problem may be the air-conditioner, and polar-pattern stew is just as complicated with a guitar. Worse perhaps, since pianos don't move around while they are being played. (Do you sit absolutely still when you play? Remember what a 1-inch shift in the mike position can do.)



Shure 300: bidirectional, good on solo brass

The only safe rules of thumb that generally apply are:

- (1) Place the mike as close to a source as necessary, not as close as possible.
- (2) Don't forget the omnis; they are more forgiving than other types.
- (3) Try miking vocals above the singer's nose line, so you won't need a windscreen.
- (4) If your singer cannot forget PA technique and must "eat" the mike, use two: one for munching and one for the recording. Sometimes a piece of wood will do the trick—anything to duplicate the sensation of working onstage.
- (5) Try to find the location where the sound is what you want. Put the mike there and listen via a speaker (or headphones).
- (6) An effect that creates problems in one case may offer salvation in another and vice versa. Experiment a lot, and you will learn. Sinatra wasn't born with his hat on.

Records

KEN EMERSON
TODD EVERETT
TOBY GOLDSTEIN
DON HECKMAN
JIM MELANSON

JOHN STORM ROBERTS
SAM SUTHERLAND
NICK TOSCHES
KEN TUCKER
JOHN S. WILSON

Warren Zevon's Magnum Opus

by Sam Sutherland

Warren Zevon: Excitable Boy. Jackson Browne & Waddy Wachtel, producers. *Asylum 6E 118, \$7.98. Tape: TC5 118, ET8 118, \$7.98.*

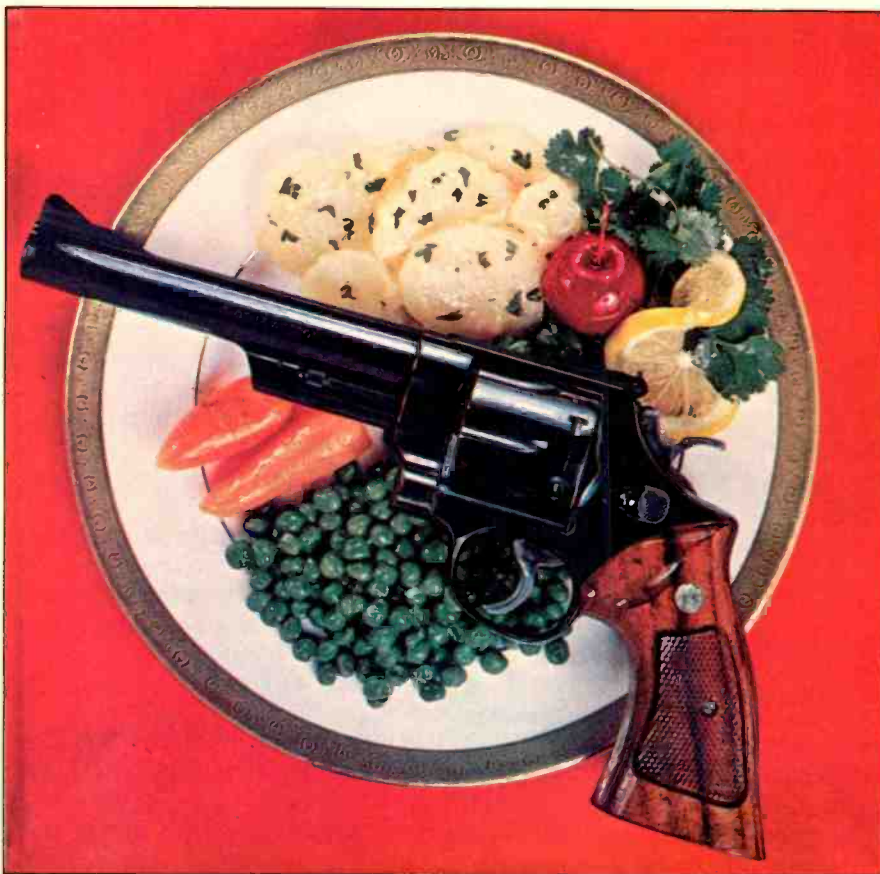
The Smith & Wesson magnum revolver that appears on the inner sleeve is a theatrical prop, but the record inside makes it clear the gun is loaded. "Excitable Boy" is a bloody, troubling masterpiece, laced with deadly jokes that bring the violent undercurrents of Warren Zevon's previous album ("Warren Zevon," 1976) boiling to the surface.

Without abandoning the elegiac lyricism of his earlier work, Zevon has adopted a harder rock & roll attack that serves as a second language for the rage and desperation of his characters. In the process he reveals a galvanic intensity glimpsed only briefly on his '76 *Asylum* debut.

Perhaps more than any other single record, "Warren Zevon" punctured a number of myths about California's '70s pop legacy. His label, producer (Jackson Browne), and studio support suggested the pedigree of the Los Angeles "tequila circuit" he has long been associated with,



Warren Zevon



A pictorial representation of *Excitable Boy's* contents

yet his songs proved his distance from that by exploding the singer/songwriter archetype his very credentials invited. Instead of romantic introspection, his closely observed case histories employed a hard-boiled narrative power. His songs were not merely tragic (*The French Inhaler*) or comic (*Poor, Poor Pitiful Me*), but often both (*Desperadoes Under the Eaves* and *Carmelita*). Zevon unified his work through a mature melodic sense and a loosely autobiographical focus reflected in the album's sense of place—the west in general, L.A. in particular.

If the ironic tension generated by his work quickly earned him critical praise, Zevon himself suggested that the record captured only part of his power as a performer: Seeing him live—his recorded orchestral armament reduced to bass, drums, guitar, and his own piano—it was apparent that he possessed a riveting power. Where his record indicated his intelligence as a songwriter, his performances explained the manic drive behind his edgy rockers.

On "Excitable Boy," Zevon and co-producers Jackson Browne and Waddy Wachtel have pared down their studio ensembles to capture that same wired economy. The decision isn't merely musical: the tougher, leaner feel of these tracks is mandated by the greater ur-

gency of the material. Of the nine songs, six are brisk, uptempo pieces that display this added power dramatically, and of those, four pulse with literal violence via the crack of Wachtel's guitars and Zevon's thundering piano.

Side 1 wastes little time in signaling the move. *Johnny Strikes Up the Band* is an anthem to rock itself but also achieves a brooding grandeur in its martial cadences and verbal solemnity. One of the album's most chilling moments follows, in a ballad that uses the bloodthirsty precision of traditional English ballads to tell a tale derived from our own front-page news. *Roland the Headless Thompson Gunner* suggests a new warrior myth through more than its title. "Norway's bravest son" is a mercenary betrayed by the CIA and one of his own comrades, and the supernatural force of his quest for revenge lends a sense of moral contradiction heightened rather than resolved by the final verse:

The eternal Thompson gunner, still
wandering through the night
Now it's ten years later, but he still
keeps up the fight
In Ireland, in Lebanon, in Palestine
and Berkeley
Patty Hearst heard the burst of Rol-
and's Thompson gun
And bought it.*

By refusing to reduce such contradictions to simpler terms, Zevon breaks down our expectations of traditional justice.

The title cut is a lilting major-keyed pop song with creamy backing vocals by Wachtel, Linda Ronstadt, and Jennifer Warnes, all of which sets off its poker-faced recitation of a psychopath's career. Following an appropriately carefree, stuttering sax solo, Zevon sings the pivotal third verse ("He took little Suzie to the Junior Prom . . . /And he raped her and killed her, then he took her home) against the smooth, shorthand inanity of the supporting vocals. It's a devastating juxtaposition, at once funny and harrowing, and as concise a commentary on the American appetite for violence as we're likely to hear.

Zevon's lyrics, cowritten on various songs with LeRoy Marinell, David Lindell (whom Zevon credits with most of *Roland's* grim locution), Wachtel, and Browne, are so good that they are best left to the pleasure of discovery. I recommend *Werewolves of London* and *Lawyers, Guns and Money* as additional examples of his black comic verve; *Veracruz*, a restrained elegy to the innocents doomed by political conflict; and *Accidentally like a Martyr*, a spare and haunting ballad that displays his ability to craft realistic emotional vignettes free from romantic hyperbole. Also, the

clear-eyed compassionate *Tenderness on the Block* is a wise and touching statement of a father's faith in his daughter's capacity to love. It's clear that there's little album filler here.

Zevon is a self-taught composer. He studied orchestral scores from his adolescence (and today still harbors plans for longer works in symphonic form) and alludes to late-nineteenth, early-twentieth-century masters in his work as well as to various folk traditions and primal rock & roll. Where he contributed a stately string chorale on the first album, here he achieves that same effect in his compressed piano arrangements to maintain this LP's prevailing band sound.

The addition of guitarist Waddy Wachtel as a coproducer accounts for the crackling power of this record. Wachtel, one of the west's most respected sessionmen, gives the broadest reading to date of his skills as both player and arranger. On *Werewolves*, his growling slide guitar solos are a perfect answer to Zevon's howling chorus, and on *Lawyers, Guns and Money* he builds a saw-toothed, layered chorus of rhythm parts and modal figures that suggest an unholy alliance between the Rolling Stones and a troop of Highland pipers. In concert with Zevon's striding piano chords, Wachtel completes an instrumental crossfire of classic rock proportions.

"Excitable Boy" is a dangerous work in an era when media analysts predict more conservative values and a public hunger for escapism. Instead, Zevon gives us a complex and charged song cycle that shifts narrators and locale to assume cinematic scope. Decide for yourself whether his work connects with Raymond Chandler or Brian DePalma; either way, as the singer barks on *Werewolves*, he "draws blood." ■

ABBA: The Album. Benny Andersson & Bjorn Ulvaeus, producers. *Atlantic SD 19164, \$7.98. Tape: CS 19164, TP 19164, \$7.98.*

Anyone who has heard one ABBA single a few times, or a few ABBA singles one time, has probably taken one of two extreme positions: They've either dismissed the group as a global hit machine/Identikit that borrows shamelessly from countless other records, or they've surrendered completely to the irresistible kitsch of its trademarked vocal blend.

"The Album," whose title neatly summarizes ABBA's idea of profundity, thus will be considered either insufferable or delicious. I find it the latter. Producers Bjorn and Benny, who honed their blades with this sort of cheerful pop customizing a decade ago, soak up new influences and graft them onto their pop symphonic arrangements. When a syncopated clavinet figure shows up on *Name of the Game*, the sophisticated funk origins are mitigated by the tempo, achieving a stately r&b variant that somehow works.

Such improbable juxtapositions are one of ABBA's most obvious charms. On *Eagle*, the overdubbed vocals of the two female leads are dramatically carried by a massive acoustic rhythm guitar sound, eerie string effects, and a solo on what appears to be a wood flute. The combination sounds uncannily like a Morricone spaghetti western theme as it might be produced by Phil Spector.

Throughout, Andersson and Ulvaeus make such potpourris work through their sure handling of production effects and arrangements. Sudden changes in tempo or key occur with an almost automatic ease that would shame any number of ABBA's more serious-minded and



ABBA: Benny Andersson, Bjorn & Anna-Faltskog Ulvaeus, Frida Lyngstad

self-important peers. And if their English lyrics continue to fall back on a certain awkwardness, at least they don't amplify the problem by taking their story lines too seriously. The sound of ABBA's records is what this Swedish quartet is most concerned with. That is particularly apparent on two other minor gems. *Take a Chance on Me* and *Hole in Your Soul*, the latter of which sounds like a collaboration between Eric Carmen in his rockier days and—would you believe—Carl Orff. S.S.

Bootsy's Rubber Band: Bootsy? Player of the year. George Clinton & William Collins, producers. Warner Bros. BSK 3093, \$7.98. Tape: M5 3093, M8 3093, \$7.98.

"Wind me up!" shouts a chorus of *Bootsyzilla*, a song on which William "Bootsy" Collins plays "the world's only rhinestone rockstar doll baby." And indeed there's something a bit mechanical about much of the Rubber Band's third album. "I got a cartoon mind," Bootsy sings, and no one has ever doubted—or regretted—that. But his comic-book raps seem belabored now that he's shed the persona of Casper the Friendly Ghost, that elusive image of racial ambiguity, for more sim-



Mr. William Bootsy Collins

plistically sexual and/or self-congratulatory roles. Even the chipmunk twitters that skitter through most of the songs sound forced. Behind the mirth there's a hint of melancholy—the French horns (at least that's what they sound like), for example, that mute the lascivious laughs of *Hollywood Squares*.

The interesting tracks on "Bootsy? Player of the Year" are the less raucous numbers that tend toward romantic rev-



Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band, with Mr. Limelight

erie. The boisterous boogie of *Roto-Rooter* is less memorable than the feathery *As in (I Love You)*, a haunting (Casper's at it again) ballad graced by a wispy saxophone, the sound of surf, delicate chimes, and electric piano. The sentimental songs are more compelling than the silly ones.

But all of them suffer somewhat because coproducer George Clinton doesn't know when to call it quits. Like Clinton's Parliament and Funkadelic records, "Bootsy?" should have been pruned. Each of the seven songs is too much of a good "thang," and one's attention flags before the riffing does. At least Casper, like a good ghost, knew when to disappear. K.E.

Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band Meets King Penett. Stony Browder Jr., producer. RCA AFL 1-2402, \$7.98. Tape: AFK 1-2402, AFS 1-2402, \$7.98.

Some call it nostalgia, some call it camp, but there's something more working for artists like Bette Midler, Cathy Chamberlain, and Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band. Though they all deliberately create a 1940s sound, they don't simply reproduce it, and their vocal renditions of songs from that era are often not very good. Their best work is always original, usually satirical, and it mixes influences ranging from the Ink Spots to Kurt Weill in a way that drives pedants crazy.

The Savannah Band's material is all original. Musically they focus on '40s pop, with big-band arrangements and solo/close-harmony jazz-flecked vocals. But things aren't really that simple. The Swing brass is underpinned by eclectic '70s rhythms, the vocals with echoes of

bossa nova, the Ink Spots, and Helen O'Connell, and the detailed arrangements are rich with references that span from old calypso to Parisian *chansonniere*.

All of this is in the context of a jazz-and-gangster-film *Threepenny Opera* ethos—seedy and evil and, because long gone, quaint. But the Savannah Band's quaintness is often of the velvet glove variety: The delicious calypso rhythm of *Soraya/March of the Nignies*, for example, harbors a singularly subtle piece of political satire. The charm, in fact, is at the service of a less than frivolous vision.

Unfortunately, that's not the whole story. The group has execution problems, of which the most obvious is Cory Daye's singing. Though she's transmuted her various influences into a personal style, both her phrasing and her vocal tone are limited and she's apt to sound mannered. And though bass player August Darnell's lyrics work well enough on first hearing, too many of his images are half-cocked, sabotaging what are mostly marvelous ideas. While pastiche can perhaps justify an occasional cliché, couplets such as "for the air here reeks of lies/and even the robins sound warlike" are just plain bad. Still, the Savannah Band has a lot going for them—most importantly, originality. If they'll just settle down and sweat a bit, their next album may bring off what this one hints at: *real* musical pop art. J.S.R.

Fela and Afrika 70: Zombie. Fela Anikulapo Kuti, producer. Mercury SRM 1-3709, \$7.98.

Nigerian Fela Anikulapo Kuti is the only African pop musician to make the *New York Times Magazine*. How? By

suing assorted military and civilian bigwigs after several hundred soldiers, enraged by the title song of this record, allegedly burned his house down and beat up many of his followers.

Politics aside, Fela Anikulapo Kuti is on the cutting edge of Africa's extremely exciting modern urban music, which is made up of a hundred blends of local and Western styles. "Zombie" is strongly r&b-influenced, with crisp ensemble brass riffs and Kuti's own stuttering, macho tenor and curt piano playing. But many of the melodies are strongly Nigerian—though not in any strict traditional sense—as are the sharp, soaring women's chorus and Kuti's Pidgin English (more comprehensible than much reggae).

Each of the album's three long numbers—*Zombie*, *Monkey Banana*, and *Everything Scatter*—is in the African tradition of songs of derision. It's easy enough to see why the Nigerian soldiery was peeved by being equated with zombies who "no go think unless you tell them to think." And *Monkey Banana* and *Everything Scatter* are equally scathing com-



Fela—on the cutting edge

mentary on master-servant relations and the state of the nation in general.

Heavy? Politically, yes. Musically, yes. But heavy-going, no. Verbally "Zombie" is as sharp as anything of Bob Marley's, and musically it's masterly. I bet it'll be on my best list next winter. J.S.R.

Andrew Gold: All This and Heaven Too. Andrew Gold, producer (with Brock Walsh). *Asylum 6E 116*, \$7.98. *Tape: TC5 116*, *ET8 116*, \$7.98.

A question of balance hangs over Andrew Gold's third album. Although the buoyant charm of his earlier records came from an ingenuous, lively evocation of '60s melodic rock styles, on "All This and Heaven Too" he has extended the revised keyboard focus that emerged on last year's "What's Wrong with This Picture?" The move is a risky one and trades hook-laden, guitar-based imme-

diacy for theatrical pop subtlety.

Ballads predominate and, although several of them acquire a haunting atmosphere from Gold's and Brock Walsh's contrasting keyboard textures, the predictable frothiness of Gold's lyrics creates problems. The wan innocence that is his main suit works when framed by jangling, layered guitar parts and a snappy rhythm section. But in these new sculptured settings the same romantic perspective seems strained—his reworkings of familiar sentiments lack the sub-

stance to support the melodrama of the arrangements.

Sequencing underscores the imbalance of the material. Side 1 kicks off with one of the few rockers, *How Can This Be Love*. It's a punchy, nicely Beatles-browed synthesis of uptempo rave and lover's lament. Until the second side, though, the fare stays trapped in lugubrious tempos, with the one exception of the breezy *Never Let Her Slip Away*. Ironically, that cut typifies the record's dangerously mellow ambience: On first

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listen I filed it away under "10 cc"; it was only with subsequent hearings (which frankly were triggered by a fondness for Gold's past records) that the smooth keyboards and limber sax of Ernie Watts rendered it irresistible.

As for the first single to be released, *Thank You for Being a Friend*, Gold's juxtaposition of dewy-eyed romance with tongue-in-cheek pop humor nearly does him in. Cute rhymes and a seemingly outlandish bridge that describes how true-blue loyalty will prevail in the ascent toward the ether—as illustrated with phasing and reverb effects—make the song a tribute to wimps. Yet when the instrumental track drops off after the bridge, Gold re-enters singing the title line in exaggerated Californian squeeze: "Thank yew fer bein' a friend. . . ." It's impossible to avoid comparing this to equally silly Beach Boys confections that boast equally sunny lead-ins from Mike Love or Al Jardine. Gold's goofy pop sensibility saves the song but only by a hairs-breadth.

Production is typically sleek and spacious, given the artist's seasoning as a session musician and arranger. Gold's voice has clearly gained a new strength and refined timbre, which may be an explanation for the ballads, since they allow him to show off his smooth falsetto and finesse with grace notes. But I hope that next time he'll offset his new fondness for roll with a little more rock. S.S.



Andrew Gold—light rock, heavy roll

Emmylou Harris: *Quarter Moon in a Ten Cent Town*. Brian Ahern, producer. Warner Bros. BSK 3141, \$7.98. Tape: ●● M5 3141, ●● M8 3141, \$7.98.

Anne Murray: *Let's Keep It That Way*. Jim Ed Norman, producer. Capitol ST 11743, \$7.98. Tape: ●● 4XT 11743, ●● 8XT 11743, \$7.98.

Emmylou Harris and Anne Murray are singers with exceptional voices who record mediocre material with mediocre producers. Both are leery of seeming assertive in public and take pains to appear pensive but punky. "Quarter Moon in a Ten Cent Town" is Harris' fourth album; it sports the same producer and musicians as her previous three, and exhibits the same weaknesses: a whining folkiness and a general lack of aesthetic nerve. Only on Delbert McClinton's *Two More Bottles of Wine* does she come close to allowing that high, desolate-sounding voice to really rip through. For the rest, "Quarter Moon" opts for the stickily sentimental and the ponderously elegiac. She covers Dolly Parton's *To Daddy* by imitating Parton's babyish coo, which seems extremely out of character for a woman as self-consciously mature as Harris. And her seltzer-clear soprano grates when set against Willie Nelson's fascinatingly weird tenor on *One Paper Kid*.

Harris' mentor Gram Parsons used to give her old honky-tonk ballads to stretch her thin, often rather expressionless voice; he knew that she would sound even more starkly beautiful when forced into extremes of emotion and pitch. Left to her own selection, or perhaps that of her producer/husband Brian Ahern, most of her solo career's material has been intended to depict her as thoughtful and shiveringly delicate. This does not give proper credit to her instrument. All of that sensitive stuff is obvious as soon as she opens her mouth—it's the other side of her, the rowdy but proud side, that needs exposure.

Anne Murray's misguided use of her talent is even more obvious, and poignant, than Harris'. Murray's first big hit, *Snowbird*, introduced a husky voice with an ingratiating cold-in-the-nose quality. *Snowbird* was fluff, but her seriousness of intent gave the song integrity. But that is the way she approaches every record, and fluff piles up: By now she's mired in it. The last time she let that voice loose was when she covered a Beatles song, *You Won't See Me*, and infused it with anger and withering humor. "Let's Keep It That Way" is her usual heroic battle with bilge. All of Murray's various producers have tried to replicate *Snowbird's* success on both the pop and country charts, and Jim Ed Norman is no exception. The hoped-for smashes on this at-

tempt are the title track and *Walk Right Back*. You can tell, because both have lilting choruses (pop) and strategically placed steel guitars (country)—the calculation is that simple. The rest of "Let's



Emmylou Harris (top), Anne Murray

Keep It" is gently orchestrated pap, with Johnny Nash's *Hold Me Tight* an especially egregious selection to twist Murray's pipes.

Both of these women are wasteful of their skills and apparently willing accomplices in their own creative submission. That they are potentially so good makes this situation all the more frustrating. K.T.

Gordon Lightfoot: *Endless Wire*. Lenny Waronker & Gordon Lightfoot, producers. Warner Bros. BSK 3149, \$7.98. Tape: ●● M5 3149, ●● M8 3149, \$7.98.

"Beats me," shrugged a friend when I asked him what he thought about the new Gordon Lightfoot album. "I can never tell them apart." Unfortunately, you can tell "Endless Wire" apart from its umpteen predecessors, and the contrast isn't flattering. For Lightfoot seems to have lost his sturdy consistency and

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Jazz

BY DON HECKMAN & JOHN S. WILSON

John Coates Jr.: Alone and Live at the Deer Head. Yoshio Inomata, producer. *Omnisound, Inc.*, \$6.98. *By mail from Omnisound, Inc. Delaware Water Gap, Pa. 18327.*

Coates is a real find. How many other first-class piano soloists would be content to spend their time living and working in the outer areas of Eastern Pennsylvania? Coates plays brilliant, commanding solo piano in a style that owes as many debts to Keith Jarrett as to more traditional sources like Art Tatum and James P. Johnson. He relies mostly on original material, usually in the form of spontaneous improvisations, but he can also deal handily with standards like *When It's Sleepy Time Down South*. The disc may not be available locally, but it's well worth seeking out. D.H.

Ornette Coleman: Coleman Classics, Vol. 1. Paul Bley, producer. *Improvising Artists IAI 37.38.52*, \$6.98.

This is an extremely valuable recording that provides the first glimpse of Coleman's playing *prior* to his much ballyhooed debut on Contemporary Records in the late Fifties. His performances on two originals—*When Will the Blues Leave* and *Ramblin'*—both recorded later in different versions, should still any lingering doubts about his ability to play traditionally cadenced improvisations. And both the spirit and the substance of his work are superior to those of his early recordings, perhaps because these 1958 "live" club sessions were loose and relaxed in a way that his later, much-publicized recording dates were not. A vital chronicle of an important episode in contemporary music. D.H.

Duke Ellington: 1939. Martin Williams, producer. *The Smithsonian Collection R 010*, \$9.99 (two discs). *By mail from Smithsonian Customer Service, P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50336.*

Duke Ellington's recorded output in 1939 has been, to a great extent, overlooked because it was overshadowed by his work in the three years that followed. His orchestra was at its peak during 1940-42, with all its most brilliant soloists, and the Duke was on the greatest creative binge of his career. But this did not happen in a vacuum, and in this set we find Duke on the threshold of it all. By the standards of most other musicians, 1939 would have been a brilliant year with such pieces as *Pussy Willow*, *Subtle Lament*, *Finesse*, *Serenade to Sweden*, *The Sergeant Was Shy*, and *Tootin' Through the Roof*. Also included are his first two duets with Jimmy Blanton as well as the first American release of an Ellington solo, *Informal Blues*, which is a casual, relaxed performance more characteristic of his late-Twenties/early-Thirties style than the work that lay just ahead. J.S.W.

Gene Harris: Tone Tantrum. Jerry Peters, producer. *Blue Note BN-LA 760H*, \$7.98. *Tape: ● CA 760H, ● EA 760H*, \$7.98.

Harris is best known, of course, as the pianist/leader of the

successful cocktail jazz group, the Three Sounds. He has been moving recently toward more of a crossover sound—a logical progression for a performer who has always had an intuitive understanding of what works best commercially. What he does with Stevie Wonder's *As* and the standard *Stranger in Paradise*, however, isn't going to delight too many jazz fans. And Duke Pearson's classic *Cristo Redentor* is saved only by the belated entry of Donald Byrd's flugelhorn and trumpet solos. D.H.

New York Jazz Quartet: Surge. Horst Weber & Matthias Wincklemann, producers. *Inner City IC 3011*, \$6.98.

Although the New York Jazz Quartet has been around since 1969, playing often as the Roland Hanna Quartet or the Ron Carter Quartet (depending on who got the gig), it is just beginning to find its way onto records. Hanna and Frank Wess are the veterans of the early ensemble, with George Mraz and Richie Pratt now on bass and drums. This set conveys only part of the group's capabilities, and Wess's work on flute stands out. Since his days with the Basie band twenty years ago, he has managed to elicit more of a jazz quality than any other putative jazz flutist. In these pieces, he brings the instrument even more firmly into a jazz context by adding a strength and depth to his phrasing that give the flute a drive and projection almost like that of a clarinet. A swinging ensemble attack is evident all through the set, but, aside from a dreamy pastel on *Placitude*, Hanna's piano potential is kept under wraps. J.S.W.

Soprano Summit: Crazy Rhythm. Hank O'Neal, producer. *Chiaroscuro CR 178*, \$6.98.

The reed team of Bob Wilber and Kenny Davern has found a third wheel in Marty Grosz, whose acoustic guitar is as essential and enlivening to this set as the various saxophones and clarinets of his partners. Grosz, in fact, manages to pick up the momentum when neither coleader seems inspired on *There'll Be Some Changes Made*. Otherwise, this is a fascinatingly varied collection in which Davern adds a C melody saxophone to the instrumental arsenal, playing with a breathy, somewhat gutty style that leans toward the Ben Webster approach on tenor. Material includes Coleman Hawkins' sinuous, rarely heard *Netcha's Dream*, a variation of the classic Whiteman arrangement of *When Day Is Done*, and Davern's clarinet tribute to Pee Wee Russell, *I'd Climb the Highest Mountain*. J.S.W.

Ross Tompkins: Lost in the Stars. Carl E. Jefferson, producer. *Concord Jazz CJ 46*, \$7.98.

Tompkins comes the closest of any pianist today to being the inheritor of the late Eddie Costa's rumbling, rambunctious attack. Costa's was a style that built tremendous rhythmic momentum and, even in the slower, more deliberate passages, had an appealing swagger. Tompkins balances this with heavy, punched-out chords and some frothy surface glitter, all of which is particularly effective when he has this kind of backing: Ray Brown's beautiful intonation and gliding notes not only form a strong solo base, but add glancing lights and colors within Tompkins' lines, and drummer Jake Hanna plays with an open sense of joy. The ensemble openings and closings are particularly good and, conversely, Tompkins' two unaccompanied ad lib solos are the weakest pieces because they don't have his energizing rhythmic attack. J.S.W.

A Polished Debut for Double Image

by John S. Wilson

The vibraphone, or vibraharp (depending on whose trademark you use), is the only mallet instrument that has found a secure place in jazz—despite the music's emphasis on rhythm and percussion. Red Norvo, the jazz-mallet pioneer, switched in the early Forties from the wood-keyed xylophone to vibes, and Lionel Hampton was the first to give the instrument a true jazz identity when he joined the Benny Goodman Quartet in 1936. (Bass saxophonist Adrian Rollini played it in the early '30s but failed to make an equivalent jazz impression.) Scarcely anyone followed in Hampton's footsteps until Milt Jackson appeared in

the mid-Forties; since then there has been a steady stream of vibists while other mallet instruments continue to be virtually ignored.

David Friedman and Dave Samuels of Double Image might have gone on concentrating solely on vibes had they not been faced with a need to expand their quartet's sound. The group's roots go back to 1973 when Friedman and bassist Harvie Swartz formed a duo. A year later Samuels joined and, because this produced too much similarity of sound, they brought in a marimba. That way both Friedman and Samuels could switch back and forth between marimba and

vibes—a sort of double image. The quartet was completed early in 1977 by Michael DiPasqua. He initially played a standard drummer's role but has gradually collected an arsenal of percussion instruments, adding some wonderful colors to the group's sound.

Although "Double Image" was recorded when the foursome had been together for less than four months, it is a landmark LP and belongs in a league with the early recordings of the Modern Jazz Quartet. Not just because Double Image is also a quartet but because, like the MJQ, it is breaking new ground and doing so with highly creative musical intelligence. Their repertory of original material shows Friedman, Samuels, and Swartz to be imaginative yet disciplined composers, working with a total concept—not merely statements and solos. This makes the MJQ a reference point again, and there is also a strong relationship to the work of another mallet man, Gary Burton.

There is, however, much more that is distinctively Double Image. The use of the marimba gives it a sound that has never been adequately explored in jazz. Both Samuels and Friedman bring strongly developed jazz sensitivities to it, and the combination of marimba and vibes takes them into new areas of blending and contrast. In addition, Swartz is as much a part of the front line as he is of the rhythm section, moving persuasively from one position to the other, while DiPasqua's percussion is a kaleidoscope of colorful touches that heighten or underline the other three players.

As a debut recording, these are remarkably polished and finished performances. But one gets the feeling that this quartet is just beginning to explore its potential and that, like the MJQ, it will use these initial statements as a firm foundation on which to build a fresh and adventurous body of work. ●



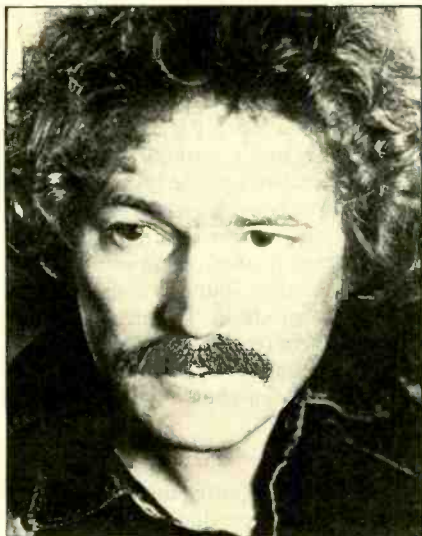
Michael DiPasqua, Harvie Swartz, David Friedman, Dave Samuels

Double Image. Horst Weber and Matthias Winckelmann, producers. *Inner City* IC 3013, \$7.98.

Continued from page 138
lapsed into mere mediocrity.

The difference is immediately apparent in the faltering vocals. Lightfoot's singing has never been virtuosic (and often not even on pitch), but it has always resonated with self-assurance. Here, however, his voice sounds woozy or pinched and strained or—worst of all—simply listless. His performance on *If There's a Reason* is so clubfooted it's painful.

The lavish arrangements on "Endless Wire" alternate goopy strings with Terry Clements' rock guitar, but the opulence only underscores the singer's diminished capacities—as if he were a corpse laid out



Gordon Lightfoot

in a deluxe casket. The billowing strings in particular play up the sentimentality in which the lyrics indulge. Though Lightfoot's saving grace has usually been his tough-minded refusal to pity himself or others, pathos reigns supreme here.

There are, to be sure, a couple of exceptions—most notably *If Children Had Wings*, which simultaneously laments and celebrates a failed marriage that will never die, despite divorce. But Lightfoot's strengths have been his singing and his stance, both of which stumble this time around. And, since few of his melodies are striking originals (everything from Sam Cooke's *Bring It on Home to Me* to the Blue Oyster Cult's *Don't Fear the Reaper*), "Endless Wire" snaps a long string of superlative records. K.E.

Bette Midler: Broken Blossom. Brooks Arthur, producer. *Atlantic SD 19151*, \$7.98. *Tape: CS 19151, TP 19151*, \$7.98.

Somewhere in this motley collection of golden oldies, double-entendre blues, and characterless contemporary tunes

lurks the real Bette Midler. Where? Who knows?

There surely can be no doubt that Midler is one of the premier performers of the day. In nightclub, concert, or television appearances she is a brilliant master of timing—balancing brightly bitchy one-liners with evocative interpretations of songs that range from pop standards to rhythm and blues. Alas, on her recent recordings little of that colorful panache comes through.

A good part of the problem with "Bro-

ken Blossom" lies in the production and selection of material. The choice of producer Brooks Arthur has not proven quite as disastrous as the choice of "Moogy" Klingman for her last outing, but it ain't all that good, either. Arthur's most effective production style—a sort of modified, Joel Dorn-ish, floating jazz—has been abandoned in favor of a faceless, let's-see-if-this-will-work attitude. *Paradise* and *You Don't Know Me*, for example, sink without a trace into a dense, Spectorish ocean of sound. *Make*



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Yourself Comfortable and Billy Joel's bright swipe *Say Goodbye to Hollywood* drift into silly satires of Fifties rock & roll.

Empty Bed Blues and *I Never Talk to Strangers* are curiosities. The former is a gross, sexually insulting song that Bessie Smith recorded in 1928 under pressure to maintain her record sales with interpretations of suggestive material. Midler's fabled fascination with tackiness might have made it an understandable



Midler—ill at ease in the studio

choice, but tackiness on top of tackiness is pushing matters a bit too far. *Strangers*, performed as a duet with its author Tom Waits, is a curious amalgam of Waits's tawdry imitation of Louis Armstrong and Midler's unsuccessful effort to clone herself into a jazz singer. *Storybook Children* and *Red* are undistinguished numbers that receive undistinguished treatment. Two ballads—*A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes* and *La Vie en Rose*—are apparently intended as interpretive *pièces de résistance*; they are, instead, studies in excessive mannerisms. Only *Yellow Beach Umbrella*, a lightweight, optimistic song by Craig Doerge and Judy Henske, has the right production, the right style, and the right tinge of Midler acerbity.

That Midler can sing is beyond discussion. Both her natural instrument and her sense of how to use it are at least comparable with the skills of Barbra Streisand, her most obvious competitor. But Midler, since the success of her first recording, has sounded increasingly uncomfortable in the studio. The sarcastic bits of fluff that work, somehow, in her live performances, sound silly and out of joint on record. (Her introductions to *Dream* and *Strangers* undercut whatever value the tunes might have had.) And the production gimmickery overwhelms whatever feelings—beyond her ever-con-

stant sarcasm—she might project into these songs. The result is passive and antiseptic. Too bad. Bette Midler may be potentially the best new all-around entertainer to emerge in the Seventies. But you would never know it from her performances on "Broken Blossom." D.H.

Johnny Guitar Watson: Funk Beyond the Call of Duty. Johnny Guitar Watson, producer. *DJM Records DJLPA 714*, \$7.98. *Tape: ●● DJMC 714, ● DJM8 714*, \$7.95.

As the title track opens the LP with a standard mid-paced funk rhythm, it sounds like it's cliché time again. Then in comes one laidback, low-down citizen with a tone full of evil street urbanity, and things are never the same.

The slow-rocking rhythm of *It's About the Dollar Bill* should send the studio funk-pumpers blushing toward the woodshed. Its knowing view of what life is all about makes them sound both naive and frenetic and reminds us that the gully-low blues is where funk began.

It's not that Watson is a *great* singer, though his voice worms its way insinuatingly into your memory and stays there for days. Nor is he a *great* guitarist. His solos do their thing so matter-of-factly that you're apt not to notice how they ooze with the blues that pop/r&b has abandoned in favor of British rock & roll. No, Watson's real medium is his message. In *It's a Damn Shame*, it's the perverseness of daily life in general; in *Barn Door* it's the stupidity of working so hard to become hip; and in *I'm Gonna Get You Baby*, it's good old lust. In every track—even the couple of faintly derisive nods toward conventional soul balladry—he applies the almost lost blues philosophy. It's a compound of rather vexed humor and slightly cynical passion. Unlike the tragic hero, Watson doesn't waste time shaking his fist at fate—he's too busy slipping a banana skin under its foot. J.S.R.

JAZZ

George Benson: Weekend in L.A. Tommy LiPuma, producer. *Warner Bros. 2WB 3139*, \$12.98. *Tape: ●● J5A 3139, ● J8A 3139*, \$12.98.

If there have been any doubts that George Benson has a firm grip on the fusion soul/jazz market, this live concert album should firmly dispel them. Aided by a backup group that is right at the cutting edge of perfection—Harvey Mason on drums, Ralph MacDonald on percus-

sion, Ronnie Foster and Jorge Dalto on keyboards, and Phil Upchurch on rhythm guitar—Benson zings through eleven pieces that firmly establish his affinity for this particular kind of music.

The real question, of course, is how one feels about fusion jazz and what kind of lasting value it has. Benson's gifts as a vocalist leave a lot to be desired. His interpretations of Leon Russell's *Lady Blue* as well as the standards *On Broadway* and *It's All in the Game* are simply not anywhere near the special character of *This Masquerade*. His guitar work, on the other hand, is absolutely stunning. So good, in fact, that it raises a very real question: Is the kind of music he has chosen to play providing him with the kind of challenge his talent demands? I think not.

I wonder, too, why his label has been so cheap with this album. There is no listing of tunes nor of who plays what solo, no liner notes, nothing that is suggestive of Benson's prime importance to the Warner catalog. I wonder also about the peculiar and persistently annoying use of a string synthesizer on some of the cuts. This kind of sound is a special affectation of producer Tommy LiPuma, but its use here (tracked in after the performance?) simply has nothing to do with the live, high-energy music of Benson in concert. D.H.

Stanley Cowell: Waiting for the Moment. Ed Michel, producer. *Galaxy Records GXY 5104*, \$7.98. *Tape: ●● 5 5104, ● 8 5104*, \$7.98.

It would be hard to imagine a more likely candidate for fusion/crossover prominence than pianist Stanley Cowell. A brilliant technician, a superb improviser, and—perhaps most important of all—a thinking musician, he seems to have all the necessary attributes. Yet he has remained somewhat out of the spotlight lately, apparently content to concentrate on his own record company, Strata-East, and his membership in the Collective Black Artists Ensemble.

This release from Galaxy (a new label associated with Fantasy Records) represents Cowell's first real effort to move into the arena now populated by the likes of Keith Jarrett and Chick Corea. The results are mixed. One side of the disc is devoted to solo acoustic piano performances—very good ones, in fact. The other side is less appealing: a mish-mash of overdubbed keyboard tracks clearly intended to show that Cowell can run in the disco/jazz derby as well as anyone.

The two high points of Side 1 are Bud Powell's *Parisian Thoroughfare* and Thelonious Monk's *'Round Midnight*. On

Continued on page 146

New Acts

BY JIM MELANSON

Willie Alexander and the Boom Boom Band. Craig Leon, producer. *MCA 2323*, \$6.98. *Tape: MCAC 2323, MCAT 2323*, \$7.98.

Production on this album makes it a respectable entry into the New Wave sweepstakes. Unfortunately, Willie Alexander's material fails to impress the nonaficionado. Early American rock & roll and British influences pop up throughout (Alexander is a veteran of the Lost and Velvet) but are generally overshadowed by bland lyric litanies. Don't expect this group to stay afloat for too long.

Angel: White Hot. Eddie Leonetti, producer. *Casablanca NBLP 7085*, \$7.98. *Tape: NBLP5 7085, NBLP8 7085*, \$7.98.

High energy rock here, with the synthesized sounds even more upfront than those of Kiss or Aerosmith. With all five members of Angel clad in white jumpsuits, the group is the visual antithesis of Kiss, though they'll probably receive equal-time hype from their shared label. *The Winter Song* is an exception to the listening tedium that pervades both sides: it's the most likely cut to break them into the national spotlight.

DENNE&GOLD



Denne and Gold. George Lee, producer. *MCA 2303*, \$7.98. *Tape: MCAC 2303, MCAT 2303*, \$7.98.

A debut that signals bright horizons for Britons Mickey Denne and Ken Gold, both already well known in industry circles for their songwriting skills. Their musical bag ranges from soft-rock ballads to well arranged uptempo numbers and invites comparisons to England Dan & John Ford Coley. The cuts *It Hurts to Watch a Good Thing Die* and *Midnite Creeper* give a good idea of the diversity of their talents. They're good; expect improvement with more time in the studio.

Brian Elliot. Erik Jacobsen & Brian Elliot, producers. *Warner Bros. BSK 3148*, \$7.98. *Tape: M5 3148, M8 3148*, \$7.98.

Singer/songwriter Brian Elliot is one of those esoteric types that Warner Bros. has long been fond of nurturing. Occasionally one or two of them will gain popular success (Leon Redbone, for instance), but most either fall by the wayside

or retire to a small cultist label. Elliot will probably end up in the latter category. The songs, hardly inspired, are a kind of popish folk/rock. Investigate only if you have money to burn.

Amanda Lear: I Am a Photograph. Anthony Monn, producer. *Chrysalis CHR 1173*, \$7.98. *Tape: CCH 1173, 8CH 1173*, \$7.98.

Would you believe Marlene Dietrich singing disco? Close your eyes and give a listen—you might. Recorded in Munich, this LP spotlights Lear (already well-known to French and German disco-goers) in a singing/talking role. Oddly enough, while not featuring the hottest dance material, it works. Check out the cut *Alphabet*: it's as clever as it is cute.



Sharon Redd, Ula Hedwig, Charlotte Crossley—Formerly of the Harlettes. David Rubinson, producer. *Columbia JC 35250*, \$7.98. *Tape: JCT 35250, JCA 35250*, \$7.98.



The Harlettes are Bette Midler's vocal backup group. A good deal of the material sung by these three talented ladies will be familiar to you: *Maiden Voyage* (as recorded by Herbie Hancock), *Cash In* (Phoebe Snow), *Put It Where You Want It* (the Crusaders). They do it all—disco, r&b, progressive, and pop. Production is excellent, but some solid original material would have helped. Voice quality is thin—both individually and as a group—but it's worth a listen.

The Rutles. Neil Innes, producer. *Warner Bros. H5 3151*, \$8.98. *Tape: HSW5 3151, HSW8 3151*, \$8.98.

The intentional sound-alike quality to the early Beatles is going to generate a lot of exposure for this act. However, I find this kind of mimicry, no matter how cleverly done, to be tasteless and exploitative—of the listener. The lyrics are quite good, but the melodies and the playing style are just too too imitative. Who's next, the Rolling Stones? The Who?



Valentine. Tony Camillo, producer. *RCA APL 1-2372*, \$6.98. *Tape: APK 1-2372, APS 1-2372*, \$7.98.

This five-man band sports Sylvester Stallone's brother Frank, who wrote *Take You Back* (*Street Corner Song* from "Rocky") and performed it in the movie. But it's going to take more than a name to break Valentine. Their sound is a mixture of disco/pop and contemporary ballads, with lead vocals shared by three members. Basically, they're good, but don't expect them to make the charts.

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Continued from page 142

Parisian, Cowell uses his remarkable technique to electrifying effect. He whizzes around the piano like a demon, creating overlapping waves of Parisian taxi horns, street noises, fragmentary melodies, and all the Gershwin-esque fantasies that obviously inspired Powell's original conception of the theme. On *Midnight* he takes another tack—more spare, more angular, and again receptive to the composer's intentions. These are two brilliant interpretive performances, and it's a shame that the rest of the album cannot be similarly complimented.

D.H.

Bill Evans: Alone (Again). Helen Keane, producer. *Fantasy Records F 9542*, \$7.98. *Tape*: ●● 5 9542, ●● 8 9542, \$7.98.

It's strange that, after some twenty years as a major jazz performer, pianist Bill Evans should project such an isolated



Bill Evans—too close to cocktail

persona. This is surely his third or fourth solo album (some past efforts were recorded with his own overdubs), yet his improvisational style has increasingly reflected that sense of aloneness.

He performs only five pieces here—*The Touch of Your Lips*, *In Your Own Sweet Way*, *Make Someone Happy*, *What Kind of Fool Am I*, and *People*—all of them, with the exception of Dave Brubeck's *Sweet Way*, standards. One would ordinarily expect a major jazz improviser to approach material like this from some sort of oblique direction; Art Tatum and Fats Waller, after all, found plenty of room to maneuver when they played similarly hackneyed material. But Evans' somnolent lethargy makes everything sound perilously close to cocktail jazz. One can almost hear the glasses tinkling and the cash register clanging in the distance. It is time, I suspect, for him to start doing some creative re-evaluating, find a new producer, and provide himself with the kind of stimuli that can bring his remarkable gifts back to life.

D.H.

Marty Grosz & Wayne Wright: Let Your Fingers Do the Walking. Jerry Valburn, producer. *A viva 6000*, \$6.98.

It was inevitable that two such adventurous spirits as Marty Grosz and Wayne Wright should get together. Grosz was a pillar of Chicago's contemporary Swing Era jazz pool for many years, playing a compelling rhythm guitar in ensembles and soloing in a chorded style like that of Al Casey, Fats Waller's swinging guitarist. Also a singer, he has a remarkable collection of old pop and novelty material that he delivers in a style directly derivative of Waller, even unto the asides. (Not unnaturally, many of the songs were sung by Waller.) Recently Grosz moved to New York, where he encountered Wright, a left-handed guitarist who has been playing rhythm guitar in show bands, backing various singers, and performing with Benny Goodman, Gerry Mulligan, and Jazz a Cordes (a group in the tradition of the Quintet of the Hot Club of France).

Both Grosz and Wright are addicted to the acoustic guitar and have a special fondness for the classical, pre-Christian, pre-electric era. This set of unaccompanied guitar duets uses that period as a foundation but expands on it with some of Grosz's own contemporary contributions. Since both artists have had long experience playing rhythm guitar, the rhythms are bright and airy as they go through *Cross Your Heart* (a tune Artie Shaw's Gramercy Five brought into jazz) and *Blues My Naughty Sweeties Gives to Me*. They also have a charming ballad style on *Street of Dreams* and *Sky-lark*, with Wright the predominant soloist on both. Grosz's Waller vocal style, which has become more relaxed and less self-conscious, is displayed on *A Porter's Love Song* and *I Believe in Miracles*.

And they pay their respects to a pair of guitar duos of the past—Carl Kress and Dick McDonough, Carmen Mastren and Albert Harris—by including several of



Grosz and Wright—acoustic addicts

their compositions (although these are basically novelties). But the most promising thing about the set, and an indication that Grosz and Wright are not locked into the past, is that some of the best pieces are Grosz originals. The album's title tune is one, as is *Slightly Under the Weather*, a marvelously evocative tune cowritten with Bob Wilber. J.S.W.

Scott Hamilton. Carl E. Jefferson, producer. *Concord Jazz CJ 42*, \$7.98.

The most provocative young saxophonist to turn up in New York in many years is twenty-four-year-old Scott Hamilton. Provocative, because he does not follow the path taken by virtually every other young contemporary saxophonist. And, at the same time, he doesn't simply copy styles of earlier periods. Hamilton grew up listening to the great performers of the '30s and '40s—Hawkins, Webster,



Scott Hamilton

Paul Gonsalves, Illinois Jacquet, Lucky Thompson, Flip Phillips—on whom the whole development of the jazz saxophone is based. However, rather than picking up on the developments that sprang from these roots, he stayed with his sources and developed his own way of playing as he grew musically. As a result, you can hear the rich colorations of, most notably, Hawkins and Webster but in a context that is Hamilton's own.

On this disc, the intimate, breathy warmth of Webster suffuses *That's All* while Hawkins' gutty drive dominates his own piece, *Stuffy*. Most of the selections serve as an exposition of Hamilton's personalized development of his sources, particularly *Sometimes I'm Happy*. Bill Berry spells him with some crisp trumpet solos, mostly muted, Nat Pierce pours out jovial piano solos that keep turning into romping Basie, and Monty Budwig and Jake Hanna keep things swinging on bass and drums. This is a great showcase for Hamilton as well as an ensemble performance that epitomizes the spirit of the era that Hamilton draws upon.

J.S.W.

Crosby, Stills & Nash: CSN. WBP, 12 songs, \$7.95.

A talented threesome celebrates its fifth reunion with this new match-the-album folio. Although Crosby, Stills, and Nash do not write in collaboration with each other, they are all of one musical mind, which is—sometimes—elliptic. Their distinctive above-the-lead vocal harmonies can lead to some confusion as to the true melody line, and in some cases what you see on the printed page does not match the recording engineer's reading of the lead vocal in his final mix. The boys are in desperate need of another "Deja Vu" LP success story, and this isn't it. Nonetheless, the book is a graphic delight, printed on excellent stock, and well worth the inflationary price.

John Denver: I Want to Live. CLP, 11 songs, \$5.95.

The John Denver Music Factory has gifted us with a sure winner. "I Want to Live," edited by Milton Okun and associate Dan Fox, is, would you believe, the twelfth successful collaboration of these three talented people. Mr. Denver knows what the public wants to hear and either writes it himself or chooses appropriate material by (in this case) fellow folkies Tom Paxton, Eric Andersen, Bill Danoff, and Jim Ibbotson.

Mr. Okun and Mr. Fox, like the performer, are ecology enthusiasts. No wasteful three-line piano-vocals here; two lines will accomplish all (and more) that is necessary for a crisp printed duplication of the dulcet Denver phrasings. Though the book's stark black-and-white cover portrait is not of the utmost aesthetic appeal, this time it's what's inside that counts. And on all counts this is a must purchase.

The Emotions: Rejoice. AP, 12 songs, \$5.95.

The Emotions' optimum outlet is soft soul, somewhere between the Supremes and Stephanie Mills. Their folio comprises all the music from the LP "Rejoice," plus three previously recorded

AP—Almo Publications
Big 3—Big 3 Publications
CLP—Cherry Lane Publications
CMC—Chappell Music Corp.
CPP—Columbia Pictures Publications
MCA—MCA Music
TRO—TRO Publishing
UA—United Artists Music Publishing

tunes; it does not, unaccountably, include an important "hook" section of one of their best songs, *Blessed*. Due to the gospel orientation of the material, the home pianist is forced to maneuver delicately through a forest of sixteenth notes, some of them grating to sensitive ears. Purists also may shudder at forced rhymes such as "virtue" and "nurse you." But the English language can withstand these minor assaults, and the Emotions are certainly in tune with their times.

The Best of Hall & Oates. CMC, 13 songs, \$5.95.

The introductory bio of Messrs. H. and O. may be familiar to you. The publisher has lifted parts of it, as well as five of the thirteen selections, from last year's "Bigger than Both of Us" folio. The rest of the songs are from the albums "Silver," "Abandoned Luncheonette," "War Babies," and "No Goodbyes." It's not illegal: All's fair in war and the music business. If you liked Hall and Oates last year, you'll love them in 1978, especially with the addition of some previously unprinted beef-cake photos.



Denver the ecologist

101 Mellow Hits of the Superstars. WBP, 101 songs, \$7.95.

I too must be mellowing in my old age, or else Warner Bros.—after a long series of catch all musical pop-ups—is doing a Reggie Jackson on us. For this is an excellent collection of singable, playable contemporary (mostly) tunes. Perhaps a slight stretch is required to accept Art Garfunkel and Harry Nilsson as the progenitors of, respectively, *I Only Have Eyes for You* and *As Time Goes By*, songs that were written before either of these Superstars was even a Superfetus.

But look what else there is: Rod Stew-

art's *Killing of Georgie*, Rita Coolidge's recent hit *Higher and Higher*, the Eagles' *Peaceful Easy Feeling*, and Andrew Gold's *Lonely Boy*, to name only a few. A fine folio for the home musician and for club-date performers as well.

Ted Nugent: Cat Scratch Fever. WBP, 10 songs, \$5.95.

Where is finicky Morris when we need him? Mr. Nugent's advisers seem to think that an audience will swallow anything, but even Charlie the Tuna would hesitate before peddling this drivel as either tasty or good.

Saturday Night Fever—Original Soundtrack. WBP, 16 songs, \$7.95.

Imagine a prize package of salsa, reggae, and boogie-rock, artfully blended with that hypnotic "shing-shing" discobeat. Add to that melodies by the Bee Gees, Beethoven, and Kool and the Gang plus provocative poses by John Travolta, and you have *Saturday Night Fever*.

The recording, that is. The folio is something else again. The erotic excitement of the film's brilliant music evaporates rapidly as one attempts to struggle through the finger-shredding sixty-fourth notes of David Shire's Musorgsky adaptation, *Night on Disco Mountain*. Also, Shire is no slouch when it comes to syncopation: His *Manhattan Skyline* and *Salsation* require almost virtuosic pianistic technique, although they are presented here in what must be the most concise possible reduction from the orchestral score. It's a prize package all right, but be sure of your own musicianship before purchasing.

Also of interest this month is some middle-of-the-road rock from Eric Carmen (*Boats Against the Current, WBP, 8 songs, \$5.95*) and David Soul (*AP, 12 songs, \$5.95*); country-rock from Larry Gatlin (*Some of My Other Children, Big 3, 27 songs, \$6.95*) and Mary Kay Place (*Tonite! At the Capri Lounge, Loretta Haggars, WBP, 10 songs, \$5.95*). Also some soul-rock from the Brothers Johnson (*Right on Time, AP, 8 songs, \$5.95*); exuberant rock from Leo Sayer (*Endless Flight, AP, songs, \$5.95*); and last but by no means least, some equal-rights rock from the sisters Wilson and Heart (*Little Queen, WBP, 10 songs, \$5.95*).

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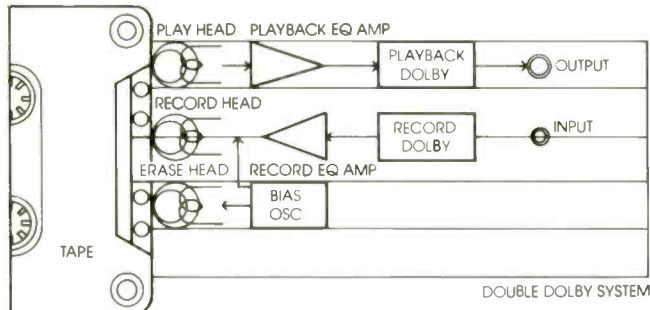
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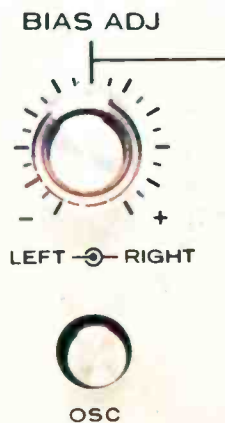
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