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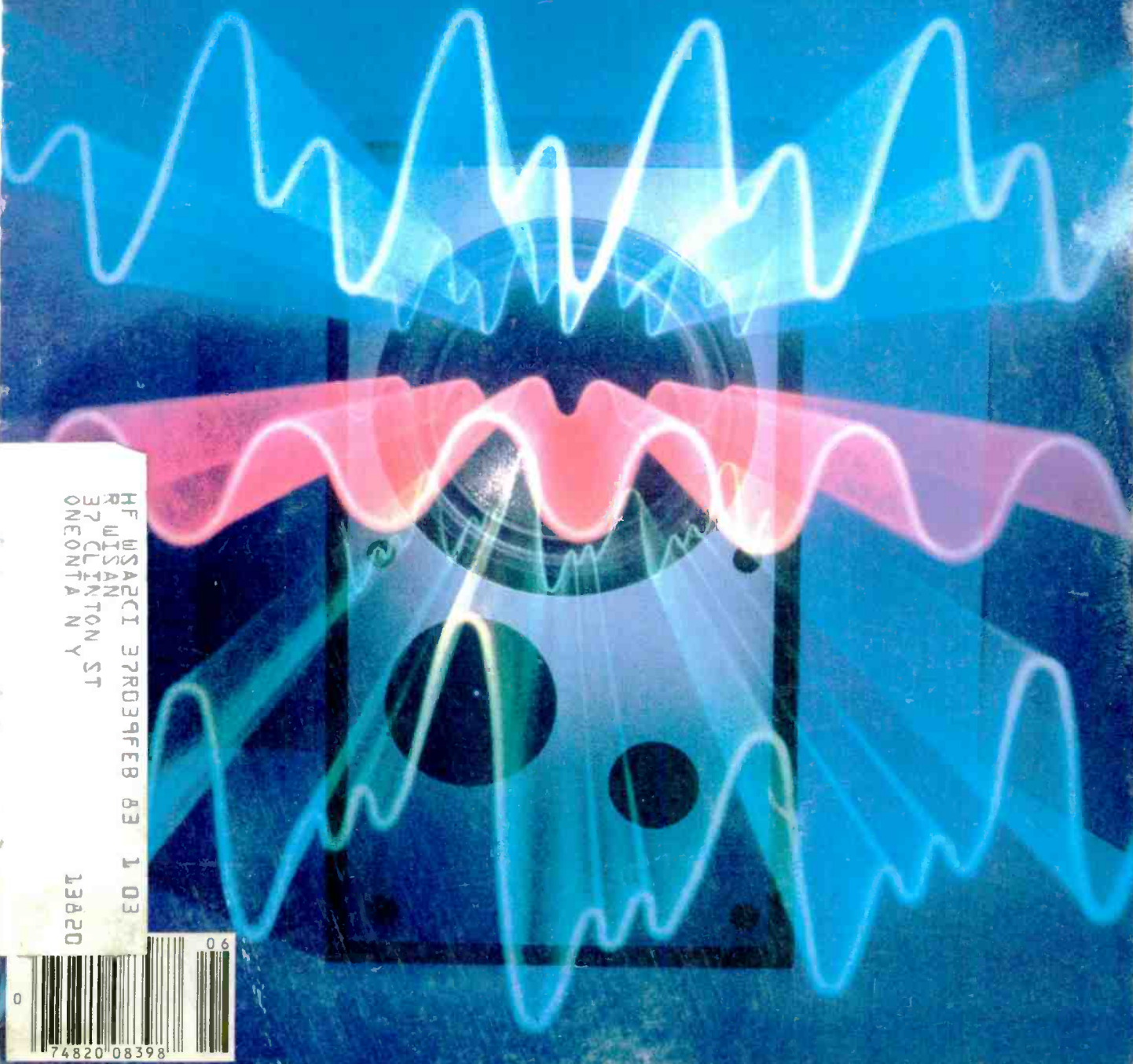
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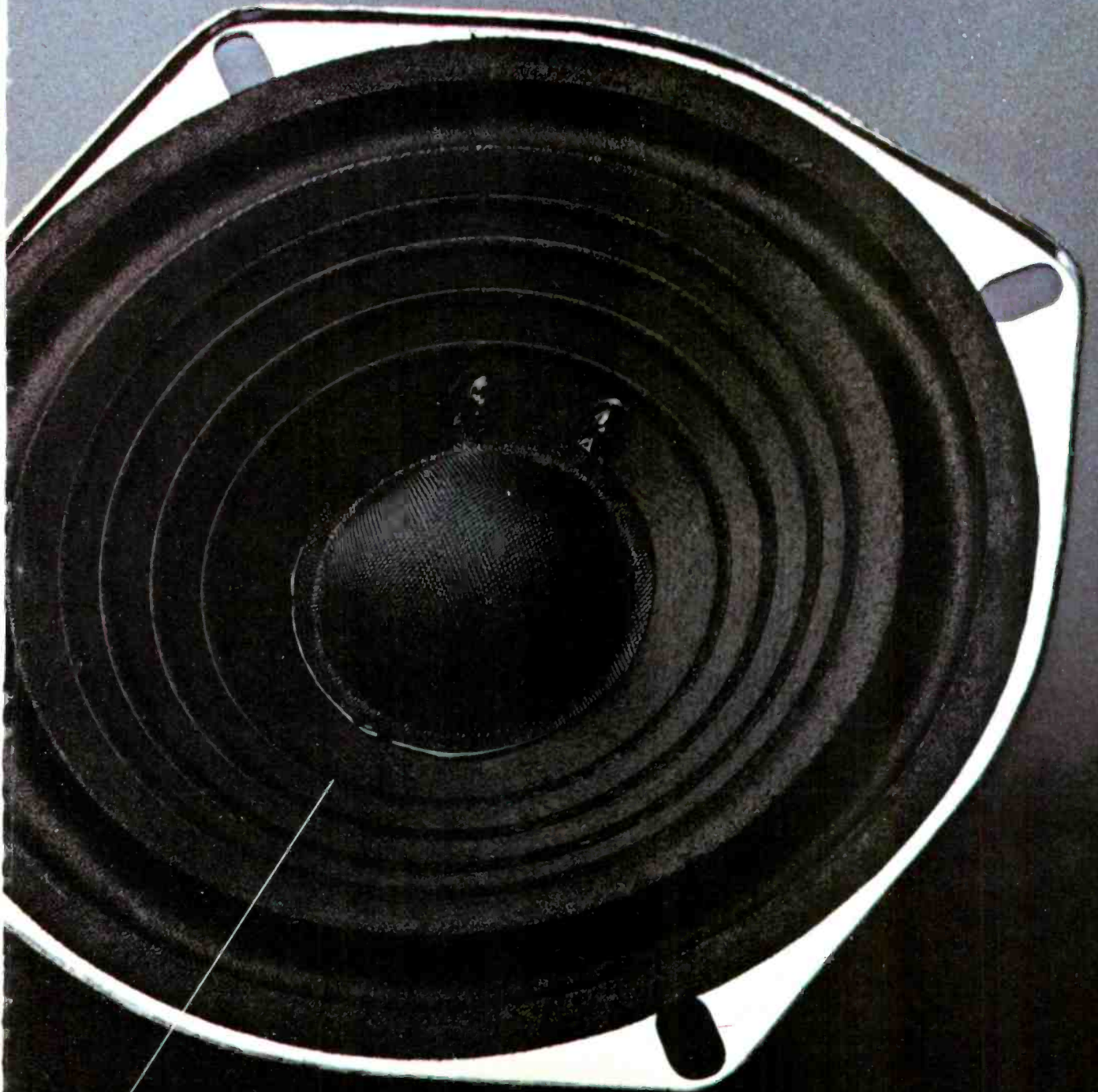
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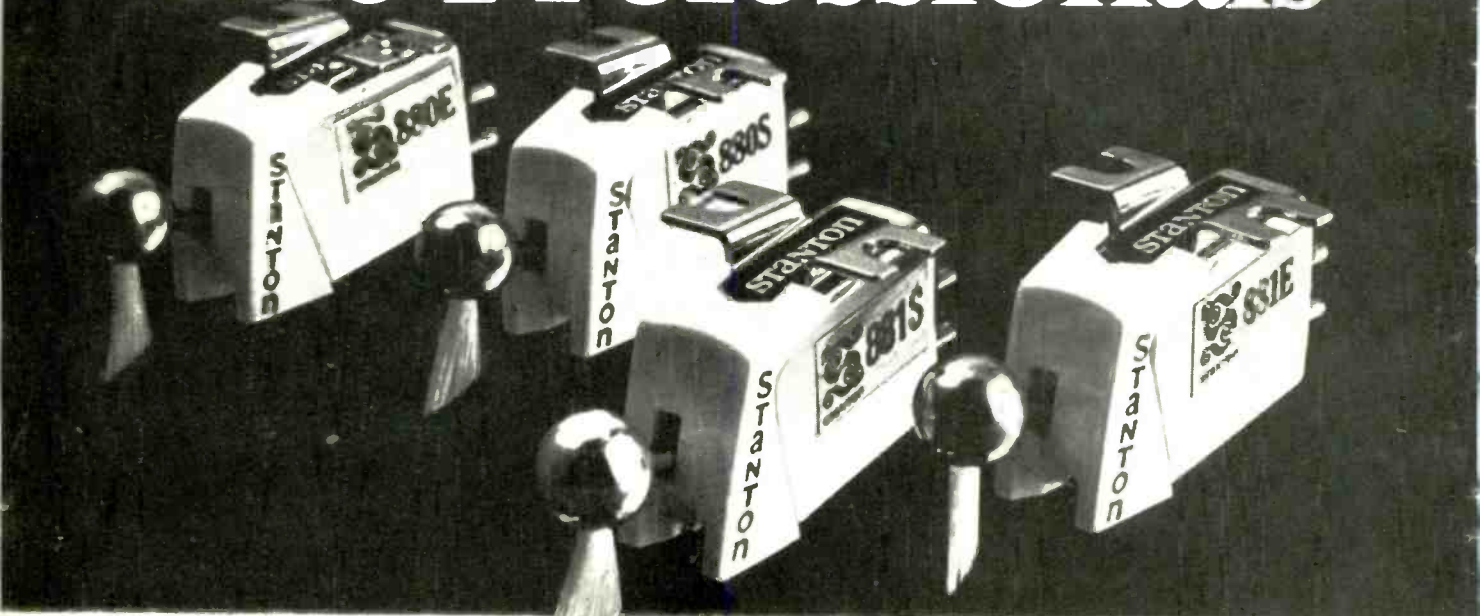
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Letters

Bartók Booster

As I have always been fascinated by Béla Bartók, I am responding to your issue [March] in which Paul Henry Lang and Curtis W. Davis, in particular, offered their valuable insights into the composer. I feel that he has a good chance of being designated the greatest composer of the twentieth century. Why must the nominees for that title be restricted to the Russian camp: Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich?



Bartók's music is permeated with overt classical purity, cleanliness of line, baroque leanness—qualities that Stravinsky does not always possess. Bartók's orchestration, somewhat like Beethoven's, is utterly direct and implies that we are hearing his actual untainted thoughts, unimpaired by attempts at color (as with Ravel, Debussy) or by sheer technical wizardry (Rimsky-Korsakov, Richard Strauss). I can't imagine him resorting to a phonograph recording of birdcalls or a wind machine.

When it comes to atonality and dissonance, Bartók had a knack for knowing where to draw the line, unlike Schoenberg and Prokofiev. (Perhaps I have old-fashioned ideas about melody and harmony.) Dissonances do color his music, but even in his less melodic works (e.g., the Second Piano Concerto and some of the string quartets) atonality is not permitted to dominate. Presumably he saw dissonance as only a device, not an end in itself.

For a composer of such immense stature, Bartók is less frequently played than he should be. I hope that the centenary of his birth will mark the beginning of a change.

James D. Maffett
Lakeland, Fla.

Bartók's "Bluebeard"

It was with sad heart that I read Karen Monson's review of Bartók's "Bluebeard's Castle" in the January is-

sue. Anyone who has read the account of Bartók's tormented stay in America, "The Naked Face of Genius," cannot but have etched on his memory the excruciating burden that life was for the composer and for the solicitous women who hovered over him as he inflicted his pain and perfectionism on them. "Bluebeard's Castle" may have been an attempt to give artistic form to his emotional coldness and remoteness from women who were drawn to him. At least this is the message I get from the program notes that accompany the mono release on the Bartók label.

I compared this Monson review with Kenneth Furie's careful and responsible analysis of Edo de Waart's rendition of "Der Rosenkavalier" [September 1977]. This was a difficult piece to organize, and yet it was done to perfection in a rather limited space, giving us particulars on the cast and the relative strengths and weaknesses of all the roles in an explicit and illuminating way. The reviewer gave us external data and musical criteria without intruding with irrelevant, subjective statements (e.g., Ms. Monson's "I feel compelled to say that this is not an antifeminist work...") This reviewer does not really have the stature to take on the piece assigned.

On the other hand, I wish to compliment the editor and staff on the consistently high quality of the classical reviews over the years. It's exhilarating to see music reported on in such civilized, witty, and joyful terms, knowledgeably, and with fresh and polished writing.

Ronald Haak
Kyoto, Japan

Sounding off on Digital

In the March "Letters," Jack Sullivan wrote unequivocally that "digital sounds better." Not always. The sound, as in analog recording, depends on the engineering and is subject to variation. Mehta's murky CBS recording of Beethoven's "Eroica" is a case in point.

Also, just because a recording is made digitally or direct-cut does not make it the best available. Mr. Sullivan can keep Telarc's "Pictures"; I prefer the Szell or Toscanini versions as better and more exciting performances. We are not "jaded," but rather more discerning, when we are not wowed by a mediocre rendition in ultrasound. The recent digital Saint-Saëns Third Symphony is splendid

ART CREDITS

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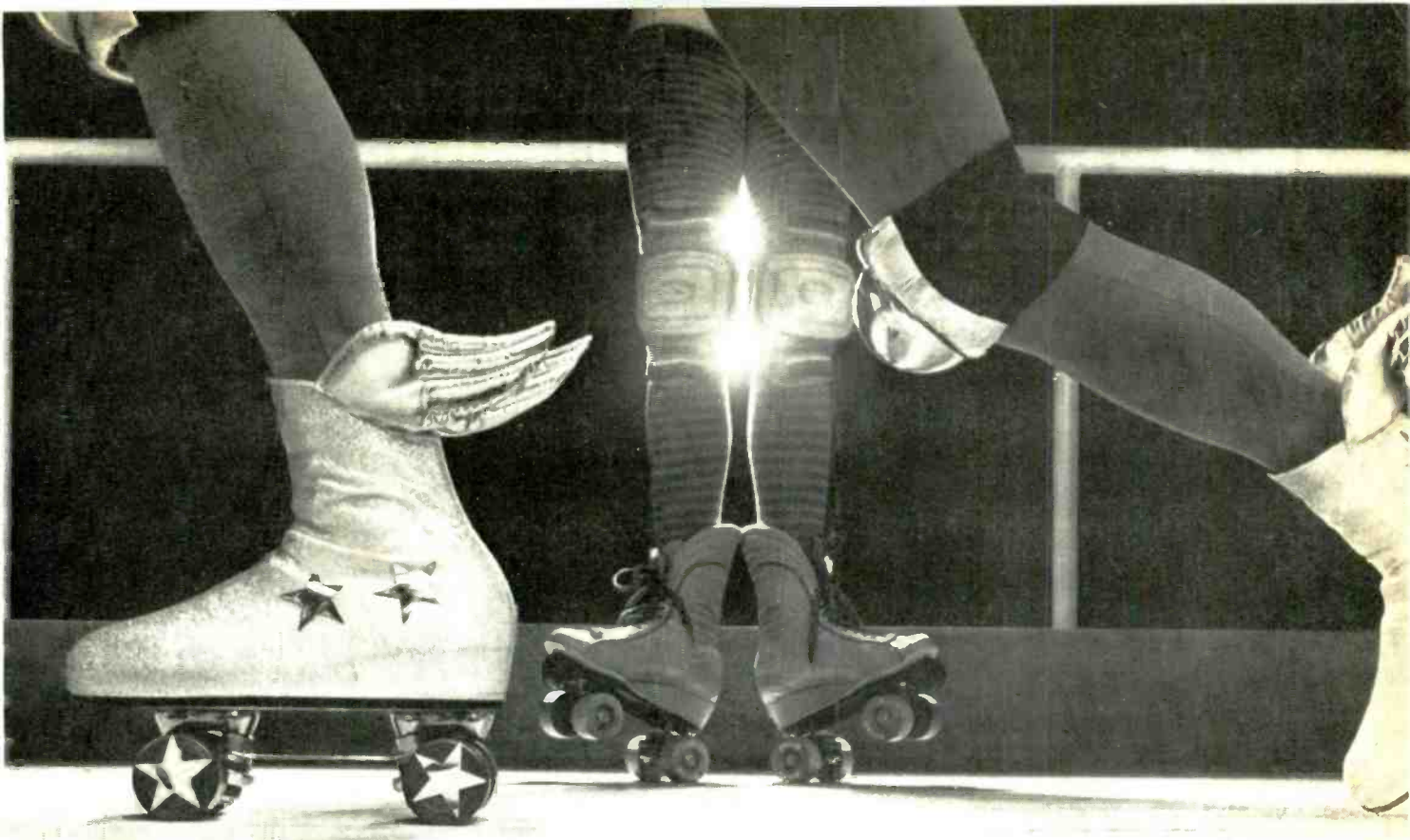
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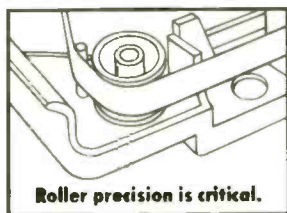


If you think "pads and rollers" are just a California craze, you're not ready for New Memorex.

Pads and rollers are key components of a cassette's tape transport system.

This system guides the tape past your deck's tape head. It must do so with unerring accuracy.

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METAL IV, don't forget the importance of those pads and rollers. Enjoy the music as the tape glides unerringly across the head.

And remember: getting it there is half the fun.

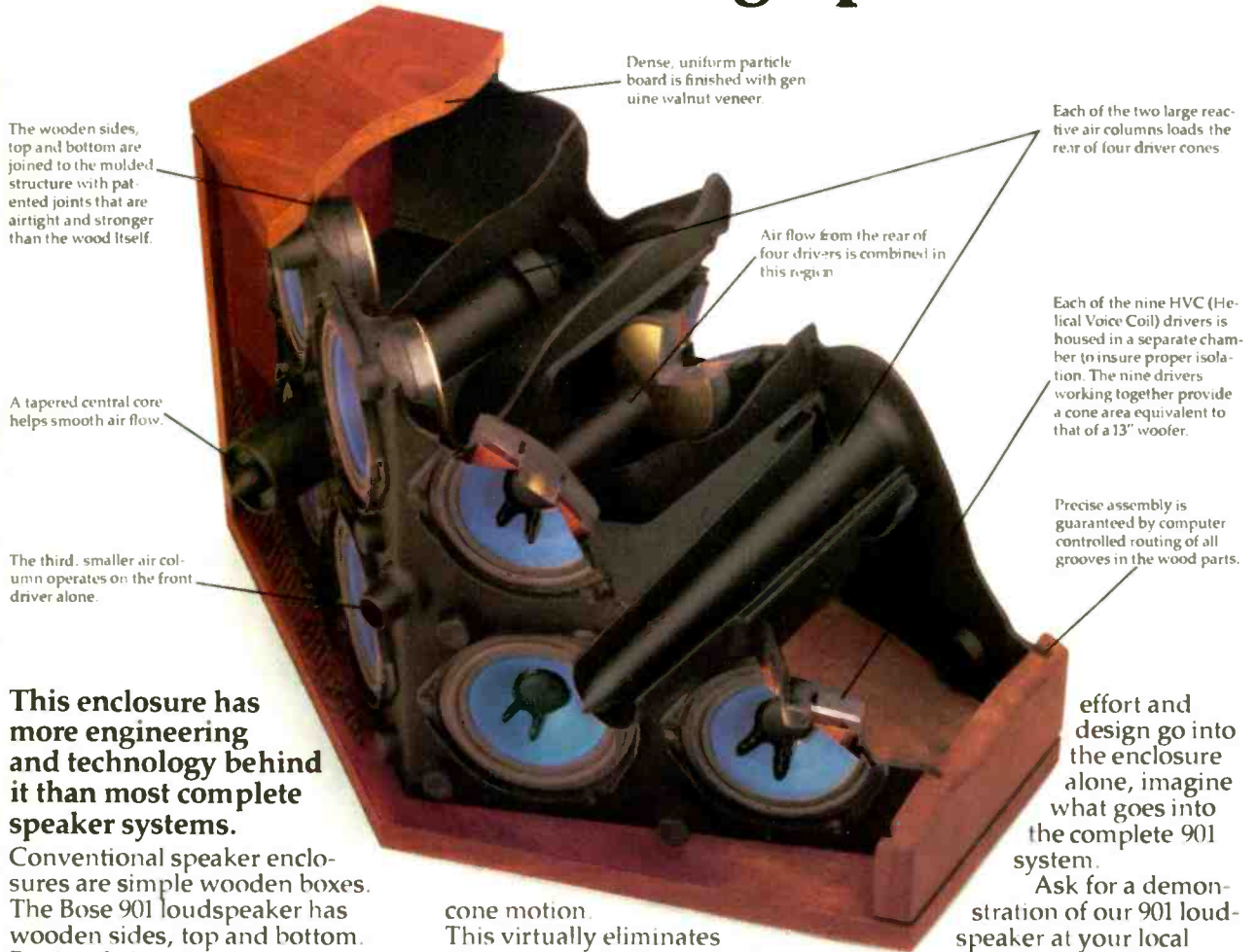


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sonically but belongs at the bottom of any list of performances.

I suggest that Mr. Sullivan start listening to the music instead of the sonic dressing. He might find what he has been missing in analog discs.

William Russell
Houston, Tex.

Levine's "Zauberflöte" Cast

With reference to your "Behind the Scenes" item [February], let me amend or correct some inaccuracies. In the digital "Zauberflöte," RCA went to a great deal of trouble to preserve James Levine's Salzburg cast—and therefore the sense of ensemble production. You state that we did not preserve the cast. Let me get some facts on record. Ileana Cotrubas premiered her Pamina with the new production in 1978. She sang all the performances that year as well as all those in 1979. In 1980, she sang only two out of the five performances because she was also appearing in "The Abduction." Zdislava Donat sang the Queen of the Night in Salzburg in 1979 and 1980 (following Edita Gruberová's debut in the role in Salzburg in 1978).

We are very proud of this recording made with the Salzburg cast of Levine's choice. There are no substitutions.

Thomas Z. Shepard
Division Vice President
RCA Red Seal Artists & Repertoire

McClure and Walter

Out of fairness to my colleague John McClure, I would like this to be an addendum to my letter printed in December 1980, in which I took credit for producing the last recordings of Bruno Walter, which were praised by Derrick Henry. If we consider the last recordings to encompass the whole Los Angeles series made from 1957 to 1962, then McClure must also be credited with producing many of these historic recordings, including the nine symphonies of Beethoven, the four symphonies of Brahms, Bruckner's Fourth and Ninth, Mahler's First and Ninth, and the last six symphonies of Mozart.

Thomas Frost
New York, N.Y.

The Composer's Intention

One reason I subscribe to HIGH FIDELITY is to be apprised of the latest opera recordings. Usually your reviewers are careful to balance their personal views with analytical considerations. But your September 1980 issue contained seven columns on the recent Muti recordings of "Cavalleria rusticana" and

NEW HIGHS. The 500ID defines hard-to-get high frequencies because it comes with a cantilever that doesn't easily distort them.

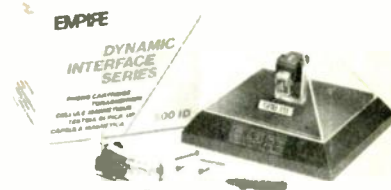
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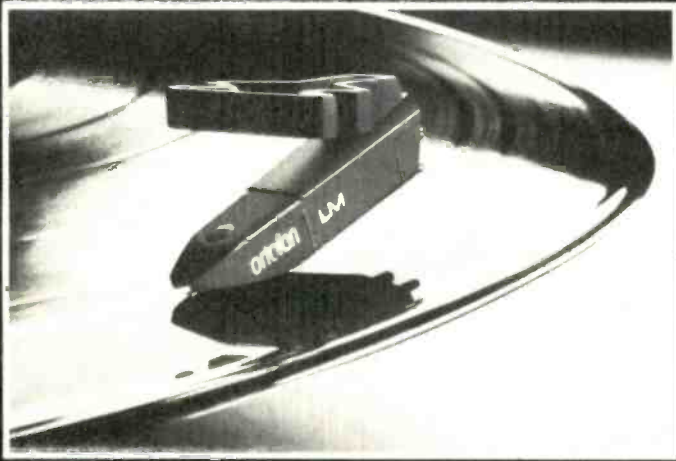
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"I Pagliacci," and while I have not yet heard them, I object in no uncertain terms to the rationale of reviewer Kenneth Furie that "... as far as I'm concerned, 'the composer's intention' is pretty much irrelevant." That statement should disqualify him from reviewing.

Alan D. Aberbach

President

Western Canadian Opera Society

Waxman Waxes Enthusiastic

I read with interest in the March issue Paul Snook's review of Entr'acte Records' first LP release of works by Rózsa, Webb, and Waxman. As coproducer of the recording, I would like to congratulate its unsung hero, Ward Marston, who engineered the well-nigh flawless disc transfers from the original 78s in this reissue and gave fidelity to the music. The process as he accomplished it was like buying an assembled puzzle in the store, breaking it into pieces, then putting it back together so that the cracks do not even show. His sensitive understanding of the music and fine craftsmanship are marvelous.

John William Waxman

Westport, Conn.

Reel Enjoyment

I am delighted that, through R. D. Darrell's "The Tape Deck," you are bringing the beauty of reel-to-reel tapes to your readers' attention. I find Barclay-Crocker tapes a source of endless and deeply moving involvement in music that is incomparably reproduced. The richness of detail and dynamic range come closest to an actual concert of all forms of sonic reproduction that I have heard. Reel-to-reel tapes are particularly suited to major choral, orchestral, and operatic works; their cost is close to that of records and beats that of cassettes.

When digging among my sons' possessions in my attic, I found some old London reels of operas and Gilbert and Sullivan. They are beautiful, even without Dolby noise reduction. Hiss is virtually inaudible, and there is almost no distortion. The impact of a piece like "Parsifal" is terrific. How I wish that these old tapes of the '60s and '70s could be revived. If anyone knows of a source, I would buy a closetful.

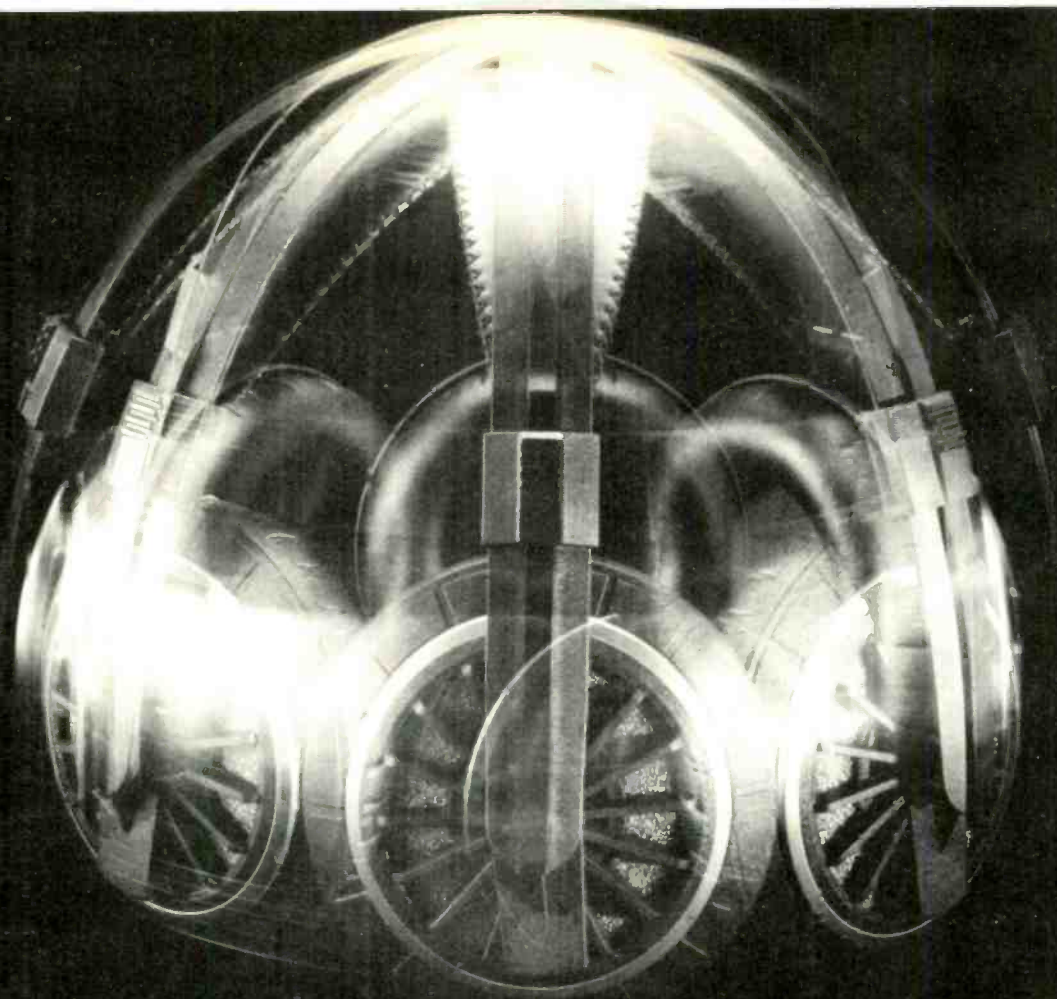
Laurence R. Mundy

Mendham, N.J.

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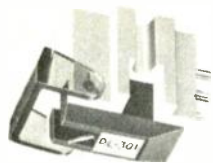
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High Fidelity News

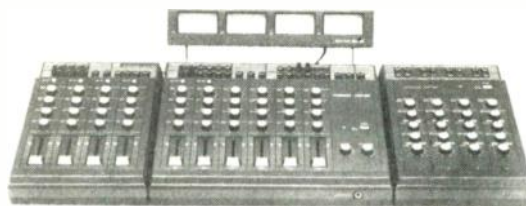
Tape tuning in Akai deck



The news from Akai is automatic tape tuning in the top-of-the-line Model GX-F95 cassette deck. Its built-in computer automatically determines correct bias, equalization, and sensitivity for any tape type. It also features a built-in timer for unattended play and record functions, a real-time tape counter, and tape/source monitoring. Cost of the GX-F95 is \$1,200

The news from Akai is automatic tape tuning in the top-of-the-line Model GX-F95 cassette deck. Its built-in computer automatically determines correct bias, equalization, and sensitivity for any tape type. It also features a built-in timer for unattended play and record functions, a real-time

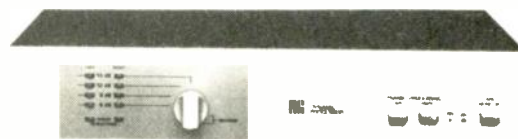
Tascam takes a modular approach



Designed for the creative recordist, Tascam's System 20 is a modular mixing system capable of growing with user needs. The core of the system is the Master Module MM-20, offering six inputs (including two transformer-isolated mike inputs), six output busses (stereo LINE, MONITOR, and CUE), and provision for four-track monitoring. Four channels of parametric EQ are available in the PE-20 module, and additional transformer-isolated inputs come in groups of four with the EX-20 module. A meter unit, the MU-20, completes the system. Each module in the System 20 is priced separately: MM-20, \$395; PE-20, \$350; EX-20, \$350; and MU-20, \$150

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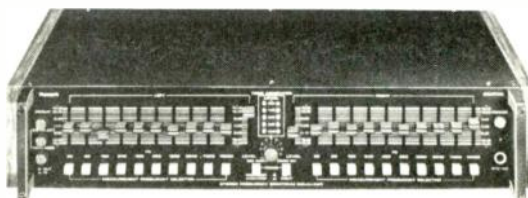
RG Dynamics expands



RG Dynamics' X-15 provides from 6 to 15 dB of dynamic range enhancement in four switch-selectable increments. Its signal processing consists of both expansion and peak limiting, to ensure correct transient reproduction, and is based on the harmonic structure of the incoming signal as well as its level. The X-15 processes each channel independently for accurate expansion and includes an "image-control" circuit to enhance the stereo image. Switches on the front panel enable a user to route straight or processed signals independently to its tape and main outputs, making it possible to record expanded programs without reconnecting patch cords. A special switch setting is said to provide optimal expansion for tape recording. The X-15 costs \$255.

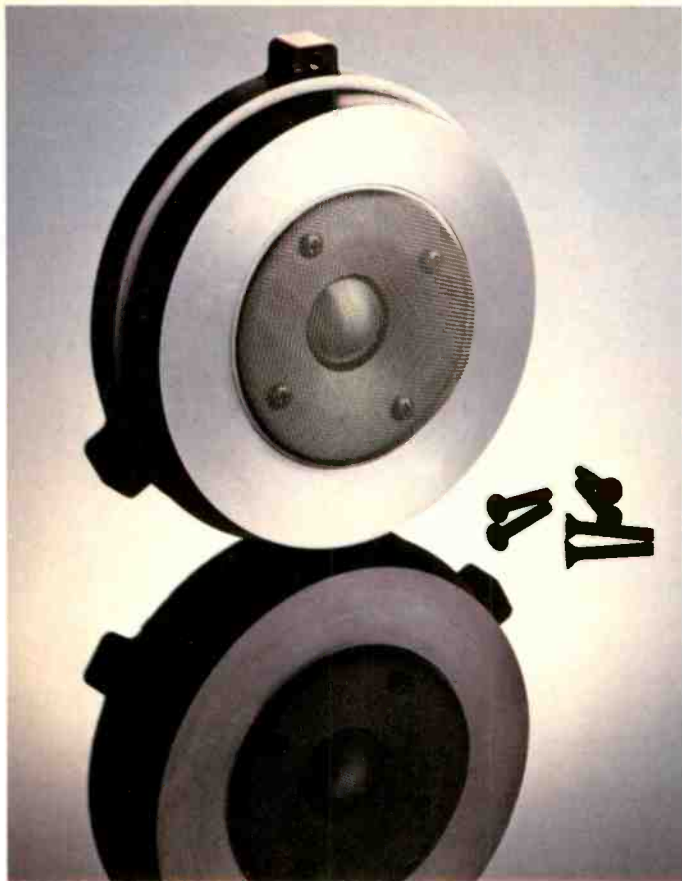
Circle 148 on Reader-Service Card

No-fuss EQ from Numark



The EQ-2700 from Numark, which has a built-in pink-noise generator and sound pressure level display, is said to make frequency equalization quick and accurate. The device features ten bands of EQ per channel, with a maximum boost or cut of 15 dB per band, and can be hooked into the tape monitor loop of a receiver or pre-amp. Full tape monitoring is maintained via front-panel switching and an additional pair of input/output jacks on the rear. With the STD-272 calibrated microphone, the EQ-2700 costs \$450.

Circle 139 on Reader-Service Card



JBL's L112 Century II. Introducing a new upper class.



Introducing a new class of tweeter performance:

The upper frequencies of music reproduced with accuracy, power, depth and subtlety that you've never heard from a bookshelf speaker before.

To advance the state-of-the-art of tweeter behavior, JBL engineers utilized laser holography to study cone diaphragm movement—while the cones were energized as in actual use. They were able to see motion that can't be detected with the naked eye (even through a microscope).

The resulting tweeter component for the L112 is a lightweight phenolic vapor-deposition aluminum-coated dome radiator with a copper voice coil that offers an optimum combination of strength, mass and rigidity. It's at the leading edge of technology.

It performs with exceptionally smooth response, wide dispersion, and it handles high power levels. You'll hear harmonics you've never heard before.

Combined with the newly

developed 044 tweeter is a 5" mid-range driver with a large 7/8" voice coil and stiffened cone that provides transients incredibly close to a live performance.

The L112's Symmetrical Field Geometry 12" woofer delivers low frequencies with extremely low distortion. Lower than any bookshelf speaker we've ever tested. You'll hear crisp, clean, powerful bass all the way down to the lowest notes.

And a new High Resolution Dividing Network controls the

L112's drivers throughout their full operating range... for sound so coherent, it will seem that only one extremely wide-range transducer is responsible—not three!

Each L112 is crafted at our Northridge, California facility, inspected and tested in over 50 test stations and beautifully hand-finished with oiled and rubbed American walnut veneer.

Get to know the new upper class. At your JBL dealer.

James B. Lansing Sound, Inc.
8500 Balboa Blvd.
Northridge, CA 91329

JBL First with the pros.

Circle 20 on Reader-Service Card

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High Fidelity News

Prerecorded tapes for the perfectionist

Recorded on Fuji metal tape in real time on modified Nakamichi decks, Audible Images' line of cassettes is aimed at the no-compromise music lover. In order to ensure the least possible signal

degradation in the chain from master analog tape to "running" masters—from which the actual cassettes are made—a digital recorder is used to make "slave" masters from the original; the digital version is then used to create any number of running masters. Dolby's HX head-room extension system is used in the cassette recording process, as is Dolby B noise reduction. Audible Images even claims to adjust Dolby level and record-

head azimuth for each side of every cassette they duplicate. Current offerings include "Professor Plum's Jazz" (a Dixieland album), "Guitar Music from South America," featuring George Sakellariou, and "Jan and Dean," a modern recording by the original artists of their hits from the '60s. All issues sell for \$17 and are recorded with either standard or the slightly different Nakamichi equalization. The cassettes are available only by mail order from Audible Images (822 Stendhal Lane, Cupertino, Calif. 95014).

Less can be more in speakers, too

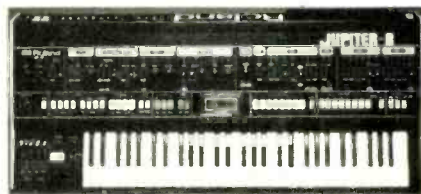


A new design known only by its company name, the Delphi speaker eschews woofers, midrange drivers, crossover networks, and level controls in favor of two 8-inch drivers covering virtually the full frequency range and

augmented by a single soft-dome tweeter. This driver configuration is said to result in wide frequency range along with better transient response than conventional designs can deliver. Delphi Speaker Systems, Inc., rates this model at a nominal impedance of 4 ohms. The speakers cost \$650 per pair, optional stands are available for \$30 per pair.

Circle 140 on Reader-Service Card

By Jupiter!

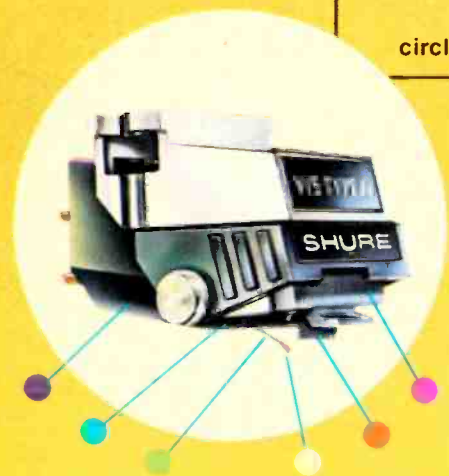


Roland's Jupiter-8 is an eight-voice polyphonic synthesizer with sixteen oscillators, a choice of split-keyboard modes, and comprehensive patching memory functions. The total of sixty-four memories can be recalled in preprogrammed pairs for the dual-voice programming mode; a memorized patching scheme can be altered at will during performance or permanently corrected; tape connections permit you to dump

Circle 38 on Reader-Service Card ▶

GENUINE SHURE V15 TYPE IV PHONO CARTRIDGE

For all the facts
circle 50 on Reader Service Card



not simply a "cartridge"... but an innovative playback system

- **Dynamic Stabilizer** Suspended from two viscous-damped bearings, acts like a shock absorber to maintain a constant cartridge-to-record distance and uniform tracking force; eliminates record groove skipping caused by warp; cushions the stylus from accidental damage.
- **Telescoped Shank** Greatly improves trackability at the critical middle and high frequencies. Lowest effective mass, with no sacrifice of necessary stiffness or strength.
- **Two-Function Bearing** Unique bearing system is optimized for both low frequencies and high frequencies independently. Enhances trackability across entire audio spectrum.
- **Electrostatic Neutralizer** 10,000 conductive graphite fibers discharge static electricity from the record during play. Eliminates attraction of dust and tracking force variations caused by static charges.
- **Laminated Core** Low-loss, laminated electromagnetic structure provides consistently flat frequency response, exceptional channel separation, higher signal level output.
- **Hyperelliptical Tip** Elongated, uniform groove contact reduces harmonic and intermodulation distortion by as much as 25% over conventional Elliptical or long contact tips.



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

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

Circle 50 on Reader-Service Card

TDK CREATES SA-X.

Now you can explore the far reaches of high bias.

TDK has added a new dimension to high bias recording. It's called SA-X.

SA-X emerges from the Super Avilyn technology that has set the reference standard for high bias cassettes. Beyond that, TDK engineers saw new worlds of high bias to explore. By taking two layers of Super Avilyn with different coercivities and optimally matching them, TDK creates a formulation that raises high bias to a higher level. One that approaches the sound quality of metal.

You will hear rock and jazz soar to new heights. Classical, with more of its wide dynamic range. A clarity that even the best bias couldn't give you before. With every kind of music, SA-X brings you closer to the richness of a live performance. And it will keep you there, with its flawless mechanical construction. TDK has given SA-X the Laboratory Standard Mechanism for optimal interfacing with cassette deck heads. You'll hear its consistently superior performance for years to come.

SA-X performs like no other cassette. Expect it to cost a bit more. You can also expect it to take you further into high bias than you've ever been



TDK

The Amazing Music Machine

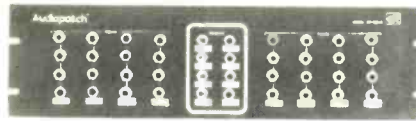
High Fidelity News

patching schemes from the memory or to reload them from the tape. The Jupiter-8 costs \$6,495.

Circle 145 on Reader-Service Card

Neatness counts

With the Audiopatch from Stereo Sentry Manufacturing Company, the mass of tangled wires behind multicomponent audio systems should lessen considerably. Input and output signals from up to



eight components plug into its back panel via pin jacks. Stereo patch cords are then used on the front panel to quickly create any combination of interconnections. The Audiopatch Model 455 sells for \$110.

Circle 144 on Reader-Service Card

FR's premium pickup



Fidelity Research says that its MC-201 pickup avoids distortion common to other moving-coil designs by using nonmagnetic material for the coil core. Equipped with a multiradial diamond tip, the pickup weighs in at 7½ grams. The MC-201 costs \$325.

Circle 143 on Reader-Service Card

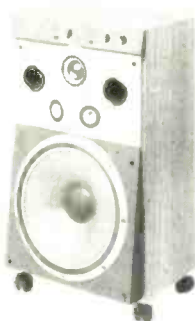
Alignment made simple



The Geo-Disc, from Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab, is a phono cartridge alignment device in the shape of a 12-inch LP and designed to optimize offset angle, lateral tracking angle, and overhang with any tonearm. The Geo-Disc, said to be the simplest of such devices to use, costs \$25.

Circle 142 on Reader-Service Card

Debut from Denmark



Jamo loudspeakers, manufactured in Jutland (the Danish mainland), have only recently been introduced here. The top of the regular home line is the Model J-253, a three-way vented system with a 15¼-inch woofer and 2-inch midrange and dual angled ¾-inch horn-loaded dome tweeters. Crossovers occur at 650 Hz and 5 kHz, and response is rated from 22 Hz to 40 kHz. The sensitivity rating is 96 dB SPL from 1 watt (0 dBW) at 1 meter, indicating exceptional efficiency, though power handling is rated at 150 watts (21½ dBW) continuous or 250 watts (24 dBW) with music. Price of J-253 is \$698.

Circle 146 on Reader-Service Card

The Polk Principle:
High Technology Delivers...

**Incredible Sound
Affordable Price**



"Polks are vastly superior to the competition."

— Musician Magazine

Lab and listening tests prove Polks measure and sound better.

Experts agree Polk speakers will give you the highest quality sound and the most listening pleasure for your money. They will deliver amazingly life-like, box-less, three dimensional sound with breathtaking clarity and detail in your listening room from your hifi system.

"Polk speakers are so vastly superior to the competition..." a remarkably well integrated and coherent sound that adapts itself ideally to all kinds of music...the kind of open, uncolored, perfectly imaged sound we thought began at twice the price...

Sound quite magnificent with a good mid-powered popular brand receiver... They make the popular speak-

ers in their price range seem dim, colored, boxy and just plain insufficient.

Our advice is not to buy speakers until you've heard the Polks."

— Musician Magazine

Better sound in your home Polk Audio loudspeakers will give you more listening pleasure and greater long term satisfaction from your music, your records and your hifi system. They offer you the best sound for your money and are affordably priced from less than \$125 each to less than \$400 each.

Simply use the free reader service card to receive detailed information, copies of the expert's rave reviews and the location nearest you for auditioning the **Incredible Affordable Polks**. Polk Audio, Inc. 1205 S. Carey St., Baltimore, Md. 21230.

polk audio
Monitor Series Loudspeakers

Circle 51 on Reader-Service Card

Dolby C and Nakamichi The Perfect Combination

Nakamichi Spoken Here.

No question about it. Dolby C is a remarkable noise-reduction system. With 10-dB greater quieting than Dolby B, tape noise is inaudible. And, unlike straight companders, Dolby C doesn't "pump" or "breathe." But you don't get something for nothing! Dolby C demands exceptional performance from the cassette recorder. Even Dolby Laboratories states that "taking full advantage of the noise reduction effect of the Dolby C system requires high mechanical and electrical performance from the recorder incorporating it, including very low noise in the circuitry which surrounds the noise reduction processor."

To achieve its superior quieting, Dolby C uses more compression during recording and more expansion in playback. If recorder response and tracking are excellent, the compensation is perfect. But every frequency-response error in the recorder is magnified more by Dolby C than by Dolby B. The result? Audible coloration! Mistracking error alters tonal balance and upsets the delicate relationship between fundamental and harmonics. The result? A change in timbre!

While many cassette decks will feature Dolby C, Nakamichi recorders are renowned for the superior headroom and inherently smooth, wideband, 20-20,000 Hz response needed to recreate the total sound experience—a response free from low-frequency contour effect, mid-frequency sag and high-frequency rolloff—the response demanded by Dolby C to achieve its full potential without audible coloration.

New for Nakamichi? Hardly! We have always demanded such perfection from our recorders—perfection that defies obsolescence. So, with utmost confidence, we offer the NR-100 Dolby-C system designed for our most recently introduced models and the NR-200 Dolby B/C processor for use with other Nakamichi decks. For our new customers, we have a completely revised line of recorders with built-in Dolby B/C and advanced electronic metering. See them now at your Nakamichi dealer.



To learn more about Nakamichi's unique technology, write directly to
Nakamichi U.S.A. Corporation, 1101 Colorado Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90401

CrossTalk

Q. I love the sound of my ADC ZLM cartridge, which I use with a Dual 727 turntable, a Soundcraftsmen PE-2217 preamp, and a Phase Linear 400 Series Two power amp. Occasionally, however, there is severe distortion on loud high-frequency passages. Changing the stylus does not help, but switching to a Pickering XV15-400E eliminates the problem. Can it be that the ZLM is too "hot" for my preamp? What can I do to get rid of the distortion without giving up the ZLM?—W. Sawrey, Chula Vista, Calif.

A. Although the ZLM's output is a trace higher than average and the Soundcraftsmen's phono overload level is slightly on the low side, we doubt that this is the source of your problem. The fact that it disappears when you change cartridges and that it manifests itself only at high frequencies suggests that what you're hearing is plain old mistracking. First, make sure that your stylus and records are scrupulously clean, for dirt is a prime suspect in the situation you describe. Then make sure that your ZLM is correctly mounted and aligned in the Dual's headshell and that the antiskating is correctly set. Set the tracking force to the very top of the range ADC recommends, and double-check it with an external VTF gauge. If the difficulty persists, you will probably have to change cartridges.

Q. My speakers are rated to handle 100 watts of power, and the click stops on the volume control of my Technics receiver, rated at 150 watts per channel, are numbered from one to ten. Where should I set the volume control to keep my speakers from getting too much power and blowing up?—Leo Caruso, Tampa, Fla.

A. There is no strict relationship between the setting of the volume control and the instantaneous power output of the receiver, which varies as the music itself becomes louder or softer. As for blowing up your speakers, there is little reason for you to worry. Under artificial conditions, it is possible to destroy almost any speaker with almost any amp or receiver, but in normal usage this is an uncommon occurrence, even with very powerful units. At extremely loud playing levels, your speakers will probably tell you that they are being overdriven by making distinctly

nonmusical sounds well before they self-destruct. To play it safe, you might want to write the manufacturer for instructions on how to fuse your speakers. This usually involves placing a low-value (1 amp or so) fast-blow fuse in the "hot" line to each speaker.

Q. I recently moved from Northampton, Mass., where the FM reception on my Sherwood 7900 receiver was fine, to Norwich, Conn., where I have trouble receiving some of the stations I want to hear. In particular, I would like to get clear reception of WFCR in Amherst, Mass., and of WGBH in Boston, both about 80 miles away, as well as of two stations very close to each other on the dial: WPBH, 90.5 in Middlefield, Conn., about 50 miles away, and WRIU, 90.3 in Kingston, R.I., much nearer my home. Would buying a newer receiver help?—Walter B. Simon, Norwich, Conn.

A. Perhaps. You would want a model with excellent sensitivity to bring in the weak distant stations and, most importantly, unusually high adjacent-channel selectivity to help separate those two kissing cousins. But we suspect that, given the circumstances you describe, you still would need a good high-gain directional antenna with a rotor, so why not try that first? It might give new life to an old friend and save you a few dollars in the bargain.

Q. I am now using a pair of ESS AMT-10b loudspeakers. However, I like the warmer sound of some Quadraflex speakers I have heard. Could I use an equalizer to make my present speakers sound like the Quadriflexes I prefer?—Franklin Covey, Folsom, Calif.

A. An equalizer can be used to alter the frequency response of signals going to a loudspeaker, in effect modifying the frequency response of the speaker. Unfortunately, frequency response is not a simple thing: It varies as one moves from side to side or up and down relative to the speaker. The pattern of this variation (a speaker's polar response or directivity) depends on many things, including cabinet size and shape, the number of drivers and their placement on the cabinet baffle, the sizes and shapes of the drivers, and the crossover frequencies and slopes. Speakers differ considerably in all these re-

spects and therefore in their directivity, as well—something an equalizer can do nothing to change.

Added to that limitation is the fact that only the more elaborate graphic equalizers are split into bands narrower than one octave, which means that they cannot be used to eliminate (or mimic) response peaks or dips that are not fairly broad and smooth. Equalizers often can make two speakers sound similar, but seldom identical. In most cases, the simpler, more satisfactory, and perhaps less expensive alternative is to trade in your old speakers for a pair whose sound more nearly matches your tastes.

Q. When using my Nakamichi 480 cassette deck to tape records (played with an Ortofon Concord 30 cartridge fitted to the tonearm of a Yamaha YP-D4 turntable), I get infrasonic surges, aggravated by record warps, that read as high as -5 dB on my recording-level meters. The resulting recordings sound like they have a severe case of wow and flutter. Recording from the preamp-out jacks of my Mitsubishi DA-R20 receiver with its low filter engaged seems to solve the problem but makes monitoring inconvenient, because adjusting the volume control affects the recording level. What causes this problem, and how can I get rid of it?—Scott A. Ornat, Plymouth, Minn.

A. Your system's arm/cartridge resonance is occurring at a frequency down in the range where warps are concentrated. You can attack this problem at its source by using a cartridge with lower compliance to raise the resonance frequency into the "safe" range between 8 and 12 Hz. Tonearm damping also can help, if you like to tinker and don't mind modifying the Yamaha. Much simpler is the indirect cure: inserting a sharp high-pass filter (such as Ace Audio's Model 4000) into the line between your receiver's tape outputs and the inputs to your tape deck. This will allow you to use the receiver's tape monitor loop for its intended function.

We regret that, due to the volume of reader mail we get, we cannot give individual answers to all questions.

WITH SOME TAPE YOU CAN'T TELL YOUR BRASS FROM YOUR OBOE.

When the oxide particles on recording tape aren't of a uniform size and shape, you can end up listening to distortion as well as music. The sounds of different instruments get blurred together, and your music loses its clarity.

At Maxell, every inch of our tape is checked and rechecked to make sure the oxide particles are perfectly uniform. Which means when you listen to music on Maxell tape, every instrument will sound perfectly clear.

So if you can't tell your brass from your oboe, try using our tape.



IT'S WORTH IT.

Loudspeaker Testing and the Listening World

It takes a heap of computations to make a speaker measurement in a home—or anything approaching one.

by Robert Long



Ed Foster of Diversified Science Laboratories glances up from the Apple computer that forms the heart of HF's new real-room speaker testing procedure.

Beginning with this issue, we are turning our backs on the anechoic-chamber loudspeaker measurements that we have used (with some updates over the years) since the late Ben Bauer and his colleagues at CBS Laboratories (now CBS Technology Center) devised them for us a decade ago. If there is a tinge of regret in that statement, it's not to be wondered at. Our position is a little like that of someone trading in his first car for a newer and better model: Sentiment must be kept at bay by a firm grasp on the improvements at hand.

The seminal improvement is that Diversified Science Laboratories now is measuring speakers in a real listening room, rather than an anechoic chamber. That statement, so easily made, implies a vast quantity of work, much of it done by an Apple computer that was far over the horizon ten years ago. At that time, the concept of measuring in a real room was unthinkable because there was no practical way to remove the room from

the measurements and, therefore, make them reflect loudspeaker behavior alone. That's what anechoic chambers were (and are) for, but they necessarily subjected the speakers to an artificial environment, making the test results themselves useful only after interpretation of their inherent artificiality.

All audio measurements are, to some extent, creatures of the process. Conversely put, the ideal of a single measurement that would say all that must be said for comparative product rankings is still very, very far off because we don't know how to measure all of the parameters that must be taken into account or how to weight them against the real needs of those on whose behalf we make the measurements. (This portion of the ideal can never be achieved, of course, since readers don't share a single set of criteria and, therefore, an individual weighting scale would be required for each reader.) So we measure what we have the instrumentation and

the understanding to measure, knowing that it will never precisely match the desiderata.

That improvements in the match could be gained by moving away from anechoic testing was manifest before DSL began development of its methodology. Several companies had begun using computers to accumulate, correlate, and adjust loudspeaker data gathered in typical listening rooms or, at least, in environments that simulated their properties. Among these companies was Acoustic Research, and when DSL approached Tim Holl, AR's vice president of engineering, for advice on this type of testing, he and chief engineer Alex DeKoster gave generously of their time and their information; they even offered to share with DSL some of the computer programs they had developed for the purpose.

This gave us a solid foundation for the building of the new test method, and the superstructure outlined below rose directly from it, retaining some familiar features from the old method in an effort to retain a degree of comparability (albeit a modest one) with the data that we had been publishing on the basis of the anechoic measurements. The very fact that the testing environment is "echoic" guarantees that measurements will not be identical to those in anechoic space even if all other variables are kept identical. Some ballpark comparisons thus are possible, but product ranking on the basis of measurements alone—even when they are identically derived—is a task into which angels, however accomplished at pin-sitting, are not likely to rush.

Now let's examine one at a time the specific parameters that will appear among the DSL measurements, noting how the measurement is made and how it should be regarded within the context of the overall report. Keep in mind that, since the speaker no longer is, acoustically, floating in infinite space, some relationship between the speaker and the listening-room boundaries must be postulated. DSL follows the manufacturer's instructions in this regard—if there are any. Too often, of course, the manufacturer represents the model as all things to all placements, and DSL must make its own decision. In that event, a "standard" position tends to put the tweeter near listening height (approximately 1 meter off the floor) and the speaker is set either with its back against the wall or four feet in front of it—whatever seems most consistent with the design approach and whatever in-

structions are supplied.

Room response characteristics,

as the graphs in this month's test reports show, are measured from two positions: directly in front of the speaker and approximately 30 degrees off to one side. The mike is kept 15 feet from the back wall (and thus in the "far field," instead of the rather arbitrary 1 meter used in our former tests, among others, which were far-field at short wavelengths but essentially near-field at very long ones) and at listening height. This does not mean that it is precisely 1 meter off the floor; the mike is moved about in an imaginary window about 1 foot square and centered on the listening position. And at least 100 measurements are made this way at each of the two basic positions. Since full-spectrum pink noise (rather than frequency sweeps or individual noise bands) is used as the source, all frequencies are excited at once; spectrum analysis "chops" the information into one-third octave bands and averages the 100-plus tests in each, while the movement of the testing mike averages the local spatial effects that otherwise would color the measurement. The computer accomplishes all this data averaging in an astonishingly short time.

The computer also corrects for any response irregularities of the testing system: the pink-noise generator, the microphone, the spectrum analyzer, or the room. This last correction is the trickiest. It is based on a set of five reverberation-time measurements at each of the points in the room where microphones may be placed. Room modes and the room's damping characteristics are identified in the reverberation data and stored in the computer as correction information. Overall room-coupling effects are not corrected, of course; to take the room completely out of the response data would defeat the purpose of testing in the "real" environment.

When you look at the response curves, you will see immediately that the calibration has been altered. Formerly, we showed absolute sound pressure levels for a nominal 0-dBW drive and a microphone distance of 1 meter. Since our "0 dBW" now is different, following the same practice would tempt unwarranted comparisons with past reports. Instead, we take the maximum and minimum response figures within the working range of the speaker (generally, the range used in the sensitivity measurement) and arbitrarily call the mean between these two extremes our 0-dB reference. In the graph, you can easily see whether the spread above and below

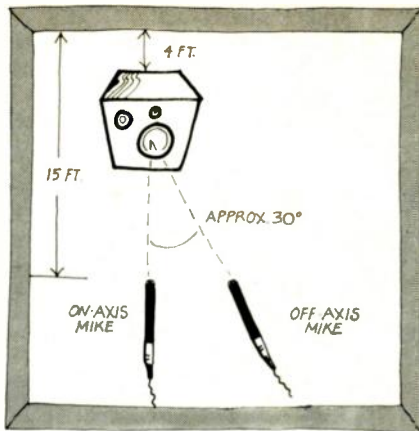


Diagram shows one "standard" position of speaker and mike during on-axis and off-axis room response analysis.

this reference is greater or less than ± 5 dB (the calibrations adjacent to the 0-dB reference).

In addition to the smoothness of the on-axis (solid) curve, look at its general lie and at any tendency to tilt one way or the other toward the frequency extremes, where response anomalies that affect perceived tonal balance may be visible. Comparison of the two curves will give you some idea of the speaker's beaminess; the closer the curves lie, the more uniform the distribution of sound in space and the lower the likelihood that tone color will alter radically depending on your listening position.

Sensitivity is measured with band-limited pink noise (250 Hz to 6 kHz), with the microphone at 1 meter, just as it used to be. One major change in the technique affects sensitivity results in particular, however. Our past reports keyed all their figures to "nominal impedance" (defined as the impedance minimum falling just above woofer resonance) and calculated power in watts from the voltages needed at that impedance—whether or not the frequency under consideration happened to coincide with that of the impedance minimum. So if the nominal impedance measured 5 ohms, "100 watts" would require a drive of 22.36 volts (the square root of the product of 100 times 5), which would deliver only 50 watts at any frequency where the impedance happened to rise to 10 ohms.

We now dispense with the notion of "nominal impedance" altogether and specify actual test voltages instead of their theoretical power equivalents. Since the reference resistive load used in testing amplifiers is 8 ohms, DSL makes this test with the drive—2.8 volts rms—

necessary to deliver 0 dBW (1 watt) into an 8-ohm load. Thus both systems, old and new, use nominal 0-dBW drives; but since their actual calculation differs, so will the test results. And since most speakers' nominal impedance is below 8 ohms (though their average impedance may not be), the new technique tends to yield higher numbers.

Continuous output follows past practice in driving the speaker only to "20 dBW or 100 watts" (28.3 volts rms in the new procedure) or to excessive distortion (10% THD or "buzzing"), whichever comes first, and measuring the sound pressure level at this drive. Many speakers will accept more without misbehavior, of course, but it's hard to imagine why a home system—even a very inefficient one—would need to handle more on a continuous basis. Many would surely self-destruct if we made it a practice to feed them with higher continuous levels, even at the relatively "safe" test frequency of 300 Hz.

Pulsed output, again at 300 Hz, can pursue these upper power reaches more safely because of the brief duty cycle of the pulse, which, to that extent, more closely resembles musical signals. This test can be (and frequently is) conducted at the maximum unclipped output of the driving amplifier. DSL stops short of this drive level if the distortion becomes excessive. Since audible change may be evident in the pulse reproduction before outright clipping occurs, audibility (rather than visibility on an oscilloscope) has been adopted as the criterion. Evidently the ear is more sensitive than the oscilloscope; the maximum allowable pulse distortion seems distinctly lower by this criterion than by the former visible-deformation judgment method. So pulse-handling comparisons should not be attempted with a combination of old and new measurements.

Distortion, like sensitivity, is measured at 1 meter. Drive voltages for the desired sound pressure levels are calculated from the sensitivity data (so that these levels will be averaged in the band—250 Hz to 6 kHz—used for the sensitivity test), and a series of tones one-third octave apart are fed to the speaker at these voltages. The second and third harmonics of the test frequencies are measured with a spectrum analyzer and the results stored and plotted with the aid of the computer. Because of the quantity of data involved, we continue to give overall characterizations of it in the main text, rather than trying to list or plot it in some form in the data column. **HF**

New Equipment Reports

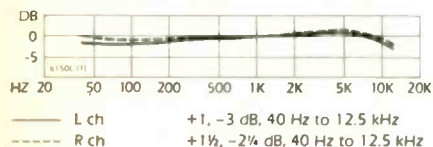
Preparation supervised by Robert Long, Peter Dobbin, Michael Riggs, and Edward J. Foster. Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted) supplied by Diversified Science Laboratories.



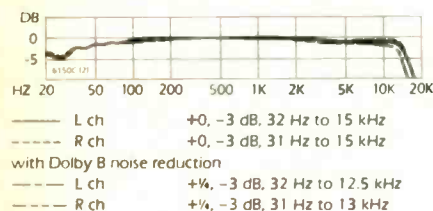
First Ever: NAD's Dolby C Cassette Deck

NAD Model 6150C cassette deck

PLAYBACK RESPONSE (TDK test tape; -20 dB DIN)



RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 2 TAPE (-20 dB)



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NAD Model 6150C cassette deck, in metal case. Dimensions: 16 by 3½ inches (front panel), 9 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$460; optional RC-61 remote control, \$50. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: made in Japan for NAD (U.S.A.), Inc., 675 Canton St., Norwood, Mass. 02062.

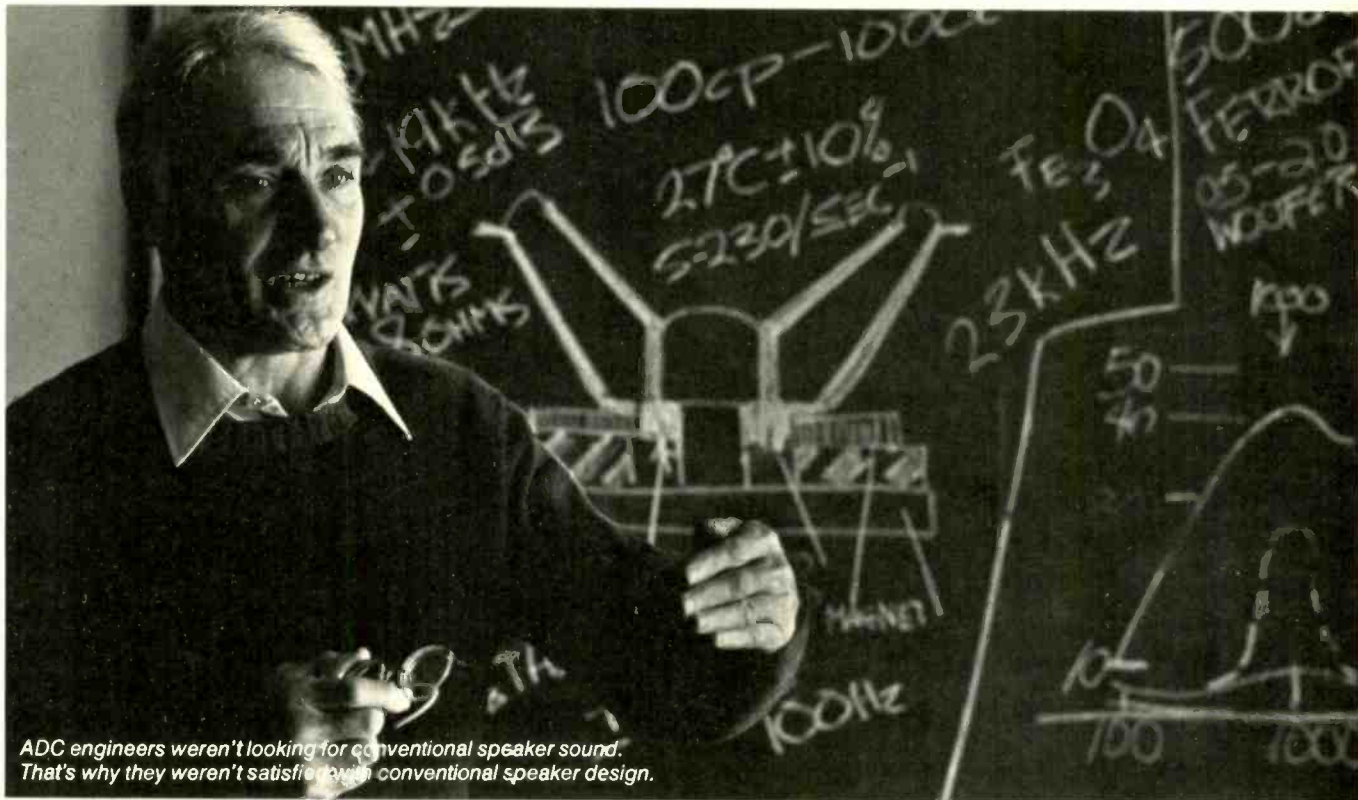
Well, folks, Dolby C really is here, with its touted extra noise reduction (some 10 dB more than Dolby B) and improved high-frequency headroom. And it looks like a winner to us—thanks, in part, to the NAD deck in which, as far as we know, it reaches the market for the first time anywhere in the world. Naturally, our curiosity about the newest Dolby circuit had been running high; when we were offered test samples from the first production run, we were delighted, to say the least. And the delight doesn't stop there.

The deck itself doesn't look like a world-shaker on first encounter. Its modest proportions and quiet styling are in keeping with the moderate price and the two-head format. Only the noise-reduction options—DOLBY C, DOLBY B, and OFF—give it away. In practice, as well as theory, the C encoder adds more upward compression than Dolby B and extends farther down in frequency, thus suppressing more noise in both dimensions. At the same time, it introduces less compression at the very top of the range to prevent any exaggeration of saturation effects. Dolby B does, indeed, magnify them; that's why high-frequency response is not quite as good with the noise-reduction switch on in most decks and why Dolby Laboratories came up with the HX circuit. Dolby B tends to exaggerate any response anomaly within its working range because it expands dynamic values in decoding. Since the expansion is even greater in Dolby C, the exaggeration tends to be greater as well, putting an added premium on correct tape matching so that response is inherently as flat as possible.

One of the first things we looked at in the 6150C was its tape matching. As you can see from the response curves, it's very good, especially for a two-head deck, when measured with the Maxell tapes suggested by NAD: UDXL-II as the Type 2 ferricobalt, UD as the Type 1 ferric, and MX as the Type 4 metal. Not only is the response quite flat, but the introduction of Dolby B (see the Type 2 record/play curves) does little to unflatten it, confirming good sensitivity adjustment. The Dolby C curves (which have their own graph) are not quite as flat as the B curves, but they're at least as good as those for many decks in this respect. Note that the Type 2 curves lose a little at the top end when the Dolby B is turned on and regain it when the switch is moved to Dolby C. The metal tape, with its greater high-frequency headroom, shows no saturation effects at the test level (-20 dB) and therefore no real difference among the three noise-reduction options.

As usual, Diversified Science Laboratories also ran some Type 2 response

The ADC difference



ADC engineers weren't looking for conventional speaker sound. That's why they weren't satisfied with conventional speaker design.

Originality

When it comes to performance, size doesn't count... anymore.

There's nothing conventional about our ADC MS-650 mini-speaker system.

Not its size; each MS-650 is just 11" high.

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Not its performance; "We cranked up the volume to almost orgiastic levels.... Ry Cooder's bass guitar and the howitzers in the new Telarc digital 1812 Overture came through undiminished and unscathed, and we didn't even smell the smoke of battle..." - Hi-Fi/ Stereo Buyers Guide.

Ferrofluid cooled drivers for higher performance and lower distortion.

There's also nothing conventional about MS-650 technology.

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A bass module that isolates low frequencies for extended bass response.

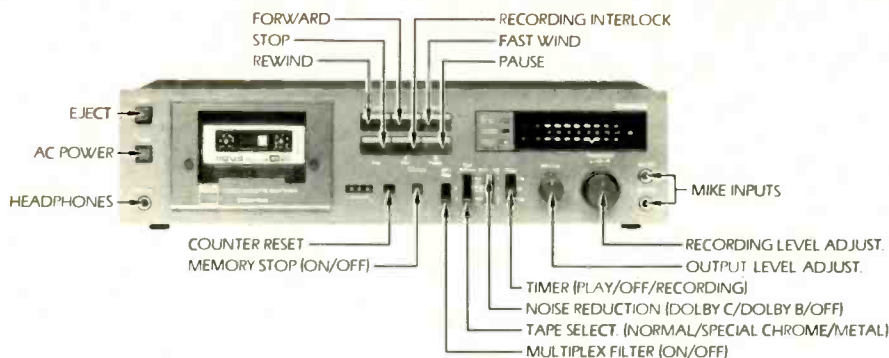
For most people a pair of ADC MS-650's are perfect. But maybe you're not most people. For you, there's our matching MS-10W bass module. It reproduces the lowest bass notes for both channels. The result? Bass response that not only defies the size of the system, it defies the imagination.

For your nearest ADC MS-650 dealer call toll-free 1-800-243-9544. Or write Audio Dynamics Corporation, Pickett District Road, New Milford, CT 06776. In Canada, BSR (Canada) Ltd.

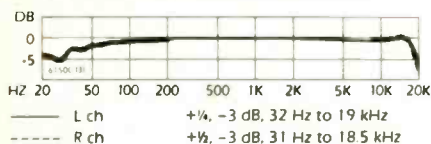
ADC



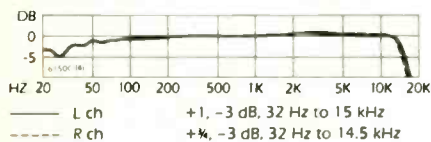
Circle 3 on Reader-Service Card



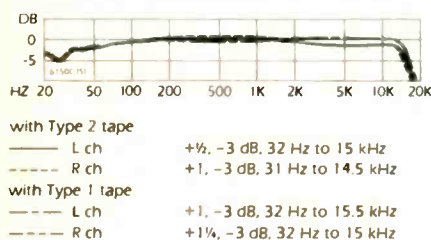
RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 4 TAPE (-20 dB)



RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 1 TAPE (-20 dB)



RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE WITH DOLBY C (-20 dB)



S/N RATIO (re DIN 0 dB, A-weighted)

	Type 2	Type 4	Type 1
record/play without noise reduction	57 1/2 dB	56 dB	54 1/4 dB
Dolby B record/play	65 1/4 dB	63 3/4 dB	62 1/4 dB
Dolby C record/play (see text)	69 dB	68 dB	65 dB

METER READING FOR DIN 0 DB

0 dB

METER READING FOR 3% DISTORTION (at 333 Hz)

Type 2 or Type 4 tape	+2 dB
Type 1 tape	+4 dB

DISTORTION

see text

ERASURE (333 Hz, re DIN 0 dB)

Type 2 tape	74 dB
Type 4 tape	67 dB

CHANNEL SEPARATION (at 333 Hz)

48 dB

SPEED ACCURACY	0.7% fast at 105 VAC
	0.8% fast at 120 VAC
	0.8% fast at 127 VAC

curves at higher levels to investigate saturation effects. With the Dolby B circuit engaged, there is the usual small loss, which is easiest to document in terms of the frequencies at which the response curves are 3 dB below their reference levels. For Dolby B, they are 5 kHz for the 0-dB curve and 9.5 kHz for -10 dB; without noise reduction, they are 5.5 and 10.5 kHz, respectively; with Dolby C they are 7.25 and 11.5 kHz—a significant improvement.

The measurements seem to indicate (incorrectly) that a tradeoff is involved: a gain of less than 5 dB in S/N ratio when you switch from B to C, rather than the promised extra 10 dB. Our measurements are A-weighted. Given fairly even spectral distribution of the noise, A weighting usually correlates well with audible effects, but this noise is not evenly distributed. When DSL ran no-signal noise-spectrum analyses with the three tapes, all showed the typical tape noise "response," rising with frequency, without noise reduction. The B circuit takes a healthy bite out of the hiss, delivering its 10 dB of improvement in the range between 2 and 7 kHz and more or less flattening the curves except at the very top end. The Dolby C spectra cut noise by well over 10 dB more across a broad range from the midbass up into the treble—right where it's most needed once Dolby B has taken its bite—but actually reduce noise less than Dolby B as frequency nears 20 kHz. The result is a series of deeply swaybacked curves that average about the same as Dolby B's below 100 Hz and above 10 kHz. The weighting technique, in taking undue account of these maxima, underestimates the subjective importance of the deep valley between them.

Not so, the ear: With any reasonable level setting, Dolby C is dead quiet on the NAD deck. We were able to copy Dolby B open reels with no discernible loss, for example, which no combination of built-in noise reduction, supertape, and high speed has ever permitted on any cassette deck we've tested before. The effect is astonishing if you're used to that whisper of hiss, always there in the background, when you're listening to cassettes. Conclusion: As predicted, the Dolby C system effectively addresses itself to both the noise spectra of cassette tapes and the ear's sensitivity spectrum for optimum effect.

Distortion figures proved good, but somewhat surprising. Ordinarily we show only the third harmonic—normally the worst, in tape equipment—in our graphs. Had we done so here, you would have seen figures of 0.48% with Type 2, 0.29% with Type 4, and 0.35% with Type 1 as the maximum measurements (between 50 Hz and 5 kHz), each representing the usual distortion rise at the higher frequencies. Here, however, the second harmonics at the low end of the range were higher than the third at those frequencies: 0.57% with Type 2, 0.46% with Type 4, and 0.71% with Type 1. Maximum THD figures still are below 3/4% for all tapes, so there is no cause for complaint, but showing only the third harmonic would, in this case, have made distortion seem even lower than it is.

If we have any complaint with basic performance, it is that wow and flutter are not quite as low as we have come to expect at this price, though for general purposes, the figures are adequate. We also find that the tape doesn't get up to speed instantly when you release the PAUSE, producing a brief groan in playback or an obvious "chiff" if you begin recording during a sustained tone. But it is very quiet and will make edits that are, at worst, barely detectable where background noise is either low or (as in applause) composed primarily of transients. The meter also elicited some complaint for its rather coarse (2-dB) calibration gradations in the 0-dB range, but since it isn't required for tape matching, this

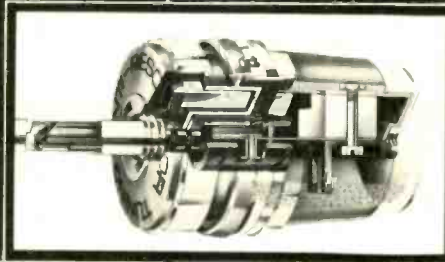


Tunable acoustic isolators

(Adjust for maximum protection from acoustic feedback or external shock.)

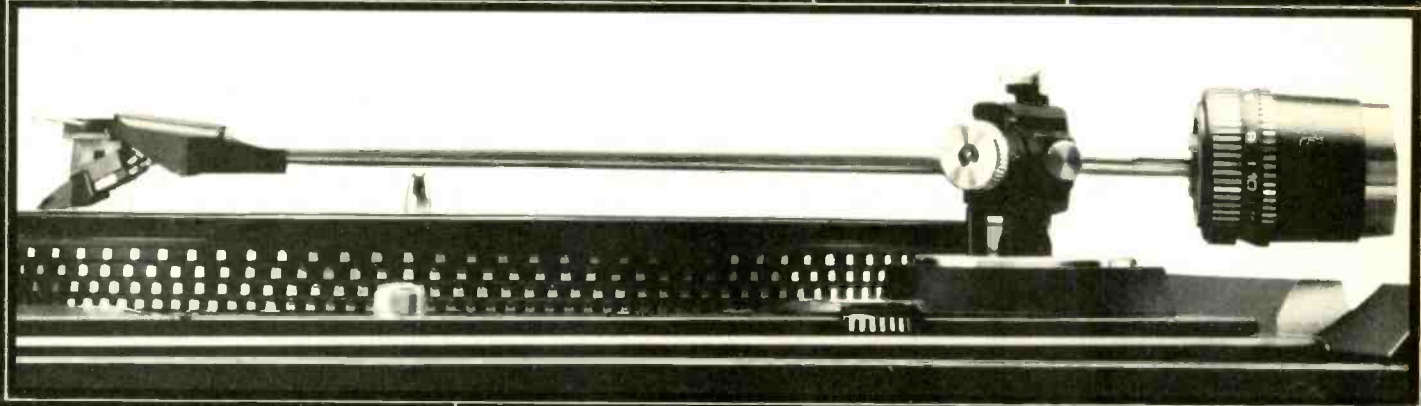
Tunable anti-resonance filter

(Minimizes vibration and undesirable resonances in tonearm and cartridge.)



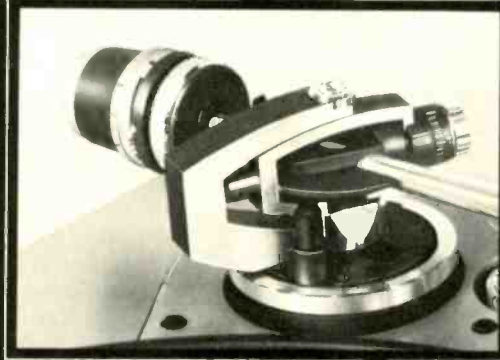
Hydrodynamic suspension system

(Absorbs spurious energy from sound waves and external vibrations.)



8-gram ULM tonearm and cartridge system

(Tracks warped records as if they were perfect; makes all records sound better.)



Four-point gyroscopic gimbal

(Maintains perfect dynamic tonearm balance and tracking throughout play.)

Any one of these Dual features has more advanced engineering in it than most complete turntables.



WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEC weighted peak)		
	average	maximum
playback	± 0.09%	± 0.12%
record/play	± 0.11%	± 0.14%
SENSITIVITY (re DIN 0 dB, 333 Hz)		
line input		100 mV
mike input		0.66 mV
MIKE INPUT OVERLOAD (clipping)		
	50 mV	
MAX. OUTPUT (from DIN 0 dB)		
	585 mV	

A Quick Guide to Tape Types

Our classifications, Types 0 through 4, are based largely on those embodied in the measurement standards now in the process of ratification by the International Electrotechnical Commission. The higher the type number, the higher the tape price generally is in any given brand. Similarly, the higher type numbers imply superior performance, though—depending in part on the deck in which the tape is used—they do not guarantee it.

Type 0 tapes represent "ground zero" in that they follow the original Philips-based DIN spec. They are

consideration is not as crucial as it might be.

There is provision for tape matching, however. On the back panel is a horizontal bias slider with a detented center position, the "standard" setting used for all the lab measurements. If you have the necessary test equipment and experience, you could use it to tailor the deck to formulations other than those substantially interchangeable with the recommended Maxell tapes. Since this is a two-head deck, requiring cut-and-try tactics, it isn't easy. That's why the control is hidden; it is not intended for regular use by the owner.

And tape matching obviously is exceptionally important with Dolby C, as it is with any noise-reduction system that introduces more than minimal playback expansion. Since the expansion exaggerates level anomalies (dropouts, poor head contact) as well as response irregularities, it puts a premium on transport quality as well. Though we won't be surprised if a race develops for the least expensive Dolby C deck on the market, coupling it with an inferior design would be both a pity and a mistake. The NAD deck is by no means inferior and therefore contributes materially to the very high marks we give Dolby C in this first encounter. We expect to be hearing a lot more of both.

Circle 135 on Reader-Service Card

ferric tapes, called LN (low-noise) by some manufacturers, requiring minimum (nominal 100%) bias and the original, "standard" 120-microsecond playback equalization. Though they include the "garden variety" formulations, the best are capable of excellent performance at moderate cost in decks that are well matched to them.

Type 1 (IEC Type I) tapes are ferrics requiring the same 120-microsecond playback EQ but somewhat higher bias. They sometimes are styled LH (low-noise, high output) formulations or "premium ferrics."

Type 2 (IEC Type II) tapes are intended for use

with 70-microsecond playback EQ and higher recording bias still (nominal 150%). The first formulations of this sort used chromium dioxide; today they also include chrome-compatible coatings such as the ferricobalts.

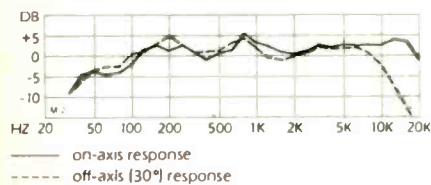
Type 3 (IEC Type III) tapes are dual-layered ferrichromes, implying the 70-microsecond ("chrome") playback EQ. Approaches to their biasing and recording EQ vary somewhat from one deck manufacturer to another.

Type 4 (IEC Type IV) are the metal-particle, or "alloy" tapes, requiring the highest bias of all and retaining the 70-microsecond EQ of Type 2.

An Astonishing Speaker from Great Britain

Boothroyd Stuart Meridian M-2 powered speaker

ROOM RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS



SENSITIVITY (at 1 meter, 250 Hz to 6 kHz)
99% dB SPL from 0.5 volt

CONTINUOUS OUTPUT (at 1 meter, 300 Hz)
103% dB SPL

PULSED OUTPUT (at 1 meter, 300 Hz)
112 dB SPL peak

Meridian M-2 powered loudspeaker system, in wood enclosure with metal base. Dimensions: 6¼ by approx. 31 inches (front; height depends on adjustment to cant enclosure toward listening area), 14½ inches deep. Price: \$2,900 in rosewood, \$2,700 in walnut or black ash. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Boothroyd Stuart, Ltd., England; U.S. distributor: Anglo American Audio Co., Inc., 1080 Bellamy Road North, Scarborough, Ont., Canada M1H 1H2.

"Incredible" is not a word we apply carelessly to audio, but this is one context where it belongs. Most incredible, perhaps, is the look of the front panel with the grille removed: There simply is no woofer in this full-range system. Instead, there are two 5-inch midrange drivers (with Bextrene cones, of course) flanking a dome tweeter, to which they cross over near 2 kHz. There's also a port, but it only reminds the eye that custom would lead us to expect a larger driver somewhere in the system. Powered loudspeakers still are rare enough to create some wonder, of course, but the sound itself is a more important component of the astonishment that the M-2 generates.

It is not Boothroyd Stuart's first powered Meridian speaker. The M-1 was bigger and less impressive in its conventionality; like most powered models, it made us wonder why it was powered—whether a passive model we could have driven with our own amp would not really have done as well. But one glance at the tiny drivers in the M-2 answers the question on its behalf: Only in symbiosis with a specially designed amplifier could they be expected to approach full bass response, though coupling between the two "midrange" drivers certainly gives them greater air-moving power than their size would otherwise imply. Boothroyd Stuart describes the arrangement as the acoustic equivalent of an elliptical woofer measuring about 5 by 12 inches with a concentrically mounted, time-compensated tweeter. After a few moments' reflection, therefore, amazement pales in the light of reason.

But not altogether. The salient property of the sound is its uncanny imaging, which we consistently remarked on during our listening tests. They were conducted with the speakers free-standing, well away from side and back walls, as the company's own demonstrations have consistently placed them. Once the placement has been adjusted to disengage the systems from unwanted room effects, so to speak, the air between and somewhat behind the two speakers seems to generate sound. In some unexplained way (at least to us), the imaging manages

AKAI MINI-COMPONENTS. FOR PEOPLE WITH MORE TASTE THAN SPACE.



Through the magic of LSI technology, pulsed power supplies and a unique mini circuit board design, AKAI has masterfully managed to craft a collection of audio components that rivals many systems twice its size. The new UC-5 series.

For starters, you'll find gold-plated pin jacks and input terminals standard throughout to minimize distortion and maximize durability.

And an optional infrared remote control unit that allows operation of every major function within the system.

AKAI's steadfast dedication to quality doesn't diminish with the size of the package.

Further proof. A pre-amp with a phono cartridge selector for either moving magnet or moving coil cartridge, two tape monitors, tape dubbing, tone control

defeat switches and more.

Signal-to-noise is 105dB and THD is a very tidy 0.005%.

Next up, a DC power amp including fluorescent power meters, clipping indicator, subsonic filter and pulsed power supply.

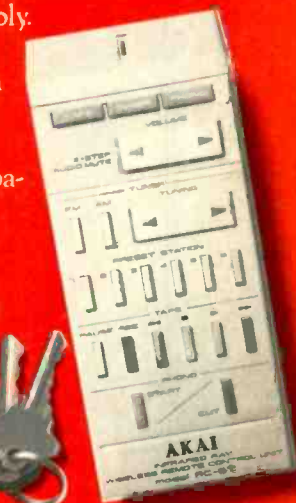
On to the quartz synthesized AM/FM tuner, with five-LED signal strength indicators, digital frequency display, six-station preset capability, and both auto and manual tuning.

And our metal-capable cassette deck rounds out the package, with two DC motors, twin field super GX Head, solenoid controls, fluorescent bar meter with 2-step peak level indicator and an

electronic LED tape counter. Plus timer recording, auto stop, memory, and auto play/rewind/repeat.

All in all, a pretty substantial package of components that measures a fashionably lean 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide. Incredible.

And for the music lover with more taste than money, AKAI offers the economically-minded UC-2 series with integrated amp. Coupled

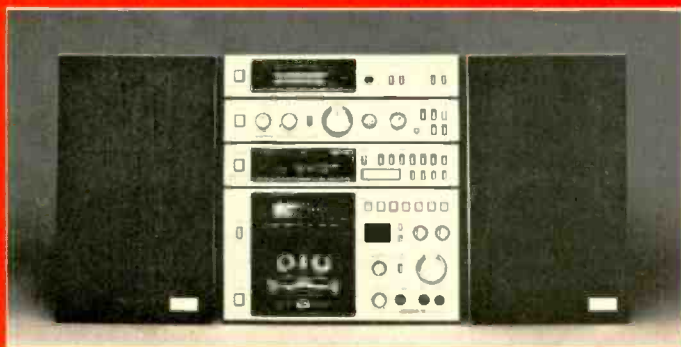


Our optional infrared remote control unit allows operation from across the room.

with a pair of their own specially designed two-way speakers, both the UC-5 and UC-2 aptly prove you can get giant stereo sound.

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The UC-5 series. Both pre-amp and amp, digital tuner, metal cassette and 2-way bookshelf speakers.

A K A I

YOU NEVER HEARD IT SO GOOD



Altec Domesticates The Horn

to suggest signal matrixing (Sonic Holography, etc.) without its electrical manipulation.

We used Meridian's own preamp, feeding via DIN cable to the amps built into the speakers, for most of our listening tests; but the lab and some of the listening made use of regular pin jacks that parallel the amps' DIN input sockets. The amplifier actually is listed as a biamp: a combination of a 70-watt (18½-dBW) section driving the woofers and a 35-watt (15½-dBW) section for the tweeter. The lab, of course, treated the ensemble as a "black box"; without access to the amp/driver interface, subsection measurements are impossible—and they're largely beside the point in any event.

Thus the sensitivity is stated for a ½-volt input (reference level for preamp outputs in the IHF standard, which we follow in our tests) instead of for the voltage equivalent of 0 dBW. Actually, most preamps have headroom for peaks of several volts, meaning that at maximum gain they could drive it to higher levels, at least instantaneously. DSL found that the tonal quality of input pulses altered audibly when pushed to peak sound pressure levels of 112 dB, implying an input waveform with peaks of approximately 2 volts. On continuous 300-Hz tones, buzzing set in at about 1 volt rms. So the capabilities of the speaker ensemble seem well matched to those of typical preamps. These upper-limit sound pressure levels don't add up to exceptional dynamic range, but they're ample for most home applications, even in quite large rooms.

Distortion proved moderate at moderate drive levels. The second harmonic averages below ½% above 100 Hz and rises to about 5% near the woofer resonance; the third harmonics are lower (say, 2–3%) in this range but, though they also average below ½% through the rest of the spectrum, exceed 1% in the 5-kHz range. When input is increased enough to deliver 100 dB SPL, there is a general rise in distortion across the board, signaling the imminence of the limits established in the 300-Hz tone and pulse tests.

All the measurements were made with the speakers four feet in front of the back wall, following the general placement recommendations of the company. The lab comments that the bass could be strengthened by moving the speakers nearer to a room boundary, but we generally considered the bass solid sounding (startlingly so, considering the driver size) in our listening tests with them well out in the room. A/B comparisons (which were somewhat problematic because the built-in amps prevented our normal speaker switching) confirmed adequate bass but spotlighted some coloration, which may be related to the mild prominence around 800 Hz in the measured response. There were times, too, at which the M-2's sound seemed somewhat constrained or less open in comparison with that of our stalking horses.

But when comparisons were set aside and our attention turned unilaterally to the pair of M-2s, even for a very brief time, the one attribute that consistently stood out was the crystalline stereo imaging. Again, it's not just a question of stability and of unequivocal differentiation, but of somehow dissociating the sound from the speakers so that it appears to be generated in thin air. When the musical forces are small—chamber, folk, and small jazz combos, for examples—the effect can be particularly uncanny. We also found it, in varying degrees, intensely pleasurable: something some of our auditors consistently wanted to return to after the listening chores were done.

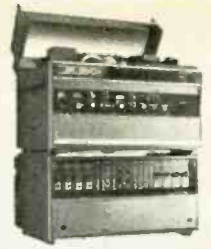
Circle 134 on Reader-Service Card

Altec Lansing Model 6 loudspeaker, in wood veneer finish. Dimensions: 15 by 24½ inches (front), 12¾ inches deep. Price: \$350. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Altec Lansing International, 1515 S. Manchester Ave., Anaheim, Calif. 92803.

For some forty years, horn-loaded tweeters and ported woofer enclosures have been hallmarks of Altec Lansing's home and professional systems. In the last few years these elements have been refined—especially through the development of the constant-directivity horn and the radial phase plug, nicknamed Mantaray and Tangerine, respectively. First incorporated in large floor-standing speakers (HF test report on the Model 19, February 1978), these and further refinements are now being offered in a line of three less bulky systems with the three-way Model 6 in the middle.

Circle 11 on Reader-Service Card ▶

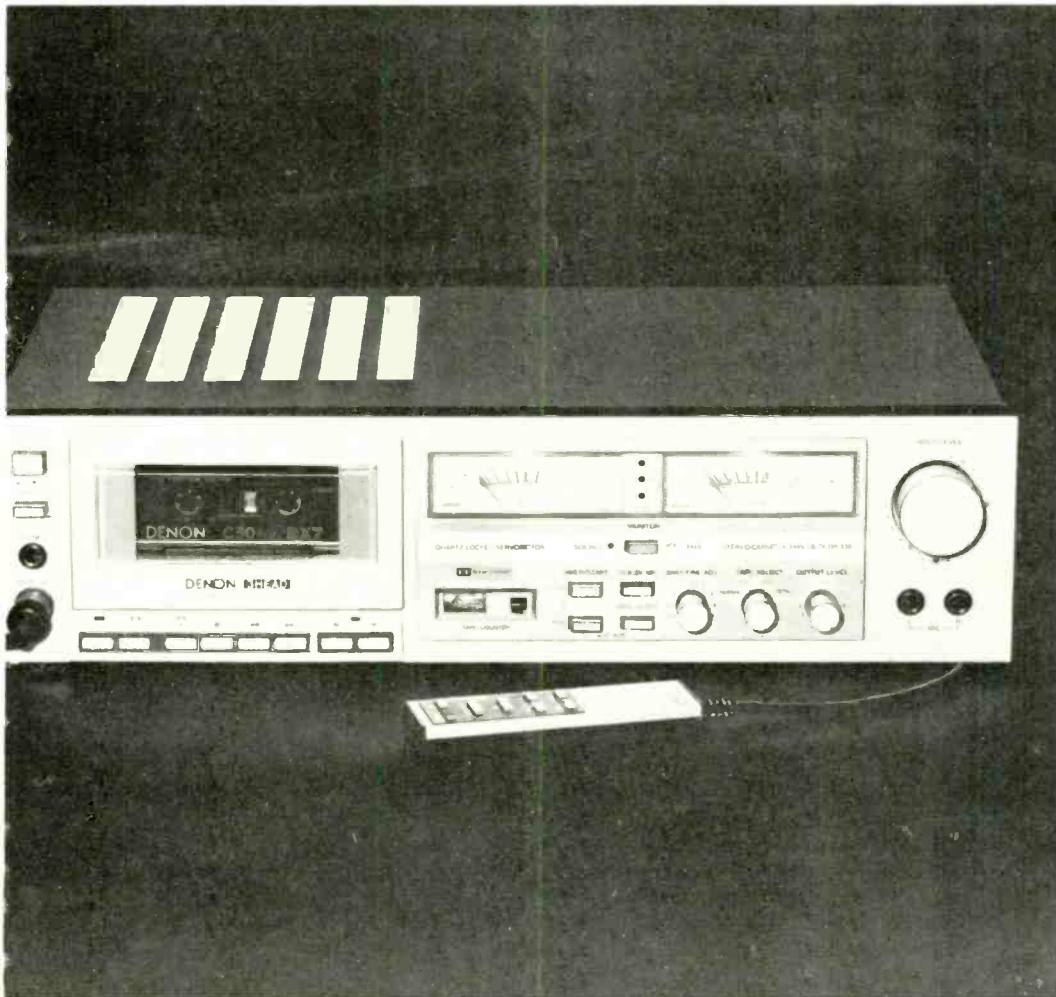
1939...FIRST DIRECT-DRIVE TURNTABLE SYSTEM.
1951...FIRST MOVING-COIL CARTRIDGE.
1972...FIRST DIGITAL (PCM) RECORDING.



Denon was founded 71 years ago, making it among the oldest extant companies in the audio industry. Thirty years ago, Denon first entered the professional recording field, and today it is the prime supplier to organizations like the NHK, Japan's equivalent to the British BBC.

Denon's professional products range from blank tape to 24-track recording consoles to fully automated radio stations; their accomplishments include the development of PCM (digital recording), one of the most significant advancements in the history of recorded sound.

In the U.S. Denon is known primarily by those in the know. In Japan, the land where electronics is king, Denon is king of the land.



1981...THE DENON DR-330 AND DR-320 SERVO-TENSIONER THREE-HEAD CASSETTE DECKS.

Many manufacturers would lead you to believe that three heads alone can transform a cassette deck. Denon's experience with professional studio tape-recorders proved that lack of uniform tape-to-head contact and proper transport stability, can create serious phase problems—especially in the high frequencies—whether the recorder has three heads or two.

To solve this problem, Denon developed a unique Tape Tension Servo Sensor, a system that maintains uniform tape-to-head contact during record and playback. In addition, Denon originated the Non-Slip Reel Drive mechanism (without clutches) which provides the extremely stable tape movement and prolongs the deck's life.

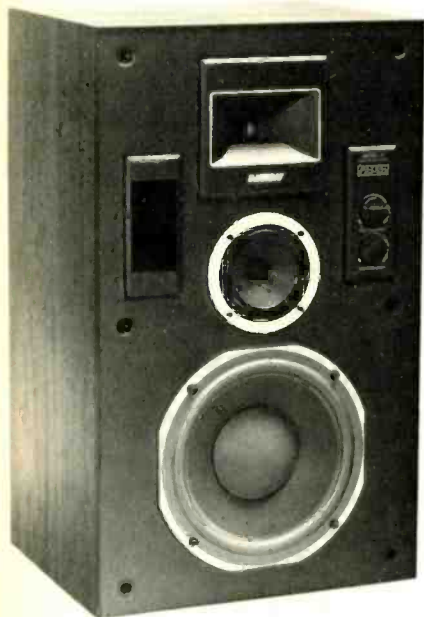
Before the development of the DR-330 (Speed Control and fine Bias Adjustment), Denon built two-head decks, which many audiophiles prefer even to the most expensive conventional three-head units.

With the development of the Tape Tension Servo Sensor and Non-Slip Reel Drive, Denon has realized the full potential of the three-head configuration.

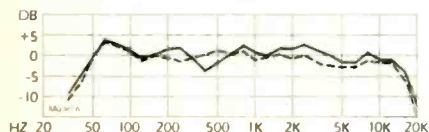
The Denon DR-320 and DR-330. Two important contributions to better sound reproduction, from the company where innovation is a tradition.

DENON
*Imagine
 what we'll
 do next.*

Denon America, Inc.
 27 Law Drive, Fairfield, N.J. 07006



Altec Lansing Model 6 loudspeaker



ROOM RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS

— on-axis response
 - - - - off-axis (30°) response

SENSITIVITY (at 1 meter, 2.8-volt pink noise,
 250 Hz to 6 kHz) 90 dB SPL

CONTINUOUS OUTPUT (at 1 meter, 300 Hz)
 111 dB SPL from 28.3 volts (see text)

PULSED OUTPUT (at 1 meter, 300 Hz)
 117 dB SPL from 56.6 volts peak

This speaker employs a nicely designed piezoelectric compression driver dubbed an LZT (for its lead zirconate titanate transducer element). The Mantaray horn into which it operates is far smaller than that in previous models and is shaped differently. But like the horns in the Model 19 and Model 14 (both of which are two-way systems, requiring lower tweeter crossovers), that in the Model 6 was designed with the aid of a computer for even sound distribution in a precisely calculated area. In addition, the driver's radial phase plug is said to propagate more high-frequency energy than older circumferential plugs will. The horn assembly can be reoriented by 90 degrees if the speaker is to be used horizontally, thus maintaining the intended directivity, which is broader horizontally than vertically. The Model 6's remaining drivers are a 5-inch midrange cone and 10-inch woofer in a ported chamber.

A newly developed crossover—referred to as a pass-band stable network—is said to further increase the effective sensitivity of the high-frequency driver while presenting an extremely stable load for the amplifier. To prevent damage to the drivers, an automatic power control circuit lowers the input to the system when safe operating limits are exceeded. Baffle-mounted on the same escutcheon as the mid- and high-frequency controls is a display that lights when the automatic power control circuit activates, and the display is visible through the semitransparent black grille cloth. The baffle board is completely padded with sound-absorbent material to reduce cabinet reflections and diffraction effects that can cause irregularities in frequency response and unstable stereo imaging. Finally, the glossy polish of the cabinet's Endriana wood veneer gives us a refreshing change from the acres of oiled walnut we've viewed over the years.

In the lab tests, the Model 6 emerged with high marks all around. Its sensitivity—90 dB with an input of 2.8 volts (equivalent to 0 dBW or 1 watt into 8 ohms)—is quite high. It accepted a continuous-tone input of 28.3 volts (equivalent to 20 dBW or 100 watts into 8 ohms) without exceeding distortion limits or audibly buzzing. At that drive level, however, the power control circuit activated after about 6 seconds, reducing the speaker's output from 111 to 104 dB SPL. Like a turtle that reacts to danger by withdrawing into its shell, then pokes its head out again to see if the danger has passed, the circuit returned to normal again after an interval of about 8 seconds even though the input had not been reduced. Peak sound pressure levels of 117 dB could be elicited with peak inputs of 56.6 volts (equivalent to 26 dBW or 400 watts into 8 ohms). Yet DSL informs us that the limiting factor in this test was not the speaker, but the amplifier, which simply ran out of steam at that level.

From the woofer resonance at about 62 Hz, the impedance curve falls to a nominal 6.7 ohms at 110 Hz, then rises gradually through the midrange to a maximum of 17 ohms in the upper treble region. Considering both the speaker's high efficiency and relatively smooth and consistent impedance values, the Model 6 should interface nicely with just about any amplifier or receiver. Frequency response is exceptionally flat, with extraordinary output down into the deep bass. Notable, too, is the virtual duplication of both on-axis and off-axis traces in the very high-frequency section of the curve. The Mantaray horn obviously does exactly what its designers intended: maintaining consistent high-frequency output over a broad horizontal angle.

The midrange control begins its action at approximately 1 kHz, producing a maximum cut of 15 dB, at 2.5 kHz, as the control is rotated from its optimum setting to the minimum. The control allows some additional rotation beyond optimum, and up to 2½ dB of boost can be realized at 2.5 kHz. When the high-frequency control is set to its maximum, it delivers about 7 dB of additional output above 8 kHz. Moving the control to its minimum setting results in a gradual rolloff of response starting at 2.5 kHz, with response down by approximately 7 dB or more above 8 kHz. Thus, hefty but not preposterous changes can be introduced at these controls. Harmonic distortion measurements made at loud playing levels (100 dB SPL) are remarkably low. The softer second harmonic predominates in the lower midrange area, though even here it barely exceeds 1%. Third harmonics are even lower, with values averaging less than ½% over most of the speaker's range. At moderate playing levels (90 dB SPL), harmonic distortion is negligible, averaging well below ½%.

In the listening room, we turned to Altec's particularly comprehensive and well-written owner's manual to help us determine optimum speaker placement.

Altec is refreshingly frank about the problems of poor placement; following the manual's admonitions, we placed our pair away from the back wall, approximately three feet from the side walls and about seven feet apart. This gave us broad and detailed stereo imaging that held up well in a broad listening arc. A small cut at the midrange control tamed what we deemed excessive forwardness on voices; one auditioner felt the bass was a hair heavy-handed, but the preamp's bass control solved that, too. The bass is robust, with no hesitancy on even the deepest organ and drum fundamentals. Massed orchestral passages are handled effortlessly, a hallmark of a good speaker.

With the Model 6, Altec has domesticated the horn-loaded loudspeaker. Not only has it tamed the beaminess that has given high-frequency horns a reputation for coloration, but it has reduced the size of the systems from the chunky Model 14 and monumental Model 19. The Model 6 is finished like fine furniture and is small enough to be accommodated even in urban-size rooms. We have no doubt it will take up residence in a great many of them.

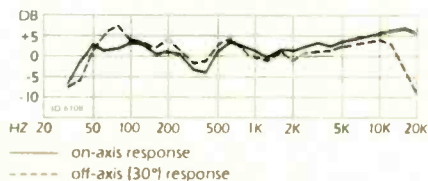
Circle 133 on Reader-Service Card

Three-Piece Ensemble from 3D



3D Acoustics Model 3D-610B loudspeaker system

ROOM RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS



SENSITIVITY (at 1 meter, 2.8-volt pink noise, 250 Hz to 6 kHz) 85 dB SPL

CONTINUOUS OUTPUT (at 1 meter, 300 Hz) see text

PULSED OUTPUT (at 1 meter, 300 Hz) 98½ dB SPL from 14 volts peak

3D Acoustics Model 3D-610B three-piece loudspeaker system (two satellite speakers and a floor-standing bass module), in walnut-veneer enclosures. Satellite dimensions: 8 by 13½ inches (front), 6¼ inches deep. Bass module dimensions: 15½ by 23 inches (front), 11½ inches deep (max.). Price: \$450 (east), \$500 (west); optional stands for satellites, \$65 per pair (east), \$75 per pair (west). Warranty: "full," five years parts, labor, and shipping. Manufacturer: 3D Acoustics, Inc., 5 Sunrise Plaza, Valley Stream, N.Y. 11581.

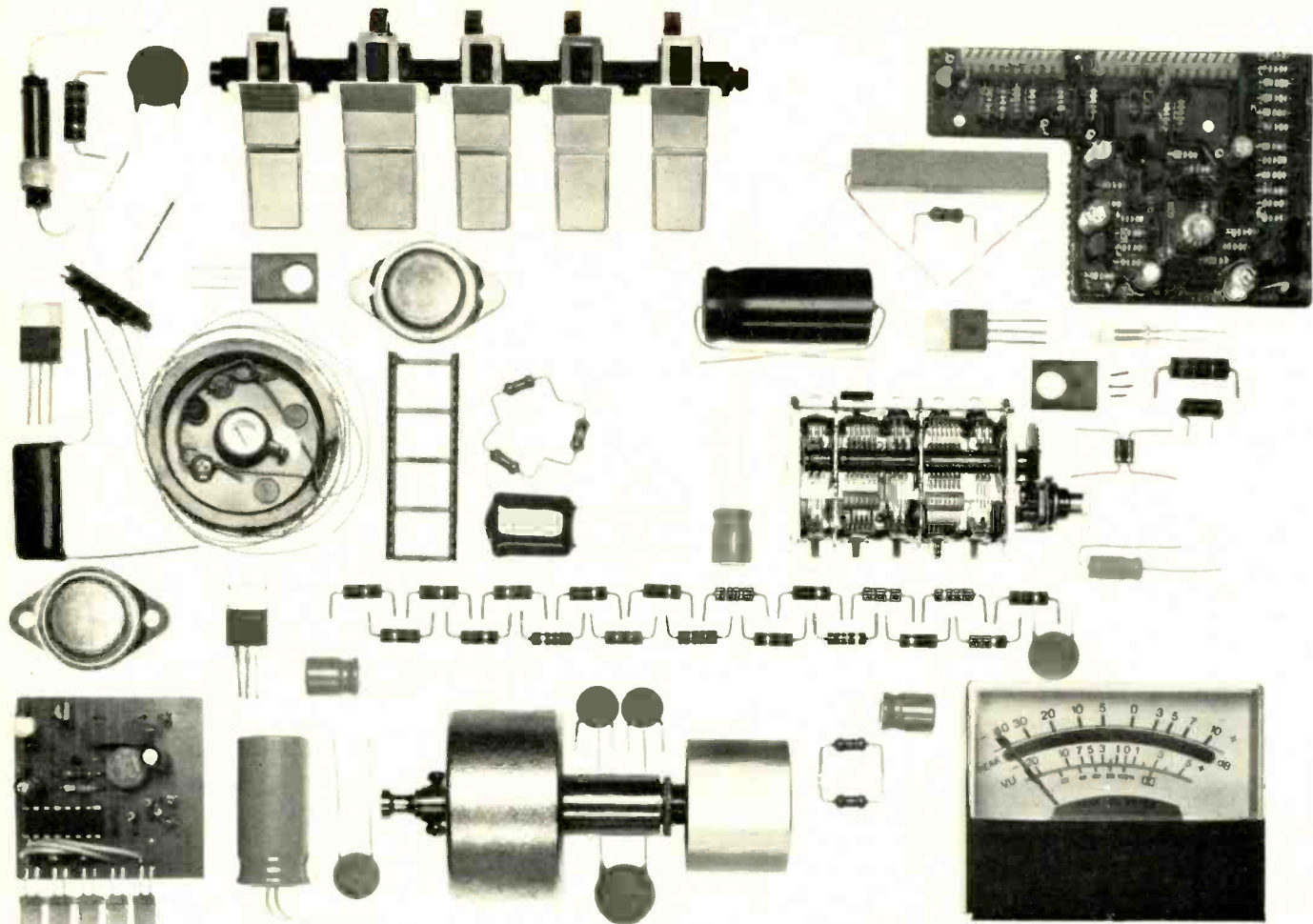
There is an obvious symbiosis between a so-called subwoofer and a pair of minispeakers—which are easy to place but invariably bass-shy in comparison with big full-range systems. The combination theoretically offers audiophiles the best of both worlds: full-range music reproduction without the clutter of a pair of large, ungainly boxes in the living room. Unfortunately, most of these satellite/subwoofer systems have been considerably more expensive than conventional models of similar performance. But this is not the case with 3D Acoustics' three-piece loudspeaker system, which sells for about the cost of a good pair of full-range two-way speakers.

The first product from this new company (scarcely a year old), the 3D-610B comprises a pair of compact speakers, each with a one-inch dome tweeter and a six-inch driver in an acoustic suspension enclosure, and a single bass module built around a resistively loaded ten-inch woofer with a dual voice coil. Amplifier connections are made to the woofer module via a set of spring-loaded clips on the rear of the enclosure. Leads to the satellites are strung from a second set of clips on the woofer box, which are connected in parallel to the first set for full-range operation of the satellites. The inputs to the woofer itself are rolled off above 100 Hz by a passive crossover filter. Because the woofer has a separate voice coil for each channel, the crossover is spared the costly task of matrixing stereo signals into mono for delivery to a conventional driver with only one voice coil.

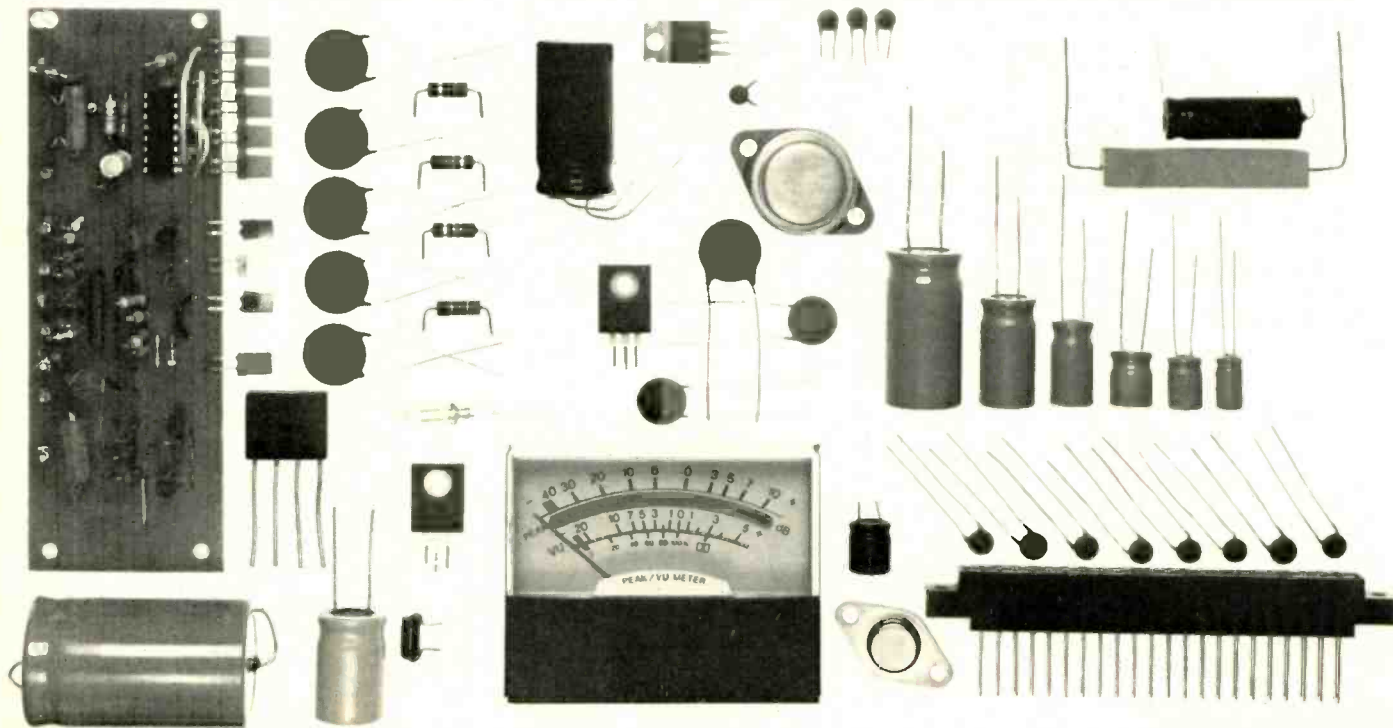
Driven with 2.8 volts (equivalent to 0 dBW or 1 watt into 8 ohms) of band-limited pink noise, the system showed itself to be moderately efficient. If we had to rate the impedances of the satellite and woofer modules separately, we would call the former 8-ohm units and the latter a 6-ohm unit. The system as a whole stays very close to 4 ohms from 20 to 90 Hz, meanders between 5 and 6 ohms up to 200 Hz, rises smoothly to a maximum of 53 ohms at about 1.2 kHz, and then falls back to 5.7 ohms at 7 kHz. We would not expect any good amplifier to have trouble driving such a load.

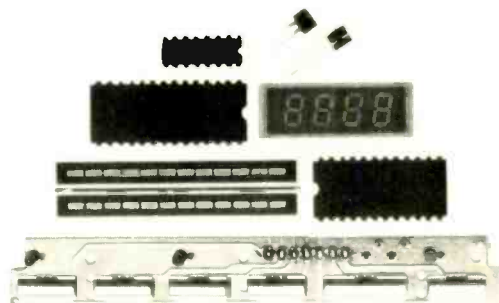
Because the small satellite speakers are driven full range, with no electrical cutoff at the bottom end, they become the limiting factor in the 3D's power-handling capacity. Diversified Science Laboratories found that the system could accurately reproduce 300-Hz shaped tone bursts at peak drive levels as high as ± 14 volts (equivalent to 14 dBW or 25 watts into 8 ohms), which is similar to the performance of a typical good minispeaker. The continuous output test was not performed, because "distortion"—actually extraneous noise created by air leaking from the cabinet—became intrusive at 95 dB SPL, though true harmonic distortion was still reasonably low.

Below the 300-Hz test frequency, distortion rises appreciably, with the



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second harmonic exceeding 1% below 200 Hz and the third below about 100 Hz at all test levels. The second harmonic also exceeded 1% in the 10-kHz range, but the third harmonic did so only at the highest drive level (for 95 dB SPL). In between, however, distortion is low. It averaged less than ½% at 95 dB SPL and less than that at lower output levels.

Our listening was done with the satellite speakers at ear level and well out from the walls of the room, simulating the use of 3D's own stands. (One test pair of stands did not survive shipping; a second pair did not fit the satellites very well.) After some experimentation, we settled on the position recommended by 3D for the woofer module, backed up against a wall away from any corners. We were immediately struck by the speaker's precise, spacious imaging. And integration of the bass and upper frequency ranges was excellent. Never was there any sense of listening to two small boxes situated some five feet from a separate woofer.

The system's balance was much as one might expect from the frequency-response plot. Bass was smooth and firm without being overprominent (a common flaw in satellite/subwoofer systems) and extended down far enough to project with authority all but the most subterranean musical fundamentals. The midrange sounded equally natural; the dip centered on the range between 300 and 400 Hz was not particularly apparent in our auditioning. A few listeners did note a touch of brightness, evident in both the on- and off-axis response curves, which show a gradual rise beginning at 2 kHz. But a light hand on the treble control is all that's necessary to tame the high end.

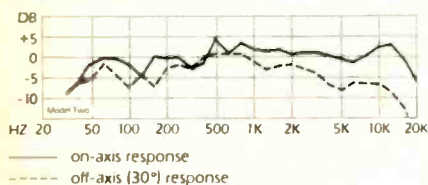
The 3D-610B sounds at least as good as most other speakers in its price range, and it is competitive with satellite/subwoofer systems costing far more. If the format appeals to you—as it obviously does to a great many listeners—this certainly is a model to include on your auditioning list.

Circle 131 on Reader-Service Card

An Electrostatic For Everyman

Acoustat Model Two loudspeaker

ROOM RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS



SENSITIVITY (at 1 meter; 2.8-volt pink noise,
250 Hz to 6 kHz) 80% dB SPL

CONTINUOUS AND PULSED OUTPUT see text

Acoustat Model Two full-range electrostatic loudspeaker, with Magne-Kinetic interface. Dimensions: 19½ by 56½ inches (front), 3 inches deep (panel, 14½ inches deep at interface base). Price: \$1,200 per pair. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Acoustat Corp., 3101 S.W. First Ter., Fort Lauderdale, Fla. 33315.

Full-range electrostatic loudspeakers have commanded a dedicated following for years, but their typically high price and their somewhat quirky electrical properties have conspired to keep their appeal rather limited. Acoustat, a Florida-based manufacturer, would like to change that. It believes it has solved some of the problems inherent in the species, and at a price that dramatically increases the appeal. Its lowest-priced system, the Model Two, consists of two tall, thin panels and two stepup devices that provide the necessary polarizing voltage. Dubbed Magne-Kinetic interfaces, these polarizing units employ a biformer—essentially two transformers in one—that is said to keep system impedance at or above 3 ohms over the entire audio frequency range.

Proper initial assembly and setup takes some time and patience. Each interface box serves double-duty as a deadweight counterbalance and support for the panels. Three wires from the electrostatic elements are attached to the interface box, which in turn is screwed securely to the bottom rear of the panel. Each speaker must then be plugged into a grounded wall outlet for a chargeup period of twenty-four hours; should AC power ever be interrupted, Acoustat advises a similar chargeup period before further use. A high-frequency level control is located on the back of the interface, as are banana-plug jacks for connection to the power amp. The whole assembly is quite handsome and remarkably stable, considering the height of the panels.

Diversified Science Laboratories measured frequency response with the high-frequency control set to its recommended three-o'clock position. Good response is evident down to about 50 Hz—quite a feat, considering that the Model Two consists of just one panel per side—but the response curves can hardly be called smooth through the midrange. Predictably, treble frequencies in the on-axis curve are quite elevated and smooth, though output peaks at around 12 kHz. The off-axis curve depicts a basic truism about electrostatic systems; high frequencies are exceptionally beamy, and response 30 degrees off axis rolls off dramatically above 1.3 kHz. But the specifics of these curves should not be taken literally as indicative of

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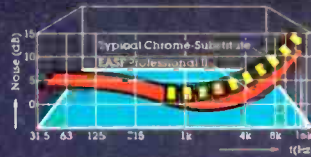
Professional II is like no other tape because it's made like no other tape. While ordinary high bias tapes are made from modi-

fied particles of ferric oxide, Professional II is made of pure chromium dioxide. These perfectly shaped and uniformly sized particles provide a magnetic medium that not only delivers an absolute minimum of background noise, but outstanding high frequencies as well.

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The difference in noise level between PRO II and ordinary high bias tape is greatest where the human ear is most sensitive (2-4 kHz).

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BASF Professional II is so superior it was chosen by Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab for their Original Master Recording™ High Fidelity Cassettes. These state-of-the-art prerecorded cassettes are duplicated in real time (1:1) from the original recording studio master tapes of some of the most prominent recording artists of our time.



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In the 1970s, Blaupunkt introduced the world's first fully electronic car stereo. For the 1980s, Blaupunkt designed the new Berlin—a superbly engineered AM/FM Stereo Cassette that, among other remarkable things, automatically raises and lowers its own volume.

The Berlin's unique dual-unit construction, winner of four industrial design awards, is a masterpiece of human engineering.

Controls at your fingertips

Unit One is the Operating Head. Mounted on a flexible stalk, it is a marvel of electronic miniaturization. Into a space the size of a 100 mm. cigarette pack, Blaupunkt engineers organized the most frequently used radio controls.

By manipulating the flexible stalk, the Head can be adjusted in any direction to put these controls comfortably at your fingertips. No groping, no taking your eyes off the road.



*The Berlin sells for \$1,395.** It is one of a full line of Blaupunkt AM/FM Stereo Cassettes priced from \$250!***

**Suggested retail price exclusive of installation and speakers.

Automatically adjusts its own volume

Unit Two contains the Stereo Cassette Player and the remaining sound

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Blaupunkt Berlin Features

- 4 x 20 W (4 Separate Channels)
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- Separate Bass & Treble
- Separate Fader and Balance
- Cassette Gain Control
- Tape Pause Control
- Loudness Contour Control
- Tape Bias Compensation Switch

*Dolby is a registered trademark of Dolby Laboratories.

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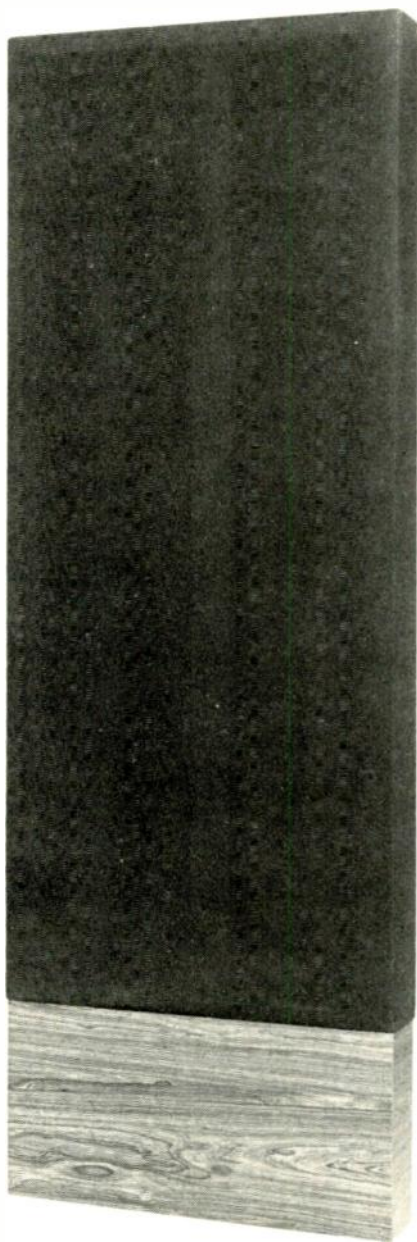
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how the speaker will perform with your amplifier. In tests aimed at determining the action of the high-frequency control, DSL discovered anomalies outside the control's intended range that appeared to result from the combination of low overall impedance (about 4 ohms), extreme dependence on the control setting, low minima in the range around 250 Hz, and even lower minima at 20 kHz for some control settings. At the recommended control setting, the midbass minimum measures 2 ohms and that at 20 kHz is 1.6 ohms; turning the control for minimum treble smooths the curve considerably, while the maximum setting exaggerates the impedance minima. As a result, at some frequencies and settings, the source impedance of the lab's test amplifier became the controlling factor in determining the frequency response of the speaker.

The Model Two, therefore, emerges as extremely critical (and demanding) of the amplifier that powers it. (Acoustat suggests the Hafler DH-200 amplifier as a reasonably priced model with enough output to drive the system and a power MOS-FET output stage requiring no current-limiting circuitry because of its immunity to thermal runaway.) And since any maximum-input tests also would be amplifier-dependent, the 300-Hz continuous and pulsed tests were scuttled as relatively meaningless in this case. We turned to the listening room instead to tell us how loud the speakers would play.

Since speaker sensitivity is now measured in a real (i.e., reflective) room at a standardized test voltage, the Model Two's output of 80½ dB SPL with 2.8 volts input (equivalent to 0 dBW or 1 watt into 8 ohms) must be seen as indicating low efficiency. With our former test method, the "nominal" impedance would have measured 2 ohms and the voltage therefore would have been reduced to deliver 0 dBW across that load—resulting in an output 6 dB lower or 74½ dB SPL. Harmonic distortion measurements reveal essentially negligible amounts of both second and third harmonic products; measured at drive levels sufficient to produce 85- and 90-dB sound pressure levels, total harmonic distortion stayed below 1% from 50 Hz up!

In the listening room, we followed Acoustat's placement instructions to the letter. Both speakers were about four feet from a reflective back wall. We adjusted the two small feet on the bottom of each interface for vertical tilt and the panels themselves for toe-in angle to produce the proper "sweet spot" at the listening position. We were delighted by the results. Our first, and lingering, impression was of an airiness, detail, and clarity seldom surpassed by dynamic speakers—the classic virtues of electrostatics—with none of the common boxy colorations we've grown so accustomed to. Voices emerge with crystalline clarity; strings, woodwinds, and brasses are handled with vividness and realism; transients have whip-snap immediacy. Deep bass, perhaps, is not up to that of the best dynamic systems, but the musical underpinnings are satisfyingly solid with a wide variety of music. Like other electrostatics, the Model Two is relatively beamy; tone color can change quite radically with only minor shift in listener position—a fact some auditioners found disconcerting.

Also typical of electrostatics is the Two's dislike of levels approaching those of a real orchestra: When prodded hard, it starts to crackle and complain. Acoustat warns that amplifier clipping or protective circuitry may be the limiting factor, though our experience with a Dynaco Stereo 300/A (rated at 150 watts or 21¾ dBW per side) as power source left us in doubt whether the crackle on loud peaks was from excessive diaphragm excursion or from the amp's protection. Again, the behavior of the Model Two depends to an unusual degree on the properties of the amp driving it. Acoustat tells us, incidentally, that it is virtually impossible to destroy the electrostatic elements by overdriving them with too large a power amp.

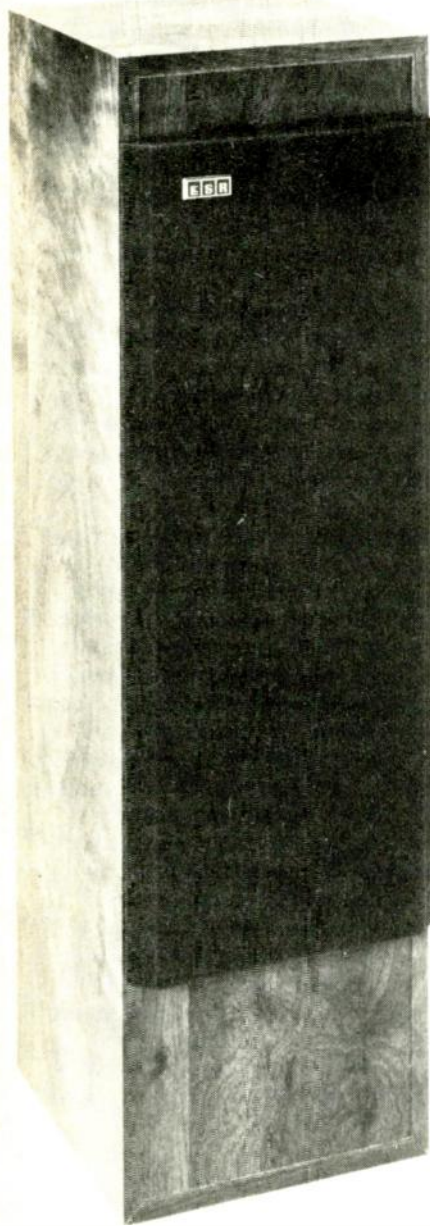
So here it is: An electrostatic in the tradition of the KLH Nine and the Acoustech, but less subject to idiosyncrasies than they and certainly less expensive than they would be were they available today. Listening to the Model Two is rather like driving a Jaguar XKE—with some modernizing modifications, of course.

Circle 136 on Reader-Service Card

... And Now It's BSR Speakers

BSR 883 loudspeaker system, in wood enclosure with vinyl finish. Dimensions: 10 by 36 (front), 12¾ inches deep. Price: \$130. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: BSR (U.S.A.), Ltd., Route 303, Blauvelt, N.Y. 10913.

Though loudspeakers are a new field for BSR, the mass-market audience



for which the Powerhandlers series is intended has been well served by the company for many years with its line of budget-price record changers. At the time of our request for test samples, the Model 883 had top billing in a line consisting of four models; since then—a period of some six months—another model has been added at a higher price point, giving the Powerhandlers series a price range of \$60 to \$200.

A narrow floor-standing tower, the 883 houses two identical 8-inch drivers and a single cone tweeter mounted in a vertical plane on the baffle. Despite the use of twin drivers, the 883 can safely be termed a three-way system; one low-frequency driver functions solely as a woofer while the second operates as a combination woofer/midrange driver. BSR claims to have turned to computer analysis to determine the precise volume for the system's acoustic suspension enclosure, resulting in both high efficiency and high power-handling capability. Connection to the amplifier is via spring-loaded clips on a small panel near the floor at the back of the enclosure. Potential overload situations are dealt with by a fuse holder on the same panel, which also holds a tweeter level control.

In tests at Diversified Science Laboratories, the 883 amply demonstrated BSR's claim of high efficiency. With a 2.8-volt input (equivalent to 0 dBW or 1 watt into 8 ohms), it produced a 91½-dB sound pressure level. In the continuous-tone power test, its protective 3-amp fuse blew when the input reached 17.9 volts (equivalent to 16 dBW or 40 watts into 8 ohms). Though this might seem middling behavior for a speaker characterized as a Powerhandler, the sound pressure level generated in the test, 106¾ dB, is as loud as many real-world listening situations will permit. DSL found that the tonal character of the 300-Hz tone burst altered noticeably at a level slightly below the speaker's continuous power-handling capability.

Frequency response curves were generated with the speaker placed against the wall, following BSR's suggestion, and with the tweeter level control set to the standard or maximum position. As the curves depict, on-axis output is fairly uniform, with lots of bass energy down to about 60 Hz. The off-axis curve tells you that proper placement of the 883 in terms of the normal seated listening position is critical; the severe high-frequency rolloff above 10 kHz indicates that the tweeter is beamy in that region, inhibiting tonal balance as you move away from the "firing line." The tweeter level control is more regular in its action than many we have seen in more expensive speakers; it alters response above about 2 kHz and, at its minimum setting, cuts high-frequency output by up to 16 dB at 10 kHz.

Harmonic distortion is extremely well controlled. At loud playing levels (100 dB SPL), harsh-sounding third harmonics hardly ever exceed 1% above 100 Hz. Second harmonics are a bit more elevated, reaching 2% in the lower midrange and almost 3% in the upper treble region. At a more moderate playing level (85 dB SPL), both second and third harmonics fall dramatically, with neither exceeding 1% from 80 Hz on up.

The overall lie of the impedance curve and the speaker's high efficiency combine to make an easy load for even low-power receivers or amplifiers. A word of caution, however, about attempting to parallel two pairs from the same amplifier: Impedance values hover around 4 ohms in the musically active upper-bass and midrange area, so two pairs operating simultaneously will present a 2-ohm load—low enough to cause some amps to balk.

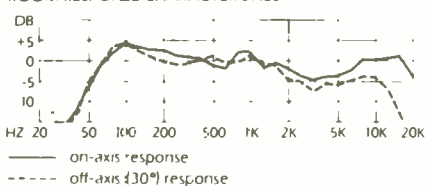
In our extended listening sessions, we were quite impressed by the 883s' performance. These are not super-accurate loudspeakers capable of prodigious output, but they are remarkably free of the nasty "hi-fi" colorations or boomy blowness common to some mass-market models. Their overall tone is smooth and warm, with a dramatic frontal projection. Voices emerge with clarity, as do a broad range of instrumental timbres. When the speakers are moved away from the wall, bass response falls noticeably, but we found that a slight bass boost at the preamp remedied the situation nicely. Some high-end brightness was also mitigated with a bit of cut at the preamp.

The 883 is a handsome-looking and agreeable-sounding loudspeaker. At its price, it is a bargain by anyone's standards. Judging by this Powerhandler model, we would venture to say that BSR's loudspeaker-market blandishments will not (if you'll pardon the expression) fall on deaf ears.

Circle 132 on Reader-Service Card

BSR Model 883 loudspeaker

ROOM RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS



SENSITIVITY (at 1 meter, 2.8-vol: pink noise,
250 Hz to 6 kHz): 91½ dB SPL

CONTINUOUS OUTPUT (at 1 meter, 300 Hz)
fuse blew at 17.9 volts, for 106¾ dB SPL

PULSED OUTPUT (at 1 meter, 300 Hz)
106 dB SPL from 16.4 volts peak (see text)

Circle 35 on Reader-Service Card ▶

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS LISTEN.

THE SANSUI 900 SUPER SYSTEM.

Just listen.

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But best of all, here is a sensibly priced complete system of high performance separates that is as easy to use as it is to buy.

All you have to do is plug it in — and enjoy.

C-77 Control Center/Preamplifier with Automatic Fader and Moving Coil Pre-Preamp Unique in offering full stereo mixing with the convenience of an automatic and manual fader for smooth, professional sounding transitions from any connected source to any other, plus a built in pre-preamp for moving-coil cartridges. Variable loudness control.



B-77 LINEAR-A DC Servo Power Amplifier with Spectrum Analyzer and Peak Power Meter. Sensibly rated at 60 watts/channel, min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms from 20-20,000Hz, with no more than 0.03% THD. Direct-coupled throughout, it features Sansui's exclusive new "Linear A" circuitry for low distortion with high efficiency, along with separate 10-band spectrum analyzer and peak power displays that show just what your system is doing.

T-77 Quartz-PLL Digital Synthesizer FM/AM Tuner with 8 Preset FM/AM Stations and Auto Search Digital Quartz-PLL Synthesizer design, which guarantees the most accurate tuning possible, is the highlight of this extraordinary tuner. Stores up to 8 stations in memory circuits for instant recall.

This system also has a direct/



drive automatic-return FR-D3 turntable with its low 0.028% wow/flutter and 72dB S/N ratio.

The attractive audio rack that contains the 900's components has additional space for an optional Sansui metal-tape compatible cassette deck.

Also included are two S-50 12", 3-way loudspeakers specially designed to perfectly match the system's components and fill your listening room with an uncanny amount and quality of music.

If you love great high fidelity, but don't have the patience for a lot of shopping and technical talk, you'll want to see and hear the Sansui 900 Super System. Visit your Sansui dealer and find out how



easy it is to own a top-of-the-line high fidelity system.

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The System.

The Scotch Record Care System combines Sound Life[™] record care fluid with a unique dispensing applicator. To use, simply depress the supply container and Sound Life fluid is fed automatically to the pad. That's all there is to it. It's quick, easy and simple. No guesswork about how much fluid you need or how to apply it correctly. Just place the applicator on your turntable spindle, revolve it and the record is cleaned.

Super-wetting action deep-cleans grooves.



Artist's representation. Water-based record-cleaning solutions bead up on the grooves (left). Sound Life with super-wetting action deep-cleans grooves (right).

If your present cleaning solution beads up on the record surface, it may not be getting the job done.

Scotch Sound Life spreads onto the disc surface evenly—safely penetrating grooves to remove micro-dust and fingerprints. Sound Life leaves the record with a brilliant look, as brilliant as the sound is clean and true.

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Even though your record surface is clean, it's generally the electrostatic charge that gets it dirty again. An anti-static gun is just a temporary treatment.

One application of Sound Life reduces the residual charge to near zero. And it prevents static from returning no matter how often the record is played.



(Left) Foam beads are attracted to static charge left on record after cleaning with a leading record cleaner. Same record (right) after one treatment with Sound Life fluid with anti-static action.

Friction reduction's a plus.

The same application of Sound Life that super-cleans and removes static can reduce stylus drag up to 15%.

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All of the tech data we've used to back up these statements is available free. Write to Home Entertainment Products Department, 3M Company, 3M Center, St. Paul, MN 55144. Ask for report C-242.



**SCOTCH[®]
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THE TRUTH COMES OUT.**



A Guide for the Speaker Shopper

HF's editors take the work out of selecting the best-sounding model for your budget.

by Peter Dobbin and Michael Riggs



This spring's new speaker introductions range from small, two-way systems to complex, multidriver behemoths. Representative of the diversity of the season's new entries are (1) Infinity's Reference Standard II, (2) B&W's DM-16, (3) Sound of O's Gabriel, (4) American Acoustics Labs' Impression IM-96, (5) Altec Lansing's Model 1012, (6) Snell's Type 1, (7) Boston Acoustics' A-150, (8) Itone Audio's VMPS IIA/R Super Tower, and (9) Sansui's SP-L750.

Though no two speaker systems ever sound exactly alike, so many models are available (see "Surveying the Scene") that in any city or town you probably can hear an adequate cross-section of the various types. Yet, unless you are disciplined in your listening evaluations, the very abundance of competing models can make shopping a long, frustrating ordeal.

Our time-honored solutions to the problem of selecting the right loudspeaker for your tastes and needs address a number of variables: the size and liveness of the listening room, the amount of amplifier power available, the load a particular speaker presents to the amplifier, and so on. Approaching from this

vantage, however, the novice audiophile is often left with a bewildering array of theories and parameters to commit to memory, obscuring the most important variable—how the speaker sounds. Simplification is possible if we make some reasonable assumptions, addressing the situations you are most likely to encounter.

First, let's assume that your listening room is of "average" size—about 15 by 20 feet with 9-foot ceilings. Some urbanites may complain that these dimensions are too generous and suburbanites may gasp at their meagerness, but a few feet more or less in any one direction should not be a major stumbling block.

Second, though adequate volume levels can be generated with amplifiers or receivers rated at as little as 20 watts (13 dBW) per channel, we will assume that you have (or will someday buy) a unit capable of 40 to 50 watts (16 to 17 dBW) per side. At moderate listening levels with highly compressed program material (e.g., most rock music and FM broadcasts), the extra power won't mean much, but relatively uncompressed recordings, DBX-encoded discs, and digital discs will put a premium on power. Also, having enough power at the outset presumably frees you to audition speakers across a wider sensitivity range; even a speaker with relatively low efficiency can be driven to adequate listening levels in our "average" room with a 40-watt receiver.

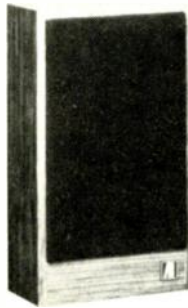
And third, though impedance characteristics of loudspeakers vary from model to model, most are rated from 4 to 8 ohms and should not present a difficult load for most amplifiers. Here again, we must make an assumption—namely, that you are not planning to run two pairs of speakers simultaneously. Most amplifiers are not designed to work well into loads of less than 4 ohms, and two 8-ohm loudspeakers will present such a load, with momentary excursions to even lower impedances. If you think you might want to add another pair someday or are seeking a second pair to add to an existing stereo setup, make sure that the impedance is rated at a minimum of 8 ohms. HIGH FIDELITY's test reports can be a big help here.

With those basic—and reasonably safe—assumptions in mind, you can proceed to the task of choosing a loudspeaker. For that, we offer the following three-point shopping guide to getting

Surveying the Scene

A Lexicon of the Latest Loudspeaker Introductions

Acoustat's Model Three (\$750) is similar to the company's Model Two full-range electrostatic but was made slightly larger for somewhat more extended bass response.



Acoustic Research Model 18S

Acoustic Research is offering its Super Value series of two-way bookshelf speakers. The smallest of the lot, the AR-18S, has an 8-inch woofer and sells for \$90, while the largest, the AR-38S, has a 10-inch woofer and sells for \$150. All were developed using AR's computer-aided design techniques and are said to be about 2 dB more efficient than the old bookshelf line.



Altec Lansing Model 1012

Altec Lansing has two new midsize systems: the two-way Model 1010 (\$200) and the three-way Model 1012 (\$300). Both speakers use what Altec calls an energy-refracting transducer, or "sound prism," to handle high frequencies. It consists of slots that bend and delay some of the sound to control directivity.

American Acoustics Labs' latest design is a two-way compact bookshelf system, Model IM-96 (\$240 the pair). The unit incorporates a soft-dome 1-inch tweeter and 6-inch woofer along with a rear-mounted 6-inch passive radiator.

Apature's R-T ribbon tweeter (available as an add-on for \$100) is the starting point for all three of the company's complete systems. These include the two-way R-8 (\$180) and three-way R-10 (\$300). The Trident system (\$500) consists of a subwoofer with two 10-inch drivers and two satellite speakers.

Audio Electronics Systems calls its three latest speakers the PC (phase coherent) series. Each employs a new woofer design with a flat, high-density diaphragm. The top-of-the-line Model AES-100 (\$550) is a four-way system with two 10-inch flat-diaphragm woofers, a 3-inch soft-dome lower midrange

driver, a 1½-inch soft-dome upper mid-range driver, and a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter. The AES-70, a three-way system, and the two-way AES-60 are priced at \$300 and \$150, respectively.

BML offers four Tracer Reference loudspeakers, ranging from the \$200 Model 10, which uses one 6-inch woofer, to the \$900 Model 130-II, which has two 8-inch woofers. All are two-way designs with 1-inch dome tweeters.

BSR's newest in the Powerhandlers series is the Model 888 (\$200), a side-firing three-way tower with two 8-inch woofers, a single 8-inch midrange, and a 2½-inch tweeter.

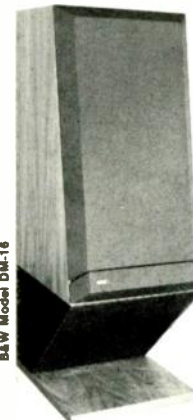
B&W crossed the Atlantic with additions to the top and bottom of its Domestic Monitor series. The DM-16 (\$895), a three-way phase-compensated speaker with a sloped front baffle and a 9-inch woofer, fills the niche vacated by the discontinued DM-6. The much smaller DM-22 (\$225) uses an 8½-inch woofer and a 1-inch dome tweeter. Both are said to have benefited from the work that went into the design of the highly regarded Model 801 Monitor.

Benjamin Electroproducts is marketing three loudspeakers manufactured by Vieta Audio Electronica of Spain. These range from the compact B-4200 (\$300) to the floor-standing omnidirectional B-10,000 (\$1,750).

Bertagni Electroacoustic Systems (BES), after a couple of false starts, is back in business with a whole new series of flat-panel bipolar loudspeakers. All four models (\$200 to \$550) use BES's unique polymer diaphragm drivers, which are made to vibrate by the impact of what the company calls an acoustic hammer.

Beveridge's System-4 (\$3,000), which resembles the larger and more expensive System-3, is a hybrid that uses electrostatic elements above 200 Hz and two 12-inch dynamic drivers below.

Boston Acoustics has entries at the bottom and middle of its line. The smallest is the A-60 (\$200 a pair) with an 8-inch woofer and 1½-inch cone tweeter. The A-150 (\$550 a pair) uses the same three drivers as the top-of-the-line A-200 in a smaller enclosure.



B&W Model DM-16

Byers Stephens Corporation, a new company from Mountain View, California, has six speakers employing either transmission-line or bass-reflex loading techniques. At the top of the line is the Model 1031 TC, a two-piece system with a 10-inch Bextrene woofer mounted in a floor-standing enclosure.

Canton has two new models this spring. One is a powered satellite/subwoofer system called the LSet Plus (\$1,300). The other is the Ergo (\$1,750), a floor-standing triamped loudspeaker with built-in amplifiers and electronic crossover.

Celestion presents its Ditton 300 (\$400), a three-way system with a 10-inch woofer.

Cizek Audio has produced two subwoofers intended primarily for use with other speakers in its line. The \$250 Model SW-5W, for use either singly or in pairs with Cizek Sound Window speakers, has a 10-inch woofer and a 10-inch passive radiator, plus a passive crossover that permits either summed or stereo operation. The KA-20, designed to match the KA-1 minispeaker, employs two 10-inch woofers in an acoustic suspension cabinet made of koa wood. It sells for \$1,400 with the KA-20X electronic crossover; extra subwoofers alone, for stereo operation, sell for about \$800.

GLI, Inc., known primarily for its professional sound-reinforcement speakers and electronics, turns its attention to the home market with the Model MR-II loudspeaker. The unit features three horn-loaded solid-state super-tweeters, four 5¼-inch mid/low-frequency drivers, and a rear-mounted 15-inch passive radiator. The MR-II, housed in a walnut cabinet and equipped with overload protection circuitry, costs \$350.

Genesis Physics has replaced most of its line with reworked designs. The four new models, sold in mirror-image pairs, range from the two-way

Model 1 (\$100) to the three-way Model 320 (\$330), with two 8-inch woofers in an acoustic suspension enclosure.



Infinity Reference Standard II

Infinity calls its latest model a direct descendant of the \$20,000 Reference Standard system and has named it accordingly: the Reference Standard II. The system—with two 10-inch polypropylene woofers, three 5-inch dipole midranges, and two Emit tweeters—is shaped like a curved, solid oak wing and is designed to minimize diffraction effects. The Reference Standard II, which stands 48 inches high, costs \$650.



Itone Audio Super Tower II A/R

Itone Audio has revised its gargantuan VMPS Super Tower as the IIA/R (\$1,430) with improved polypropylene midrange drivers. Standing more than 6 feet tall, it has sixteen drivers and is reportedly able to produce sound pressure levels of 101 dB at 1 meter with 1 watt (0 dBW) of input.

JBL has a successor to its floor-standing L-150. Claimed to incorporate improved midrange and high-frequency drivers and a new crossover network, the L-150A costs \$695.



Jensen System 500

Jensen has broadened its line with the introduction of four speakers in its Systems Series, borrowing techniques used in its high-end System B and C designs. The new models range from the two-way System 200 (\$130) to the System 500 (\$290), a four-driver three-way speaker with a rear-firing 2-inch tweeter for improved dispersion.

KLH's Model 170 two-way bookshelf speaker (\$100) is the lowest priced system in the line to have a polypropylene woofer. The company is also initiating the Series 500 line, featuring 2¼-inch cone tweeters and polymer-impregnated woofers. The four models, which are

(Continued on next page)

the sound you want for the price you want to pay.

1. Decide on a Budget

If you've been out of the market awhile, don't be surprised that \$50 speakers of hi-fi quality are no longer to be found. Like everything else, good speakers have become more expensive. But unlike many other consumer goods, they also have become better. Most full-range models start at around \$125, and discounts are not as readily obtainable with speakers as they are with audio electronics. For slightly more money—say, around \$200 each—you should hear a dramatic improvement in sound quality. Above that price, fine points of discrimination come into play, and the sky is the limit on pricing. No matter what price range you select, however, you should have no trouble finding at least four or five competing brands to audition in your locale.

2. Bring Records or Tapes

Any dealer you visit will have a cache of records with which to demonstrate his wares, but likely as not it won't include the ones that would tell you what you need to know. What you want is a speaker that will make *your* records sound the way their producers intended them to, or at least the way *you* would like them to sound. Which means that you should take records or tapes you are familiar with to use for your speaker evaluations.

Ideally, you should listen to speakers in an environment that approximates the acoustics of your own listening room—actually in your listening room, if possible. At the very least, try to have the models you audition moved to positions in the showroom recommended by their manufacturers or, if any of those turn out not to be practical placements for your home, to positions that approximate the ones you would use there. Placement can have a strong effect on a speaker's sound, especially in the bass. For example, unless specifically designed for midwall placement, a speaker so positioned will almost certainly sound bass-shy compared to a similar system placed against the same wall but resting on the floor rather than a shelf. Dealers sometimes intentionally position speakers so as to exaggerate differences between designs

BACKBEAT's Reviewers Go Speaker Shopping

Turn to page 71 to find out what records BACKBEAT's reviewers would take with them to find the right speakers. Their criteria for the "perfect" loudspeaker are as diverse as their musical tastes.

claimed to be highly efficient, range from the 8-inch, two-way Model 508 (\$100) to the 15-inch, three-way Model 515 (\$350).

KM Laboratories, a Belgian manufacturer, is offering the AC-550 floor-standing bass-reflex speaker (\$450), which allows electronic adjustment of both high-frequency directivity and low-frequency response. The AC-550's driver complement consists of two 9-inch woofers and three 1-inch dome tweeters.

Kenwood continues its exploration of cone construction. For the LS-1000 (\$250) two-way bass-reflex system, it uses thermal shock treatment to form a 10-inch woofer into a bowl-shaped ridged "cone" said to be extremely stiff and highly inert.

Koss's latest is the Model 201/Kossfire (\$210), which has dual angled tweeters for wide treble distribution and high power-handling capacity. Bass is handled by a 12-inch ported woofer, the midrange by a 5-inch cone.

Mission Electronics has added the two-way Model 700 (\$185) to the bottom of its line. It combines a 9-inch woofer and a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter in a ported enclosure. The speaker comes in mirror-image pairs.

Paisley Research of Canada has six two-way loudspeakers. The least expensive is the Model 10 (\$160) with a 10-inch paper woofer, and the premium model is the 500 (\$400) with an 8-inch Bextrene woofer.

Petroff Labs' Kephren loud-speaker (\$400), a trapezoidally shaped floor-standing system, makes use of a 12-inch polypropylene woofer, a cluster of four 4½-inch polypropylene mid-ranges, and a dome tweeter. The cluster operates from 100 Hz to 5 kHz, which the manufacturer says results in unusually uncolored reproduction.

Petrous Electronics' RBH/Petrous

SW-12-W is a subwoofer system that consists of a 12-inch polypropylene cone with a dual voice coil mounted in a glass-topped walnut enclosure.

Phase Research, a Dallas-based company, incorporates a leaf tweeter and polypropylene woofer in its two-way ported speaker systems. Dubbed a Line Energy Driver—or, somewhat confusingly, LED—the leaf tweeter consists of a polymer membrane and photo-etched aluminum voice coil. Phase Research uses an LED 5 inches long to cover the frequency range from 1.6 to 20 kHz in its Little-d speaker (\$210) and a 7-inch version in the Model R (\$360).

Revox's new top-of-the-line system is called The Symbol (\$1,300). A three-way design, it houses a 12½-inch woofer, a passive radiator of similar size, a 2-inch plastic-cone midrange, and a 1-inch dome tweeter in a floor-standing cabinet.

SKS, Inc., a new company, claims super-accurate transient response for the Intaglio (\$500), a two-way system. Its designers claim that the speaker can handle 10-millisecond tone bursts at 1,200 watts.

Sansui's SP-L series of loudspeakers is said to be designed for both high efficiency and high power-handling capacity. Both the \$650 SP-L750 and the \$500 SP-L550 use a

12-inch woofer plus horn tweeters and supertweeters.

Shahinian Acoustics calls its new subwoofer the Contra-Bombarde (\$850), a stereo unit with dual 8-inch drivers in twin slot-loaded horn enclosures.

Snell uses conventional dynamic drivers in an unconventional configuration in its Type 1 system (\$1,195 per pair). The design is said to eliminate floor reflections that cause inter-

ference ripples in the frequency response of the direct sound. Both the woofer and the tweeter are mounted near the floor on a sloping baffle, with the tweeter half obscured by a second reflective baffle sloping up from the floor.

The Sound of O, from Berkeley, California, is offering the time-aligned Gabriel loudspeaker (\$1,400). A large floor-standing model, mounted on casters, it houses a 15-inch woofer in a Thiele-alignment ported enclosure. A 10-inch lower-midrange driver is mounted in a subenclosure, and the 6-inch upper-midrange and 1-inch treble drivers are mounted on a stalk above the bass cabinet.

Speakerlab, the Seattle-based manufacturer of speaker kits, is changing its marketing approach this spring. Each of the three new Wave Aperture tower speakers is being offered in a preassembled version only, with prices ranging from \$139 to \$300. The top-of-the-line Model S-500 contains a leaf tweeter, 4½-inch midrange driver, 10-inch polypropylene woofer, and 12-inch passive radiator.

Technics has three new speakers using flat drivers with honeycomb internal structures for high rigidity and more nearly piston motion. The SB-8 (\$500) has a 13-inch woofer, 3-inch midrange, and 1-inch tweeter. The SB-6 (\$400) employs the same midrange and tweeter with a 10-inch woofer; the smallest of the three, the SB-4 (\$300), has an 8-inch woofer and a 2-inch midrange.

3D Acoustics' newest design is the Model 3D-8 (\$165) with an 8-inch acoustic suspension woofer and two 2-inch tweeters.

Weber Electronics' six systems range from the small two-way LBK-200 to the tall five-way Aural Fifteen. Weber's SW-212 subwoofer has two 12-inch drivers and can be used as a coffee table or game table.

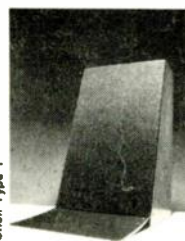
Unitronix Corporation is marketing Polish-made Impact speakers: four models, starting with the bookshelf Model 2 (\$150) and topped by the floor-standing Model 8 (\$400).



Mission Electronics Model 700



Sansui Model SP-L750



Snell Type 1

to the benefit of the ones they most want to sell.

3. Keep an Open Mind

If you go into a store insisting that you must have a linear-phase loudspeaker with an electrostatic tweeter, a

horn midrange, and a transmission-line woofer, chances are that's what you'll walk home with, even if it has a long tail and floppy ears and howls at the moon. It never hurts to have an understanding of the technical side of audio, but don't let a lot of design details obscure your perception of how a speaker actually

sounds—which is, after all, what really matters. There are speakers, good and bad, in all sizes and shapes and with all manner of drivers. Similarly, there are good and bad speakers in every price range, so fiscal pain is no guarantee of aural pleasure. Go for the sound, not for the hype. **HF**

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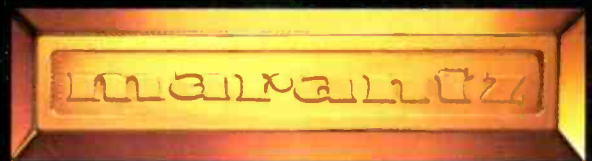
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THE SOLID GOLD SOUND®

Samuel Barber: The Last Interview and the Legacy

Part I

One of America's most quotable composers discusses himself and his music, and our reporter assesses the recordings.

by Allan Kozinn



Samuel Barber, in one of his last photographs

I think I'm a country person. Most everything I've composed, I've composed in the country, and the pieces I've written in the city have generally been started in the country. I'm sure you've noticed that I haven't been notably productive since I moved to New York. Like Messiaen, I like birds. And I need the absolute silence of the country. I need places to walk. Now I can walk through Central Park, but it isn't the same. I've tried to analyze it, but to my mind, it's just not as satisfying. It isn't really natural woods."

The speaker was Samuel Barber, one of the most celebrated composers this country has produced. Like Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, Elliott Carter, William Schuman, and others of that golden generation that came to prominence during the first three decades of this century, Barber was intent on showing the world that serious composition was not an exclusively European art form. He also firmly believed that new music need not be forbidding, and by writing in a Romantic, accessible idiom, he built a large international audience

for his own work and for American music in general.

Barber died of cancer on January 23, a little more than a month before his seventy-first birthday. The comments about city life's dearth of inspiring charms, as well as those that follow, were part of what turned out to be his last formal interview, granted in December 1979. He had by then composed all he was destined to, although he maintained that he would be writing again as soon as he found a way of keeping the intrusive city noise out of his workroom.

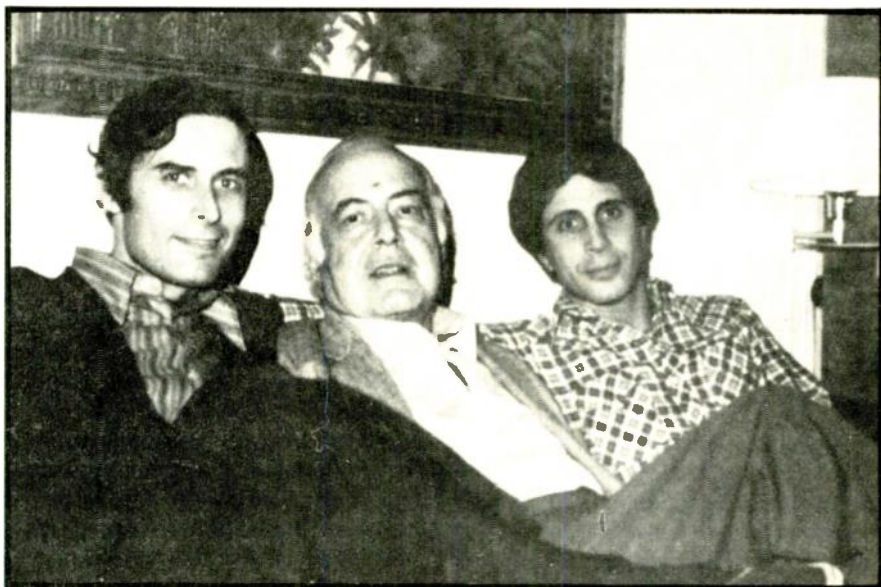
The day of the interview, in fact, he had a team of workmen building soundproof walls in his Fifth Avenue apartment, one of several attempts to solve this problem.

Of course, the increasing severity of Barber's illness—which he would not publicly admit was anything serious—took at least as great a toll on his composing as did the lack of country quiet. As he pointed out, his output had indeed been slim in recent years: There were the *Three Songs*, Op. 45, in 1974; the revision of his second opera, *Antony and Cleopatra*, in 1975; the short *Ballade* for solo piano in 1977; and the *Third Essay for Orchestra* in 1978. The New York Philharmonic, which gave the *Third Essay* its premiere, had also commissioned an oboe concerto, scheduled for early 1979, but Barber laid this work aside after completing only one movement.

According to an early biography, Nathan Broder's *Samuel Barber* (G. Schirmer, 1954; out of print), the composer was shy, withdrawn, and moody as a young man; those traits endured, and perhaps intensified, as he grew older. He was, I was told before meeting him, "absolutely brilliant and funny as hell—but an impossible man." I was also told that he did not enjoy long conversations with strangers, particularly journalists. He had, therefore, originally canceled our interview, as well as most of his other appointments, and was refusing at the time to see anyone but his closest friends. It was one of the latter, pianist and composer Phillip Ramey, who persuaded Barber to keep our appointment. And so, on a brisk, cloudy morning, Barber turned up at the offices of his publisher, G. Schirmer, looking healthy and apparently in good spirits. He answered questions for about an hour and a half, and then, as we parted, he asked, "What do you think—did I give you any good lines?"

If there was one thing the interview had plenty of, it was good lines. Barber was clearly not given to lengthy and serious rhetorical pronouncements about the meaning and purpose of music; nor was he interested in predicting where current compositional trends might lead. He refused to speak analytically about his music or his style, and when he discussed his work at all, it was in general and usually anecdotal terms. Otherwise, he seemed happy to sit back and play the role of the cantankerous elder statesman, musing pointedly about the music world's shortcomings.

I reminded him, for instance, of a



Barber at home, flanked by friends Phillip Ramey and John Corigliano, American composers of the subsequent generation

statement he had made to *MUSICAL AMERICA* in 1935, when he won his first Pulitzer traveling scholarship. "The present offers fine opportunities for young composers," the twenty-five-year-old Barber had said. "The public seems ready to encourage native talent, and if composers are ready to do their part and offer something worthwhile, American music may surely be expected to make great progress." What, I wondered, did Barber think of the prospects for young composers in the 1980s?

"Oh, I think it's much harder. First of all, there were conductors who were interested in American music in those days. Koussevitzky, for example. When young conductors tell me they have trouble putting together interesting programs, I tell them to look at the Koussevitzky/Boston Symphony programs. They were superb—much better than Toscanini's. They had the classics, the Romantics, and almost every program had an American work. He was very enthusiastic about American music, and he played it beautifully. For a composer, it all hinges on enthusiastic conductors. But that's all gone now. Why? Well, don't ask me—why don't you go ask Mr. Muti? He came here to take a nice American post and announced in a *New York Times* interview that he's never conducted an American work in his life. Well, that's the end of us in Philadelphia. My hometown. Will he come around once he's on the Philadelphia podium? I rather doubt it. It seems many of today's young conductors are too lazy to learn new things. And it's not only lazy-

ness: They are not at all convinced that new music is any good. Therefore, new works only get done when the wives of the composers pressure the members of an orchestra's board to have certain works played. That's why I think all composers should get married as early as possible."

Barber himself never married, but his music has found plenty of champions. Virtually from the start, it brought him the popular and financial success that allowed him to forgo academic and other extracompositional occupations. In 1928, at eighteen, he entered a violin sonata (unpublished) in a composition contest and won the first of several substantial prizes and grants that put him in the enviable position of being able to spend every summer from his late teens through his late twenties touring Europe and composing. The Philadelphia Orchestra performed his first orchestral score, *The School for Scandal Overture*, when he was twenty-three, and two years later, in 1935, his *Music for a Scene from Shelley* was performed by the New York Philharmonic. The same year Barber won the Prix de Rome and made his recording debut as both composer and baritone, singing his *Dover Beach* for the Victor microphones. In 1937, Artur Rodzinski gave the American premiere of the First Symphony with the Cleveland Orchestra, repeating it that summer in Salzburg. And in 1938, Arturo Toscanini added his seal of approval, leading the NBC Symphony Orchestra in the first performances of the *First Essay* and the work that became not only Barber's

best-known score, but one of the most frequently played of all twentieth-century orchestral works, the *Adagio for Strings*.

The urge to compose hit Barber early. He was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1910, took his first piano lessons when he was six, and began composing at seven. Evidently without much encouragement, his compositional drive flowered quietly until, at age nine, he left his mother a letter that read, "I have written this to tell you my worrying secret. Now don't cry when you read it because it is neither yours or my fault [sic]. I suppose I have to tell it now without any nonsense. To begin with, I was not meant to be an athlete [sic]. I was meant to be a composer, and will be I'm sure. Don't ask me to try to forget this unpleasant thing and go play football—Please—Sometimes I've been worrying about this so much it makes me mad (not very)."

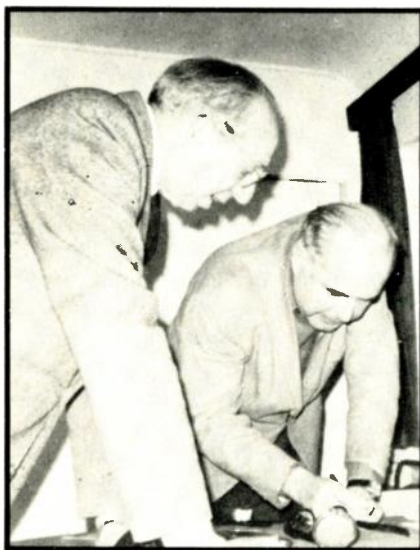
A closet composer no more, Barber continued his musical studies on his own, attempting an opera when he was ten (called *The Rose Tree*, to a libretto by the family cook). In 1924, the Curtis Institute was founded, and Barber, then fourteen, went to Philadelphia as one of the conservatory's 357 charter students to study piano, voice, and composition. There in 1928, he met another composition student, Gian Carlo Menotti, and the two entered upon a lifelong friendship. They traveled around Europe together through the 1930s and eventually (from 1943 to 1974) shared a large woodland estate, called Capricorn, near Mount Kisco, New York. Many of Barber's finest scores were composed in the countrified seclusion of Capricorn, and it was there that he and Menotti collaborated on a couple of stage works (Menotti supplying the librettos): Barber's first opera, *Vanessa* (1957), and a ten-minute "chamber opera," *A Hand of Bridge* (1959).

In January 1934, in Vienna, Barber made his debut as a conductor, a sideline he gave up happily in the early 1950s, soon after making a short series of "Barber Conducts Barber" recordings. Why did he stop? "Because on-stage I had about as much projection as a baby skunk. Projection, nerves—and I got bored of rehearsing my own music. Some composers just adore it, but I don't find it very interesting. There's a lack, in me, of pedagogical talent. And when you're guest-conducting, either you have to have that talent or else you have to

have an authority over the orchestra to make them do it right. Guest conductors rarely have that authority, whereas if it's your own orchestra, you can just do what Toscanini did: You can scream, 'Stupidi! Imbecille!', and throw down your watch. I've seen him do that. But he was Toscanini, and it was his orchestra; they wouldn't dare make the mistakes with him that they did with me.

"Oh, I suppose there's something to be gained from hearing a composer conduct his own work. My tempos could be definitive. But generally, I don't believe composers make very good conductors. Someone who conducts every day can give a technically superior performance. I remember the last work of mine I conducted: my Second Symphony with the Boston Symphony. Not a bad way to end a conducting career. But by the time I got to Boston, I'd conducted it in Denmark and in England, and I knew exactly where the violas were going to be wrong, and where I'd have to make them do it over and over, very slowly. Now how can you remain interested in doing that, whether it's your own music or not?"

Not the gregarious type, Barber was a less vociferous public campaigner for the cause of new American music than Copland, Schuman, and Leonard Bernstein have been. However, he did occasionally take a stand, serving briefly as president of the International Music Council of UNESCO and, in 1952, joining a group of his fellow composers in a successful campaign to win a larger allotment of royalties for serious compos-



Composer Aaron Copland in discussion with Barber, in a photo by Ramey

ers from ASCAP. Now and then, he even came up with a plan to encourage younger composers. One such scheme involved the commission for *Summer Music* (1956), by the Chamber Music Society of Detroit. He had agreed to set aside his usual fee, accepting instead the proceeds of a "pay what you can" collection among the audience, most of the contributions falling between \$1.00 and \$5.00.

"The idea," he recalled, "was that, if this caught on, music societies around the country would take up similar collections and use the funds to commission young local composers who needed experience and exposure. I made a speech against myself, essentially, telling them it was crazy that they didn't use local composers. It was certainly done in Bach's day. But they didn't like that idea. They just wanted the same tired old names—Copland, Sessions, Harris, me—so it never got off the ground. Consequently, not only are young composers still not getting the commissions, but the prices for new works are staying rather high. In fact, I've done my best to increase them. Which I guess ruins my story."

He was able to increase those fees—to a level that was reportedly the highest in the country—primarily because he was able to produce music that audiences consistently enjoyed. His conception of the ideal American idiom differed considerably from those of his peers, and he seems not to have been touched by the need to keep up with experimental and stylistic trends. In the 1940s, when the predominant American style emphasized the rediscovery of nationalistic musical roots, Barber's major works—the Violin Concerto (1939–40), the *Second Essay* (1942), the *Capricorn Concerto* (1944), and the Cello Concerto (1945)—reflected an impulse to continue developing in his own direction rather than turn to folk tunes for raw material. When the compositional world dove headlong into atonality, serialism, and a host of other experimental, intellectual forms in the 1950s and '60s, he proceeded along his own lyrical and often intensely subjective path, veering moderately toward a more chromatic, angular, and dramatic language.

Thomson, in his book *American Music since 1910*, calls Barber "a reactionary," and that may be. He was not, certainly, the kind of composer we would call a daring trailblazer; yet the

(Continued on page 65)



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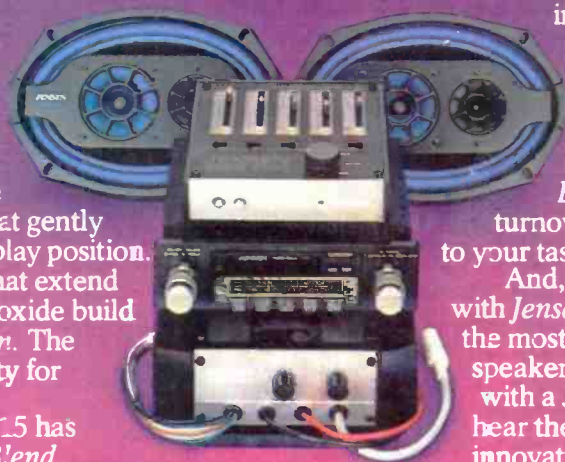
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Behind the Scenes

Too late for inclusion in our April mixed review of the state of the classical recording industry came confirmation of a significant new venture. James Frey and Scott Mampe, former heads of Deutsche Grammophon and Philips, are about to launch a new line, a classical wing of Clive Davis' Arista label. They will begin by importing and distributing the German Ariola/Eurodisc series, which Arista already owns, one of the larger European classical catalogs still without substantial American distribution. Subsequently, Frey/Mampe Associates will undertake original production, including a midpriced digital line of basic repertory.

About now the British Unicorn label should be completing sessions on a major Delius project: a recording of works the blind and infirm composer dictated to his amanuensis Eric Fenby between 1928 and his 1934 death. Fenby himself, who turned seventy-five last month, leads the Ambrosian Singers and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in the *Songs of Farewell*, *A Song of Summer*, *Caprice and Elegy*, *Idyll*, the *Irmelin Prelude*, and two earlier works, *Two Aquarelles* and *A Late Lark*. Soprano Felicity Lott will be among the soloists. Two separate digital tapings are being made, one multi-miked, the other with a single microphone; a later determination will be made as to which to release. The Delius Trust is providing a subsidy expected to run to some 30,000 pounds—the first time such aid is being extended to a small independent

company. Unicorn director John Goldsmith has arranged with Faber and Faber a paperback republication of Fenby's 1936 book, *Delius as I Knew Him*, and plans are to include it as part of the two-disc package.

One of the hopes for the new Davies Hall has been that it will make the San Francisco Symphony's recording life easier and more abundant. All systems are go. Next October, two weeks will be set aside from the young concert season exclusively for recording. Philips will tape performances of the Mahler Fourth Symphony, with soprano Margaret Price, and Respighi's *Pines/Fountains*, all led by Edo de Waart. And soprano Elly Ameling will join her compatriot in a third recording of works as yet undetermined.

Deutsche Grammophon is recording yet another *Aida*—though not exactly as planned. Leonard Bernstein was originally to have recorded the work, but that project apparently ran aground on the shoals of the video contract. Meanwhile, Claudio Abbado's scheduled *Don Carlos* developed serious hitches of its own, so what more natural than for Abbado to take over *Aida*? No sooner said than done. He conducts the La Scala Orchestra and Chorus and a cast that is yet another variant of the usual lineup with Katia Ricciarelli as *Aida*, Elena Obraztsova as *Amneris*, Plácido Domingo as *Radamès*, and Leo Nucci as *Amonasro*. Ruggero Raimondi, Ramfis in last year's Karajan version (Angel SZCX 3888), is the

King here and Nicolai Ghiaurov becomes Ramfis.

Time-Life Records has inaugurated a new series, American Musicals. The first volume, a three-disc set devoted to music of Rodgers and Hammerstein, contains original-cast recordings of *Oklahoma!* (complete with three songs not previously transferred to LP), *Carousel*, and *South Pacific* in unretouched monaural dubbings and is accompanied by Abe Laufe's book *Broadway's Greatest Musicals*. (\$24.95; Time-Life Records, 541 N. Fairbanks Ct., Chicago, Ill. 60611.) Future volumes will offer music of Cole Porter, Leonard Bernstein, and Stephen Sondheim.

"The audience . . . is dumber than it used to be; modern Americans are better consumers of records than ever before, but they are poorer music-listeners." William Ivey's statement and others less provocative can be found in *The Phonograph and Our Musical Life*, the proceedings of a centennial conference (December 1977), edited by H. Wiley Hitchcock. Contributors include HF's David Hamilton. (Available through the Institute for Studies in American Music, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11210, for \$7.50.)

And the Beecham Society has announced the third printing of its George Szell discography, complete with a recent updating supplement. (Sir Thomas Beecham Society, P.O. Box 6361, Cleveland, Ohio 44101; \$10.75.) **HF**

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VIDEO TODAY

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& TOMORROW



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VideoFronts

Latest Video News and Products

More on Matsushita's Mini

In the May issue, we told you about Matsushita's new Micro Video Combination camera/VCR. That prototype, shown here, uses a half-inch Cosvicon tube as an imager and quarter-inch tape.



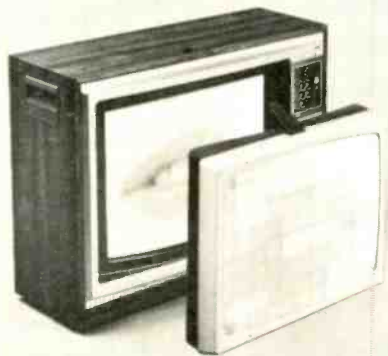
A home video equalizer—the GEM-100—has been introduced by Superex. The device may be used for video-to-video duplication or for improving reproduction from a video tape recorder or from cable television. It is said to restore lost luminescence, color, and contrast. Level controls for six frequency bands, a gain control, and an equalizer bypass switch are provided. Price is \$270.



Cable compatibility is the news in eleven General Electric TVs. Called Superband tuning, it provides direct access to thirty-five additional channels of cable programming. Details on this and the rest of GE's extensive new product line will appear in the July issue.

Want More Information?

If you'd like further information about any of the equipment or companies mentioned in the pages of VIDEO TODAY, write us at P.O. Box 550, Dept. VT, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230.



Even if you don't like television, you're likely to be intrigued by Channel 1, a unique "mood synthesizer," which fits over any TV screen of 21 inches or less. Channel 1's intricate plastic lens separates the video image into eighty-eight squares of kaleidoscopic color that ripple and change unpredictably as the image changes. The device is intended to be used with the television sound turned off, to promote relaxation during conversation, reading, or other activities. Obviously, characteristics of a program other than its graphic quality are irrelevant to the synthesizer's performance; in fact, the manufacturer says that commercials and flashy game shows provide some of the most interesting effects. Price of Channel 1 is \$20.



A Beta-format VCR head-cleaner has been introduced by TDK. The LCL-30 (\$25) is said to provide 200 cleanings at the normal (Beta II) speed. You insert the tape into the VCR, press PLAY, and after 30 seconds press STOP before removing the cassette.

A calculator disc that translates the VCR counter numbers into real time is available from Video Information Systems, Inc. (VIS). VCR counters are mechanically linked to the takeup reel drive mechanism, which operates at a steadily decreasing speed as more tape winds into the reel; thus, ordinarily, translating the reel revolutions into running time is quite complicated. With this disc, however, you just set the calculator arrow to the VCR's counter number, and the recording time used and remaining appears in little cutout windows for each of the three standard speeds. Dial-a-Time (\$15), reported to be accurate to within five minutes, comes in four separate models for both VHS and Beta format video tapes.



CED off the Ground; VHD off until 1982

RCA's CED video disc player has been launched. We'd be surprised if there are many people in the U.S. who aren't already aware of this, in view of the flood of television and newspaper publicity attending the debut. Still, there are those who wonder how successful this multi-million-dollar gamble will be. Skeptics even suggest that the publicity surrounding SelectaVision may in the end benefit video cassette recorders by heightening everyone's awareness of video in general. At least for now, RCA certainly has the limelight.

On the other hand, the VHD (Video High Density) video disc system, originally scheduled for introduction by JVC (and others) in this country late this year, has been put off until the early part of 1982. Apparently the parent company decided to distribute it in Japan this October to gain a marketing foothold before taking on the CED and laser-optical systems in the U.S. Ob-

servers are questioning whether this marketing strategy won't backfire, since the VHD debut will miss the prime Christmas buying season.

When the format is introduced here sometime in January 1982, JVC says, the initial catalog will have 100 discs, including such programs as movies, music, hobbies, sports, and education. JVC will offer its own brand, while its parent company—Matsushita Electric—will market disc systems under both the Panasonic and Quasar labels.

Meanwhile, companies continue to line up in the various disc camps. Toshiba has announced it will begin selling a CED format video disc player in the U.S. early this summer. Toshiba follows Hitachi and Sanyo in selecting this format.

Sharp reports it will adopt the VHD format, bringing its disc player on the U.S. market sometime in the first quarter of 1982. The company says it based its decision on the belief that the VHD software catalog is the strongest. Also, it contends that RCA's first-generation CED player, which has only monophonic sound, will soon be obsolete; the VHD system will offer stereo sound from the beginning. —William Tynan



Designed to hold a complete home video system—video disc player, television, VCR, and video tapes—the Status Pro Model 1915 from Gusdorf Corporation features a slide-out shelf for the VCR. Pecan or walnut vinyl veneer finishes are available. Price of the cabinet, which measures 45 by 30 by 20 inches, is \$235.

Eliminating electrical power-line noise, which often causes flashes and jitter in your TV picture, is the purpose of the Super Isolator from Electronic Specialists, Inc. This special heavy-duty spike/surge

suppressor has an overall load capacity of 1.875 kilowatts; each of the three dual balanced-pi filtered sockets handles a 1-kilowatt load. It sells for \$95.



A video lens care kit is the newest addition to Bib's Videophile Edition accessory line. The VE-13 includes a retractable brush, cleaning fluid, and an antistatic cleaning cloth, all housed in a wallet. Price is \$9.00.



A single-unit, drawer-type projection TV system with a 60-inch diagonal screen is being produced by NEC America, Inc. The PJ-60EN (\$3,600) uses a three-gun in-line projector, which yields a total of 80 footlamberts of brightness at the screen. Video inputs are line and TV; there is a line output. The built-in stereo audio system has separate inputs and outputs, an amplifier rated at 4 watts per channel into 8 ohms, and two woofer-tweeter pairs.



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TubeFood

News and reviews of new (and sometimes original) video tape and video disc programs.

by Peter Dobbin

Aiming at Quality and Quantity

For several months, rumors have been circulating that DiscoVision Associates (DVA), manufacturer of laser-based video discs, was having difficulties maintaining large-scale production of glitch-free discs. Rejects on the order of 50% were reportedly coming off the production line, and returns from dealers and consumers were pushing the figure even higher. The latest news indicates that the quality-control picture is looking brighter, and optical video discs will no doubt get a big boost in both quality and quantity when the first products emerge from the new Universal Pioneer Corporation pressing facility in Kofu, Japan.

Completed in April, the plant has a claimed production capacity of 100,000 discs per month, and officials expect to double that by the end of the year. Of the initial run, some 30,000 discs per month will go to DVA. The remaining 70,000 are earmarked for Pioneer Artists—the video music label—and others.

The lessons learned at the problem-ridden DVA factory are being utilized by UPC. The new plant, which cost more than \$8 million to construct and \$3 million to outfit with mastering and pressing equipment, employs a special clean room for the critical mastering process. Universal, incidentally, is a joint venture of Pioneer Electronic Corporation and DiscoVision Associates, which itself was formed jointly by MCA and IBM.

RCA, whose CED grooved capacitance disc system appeared with a flourish back in March, is leaving no stone unturned to ensure that it will have a broad program range. It reports that its SelectaVision division and RCA Records have cemented an alliance to develop and produce

original music video discs. This, of course, opens RCA Records' huge roster of artists to the video market; company officials are said to be looking at both live concert and special studio session programs. The company is quick to point out, however, that it is not limited by the agreement. A video development project with Don Kirshner Entertainment is already in the works, and plans are being discussed with some twenty other record suppliers.

One problem remains: The first CED discs and players have a monaural soundtrack, and for a generation weaned on stereo, that's something less than exciting.

Back to the Lagoon



A problem with image.

Those of you who have been looking for MCA Video Cassettes' VHS and Beta versions of the 3-D classics *Creature from the Black Lagoon* and *It Came from Outer Space* will have to wait a while longer. MCA has recalled both features because of technical problems in the film-to-video transfer process that resulted in a lack of image registration in the opening scenes. An MCA spokesman says corrected copies will soon be shipped off to dealers.

For Rockers

Dubbed the Godfather of Soul by his fans, James Brown is making an appearance on your home TV via a Live in Concert cassette issued by Media Home Entertainment. Obviously taped off the air, the 1979 Toronto concert—punctuated periodically by a program identification

that would normally follow a commercial break—is hardly Brown's most polished performance. About forty-five minutes long, it opens with ten minutes of his five-man brass section blowing boring riffs. When Brown does appear, the audience goes wild with excitement, and the master does a good, yet very brief, runthrough of his hits. Despite its flaws, this cassette is a must for r&b-lovers.

Warner Home Video, notably committed to video music, is offering several big-name performers in concert. The star of its roster is featured in *Rod Stewart/Live at the Los Angeles Forum*, billed as "the most powerful rock performance on video." Other releases include *Fleetwood Mac/Documentary and Live Concert*, which follows the group as it makes its 1979 LP "Tusk" and goes on its subsequent road tour. My favorite from Warner is *The Kinks/One for the Road*. The cassette combines live performances of their hits with footage of their early TV appearances.

MCA Video Cassettes' release of *Xanadu*, the musical fantasy starring Olivia Newton-John and Gene Kelly, provides another use for your VCR's fast-scan feature. This film is so tired, lifeless, and slow-moving that its only salvation is being viewed at several times its normal speed. Newton-John, whose thin voice and minimal acting skills were effectively camouflaged in *Grease* by flashy direction, good musical material, and a great supporting cast, here finds herself bereft of those elements. The director apparently thought that having the wobbly Newton-John slide through most of the film on roller skates would help; the production itself looks cheap; the plot—a muse comes to Earth to inspire the building of a disco—is inane, even by Hollywood standards; and the music and choreography (sorry, Gene) are just awful. Miss this one.



Olivia as an unamusing muse.

Basics of Better Video Images

How to obtain the best definition possible from your zoom lens and video imaging system
by Tony Galluzzo



Knurled zoom focal-length ring lets you switch easily between wide-angle and telephoto shots—often a 6:1 ratio.

Focusing ring is always located the farthest forward and is marked in both feet and meters.

Iris (f/stop) ring controls a mount of light entering camera and depth of the image's area of sharp focus.

A lens is a lens. Light enters this optical wonder and strikes the face of the vidicon tube inside your camera to form an image. To obtain the best image and make maximum use of a lens's capabilities, there are a few basics you should know.

Let's stick with the zoom lens, since it's the most flexible piece of optic equipment you can use with a video camera. Look at a zoom, and you'll see a focusing ring up front, scribed in neat numerals denoting distance in feet and meters. Farther back is the zoom ring, with numbers showing the range of focal lengths in millimeters. A very expansive range might be something like 12.5 to 70mm, providing adequate coverage for moderate wide-angle shots, critical close-ups, and anything in between.

Behind the zoom ring, you will usually find an f/stop or iris ring, marked for the range of stops from the widest lens opening (i.e., f/1.4 or f/1.8) to the smallest (ordinarily f/22). The faster the lens, the more light pours through and the better your chances are of obtaining a viewable image under poor

lighting conditions.

But you pay a price when using a lens at its maximum limits—wide open, at the extreme telephoto position, and especially when combining the use of the maximum f/stop with the telephoto setting. If you or your subject moves slightly, the video image will shift out of focus. Focusing problems increase as the distance between the subject and camera becomes shorter.

Most home video cameras now on the market come equipped with through-the-lens optical focusing screens, even if they also have auxiliary electronic viewfinders. The optical screen usually contains a split-image circle or microprism in the center. I have always found this reflex optical system easier and more accurate for critical focusing than the electronic finder. The primary strength of the electronic viewfinder, or CRT (cathode ray tube), is that it acts as a tiny TV set, allowing you to see shots as they will appear in final form.

Here's the procedure to follow for accurate focusing—one you should work on until it becomes second nature. Set your lens focus at infinity

and the zoom ring at the telephoto position. Now aim the camera at a distant object—something with distinct lines, such as a building. Peer through the finder, and set the diopter eyepiece (if it has one) so the split image or microprism looks sharpest to you. Now lock it and forget it; if the eyepiece does not have a lock, you might try taping it so it doesn't shift.

Next, select your subject and zoom in to the extreme telephoto position. Focus until the central portion of your subject looks sharpest through the split circle or microprism. (Don't focus using the aerial screen that surrounds the focusing circle; your eye adapts itself to the aerial image and deceives you.) Adjust the zoom ring to change the focal length for the framing you want. That's it. Regardless of where you move the zoom ring, your subject will remain in proper focus as long as you maintain your distance.

(continued on next page)

If your subject is constantly on the move, or moves suddenly, you might try to zap into telephoto, refocus, and zoom out again. But this technique, if you can call it that, becomes obtrusive after a while. A better method is to set focus at an average (sometimes called universal) setting—say, 6 to 10 feet—then use the wide-angle position as much as possible. Since focus isn't nearly as critical at wider focal lengths, you can keep your subject in reasonably good focus as long as the illumination is fairly decent.

Another, perhaps more difficult, approach is to zoom in while riding the focus at the same time. You may need quite a stretch of fingers for this, especially when working with a hand-held camera. Mounting the camera on a tripod, however, allows you to use both hands. To follow focus properly (or "pull focus," as

the British say), it's a good idea to study your lens carefully. Check to see where your fingers fall when the focusing ring is at the near position, somewhere in the middle, and at infinity. Most important, although it may sound absurd, remember which way to turn for infinity or close focus. Nothing is more disturbing than an image that pops in and out of focus.

The language of *f*/stops is inextricably woven into the use of focal lengths. Some people may run from these squared numbers as if confronted by a differential equation. But it's relatively easy to understand how they relate to the amount of light passing through the lens and to the effect known as depth of field.

The *f*/stop denotes the diameter of the iris or diaphragm as it relates to focal length. If you have a 50mm (2-inch) lens, for instance, and the maximum iris diameter is 25mm (1 inch), your largest stop would be

f/2. If you closed the lens down to 12.5mm (½-inch) diameter, your stop should read *f*/4. And so on. Thus the stop number is a divisor.

Interestingly, image brilliance varies only in proportion to the *f*/stop set and does not change with focal length. So, whether you set a 25mm lens or a 12.5–70mm zoom lens to *f*/4, your exposure will be the same. The *f*/stop system was devised precisely to serve as a consistent measure of aperture, regardless of focal length, and it provides a good, clear, working basis for judging exposure. But if you should ever come across the higher-priced, professional zoom lenses, you'll notice they are also marked in T-stops, which take into account the *f*/stop but also indicate light transmission through all those layers of glass. While your actual exposure (if read on a light meter) might be *f*/4, for example, your T-stop setting on the lens might be on the order of T/3.8, a slightly wider diameter to make up for light absorption through the optical equipment.

Because you're working in video, knowing the actual numbers for exposure may not be as important to you as understanding how they relate to *depth of field*. Basically, the higher the number (smaller the lens opening), the more you will have in focus. This is most apparent when you're shooting a group of people, with some closer and some farther from the camera. If you focus on a central figure and the lens is wide open—say, *f*/1.8—subjects in front of and behind this figure will be somewhat blurred or completely out of focus. If you have manual override of *f*/stops on your video camera, you can close the lens down to *f*/4 or *f*/8 (depending on the light) and increase relative sharpness over a broader range.

On the other hand, if you happen to be shooting in bright daylight, where you must use a stop of *f*/8 or *f*/16, and you wish to reduce depth of field, you will have to resort to using a neutral density filter over the lens. These grayish filters don't alter the color, but they do absorb light in varying degrees and allow you to open up the lens accordingly.

While *f*/stops and focal length have similar effects on both video and film, video does exhibit some peculiar properties. The target area of the vidicon tube (where incoming

(continued on page A11)



Depth of field can be used effectively to isolate one element in a picture. Shooting wide open (about *f*/1.8) at a medium telephoto length (about 70mm) produced image above. However, slight movement of either the camera or the subject in a low-light condition, where depth of field is limited, may cause your subject to slip out of focus and, perhaps, a second picture element to come into focus (below).



When One Screen Is Not Enough

Sampo's 9519 Tri-Screen Television is ideal for the avid TV recordist by Robert Long

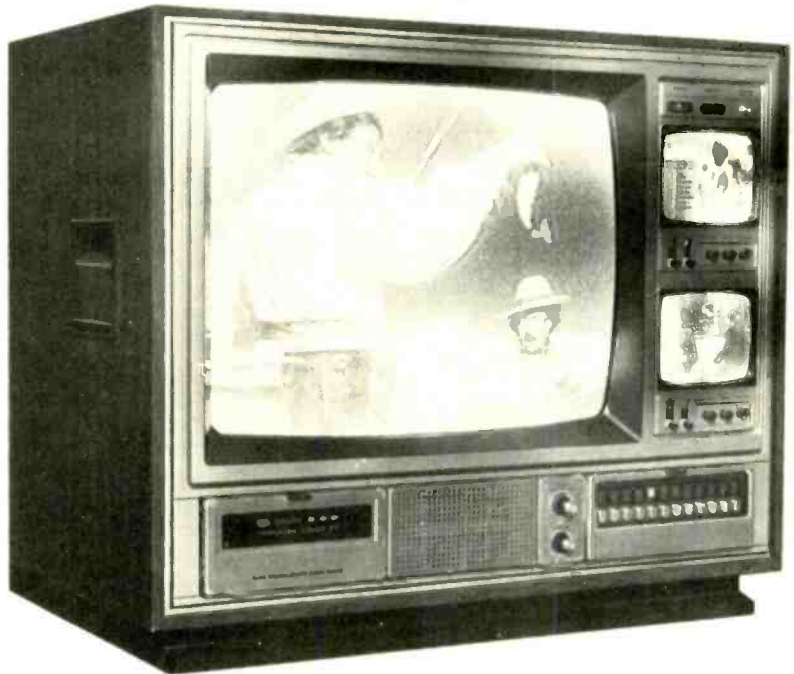
The initial reaction of almost everyone who has seen the Sampo Model 9519 Tri-Screen Television receiver in my family room is astonishment mixed with disbelief. Two 5-inch black-and-white screens in addition to a 19-inch color picture on a single TV receiver? Why? Well, so that avid time-shifters—those who record programming for playback at a later time—can keep tabs on the program they're taping (maybe to edit out commercials, for example) while watching otherwise uninterrupted a show they aren't taping. At least, that's the way I looked at it in the beginning; as it turns out, there are some quirks to the design that you should be aware of before you rush out to spend \$1,000 on one as a three-channel monitoring system.

The main screen is the only one for which there is sound, of course. Its color-locking and ambient-light compensation circuits both are defeatable via switches on a control panel hidden behind a door at the lower left corner of the receiver. Other picture controls on the same panel are for BRIGHTNESS, TINT (hue, in photographic terms), COLOR (saturation), and VERTICAL HOLD. The channel is selected by choosing one of twelve independent tuners, each of which covers the entire VHF/UHF spectrum and therefore can be pre-tuned to any channel.

The supplied remote control (bat-



Controls for main screen, color-locking, and ambient light sensor are behind flip-down door.



tery-powered, with infrared transmission to a sensor on the receiver's front panel) permits you to turn the whole set on or off, step from one tuner to the next in either direction, raise or lower the audio volume continuously (the longer you press the button, the greater the level change), and mute the audio altogether (now you hear it, now you don't). A front-panel switch chooses either remote or at-the-set operation of these functions, but we seldom used the latter controls after the first couple of weeks, so satisfactory did the remote control seem for regular family viewing.

The two secondary screens, called MONITOR B and MONITOR C by Sampo (the color picture is considered MONITOR A), can be turned off at a front-panel switch. Doing so both saves energy and avoids distraction while you're watching the color screen, but curiosity kept get-

ting the better of us. We (meaning me, in particular, my wife would hasten to add) usually kept the subsidiary screens on just in case we might be missing something otherwise.

Each of the small screens has two tuners and switches automatically from the "normal" one to the other according to a rather curious scheme: The upper small screen (B) changes channels when the main screen is switched to the tuner at the extreme right end of its array (Sampo calls this tuner A1, since its numbering, for no reason I can discern, runs from right to left); Monitor C does so when the main screen is switched to tuner A2.

The owner's manual offers no suggestions about getting best use out of this rather arbitrary scheme. Presumably, you tune the two most-watched channels on A1 and A2 and on the "normal" (again, right-hand) tuners for the small screens. The

(continued on next page)

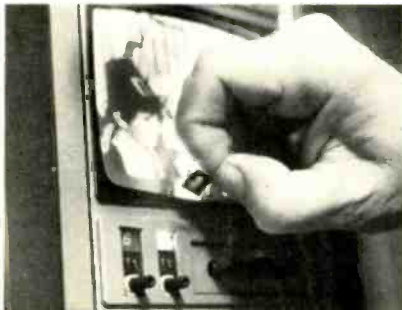
HANDS-ON REPORT (continued)

other two small-screen tuners (B2 and C2) then would get third and fourth choice in your ranking of available stations. This would mean that both of your top favorites always are showing on one screen or another, with either the third or fourth appearing whenever the main screen goes to either of the top two. But it also means that the sequence of channels in the twelve A tuners might be very scrambled in order to place the favorites at the end of the sequence—or the beginning, depending on your viewpoint.

Sampo supplies a set of translucent numbers for identification of each of the sixteen tuners involved, with illumination for the three that are currently in use. But even when



Translucent numbers are used for the sixteen tuners, twelve of which are assigned to the main screen. Channels may be in any order.



Two secondary black-and-white screens each have two tuners and automatically switch channels when you change the main screen.



Back-panel switches and inputs let you monitor two VCRs simultaneously on the small screens.

lit these channel numbers are difficult to read from across the room; they're even more difficult to read from a few feet away when they're not lit. So a scrambled sequence can be confusing.

There is an operation mode that makes the switching scheme seem less capricious. On the back panel, in addition to 300-ohm antenna inputs for both VHF and UHF plus a 75-ohm (CABLE) VHF input, there are two MONITOR VIDEO IN 75-ohm jacks and two corresponding VIDEO/TV switches—one of each for Monitors B and C. If you hook the direct output from a video recorder (or any other device delivering a video signal, as opposed to modulated RF) to either of these jacks and flip the switch, the monitor in question no longer shows either of the channels for which its tuners are programmed, only the video-input signal. If you're a multideck recordist, two VCRs can be hooked simultaneously and independently to the monitor screens.

Whoever was responsible for the conception and design of the 9519 surely was thinking of such uses as crucial, though the manual seems to consider them as mere alternatives. Consider, for example, that manually retuning Monitor B or C is a pesky enough job to make you willing to do it only occasionally and only for very good reasons; if those monitors are displaying signals you're recording on a VCR, however, you need only flip the built-in tuner to change channels.

In normal home use, picture and sound quality of Monitor A are distinctly above average, though color quality does vary with the use cycle in the test sample. When the set has just been turned on, the standard adjustments yield very rich, deep color, which soon lightens to more realistic values. But after several hours of use, a marked fading sets in; at its most extreme, the picture has the quality of an old-fashioned hand-tinted photograph (flesh tones are a uniform tan, greens very gray, and all subtle color modulations are missing), which defies amelioration with the manual controls. That would rule out use as a professional monitor, but it need not deter homebodies who practice reasonable restraint in their viewing habits. And if you're an avid TV recordist, I know of nothing comparable, short of assembling a bank of separate sets.



Piracy and Privacy

Your article "Are You a Signal-Napper?" [February] reminded me of an ancient Chinese fable about a poor man who was accused of stealing an aroma. He used to eat his simple rice while his greedy landlord, who lived next door, would cook his expensive meals. The aroma of the expensive food made the poor man's rice seem less plain. When the rich man found this out, he accused the poor man of stealing. The case was brought before a wise old judge, who instructed the poor man to take all the coins he had with him and let them drop from one hand to the other. The judge then told the rich man that he had been paid by the sound of the dropping coins.

The point is that the poor man did not ask the rich man to put the aroma in his room; the air he smelled was public property. If the pay-TV companies insist that not paying for their signal is piracy, why should I not be able to accuse them and their signal of trespassing?

David Waldron
Clarendon Hills, Ill.

Additional Value

In contrast to those who criticize the presence of the VIDEO TODAY & TOMORROW supplement ["Letters," March], I contend that the video coverage has given your magazine additional value and is better adjusted to the Generation Gap than critics suggest. As a twenty-three-year-old college instructor in popular culture holding a B.S. degree in radio/film/television, I find that your magazine now gives me concise, current information in several areas of my professional interest.

Paul D. Fischer
Bowling Green, Ohio

VIDEO TODAY & TOMORROW is published monthly by ABC Leisure Magazines as a supplement to HIGH FIDELITY and MODERN PHOTOGRAPHY magazines. Editorial correspondence should be addressed to VIDEO TODAY & TOMORROW, P.O. Box 550, Dept. VT, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230.

How many times have you walked into a friend's house and seen a television set, on which the people were some odd color that only Captain Kirk might encounter in the outer reaches of the galaxy? Some Americans believe that because they own a color TV, they should take advantage of all the color the set has to deliver. Crank up the green; crank up the red; liven up flesh tones with color.

On the other hand, those of you seriously interested in home video—especially if you're making your own home video movies—want true color. It's important, then, that you know how to obtain the most realistic color from your home TV set or monitor.

Actually it's very simple, but you have to break the habit of merely setting the color on your television set once and leaving it untouched forever. Some designs dissuade you from altering the color by including an automatic color control. Experience shows that "automatic" does not necessarily mean "best." There are four basic controls—BRIGHTNESS, CONTRAST, COLOR (sometimes called Chroma), and HUE (often called tint)—and it is the correct relationship among them that establishes a quality television picture. Here's how you can make the adjustments yourself.



- 1** First, remove all the color from the television picture by rotating the color (chrome) control counterclockwise until you have a black-and-white image.
- 2** Turn the BRIGHTNESS up relatively high.
- 3** Rotate the contrast control counterclockwise until there is no picture on the screen.
- 4** Slowly turn the CONTRAST clockwise until a picture appears and then advance the control until the image contains clean whites, solid blacks, and a gradation of middle gray tones in between. You'll probably have to tweak the control back and forth before achieving the best scale.
- 5** Once the contrast is set, correctly adjust the brightness control in accordance with the lighting in your room. Essentially, the correct setting is one that produces the most pleasing black-and-white picture.

- 6** Slowly advance the color (chrome) control clockwise until all elements in the television picture have a natural appearance. Too much color results in oversaturation—the colors seem to jump off the screen.
- 7** The color control adjusts intensity; HUE varies the relative amount of the color components. Adjust the HUE until flesh colors are natural. Misadjustment makes people look green and slightly sickly or gives them a purplish tint.
- 8** Once you have set up the controls manually, switch your television set to the automatic mode, if it has one. You can judge for yourself whether the manual setup or the automatic circuit is best in your case.
- 9** If you find it impossible to achieve the correct color balance, your television set may need professional adjustment at a service shop. This is unlikely in a new set but can become necessary after several years of

use. Always check your owner's manual before making any adjustments yourself.

- 10** It is sometimes difficult to set up your TV when the picture is constantly changing. You might want to consider purchasing a color-bar generator, which you can buy for about \$100. With this device you can generate a color test pattern and gray scale on your TV. You can also easily determine whether your inability to obtain satisfactory color pictures is caused by a malfunction within the set itself.

Home television is evolving in two directions simultaneously. Most apparent is automation—taking the ability to precisely control the set away from the viewer. But "component" television—already available in Japan—will soon be sold in the U.S. too. Essentially, it puts control back in your hands by giving you a separate, high quality TV monitor, which you connect to other elements in your home video/entertainment system.

No More TV Commercials?

It's true. You can automatically edit as you record, saving tape and viewing time.

by Herbert Keppler

One month ago a little box, 7¼ by 5¼ by 2 inches, came to live with my family and our VCR. I don't know how we ever taped without it.

We are movie fanatics. Old films inevitably go on at weird hours of the morning. We set the automatic timer on our VCR to record the movies so we can play them back at reasonable hours for ourselves and all our film-buff friends.

Unless these old movies are on public TV, Home Box Office, or cable TV (and in my area we have neither of the latter two), every viewing hour is peppered with fifteen minutes of commercials. The later the hour, the more objectionable the commercials. To make matters worse, the most irritating ads are generally repeated again and again.

That's where this little box comes in. The Shelton Video Editor stays up all night, if necessary, with my VCR and edits out the commercials! Not only do we receive a virtually uninterrupted movie, but we save about 25% of our viewing time—and 25% of our valuable tape.

The Shelton Editor is a snap to set up. With our VHS recorder, we simply plugged one regular phono connection into the video output, another into the audio output, and a miniature Japanese plug into the pause terminal. A small transformer with regular double male prongs fits any AC outlet.

Here's how the device works. Between regular programming and commercials, the TV screen usually darkens and the audio signal is blanked out. The Shelton Editor senses these hiatuses and automatically activates the pause control, stopping the forward motion of the tape. The pause period is adjustable via a front-panel switch for either Mode 1 (30 seconds) or Mode 2 (2 minutes). Following the pause, the device spends the next 30 seconds

or so searching for another audio-video silent-dark lapse. If it senses one, it pauses once more; if not, it releases the control and the VCR begins recording again.

Most commercials run 10, 30, or 60 seconds. We found that the Mode 2 pause worked beautifully for late-night movies, but you'll probably want to determine what best suits your taping needs. Occasionally during old movies, a 10-second commercial snippet slipped through, but it was the exception.

The Editor does present some problems. After the last ad, a final fade occurs, with the screen suddenly going blank prior to the resumption of programming. The machine senses this too and switches off the tape for another 30 seconds. Therefore, you lose a little of the programming. Obviously, this could be devastating for, say, a news broadcast, and we were concerned that it would have an unacceptable effect on a movie as well. Surprise! None of our viewers noticed anything was missing, save in those cases where the tape started in midsentence. As it happens, films usually are interrupted where a natural break in the

action occurs, and we found that most of the time the first 30 seconds of the picked up portion of the movie contained no dialogue.

We were warned that the Editor might shut off the tape if a scene is dark and lacking in sound or if the station has a lot of snow. We did not experience either problem. On a few TV channels that sometimes eliminate the requisite pauses between ads and programming, however, we ended up with commercials on the tape. And when in Mode 2, the unit may pause at the end of the commercials for more than 2 minutes. We were able to identify these channels fairly quickly and then used Mode 1 for them. We still picked up some ads, but the number was reduced somewhat.

The Shelton Editor cannot be used in conjunction with the automatic timers on some VCRs, principally VHS portables. To check your own set, try your pause control with the timer operating. If the control won't work, the Editor won't either.

There has been some controversy over whether substantial use of the pause mechanism may cause undue wear to the recording heads. While it certainly is too early to assess the Shelton Editor in this regard, we checked with several people who have been eliminating commercials by using the control manually. They report no excessive head wear.

In our opinion, the Shelton Editor is a worthwhile addition to the video scene. Made in Canada, it's available for \$150 from Shelton Video, P.O. Box 860, Vashon, Wash. 98070, or from video dealers. Specify the make and model of your VCR, since that information will determine which of the four models you need.



Cut it out! This tiny box, three simple VCR connections, and a transformer cord plugged into an AC outlet can make your movie video-taping much more rewarding.

VIDEO IMAGES (continued)

light is imaged) simply has more depth than the sensitive area of film emulsion. This means the vidicon target will "see" a broader range of in-focus light than film emulsion and provide more *depth of focus*. While this is not the same as depth of field, it has a direct relationship. If focus is deeper at the image plane in the camera (whether it's on film or vidicon target), there's a better chance of getting more objects in focus before the lens.

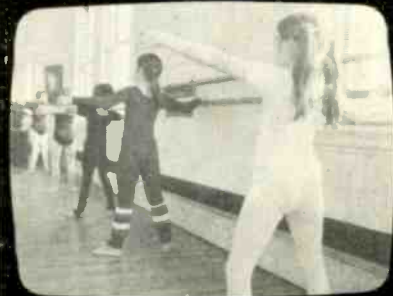
This deep-focus business is one of the factors that contributes to video's special quality. You have probably heard that television has that "live" look, even when the images are played back on tape. A feeling of depth is a major reason for this; other contributing factors have to do with scan rates, frame rates, and images born of electronics.

Another peculiarity of video with relation to *f*/stops hinges on the automatic gain control built into most consumer video cameras. Even if you turn the manual override control toward the closed position (in effect, closing the iris) to gain depth of field or darken the image, you wind up with an acceptable exposure over a broader range than with a film camera. In other words, *f*/2, *f*/4, and *f*/5.6 may give you an image of tolerably "correct" exposure. That's because the AGC circuit swings in to correct exposure electronically.

What happens now? Even though exposure may be acceptable to your eye, every change of *f*/stop alters the contrast. It also determines color saturation. If you open the exposure control too much, colors weaken and contrast increases, obliterating detail. Close down too much, and you oversaturate color, decrease contrast, and destroy detail. It's a finer line than you might think, and none of this is "idiot-proof," despite all the automation at work. But the saving grace of video is that you can look at your TV monitor or electronic finder screen and immediately see where you gain and where you lose.

Well, we're about to fade to black, but we can't. Just try closing that exposure control until the image disappears, and the AGC keeps struggling to provide you with a signal. All you can do is—fade to gray!

Smooth visual transition between scenes is effected by fading to and from gray.



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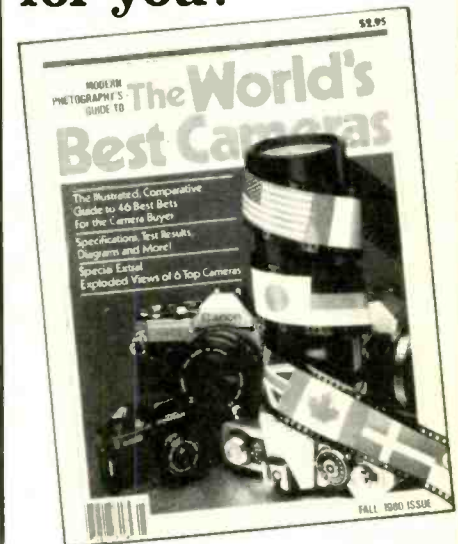
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After reading this, you'll really know.

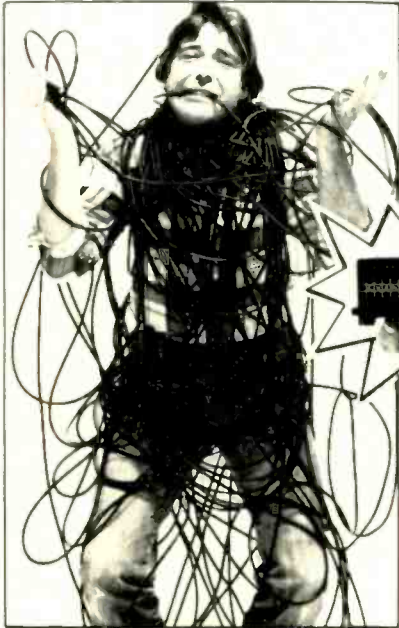
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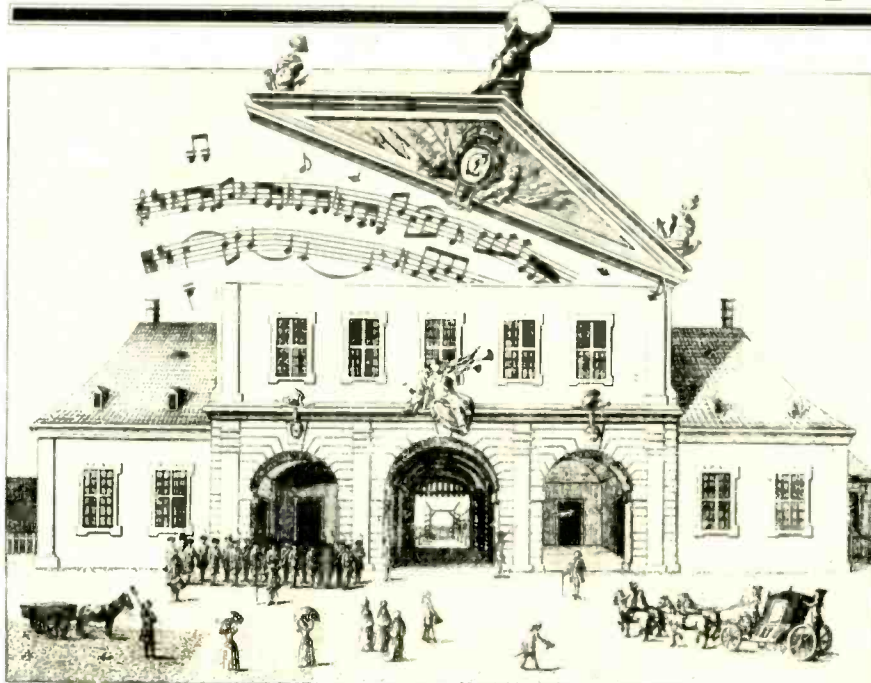
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Record Reviews



Music from Mannheim

What a few have long known, Archiv now shows the world: These pioneers didn't just make history, they made music!

by Paul Henry Lang

The rediscovery of the "Mannheim school" at the beginning of our century created a musicological sensation. The term has since become familiar even to laymen, and the group is always mentioned with respect, even though very little of its copious output is encountered.

The Mannheimers were a spunky lot. The city was twice leveled to the ground by the French and twice rebuilt, and when it was made the capital of the Palatinate in 1720, the Elector Carl Philipp promptly embarked on an ambitious building program. Since his architects started from ashes and rubble, they could plan an entire new city, and like their musical colleagues, they were modern and forward-looking. The straight streets and regular blocks resemble those of an American city, but the architecture does not. The electoral palace (the greatest in Germany), the fine opera house, the churches and other public buildings were all splendid, and the electors, with equal determination, saw to the creation of an excellent musical establishment.

Carl Theodor (reigned 1743-78) was particularly interested in music, and by spending fantastic sums of money, he made

the city a world center of the art of music. The Mannheim orchestra had no peer, and all visitors praised it unstintingly: Burney called it "an army of generals"; Mozart could not get over its precision and dynamic nuances; Daniel Schubart wrote that "its forte is like thunder, its piano like the breath of spring, and its crescendo like a cataract." In the opera house, most successful works from Venice and Naples were placed in the repertoire within a couple of years of their premieres.

Carl Theodor, like his predecessor, the "architect elector," wanted instant results, so he recruited distinguished musicians from the Austrian crown lands to add to the existing musical household; together they constituted a formidable aggregation of talent. It is here that we face the first of many misunderstandings that still cling to this important segment of musical history. The Germans usually reserve all the achievements to themselves, yet the Mannheim school—more precisely, the original style setters—were practically all immigrants and really formed an enclave, a musical island in Germany, one not at all congenial to, or admired by, the North. Jo-

hann Stamitz (1717-57), the founder and leader of the school, came from Bohemia, Franz Xaver Richter (1709-89) from Moravia, Ignaz Holzbauer (1711-83) from Vienna, and there were also a couple of Italians and a Belgian. After Bohemia became Czechoslovakia sixty-three years ago, it became fashionable to refer to these German-Bohemians as bona fide Czechs; Johann Stamitz became Jan Stamič, Franz Richter, František Richter, and so forth. Of course, this won't do either. Nor can the claim that the Mannheim school was the sole predecessor of the classic German symphony be accepted, because significant contributions to the new style came from Vienna and, of course, from Italy. Nevertheless, the Mannheim school was epoch-making.

What Stamitz and the others accomplished was a bold and logical transition from the baroque and *Empfindsamkeit* to an entirely new style. Polyphony became a means, no longer a style; composers no longer worked from the bass upward, but from the top down, the resultant texture making the basso continuo obsolete and dispensable; they established the rule of the symmetrical two-, four-, and eight-measure periods; the sequence lost its significance and became a sort of ornament or an agent of modulation, and continuity was achieved by thematic development.

But what most astounded the musical world was the establishment of a new symphonic/orchestral idiom and technique. This was entirely different from the old practices, because style and technique were now entirely interdependent. Stamitz and Christian Cannabich (1731-98) composed for orchestra, they did not orchestrate. This required a regrouping of the orchestra, and we see the familiar classical scheme of woodwinds and brass in pairs supported by a substantial string body. The orchestra was disciplined and highly trained; both Stamitz and Cannabich were outstanding violinists, and they saw to uniform bowing and all the other niceties of ensemble technique hitherto unknown except in Paris. The symphonic/orchestral bent was so strong that even Stamitz' trios, notated in the old trio-sonata manner of two violins and basso continuo, are clearly intended for orchestral delivery. (His Trio, Op. 1, is so performed here to entire satisfaction, though a bass fiddle should have been added to the ensemble.) Aside from these trios, it is quite obvious that in the concertos and symphonies the basso continuo is already superfluous.



Seated at playback, cellist Thomas Demenga and producer Gerd Ploebusch; concertmaster Thomas Fürti gestures at right.

In 1778 the Elector Palatine, having inherited the Duchy of Bavaria, moved his residence to Munich. Most of his musicians followed him, and the orchestra, combined with the Bavarian court musicians, remained supreme. It was this orchestra that played in the Munich production of *Idomeneo*; Mozart's uncommonly rich orchestration of his first great opera shows what he learned from this superb group. But—and this is the second major misunderstanding that must be corrected—the Mannheim school proper ends here, because the stay-at-homes, the second-generation Mannheimers, no longer represented the bold and innovative pioneers of Stamitz' circle. Even his own sons Carl and Anton turned out to be mere provincial musicians who could not hold a candle to their elders, let alone their contemporaries Haydn, Mozart, Rosetti, Dittersdorf, and all the others. [See "Classical Reviews."—Ed.] Leopold Mozart found them old-fashioned, unoriginal, and mannered. Even the orchestra declined; Mozart, who was greatly impressed by the original Mannheim school, was sadly disappointed when later he heard his *Figaro* performed there. To reiterate, these rear-guard Mannheimers should not be considered members of the Mannheim school proper.

The selections in this album are good, showing the principal orchestral genres established and practiced by the school: symphony, concertante symphony for strings or for winds, and solo concerto; with the exception of Richter's flute concerto, all are recorded here for the first time. It is perhaps churlish to criticize such a valiant and

important venture, yet it seems to me that a somewhat later orchestral trio by Stamitz, the one in C minor that exudes a virtually Beethovenian symphonic "furor," would have been more rewarding. Beethoven, who knew these works from his teacher, Neefe, in Bonn, based the scherzo of his own C minor symphony verbatim on this trio. But perhaps the able editors at Archiv wanted to show the very inception of the new style by presenting Stamitz' Op. 1, and it is indeed a revelation. There is the new triadic type of symphonic incipit—no longer a melody or a significant musical entity, but a "subject" that gains its significance by thematic elaboration. Then there are the new Mannheim dynamics, the "rollers," or long, growing orchestral crescendos that were to become so important and characteristic in the classical symphony. Stamitz' slow movements show a fine melodic gift, while the newly inserted minuet—here is the prototype of the classic four-movement symphony/sonata—shows the transformation of the French dance into a symphonic piece. All the great masters who followed Stamitz were indebted to him, and echoes can be followed to Beethoven's final period. This is not formula music like that of his sons and their colleagues; it is emotional, affective, with a delicate feeling for rhythmic and agogic niceties, yet it also has dramatic force.

Among the older Mannheimers, Richter was a good composer who absorbed the new orchestral style and idiom, but he did not have Stamitz' imagination and inventiveness; his music, though fluent and fine-sounding, still shows a lot of se-

quences and little thematic elaboration. Anton Filtz (1733-60), who regrettably died at the age of twenty-six, could have been one of Stamitz' worthiest disciples. He was a noted cellist and must have composed the concerto recorded here for himself. It is a solid piece, passionate yet tinged with melancholy, full of good ideas; the orchestral writing is very imaginative. There is a decided resemblance here to Pergolesi, not only because of his untimely death, but by reason of a genuine musical kinship. Holzbauer's concertante symphony for violin, viola, cello, and strings is another good piece that shows how this Viennese musician became acclimatized in Mannheim. Though the symphony uses only strings, one constantly "hears" woodwinds, horns, and trumpets, so closely is its style bound to the orchestra. His Symphony in E flat, another attractive work, does use the winds to advantage, and the majestic slow movement recalls his Austro-Italian musical origins.

Ludwig August Lebrun (1752-90), whose father, a Bruxellois, played oboe in the orchestra, is an authentic Mannheimer, born in the city. In his day he was one of the foremost oboe players, and the concerto for oboe presented here was undoubtedly for his own use. Luckily, it is performed superbly by Heinz Holliger, the outstanding oboist of our day. Lebrun (who did not follow the orchestra to Munich) is still very little known, but this somber concerto is close to the "dark" Mozart, the D and G minor Mozart; and its romping finale/rondo is very much in Haydn's vein. If this fine concerto is representative, Lebrun must have

been one of the important minor masters of the classical era.

That leaves Cannabich, who was a near contemporary of Haydn. As a composer, he does not quite belong to the original Mannheim school. However, as the leader of the orchestra—he succeeded Stamitz in that office—he is very much of their breed; Mozart considered him “the best conductor I have ever seen.” Cannabich was already a modern conductor in his technique of rehearsing his forces, demanding disciplined attention, accuracy, and expressive playing. Though he still discharged the concertmaster’s duty, playing the violin while leading the orchestra, he actually controlled the ensemble by gestures with his head, elbow, and bow. His concertante symphony for wind solos and full orchestra is not great, but very pleasant; the tootling of the solo winds is delightful, virtuosic, and transparent. His B flat Symphony is also well made, and it is astonishing how much warmth the clarinets add to the orchestra. It was in Mannheim that Mozart heard the new instrument for the first time, and he instantly fell in love with it. Cannabich was well acquainted with Jommelli, then the opera maestro in Stuttgart, and the influence of such a powerful musical personality is noticeable; the Italian, on the other hand, also learned a good deal from Cannabich’s orchestral style.

This is an important release, especially for those who like to know “how music got that way”; furthermore, the performances and the sound are first class and very enjoyable. In addition to Holliger, the master oboist, soloists include Thomas Füre, violin; and Thomas Demenga, cello, both superb instrumentalists with exceptional security of intonation and warm tone; and all the others are from the top

THE MANNHEIM SCHOOL.

Aurèle Nicolet, flute*; Heinz Holliger, oboe*; Manfred Sax, bassoon¹; Thomas Füre, violin^{**}; Christoph Schiller, viola^{**}; Thomas Demenga, cello¹; Jörg Dähler, harpsichord; Camerata Bern, Thomas Füre, dir. [Gerd Ploesch and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2723 068, \$29.94 (three discs).

STAMITZ, J.: Concerto for Violin and Strings, in C^{**}; Trio for Orchestra, in B flat, Op. 1, No. 5. RICHTER, F.X.: Symphony in B flat; Concerto for Flute and Strings, in E minor*. FILTZ: Concerto for Cello and Strings, in G.¹ HOLZBAUER: Sinfonia concertante in A^{****1}; Symphony in E flat, Op. 4, No. 3. LEBRUN: Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra, in D minor.* CANNABICH: Sinfonia concertante in C^{**}; Symphony in B flat.

drawer. Füre is also listed as “concertmaster and leader,” for nowadays it is not considered *bon ton* to talk about a “conductor” when it comes to eighteenth-century music. Well, I don’t know whether he conducts “with his head, elbow, and bow,” but he does a fine job. Perhaps one of these days he will overcome this make-believe historical inhibition, put down his violin, and reach for a baton; he might do even better.

And now a little postscript for the performance-practice zealots. The Mannheim orchestra had fifty-five members

when Stamitz took it over, and in its heyday it had eighty-five! And when Stamitz’ works were performed in Paris—he was a great favorite at the Concert Spirituel—he led a fine orchestra of sixty-five players. Haydn’s little band of twenty-three in Esterháza was by no means the preclassic/classic norm. Trying to recapture the “thunder” and the “cataract” Schubart talks about with the puny original-instrument orchestras Harnoncourt and his coreligionists advocate could yield only a musical sneeze and a puddle.

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BEETHOVEN: Sonata for Piano, No. 28, in A, Op. 101. **RAVEL:** Gaspard de la nuit. **SCHUMANN:** Toccata in C, Op. 7. Jorge Luis Prats, piano. [Heinz Wildhagen and Hanno Rinke, prod.] DG CONCOURS 2535 010, \$6.98.

LISZT: Sonata for Piano, in B minor. **CHOPIN:** Polonaise in A flat, Op. 61 (*Polonaise-Fantaisie*); Etude in A flat, Op. 10, No. 10.

Diana Kacso, piano. [Heinz Wildhagen and Hanno Rinke, prod.] DG CONCOURS 2535 008, \$6.98.

Here are the two additional Concoours piano discs mentioned in my January review; DG has decided to issue them in America after all.

I identified twenty-five-year-old Jorge Luis Prats as a French-trained Cuban, information gleaned from the press release; as it turns out, he graduated from Havana's College of Art and then went to Paris to win the Concours International Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud. His pianism is obviously on a very high level: Finger dexterity is formidable, and chords are voiced with an impressive gleam and solidity. Particularly noteworthy are his vibrant, expansive account of the Schumann toccata and his tautly propulsive *Gaspard*. The Schumann is paced rather broadly; the molding of phrases, placement of crucial accents, and intertwining of quasi-symphonic inner-voice strands give off an aura of tremendous authority. A few of the harmonies sound slightly "enriched," but that may simply be the result of the performance's unusual clarity and precision. The exposition repeat is observed. The Ravel might not have quite the frightening mystery of



Giuseppe Taddei recording the title role in Karajan's new *Fulstaff*—See page 63.

certain readings (Argerich's, for instance), but Prats is able to execute the treacherous figurations at a hair-raising clip with minimal dependence on the sustaining pedal. The tight, sprinting compression of "*Scarbo*" almost defies belief.

Prats's approach to Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 101, is very reminiscent of Horowitz' late-Sixties concert account and of an old Epic recording of the *Hammerklavier* (Op. 106) by Eduardo del Pueyo: Solid in tone, crystal-clear in articulation, and a bit garish in its glaring definition of inner lines that might have been better left to their own resources, the music sounds like a distant cousin of Albéniz' *Iberia*. Curiously, Prats fills in the octave A of last-movement measures 3 and 201. The reproduction seems more luminous than that of the other Concoours debuts (although both of these discs, like the earlier releases, were taped in recital in Munich).

If the Prats recital impresses, the work of Brazilian-born, Juilliard-trained Diana Kacso disappoints. Her playing is

woefully heavy-handed, with little heed paid to balancing the globs of sound she elicits from the instrument and with a mindlessly self-indulgent distortion of rhythm and phrase that serves no structural or aesthetic purpose. The Liszt sonata goes on forever in this studentish performance, far from note-perfect and not very intense; the Chopin *Polonaise-Fantaisie* is slightly better—if only because the music itself goes so much deeper—but the A flat Etude is coarse, percussive, and overpedaled. That a banger like this can place so high in more than one competition (Kacso took first prize in the Carreño in Venezuela and the International Chilean contest and Gold Medal at the Arthur Rubinstein in Israel) is a depressing commentary on the usefulness of such marathons. To make things worse, the Liszt sonata is broken between sides—as inartistic as it is unnecessary. H.G.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 3, in E flat, Op. 55 (*Eroica*).

A Berlin State Orchestra, Otmar Suitner, cond. [Heinz Wegner and Toru Yuki, prod.] DENON OX 7202-ND, \$15 (digital recording; distributed by Discwasher).

COMPARISON:

Scherchen/Vienna St. Op. Orch.

Westminster WG 8352

Here, as predicted, is an alternative to Mehta's digital *Eroica* (CBS IM 35883, January). Otmar Suitner, a respected East German conductor, will be recording all nine of the Beethoven symphonies for Denon.

In its way, the performance is worthy of respect: This is a chamber-orchestra presentation, mindful of Beethoven's original orchestration—even to utilizing the archaic valveless trumpet parts at the end of the first movement (also used by Scherchen in his small-scaled yet utterly different recording). The Berlin Staatskapelle plays with unanimity and poise—worlds removed from the sense of challenge and restless stridency of the Scherchen-driven Vienna State Opera Orchestra—and in an abstract way, one can admire the sleek, cool dispatch, the classical equilibrium. Tempos tend to be brisk, yet Suitner, unlike Scherchen, complacently places the great work in an eighteenth-century context (though *not* in a way that points up its revolutionary aspects); here the lightness of texture and mercurial sense of movement produce a chilly decorum. In truth, this approach does not particularly appeal to me, and I suspect

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that its formality and low-keyed primness will limit the record's circulation.

Suitner observes the exposition repeat in the first movement, in line with the current trend, and Denon's layout allots an entire side to that movement's 18:40, with the final three movements (15:00, 5:26, and 11:04) consigned to Side 2. The sound, a bit cool and analytical, is predictably smooth and undistorted. H.G.

BOND: Peter Quince at the Clavier*; Monologue**. **GILBERT:** Transmutations*; Interrupted Suite**.

Penny Orloff, soprano and percussion; Zita Carno, piano.* Ronald Leonard, cello.** Thomas Harmon, organ; Scott Shepherd, percussion.* Gary Gray, clarinet; Delores Stevens and Richard Grayson, pianos; Susan Savage, prepared piano.** [Jane Courtland Welton, prod.] PROTO NE PR 150, \$7.98 (Protone Records, 970 Bel Air Rd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90024).

Victoria Bond and Pia Gilbert both have senses of humor, bless them, and they also have in common remarkable abilities to communicate musical gestures and thrust. Both have written for dance, of course, but even in the extraterpsichoric works that Gilbert calls "music per se," there's a feeling of athleticism and implicit choreography.

The best piece here is Gilbert's *Interrupted Suite* for clarinet and three pianos, one of these prepared with dowels or manicure orange sticks and rubber erasers. Paying homage to Stravinsky, the suite has nine short sections (including a march, waltz, and tango), interrupted by unexpected and genuinely funny little asides that turn 180 degrees from the established style.

There's less humor in Gilbert's *Transmutations* for organ and percussion, conceived both to stand on its own and to serve as a dance score. The fun is to try to figure out when the organ leaves off and the percussion takes over. (A couple of octaves of pipes were removed from the organ in UCLA's Royce Hall for performance and recording, to give the windy effects.) *Transmutations* is filled with fascinating sounds and imaginative give-and-take, but it lacks direction, despite a fine performance by organist Thomas Harmon and percussionist Scott Shepherd.

Bond has bravely tackled a problem that has defeated most composers over the years: She has set a poem that deals with music, specifically, Wallace Stevens' *Peter Quince at the Clavier*. Soprano Penny Orloff (who also hits the tambourine) and pianist Zita Carno deliver the song with great spirit. But Bond's idea of Quince's music is

radically different from mine despite her colorful evocation of Byzantium, and I suspect that this poem is best left to sing in the individual reader's imagination; this is, after all, where Stevens wrote, "Music is feeling, then, not sound."

Filling up Bond's side of the disc is *Monologue* for solo cello (Ronald Leonard), excerpted from a piano trio that was written as a ballet score. The Bach-like *Monologue* is appealing; it makes one wonder what the rest of the trio is like. K.M.

CHOPIN: Polonaise in A flat, Op. 61 (*Polonaise-Fantaisie*); Etude in A flat, Op. 10, No. 10—See Beethoven: Sonata for Piano, No. 28, Op. 101.

DEBUSSY: Preludes, Book I.
Claudio Arrau, piano. PHILIPS 9500 676, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 771, \$9.98 (cassette).

The slightly square-cut phrasing and liquid sound of *Danseuses de Delphes* sets the mood for this admirable performance. Arrau combines Grecian detachment and a mastery of color with a vein of mellow poetry. The clear articulation and solidly granitic sound produce too tangible an impact in *Voiles*, and *Ce qu'a vu le Vent d'ouest* and the central episode of *La Sérénade interrompue* don't quite come off. Yet other items are sublimely re-created: The slow tread and rapt intensity of *Des Pas sur le neige* poignantly convey the benumbed sorrow of Debussy's direction—"Like a sad and tender regret"; *Minstrels* and *La Danse de Puck* have a touch of wry deliberation and perfect clarity of "diction"; and *La Cathédrale engloutie* emerges with bronzed grandeur. The straight landscapes and portraits such as *Les Collines d'Anacapri* and *La Fille aux cheveux de lin* may suggest Rembrandt or Van Gogh more than the usual Renoir, but they are none the worse for the touch of robust expressionism.

This release is particularly welcome as evidence of Arrau's continued pianistic well-being after his worrisome account of the Chopin waltzes (Philips 9500 739). Philips' radiant, robust piano tone admirably frames the performance. Highly recommended. H.G.

GILBERT: *Transmutations; Interrupted Suite*—See Bond: Peter Quince at the Clavier; Monologue.

GOUNOD: Mireille.
CAST:
Mireille Mirella Freni (s)
Vncenette Christiane Barbaux (s)
Clémence/Voice from Heaven Michèle Command (s)
Taven Jane Rhodes (ms)

Critics' Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BACH: English and French Suites, 5. 806-17. Curtis. TELEFUNKEN 46.35452 (4), Jan.
BEETHOVEN, MOZART: Keyboard Works. Bilsen. NONESUCH H 71377, N 78004, Feb.
BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 6, Op. 68. Stuttgart Klassische Philharmonie, Münchinger. INTERCORD INT 160.828, March.
BRAHMS, BEETHOVEN: Clarinet Trios. Pieterse, Greenhouse, Pressler. PHILIPS 9500 670, Feb.
BRAHMS: Orchestral Works and Concertos. Furtwängler. EMI ELECTROLA 1C 149-53420/6M (7), April.
BRAHMS, SCHUMANN: String Quartets. Guarneri. RCA ARL 3-3834 (3), April.
BYRD: Motets (10). Byrd Choir, Turner. PHILIPS 9502 030, May.
CELIBIDACHE: Der Taschengarten. Stuttgart Radio, Celibidache. INTERCORD INT 160.832, May.
CLEMENTI: Piano Sonatas (3). Horowitz. RCA ARM 1-3689, May.
CORIGLIANO: Clarinet Concerto. **BARBER:** Essay No. 3. Drucker, Mehta. NEW WORLD NW 309, April.
GOLDMARK: Die Königin von Saba. Takács, Jerusalem, Fischer. HUNGAROTON SLPX 12179/82 (4), April.
HAYDN: Great Organ Mass. Academy of Ancient Music, Preston. OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 563, March.
MAHLER: Symphony No. 6. Chicago Symphony, Abbado. DG 2707 117 (2), April.
MASSNET: Le Roi de Lahore. Sutherland, Lima, Milnes, Bonyngé. LONDON 3LDR 10025 (3), Jan.
MUSGRAVE: A Christmas Carol. Virginia Opera, Mark. MMG 302 (3), May.
POULENC: Songs (complete). Ameling, Gedda, Sénéchal, Souzay, Parker, Baldwin. EMI FRANCE 2C 165-16231/5 (5), May.
STRAVINSKY: Le Sacre du printemps (arr.). Atamian. RCA ARC 1-3636, April.
TAKEMITSU: Instrumental Works. Tashi, Boston Symphony, Ozawa. DG 2531 210, March.
DENNIS BRAIN: Unreleased Performances. ARABESQUE 8071, May.
FERNANDO DE LUCIA: The Gramophone Company Recordings, 1902-9. RUBINI RS 305 (5), Dec.
EZIO PINZA: The Golden Years. PEARL GEMM 162/3 (2), Feb.
MAURIZIO POLLINI: Piano Music of the Twentieth Century. DG 2740 229 (5), March.
RÓZSA, WAXMAN, WFB: Film Music. ENTR'ACTE ERM 6002, March.

Shepherd Luc Terrieux (boy s)
 Vincent Alain Vanzo (t)
 Ourrias José van Dam (b)
 Ramon Gabriel Bacquier (bs-b)
 Ambroise Marc Vento (bs-b)
 Ferryman Jean-Jacques Cubaynes (bs)

Chorus and Orchestra of the Théâtre du Capitole (Toulouse), Michel Plasson, cond. [Eric Macleod, prod.] ANGEL SZCX 3905, \$30.94 (three discs, automatic sequence).

There is a sense in which the literary and cultural background of *Mireille* is more fascinating than the opera itself. Yet the piece has a great deal that is charming and even moving, particularly if one makes an effort at understanding the impetus for its composition and allowing some of the resonance of that background to sound.

One of the strongest undercurrents in French literature of the mid to late nineteenth century was that of the Provençal revival. At its leading edge were the poet Frédéric Mistral and his companions of the so-called Félibrige, the society that strove to restore to literary dignity the Provençal tongue. Of even wider influence was Alphonse Daudet, who wrote in French, and whose extremely popular novels, plays, and stories were built on the rigid pride and independence of Provençal character, the ruinous familial warfare of the region's resistant patriarchal tradition, the clash of that tradition with the urban Northern modes, or the braggadocio of the legends of old Provence.

And that legendary tradition is of incomparable richness. Provence, the home of troubadours, the seat of courtly love, and before the oblitative Albigensian Crusade one of Europe's important political, cultural, and religious powers, was for centuries the most volatile meeting ground of Eastern and Western, pagan and Catholic, ways of being—a mingling still marked today by (among other manifestations) the pilgrimages at the Chapel of Saintes-Marie-de-la-Mer (the setting of the last act of *Mireille*), where Catholic and Gypsy rituals intertwine.

Musically, the specifically modern Provençal fallout has been rather specialized, but often delicious: Bizet's magnificent incidental score for Daudet's *L'Arlésienne* and Cilea's opera on the same subject, Massenet's passionate setting of the same author's novel *Sapho*, and just a bit to one side Canteloube's collections of Auvergne songs. Also of some operatic interest: the basic conflict of *La Traviata*, and Tchaikovsky's *Yolanta*, which is set at the court of René the Good of Provence, in whose reign the pilgrimages of the Three Marys were established.

And *Mireille*, set to a libretto by

Carré from the poem by Mistral, called *Mirèio*. Mistral's work was based on a true incident (as was, incidentally, *Calendal*, the Mistral epic from which Daudet derived *L'Arlésienne*—Mistral was a poet and romancer, but a realist chronicler, too). The libretto concerns the beautiful Arlésienne Mireille, who loves Vincent but comes up against two obstacles: rival suitors, and the aforementioned patriarchal tradition. Vincent is only the son of a basket weaver, while the principal rival, Ourrias, is a proud *gardien*, or bull-tamer—an honored calling in the society. Mireille's father, Ramon, will have nothing to do with a marriage between Mireille and Vincent; further, the enraged Ourrias waylays Vincent and strikes him an apparently fatal blow.

However, Ourrias has elected to fight on ground belonging to the pagan occult forces—dark spirits drag his boat beneath the waves of the Rhone, and the Gypsy woman Taven nurses Vincent back to health. Hearing of this, Mireille resolves to keep her oath to meet Vincent in time of misfortune at the Chapel of the Three Marys. But to reach Saintes-Marie, she must cross the blazing wasteland called The Crau. Inspired by the old legend of Magelone and by a vision of the Three Marys, she reaches the chapel and is briefly reunited with Vincent, but dies as heavenly and earthly voices sing of her transfiguration.

Well. You have to *be* there. Listeners will be disappointed in *Mireille* if they approach it in hopes of a profound grand opera. It is a gentle, lyrical work, almost operetta-ish for much of its course, soaked in the country flavor of its source. It has as much in common with many Eastern European folk operas as with the five-act French grand opera form it nominally represents.

The opera's history has been a troubled one. Gounod had trouble with Marie Miolan-Carvalho over the title role, trouble with the Théâtre Lyrique management over scenes rated PG for its audience, trouble finally with the audience. He rewrote the work, cutting and rearranging and substituting a light-opera, everything-works-out-after-all ending. In this form, the piece became quite a success, and it was not until the 1930s that the conductor Henri Büsser reconstructed the composer's original version—indeed, the only score I've been able to track is of the rewrite, dated 1901 and labeled "*Nouvelle édition de l'Opéra-Comique.*"

This recording, like Angel's previous one (Aix-en-Provence, 1954, under Cluytens) is of the Büsser reconstruction. It is strong enough to recommend to anyone interested in exploring the work, which is a very rewarding one provided one accepts its parameters and can live with the fact that

its heights are similar to, but not quite as exalted as, the comparable passages of *Faust* or *Roméo et Juliette*. (I don't make this comment snidely: I'm among the dwindling few who think Gounod is Actually Good.) And it is not all bucolic sprackle. Though the supernatural scenes have only the mildest demonic seasoning, like lobotomized Berlioz, they are still fun. The familial confrontations make a fine concerted finale for Act II, and Mireille's big solo *Scène de la Crau* (a much-rewritten passage) has some splendid opportunities. The opera's best-known arias (the tenor's "*Anges du Paradis*," the soprano's "*Mon coeur ne peut changer*") are solid ones, as are Ourrias' less-known couplets. The showy waltz-song, "*O légère hirondelle*," included as a separate band on the earlier recording and oft-recorded separately, is omitted from this set.

Given (as we are) the absence from the world of any outstanding French soprano, Mirella Freni is a logical enough choice for the title part. Since the role is more lyrical than some she has been taking on recently, it encourages many of the better aspects of her vocalism, and in the early going her singing is cleaner and more equalized than has often been the case, with some very nice high decrescendos tossed in. Later, things bog down a bit for her—she doesn't really feel how to guide the line in a passage like the allegro B section, "*A toi mon âme*," of her principal aria, and there is a faintly blowsy, slow-to-speak quality to the voice that doesn't serve the music well. Still, it's a warm, sizable lyric soprano, if no longer of the freshest, and she has her moments.

Her tenor, Alain Vanzo, has a clean, strong lyric tenor with an appealingly tender timbre. He tends to hook into notes from underneath and to lift "off the voice" to sing piano, but this is a good, well-used voice of the correct sort for the part. Poetic or dramatic he isn't, of rubato and portamento he hasn't heard—dig out Georges Thill's recording of "*Anges du Paradis*" if you are so sticky as to insist on music.

José van Dam is a most imposing Ourrias. His voice sounds beautiful and strong, the role lies exactly in its best tessitura, and his straightforward style is well suited to the assignment. Gabriel Bacquier turns in decent work in the bass role of Ramon, rather firmer than I'd expected. But I particularly miss the older recording here, for the excellent true bass voice and dignified style of André Vessières. Jane Rhodes appears to be a good artist who can be compelling in the theater, but on records her Taven isn't very enjoyable—some nice touches are compromised by sour, strangely pitched tone of little or no vibrato. As on a couple of recent recordings,

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the light soprano Christiane Barbaux turns in pleasing singing in a secondary role.

Michel Plasson has the score well in hand. At times his reading has more vitality and thrust than Cluytens's, but at others he doesn't capture quite the skip or lilt of lighter spots—there is no lift to the little sixteenth rests in the accompanying figure of the *Magnarelles* chorus, for example. His orchestra is a capable one that in fact sounds well above average much of the time, and whose tone is complete with the French brass timbre. The engineering, heard in close juxtaposition with that of the old mono performance, is a blessing for its detail and full encompassment of the orchestra, a curse every time the voices of Freni and Vanzo rise into their upper ranges and into a resounding void of studio reverb. The accompanying booklet, with translation, some notes, and a few photos, is an adequate one, but find if you can a copy of the old one, which is among the most helpful, complete, and handsome ever done for a record album.

It's good to have *Mireille* back. I suggest a little soaking-in time, but I think the work will beguile you, given a chance. C.L.O.

HAYDN: Symphonies (12)—See Mozart: Symphonies, Vol. 4.

LISZT: Sonata for Piano, in B minor—See Beethoven: Sonata for Piano, No. 28, Op. 101.

THE MANNHEIM SCHOOL. For a review, see page 49.

MOZART: Symphonies, Vol. 4: Salzburg, 1773–75.

Academy of Ancient Music, Jaap Schröder, violin and dir.; Christopher Hogwood, harpsichord and dir. [Morten Windling, prod.] OISEAU-LYRE D 170D3, \$29.94 (three discs, manual sequence). Tape: K 170K33, \$29.94 (three cassettes).

Symphonies: in D, K. 121; in D, K. 203; in D, K. 204; No. 25, in G minor, K. 183; No. 28, in C, K. 200; No. 29, in A, K. 201; No. 30, in D, K. 202.

MOZART: Symphonies: No. 25, in G minor, K. 183; No. 29, in A, K. 201*. **HAYDN: Symphonies: No. 92, in G (Oxford); No. 103, in E flat (Drum Roll)*.**

R Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, cond. QUINTESSENCE 2PMC 2709, \$11.96 (two discs) [from PMC 7149* / 57*, 1980].

MOZART: Symphonies: Nos. 40, in G minor, K. 550; No. 41, in C, K. 551 (Jupiter).

London Symphony Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 273, \$9.98. Tape: 3301 273, \$9.98 (cassette).

HAYDN: Salomon Symphonies, Vol. 1.

R Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Thomas Beecham, cond. [Lawrance Collingwood and *Victor Olof, prod.] ARABESQUE 8024-3, \$20.94 (three discs, manual sequence). Tape 9024-3, \$20.94 (three cassettes). [*From EMI-CAPITOL GCR 7127, 1958.]

Symphony No. 40, in F. *Salomon Symphonies**: No. 93, in D; No. 94, in G (*Surprise*); No. 95, in C minor; No. 96, in D

(*Miracle*); No. 97, in C; No. 98, in B flat.


HAYDN: Symphonies: No. 86, in D*; No. 98, in B flat*; No. 101, in D (Clock)*; No. 102, in B flat*.

Concertgebouw Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 9500 678*/9*, \$9.98 each. Tape: 7300 773*/4*, \$9.98 each (cassettes).

"Modified rapture" was the term I borrowed to describe my reaction to the first release of the Academy of Ancient Music's Mozart symphony cycle, recorded on original instruments (Vol. 3, D 169D3, May 1980). To the second issue (Vol. 4 in the series, covering the Salzburg symphonies of 1773–75) the reaction must be much the same. I wish that my rapture could have been a little less modified this time around, that noticeable improvements in the playing showed that lessons had been learned from the first set. But such are the pressures of the recording business that this volume must have been taped before the first recordings even hit plastic. So the gains of an original-instrument account—and they are many—remain substantially unchanged; the drawbacks, alas, are as much in evidence as before.

The music in this set presents a greater challenge. In the first box, there were brilliant, enchanting, but little-known works. This volume takes the leap into what historians have, rightly or wrongly, described as Mozart's symphonic maturity; it opens with the "little" G minor, K. 183, and the A major, K. 201. The Academy shows the same skills it did in the earlier music; it takes no account of the works' greater subtlety. This approach is in line

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with Neal Zaslaw's demythologizing of the whole concept of the "weighty" symphony in his booklet notes. But I think that here listeners will begin to miss something in the performances, and while they may often be misguided in doing so, their instincts may sometimes be right.

The G minor, for example, emerges very cool and restrained. Some of its colors are freshly revealed: in the first movement, a striving, yearning oboe solo, and lovely reedy low trills in the violins in the final bars. Both here and in the finale, though, steady control replaces genuine rhythmic tension; the finale comes out jaunty without enough sense of surprise. The Andante flows well, but in short phrase-lengths; the Minuet, with its rustic wind trio, is a great success.

The opening of the A major provides an object lesson in the benefits of the old instruments: The winding, rising and falling octaves of the second violins can penetrate the texture clearly. Throughout the symphony the horns make a crisp impact usually absent from modern accounts, where they merely fill in. In the bustling last movement, though, the sound of the first violins' grace notes (in the gentle second subject) is unacceptably acid and ill focused: a pity, because this finale goes with real zip, especially the sudden string scales that shoot into silence and the rasping horn calls. A loose note, perhaps from a bassoon, on an upbeat in the coda really should have been retaken. There is a need for sharper characterization in the middle movements and clearer articulation of the dotted rhythms in the Andante, which tends to drift; throughout, the clarity of the bass lines is slightly clouded by the ample acoustics. One tiny textual point: In his new book, Erich Leinsdorf makes a fuss about a bass note in the score of the first movement that is placed on a different beat in exposition and recapitulation. He insists that it should be altered for the sake of consistency, but Zaslaw, who knows his sources as well as anyone, has not done so here, and the effect is not in the least disconcerting.

The other items in the box include two "real" symphonies, K. 200, in C, and K. 202, in D; two symphonies extracted from longer serenades; and the Symphony, K. 121, that Mozart made by adding a finale to the overture for *La finta Giardiniera*. The C major is a ravishing work, eloquent and singing, with a superbly simple slow-movement theme that takes wing in this performance, allowing inner parts to be heard and creating the maximum surprise out of the long wind note that shifts the music into the minor. A touch more of refinement and grace is needed, but the Acad-

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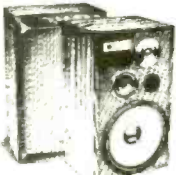


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emy here has precisely the right sort of eloquence—not rich and puffy, but quiet and noble. The Presto finale goes well, too, with a hard-edged clarity that accumulates considerable power. In contrast, the D major receives a curiously lackluster performance, with weak trills (an all-important feature of the first movement) and only a staid, neat account of the wonderfully witty finale with its pauses and unexpected harmonic shifts.

The serenade symphonies, both also in D major, fare much better (as did the D major symphonies in the first volume), possibly because the music is generally less substantial. There is a very impressive feel to the first movement of K. 204, with its thin, hard drums. The Andante of K. 203, with its *Così*-like murmuring in the second violins, is sensual and colorful; here the lack of density in the sound makes the feeling of exoticism much greater. There is some sloppy wind playing in the opera overture; elsewhere ensemble is generally good.

It is difficult to account for the variability of standard in these performances, except to say that some movements are clearly easier to play than others. But some serious improvements—long-scale planning in the fast movements, shapely phrasing in the slow ones, absolute precision of tuning and chording, and finally, a sense of enjoyable abandon in the music-making—need to be felt before the Academy tackles the later symphonies.

To turn to some of the other recordings here, however, makes one realize how much we owe to the Academy and other similar groups for refreshing our ideas of how classical symphonies can sound. Lorin Maazel, on what I presume are old recordings (though no date is provided), gives performances of the G minor and A major symphonies that may, at one time, have seemed surprising. They are firm, detached, at times rigid, and though the Berlin Radio Symphony's playing is never less than tolerable, the interpretations are quite devoid of understanding. Maazel has an alarming way of slowing down for a slow theme, even in a sonata-form movement, and the overall blandness of sound emphasizes how much we hear in original-instrument versions that has been amiably smothered all these years. A generalized fervor pervades his "little" G minor, and a dotting sentimentality characterizes his A major. (The Haydn performances present the notes clearly, but are still more depressing because they lack any response to the wit and sparkle of the music.) He shows us many aspects of conventional Mozart performance that I would not be sorry to lose.

So, I regret to say, does Claudio Abbado. The playing here is in a quite differ-

ent class: The London Symphony can do everything its new principal conductor wants, and the sound engineers give the result an opulence and shimmering beauty that would be hard to surpass. The start of the great G minor Symphony, No. 40, emerges out of a heat-haze accompaniment into a melody that pulses its way as if fluttering in a sudden breeze. When the tutti enters, the massed cellos and basses chug smoothly like a gas-guzzler with cushioning suspension clinging to the road. The emphasis of the performance is on sound; musical content finishes a poor second. I have rarely heard an account of this symphony's Minuet that derives so little tension from its marvelous counterpoint, or one of its finale that makes the earth-shattering start of the development section sound so natural and comfortable.

The *Jupiter* receives a better performance; Abbado is here not so concerned with warmth of expression, and the trumpets ring out with firmness and strength. But there is always a pudgy edge to the chords, a gluey spreading effect, which alerts us to the fact that in such readings ensemble is always and necessarily approximate. The rhapsodic slow movement has a Mahlerian imaginativeness to it, but might it not be even more powerful if all those dissonances really hit the beat together? The finale's contrapuntal splendors shine, but there is a sequence—just after the recapitulation has started—full of tritones and chromaticisms (bars 233-53) where we should surely feel that the music is about to collapse. Giuliani, on an old Philharmonia recording, did it with immense, suppressed power; Abbado, like Muti in the concert hall, pushes on gaily through it, as if it were straight recapitulation.

For performances that really make one aware of what an old-instrument approach will always lack, one must turn to Haydn and Beecham. Beecham's remarks about Haydn's having, in old age, a face "like ripe old port," helps us to understand his marvelous interpretations of the *Salomon* Symphonies. He somehow manages to turn Haydn into a witty old English gentleman, sitting in his leather armchair in a London club over a glass of something strong, delighting us with a stream of melodic, modulatory anecdote that has no reason for existing other than pleasure in its own sense of self-amusement. His performances are chubby, smiling, warmhearted, and concerned with effect rather than with meticulous detail.

These reissues are from the 1958 set he recorded with the Royal Philharmonic (though again, and more irritatingly, no recording dates are given). They have an ample sound and are gentle and relaxed in their impact. The finales are wonderful—

the sparkle and surprise of these movements seems to bring the best from Beecham. In the first movements he is little concerned with the symphonic argument, but the material itself is presented with a delicious range of inflection and careful shaping. The minuets are stodgy, and the slow movements sometimes moving, sometimes self-indulgent. At some important points, tension is lacking—especially in fugal or imitative episodes, like the one that electrifies the finale of No. 93. The vital quality that is missing here is tautness: tautness of musical argument, tautness of phrasing. These performances should be treasured; no one should think, however, that they can be re-created today. Beecham's Haydn is a glorious period piece.

Colin Davis represents a fine, modern alternative to the Beecham approach. In the only direct comparison, in No. 98, he is sometimes faster, sometimes slower, but always more careful, always concerned with detail. He shows, too, how a modern symphony orchestra with a lush sound can create highly intelligent musical results. The Concertgebouw has an ample breadth to its textures, and the recording is not dry; yet a comparison between this and the Abbado/London Symphony record shows that the precision Davis achieves is always greater. Slightly scaled down, the sound would be ideal for Haydn; as it is, one regrets only a certain inflexibility. Davis is almost as skillful as Beecham at letting the rhythms dance, but he falls marginally short in letting the quirkiness and sheer delight of these symphonies communicate themselves.

It will be exciting to hear Haydn's symphonies, with their varied and imaginative scorings, on original instruments; one cycle is in preparation, and I hope it will be well prepared and recorded in installations, so that players and listeners alike will have the chance to enter gradually into a new sound world. N.K.

RAVEL: Gaspard de la nuit—See Beethoven: Sonata for Piano, No. 28, Op. 101.

SCHUMANN: Toccata in C, Op. 7—See Beethoven: Sonata for Piano, No. 28, Op. 101.

STAMITZ, C.: Sinfonia concertante for Violin, Viola, and Orchestra, in D.*
STAMITZ, A.: Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, in B flat.

Josef Suk, violin*; Josef Kodousek, viola; Suk Chamber Orchestra, Hynek Farkač, cond. [Milan Slavický, prod.] SUPRAPHON 1110 2626, \$9.98.

Stamitz is a good name in music his-

tory, but there was only one great Stamitz—Johann, father of the two brothers represented here. (Never mind the Czech spelling given on this Czech recording: They were as thoroughly German composers as Lully was French; the two sons were even born in Mannheim.) Carl (1745–1801) and Anton (1750–1809?) were products of the late Mannheim school. Though they show the basic traits of the style and technique created by their father—and how they savor those long rolling crescendos—they definitely subscribe to the *galant/emphindsam* movement, which in their heyday was already anachronistic. There is no trace here of Johann's venturesome, pathbreaking, and fierce spirit that so impressed Beethoven, who borrowed from him, among other things, the entire plan for the Fifth Symphony scherzo. (See review on page 49.)

Anton, whose works are still little explored, seems on this evidence the more accomplished composer. His concerto sounds well and moves well, the string writing is adventurous, and the viola's range of color is admirably exploited. He bears investigation. Carl, on the other hand, should be put back on the shelf. This *sinfonia concertante* is not an original, but an arrangement (by the modern publisher) from a double concerto for oboe and bassoon. Though well made—all of the Stamitzes were good musicians—it is epigonous, old-fashioned, and without any personal traits. Look at the dates: Carl was thirteen and Anton eighteen years younger than Haydn, and both apparently outlived Mozart (who, in his catty way, called Carl "a wretched scribbler") by many years, yet in style they lagged behind by a whole generation.

The performances and the sound are very good. Violist Josef Kodousek is a first-class artist with a fine tone and sensitive articulation; violinist Josef Suk is also capable, though not quite in Kodousek's class, and his tone is a bit too sweet. Conductor Hynek Farkač knows his business, and the orchestra is lively and precise. P.H.L.

STRAUSS, R.: Also sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30.

▲ Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. [John Willan, prod.] ANGEL DS 37744, \$11.98 (digital recording).

▲ Glenn Dicterow, violin; New York Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta, cond. [David Mottley, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS IM 35888, \$14.98 (digital recording). Tape: HMT 35888, \$14.98 (cassette).

BRH Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Strauss, cond. EVEREST 3475, \$4.98 (mono) [recorded in concert, 1944; from OLYMPIA 8111, 1975].

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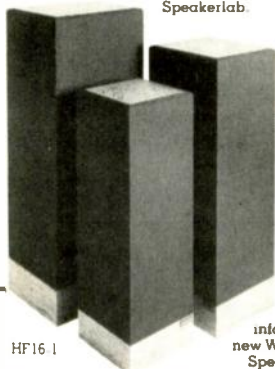
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Haitink/Concertgebouw Phi. 6500 624
Kempe/Dresden St. Orch. Sera. S 60283

Although Richard Strauss's Nietzschean tone poem may never have been a special favorite of concert audiences and conductors, it long has been the prime choice for demonstrating the sonic potentials of new recording technologies. The sensational first version, from January 1935, by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony in a 78-rpm set, was the earliest example of RCA's improved techniques of what it called "higher fidelity" recording. Then the first stereo version, March 8, 1954, by Reiner and the Chicagoans, was even more of a historical milestone, for it was recorded experimentally by a now unjustly forgotten engineer, Leslie H. Chase, working separately from the regular "orthophonic" mono engineer; this pioneering stereo venture appeared first only on a 1955 two-track open-reel tape. The 1954 mono disc release wasn't supplemented by a stereo disc edition until 1960—one later reissued and still available as RCA Victrola VICS 1265.

The now legendary popular cult apotheosis of *Also sprach Zarathustra* (or more specifically, its brief opening "Sunrise" pages) came in 1968 through its use in the soundtrack of the hit film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, even though that excerpt was drawn from the not particularly spectacular 1959 DG recording by Böhm and the Berlin Philharmonic (136 001). The next significant sonic advance came in the first quadraphonic recording in 1973, by the late Rudolph Kempe and the Dresden State Orchestra, a version that still ranks high as a notably virile and authoritative interpretation. And now, a bit later than might have been expected, we get two examples of the very latest—digital—recording technology.

Angel's, the first released, is also the most spectacular, sonically, to date. Never have greedy sound fanciers been given more of their fill of biting brass, impactful timpani, and thunderous climaxes with floor-shaking bass-drum rolls. Reproduced full out on a big home playback system, this is the perfect lease breaker. My ears still ringing and my heart thumping hard, I have to lament, however, that such electrifying—indeed, near stupefying—sonics should have been generated for so crudely sensational a reading as Ormandy's. This one is faster, but even more mannered and episodic and laxer in grip, than his earlier versions for CBS (M 31829) and RCA (ARL 1-1220). And it sinks even deeper into unabashed emotionalism with exaggerated tempo and dynamic contrasts. Everything is larger and more grotesque than life. Ac-

companying the formidable powers of digital technology unleashed here are such concomitant weaknesses as the painfully sharp high frequencies and the absence of ambient warmth. The violin soloist (Norman Carol?) is mercifully unidentified: Surely, he and the other Philadelphia string players have never sounded like this in actuality!

Mehta and his New Yorkers, in more genuinely realistic (Soundstream) sonics, give a more straightforward reading—one unexpectedly much more tautly controlled than in his pretentious 1969 London recording with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (CS 6609). The highs are razor-sharp, to be sure, but they don't draw blood from one's eardrums; and the miking, less excessively close, captures at least a bit of reverberance. Mehta also maintains an admirably consistent rhythmic pulse, with proportions well planned overall, and brings out the first of the midnight chimes that usher in the score's climactic "Night-Wanderer's Song." (Too often these low-E tubular-chime strokes become only gradually evident when one can't see the percussionist in action.)

Nevertheless, the many merits of the Mehta reading and its powerful yet crystalline sonics (to say nothing of the near ideal Mastersound disc processing), like those of several first-rate earlier analog *Zarathustra* recordings, pale in comparison with the most satisfactory, natural, and realistic-sounding of all versions—Haitink's with the Concertgebouw (December 1974). This is also the most magisterial, lucid, and illuminating interpretation, with the finest solo-violin playing by Herman Krebbers. Indeed, Haitink impresses me as perhaps the only *Zarathustra* conductor who has read and pondered Nietzsche's book. While his is a truly philosophical, even otherworldly, conception of the work, it does justice not only to its grandiloquence, but also to its playful and even humorous moments. Haitink never forgets that, among Zarathustra's more sibylline sayings, he also asked, "Who among you can at the same time laugh and be exalted?" and asserted, "I should only believe in a God that would know how to dance."

I suppose there must be at least a word for the eminently forgettable Everest release. If so, it's "Ignore!" The processing possibly may offer a fractional improvement over that of the 1975 Olympia version, but the reproduction remains intolerably distorted. That's not just from age, either, since the original wartime recording (in an empty hall, probably on Magnetophone tape for later broadcast use) of the composer's own historically invaluable reading sounds much more tolerable in far

more satisfactory processing in Vanguard's five-disc set (SRV 325/9) of all the works in the Vienna Philharmonic's June 1944 celebration of Strauss's eightieth birthday. R.D.D.

VERDI: Un Ballo in maschera.

CAST:

Amelia	Zinka Milanov (s)
Oscar	Stella Andreva (s)
Ulrica	Bruna Castagna (ms)
Riccardo	Jussi Bjoerling (t)
Chief Judge	John Carter (t)
Amelia's Servant	Lodovico Oliviero (t)
Renato	Alexander Svéd (b)
Silvano	Arthur Kent (b)
Samuel	Norman Cordon (bs)
Tom	Nicola Moscona (bs)

H Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Ettore Panizza, cond. MET 8 (mono; three discs, automatic sequence) [recorded from broadcast, December 14, 1940]. Available with a donation of \$125 or more (includes an *Opera News* subscription) to the Metropolitan Opera Fund, Box 930, New York, N.Y. 10023.

VERDI: Falstaff.

CAST:

Alice Ford	Raina Kabaivanska (s)
Nannetta	Janet Perry (s)
Mrs. Quickly	Christa Ludwig (ms)
Meg Page	Trudeliese Schmidt (ms)
Fenton	Francisco Araiza (t)
Dr. Cajus	Piero de Palma (t)
Bardolfo	Heinz Zednik (t)
Sir John Falstaff	Giuseppe Taddei (b)
Ford	Rolando Panerai (b)
Pistola	Federico Davia (bs-b)

A Vienna State Opera Chorus, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. PHILIPS 6769 060, \$32.94 (digital recording; three discs, manual sequence). Tape: 7654 060, \$29.94 (three cassettes).

COMPARISONS:

Evans, Solti	Lon. OSA 1395
Fischer-Dieskau, Bernstein	Col. M35 750
Gobbi, Karajan	Ang. SCL 3552

Falstaff was in the typewriter when the Met *Ballo* tumbled in, and the timing seemed too good to pass up. What I was in the process of proposing is that *Falstaff's* reputation as a cerebral, "difficult" opera can be blamed on its performers, who—consciously or not—seem to like this state of affairs. Conductors especially get so wrapped up in the opera's detailing, concision, and layered complexity that they sort of assume these qualities are in themselves communicative.

The *Falstaff* performances I've enjoyed most have been those that treated the opera as a logical continuation of Verdi's earlier work rather than some radical de-

parture. What this means mostly is hiring performers for their ability to make Verdi's musical gestures the logical and necessary expression of human urgencies, and this means singers with the range of developed vocal resources (with regard to range, dynamics, timbre, attack, etc.) you'd want for a "regular" Verdi opera.

Of course, this isn't exactly a radical idea; the Solti recording, for example, demonstrates what real voices can do for *Falstaff* (except in the title role, that is—an unhappy exception). But it dates back to the early Sixties, which prompts the question: When was the last time you heard a "regular" Verdi opera with real voices?

In this connection, the Met *Ballo* is welcome for reasons that go beyond the obvious suitability of Milanov and Bjoerling to roles they never recorded complete commercially. Remember that this performance was no special offering, no grand marshaling of the troops; it was just another Saturday matinee at the Met—at a time, in fact, when the company was feeling tremors from the war in Europe. The *Ballo* was a new production, the Met's first in twenty-five years, but as John Freeman's historical note explains, the cast we hear was largely an expedient patchwork. Milanov and Svéd found their way into the opening-night cast by virtue of the unavailability of Stella Roman (!) and Lawrence Tibbett, while Castagna was substituting in the broadcast for an ailing Kerstin Thorborg.

For that matter, although Bjoerling and Milanov were well established in, respectively, their third and fourth Met seasons, they weren't exactly legends yet. What they brought to the occasion was a pair of healthy, flexible voices and the basic belief that it was their job to express character actions through singing. If your instinct is to say that one vocal department in which we're currently in not-so-bad shape is lyric tenors, compare Bjoerling's beauty and variety of timbre, elegance, ease, and expressive specificity with the recorded work of Pavarotti (London OSA 1398—bear in mind that this recording is vintage 1970, when his voice worked an awful lot better than it does now), Domingo (Angel SCLX 3762), and Carreras (Philips 6769 020).

Like *Falstaff*, *Ballo* is to a large extent an ensemble opera, but here we're not apt to accept that the function of the ensembles is to submerge individual identities in some sort of collective abstraction; operatic ensembles make it possible to express an array of individual identities and agendas. Yet if we switch to Karajan's *Falstaff*, we hear its admittedly complex ensembles dutifully pecked and chirped in a way that may be inoffensive to the ear but tells us nothing about the *people* involved.

On paper, Karajan's lineup looks like a shrewd response to the problems of casting the opera: for the older generation, a quartet of admired operatic veterans, Taddei, Panerai, Kabaivanska, and Ludwig (average age at time of recording: just over fifty-four); for the young lovers, a pair of smooth, pretty little voices; for the three character roles, singers with solid lists of credits. Not the strongest cast imaginable, but you figure, who knows? It could work.

And at times it does. Panerai remains a solid Ford, even if the voice shows its age alongside his delectable work in the first Karajan and the Bernstein *Falstaffs*—though I should add a word here for Robert Merrill's socko Ford with Solti. At least age hasn't dimmed Panerai's lyric-dramatic instincts, although it may be more to the point that the character doesn't submerge easily into ensemble amorphousness—so much of Ford's writing expresses impulses that simply burst into voice, almost into raving. Panerai's response to the news of Falstaff's designs on his wife—"Sorveglierò la moglie. Sorveglierò il messere. Salvar vo' i beni miri dagli appetiti altrui"—is one of the rare instances in this recording of lines given fully voiced expression. But then, can these lines be performed any other way?

Panerai's "Signor Fontana" scene with Taddei comes close to real dramatic life, and it's bracketed by a fine "Va, vecchio John" from Taddei and Panerai's predictably solid "E sogno." Taddei was nearly sixty-four when the recording was made, and it's a pleasure to discover how much survives of the finest baritone voice Italy has produced since the war. And yet, and yet.

Perhaps the mechanical quality of his performance is simply the price he has to pay to get through the role so "effectively"—a series of precise calculations of what the voice will and won't do. Or perhaps it's a response to the general quality of the proceedings, in which there are three kinds of singing: voice (what I would call "full voice" if these particular voices had such a formation), half-voice, and ha-ha. At any rate, too much of what he does here is tiresome fake-funny fat fool, much closer to the Falstaffs of Geraint Evans and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau than to his own 1951 Cera performance, still my favorite recorded Falstaff.

Further symptom: Kabaivanska, though she sings quite prettily, never establishes an identity independent of the other merry wives—a surprisingly bland performance from such an uncommonly interesting performer. Ludwig's Quickly is a surprise of a different sort: She sings the music surprisingly well. But it's done with mirrors. Okay, she manages to produce a

clean sound below the break consistent with the rest of the voice, but that sound is such a slender wisp that she has nowhere to go interpretively. Interpretive possibilities require vocal capabilities—cf. Simionato (with Solti), Resnik (with Bernstein), or Barbieri (Karajan/Angel).

Speaking of wisps, the fact that Nannetta and Fenton can be managed by the lightest of lyric voices doesn't mean that such voices can do them justice, especially in the face of such interpretive neutrality. What game are the young folks playing?

What do they want? How do they go after it? Verdi has provided the material for some wonderful answers to these questions; check out Freni and Kraus in the Solti recording—or, even better, the young Di Stefano in the 1949 Met broadcast conducted by Fritz Reiner. (Any chance the Met might give us that? The strong cast includes the likes of Warren in the title role, Valdengo as Ford, Resnik as Alice, Albanese as Nannetta, and Elmo as Quickly.)

In fairness, I should note that the Philips performance is extremely neatly ex-

ecuted. But can't we take this for granted? If you undertake to record *Falstaff*, don't you warrant that you can get the notes more or less right? So can't we skip to the important questions, like what are those notes *about*? The near absence of any audible answer to this question is only compounded by Karajan's slow range of tempos, which simply stretches out the musical space that has somehow to be filled. The little "Reverenza" motif, for example, as played by the Vienna Philharmonic violins and violas and sung by Ludwig, seems to last for minutes rather than seconds—minutes that stretch into eternity *as nothing happens*. Maybe the digital recording has something to do with the colorlessness of the Vienna strings (compare the same orchestra under Bernstein), but then, Karajan has accomplished this feat on records before without such help.

Even De Palma's presence doesn't liven up the show as much as I'd have hoped. Unlike Bardolfo, which he sang so delectably for Solti, Cajus needs to make a big sound, which De Palma probably couldn't do now even at tempos more realistic for him than Karajan's. Zednik is a solid Bardolfo, his Germanic Italian notwithstanding; Davia, a poorish Pistola.

If the Cetra *Falstaff* were available, I'd make this simple recommendation: Get it and the Solti; between them they do just about everything terrifically. Bernstein is wonderful too, in some ways even more interesting, but his cast is spottier. If London were to reissue its disc of excerpts with Corena in the title role, that might help plug Solti's and Bernstein's title-role gap. Alternatively, there's the Karajan/Angel set with Gobbi and a livelier cast than the Karajan/Philips'.

As for the Met *Ballo*, detailed comment and comparison seem beside the point, given its special provenance. Svéd is a stiff but solid Renato; Castagna, a fine Ulrica; Andrevia, a presentable Oscar. Cordon and Moscona make a robust pair of conspirators. The sound, clearer and less congested than on my pirate edition (not surprisingly, this performance has circulated widely in the underground), casts Panizza's conducting in a more favorable light: Except for his habit of speeding up and banging climaxes, this is a sane, lovely piece of work. There is one textual oddity: Riccardo's "Ma se m'è forza perdeti" was omitted in this production.

If you can afford the contribution, you'll enjoy this recording. If you can't, you're missing something—perhaps for the first time in the Met series. Cheer up, though; for \$17.94 list, you can get the terrific Votto/La Scala *Ballo* with Callas, Di Stefano, Gobbi, and Barbieri (Seraphim IC 6087). K.F.

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Samuel Barber

(Continued from page 46)

widespread impression that all his music aspires to the simplicity of the *Adagio for Strings* is quite wide of the mark. Of course, his conservatism may be vindicated by the fact that many composers in the two succeeding generations have opted to follow in his neo-Romantic footsteps, some with a good deal of popular, commercial, and even critical success. All the same, one can't help but wonder how Barber was able to witness the intense swirling of styles, forms, and media of the last fifty years without being tempted—as were Stravinsky and Copland—to dabble on the experimental fringes. So I asked him.

“He was Toscanini, and it was his orchestra; they wouldn't dare make the mistakes with him that they did with me.”

“Ah, I was waiting for this,” he replied. “Why haven't I changed? Why *should* I? There's no reason music should be difficult for an audience to understand, is there? Not that I necessarily address the audience when I compose or, for that matter, the players. Or posterity. I write for the present, and I write for myself. Myself and Helen [Mrs. Elliott] Carter. Why Helen Carter? Well, she's the judge. She announced once that all American composers are dead except for Elliott, so we have to take our music to her, and she tells us what to do.

“I think that most music that is really good will be appreciated by the audience, ultimately. I can't say I listen to much new music now, though. I know a few names, I've heard a few recordings; but no, I don't want to suggest which of today's composers will be the big names of the future. I'm not a necromancer, you know. Anyway, this is a question for the musicologists. They know everything.”

The Recordings

“The recording situation is miserable and getting worse,” Barber observed. “I wish—I think all composers wish—that a certain amount of money could be put aside by foundations for the recording of good first performances of new works. And then those recordings should be distributed well—not just to schools and libraries. That's not enough. That speciality ap-

proach doesn't give the music any exposure. They should be distributed by the major companies, so that people can find them and hear them and so that young musicians can listen to them and decide whether they want to perform the music themselves. There are a lot of things that might be changed in the musical world, if we got down to the nitty-gritty.”

There are indeed, and Barber's wish seems more remote all the time. But in truth, he could not justifiably complain about his own representation on discs. Of his forty-seven works with opus numbers (some of which he withdrew in fits of self-criticism) and his handful of unnumbered scores, virtually all have been recorded at least once.

The following discography is arranged chronologically within genres, except for the vocal music, where couplings suggested a different approach. Details of the recordings discussed are listed at the end of each section. Where discs contain works by other composers, evaluations are confined to those of Barber.

Orchestral works

The Serenade, Op. 1 (1929), might appropriately have been grouped with the chamber works, since it is designated “for string quartet or string orchestra”; yet all the available recordings present it in its orchestral guise. It is a vibrant neoclassical work in three movements, the last a spirited dance. Vladimir Golschmann and the Symphony of the Air give a thoroughly respectable reading on an all-Barber disc (Vanguard VSD 2083), but the version by Gerard Schwarz and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (Nonesuch D 79002) is slightly preferable for its more exciting pacing, more sensitive balancing of the string lines, and (digital) sonic transparency. Both accounts move rather quickly, emphasizing the agitation and energy in the score. Nicolas Flagello and the Rome Chamber Orchestra (Peters International PLE 059) take a slower, broader approach, sacrificing vigor in favor of a somewhat exaggerated elegance.

The School for Scandal Overture, Op. 5 (1931), and *Music for a Scene from Shelley*, Op. 7 (1933), were composed during two of Barber's summer sojourns in Italy and were both inspired by literary works—the overture by Sheridan's eighteenth-century farce, *Shelley* by *Prometheus Unbound*, Act II, Scene 5. The overture is the more gripping piece, its insistent tempos and brash, tonally disoriented sections contrasting with moments of quiet, pastoral D major melody, all packed into about seven and a half minutes. Barber was intent on showing his mastery of orchestral hues in this early

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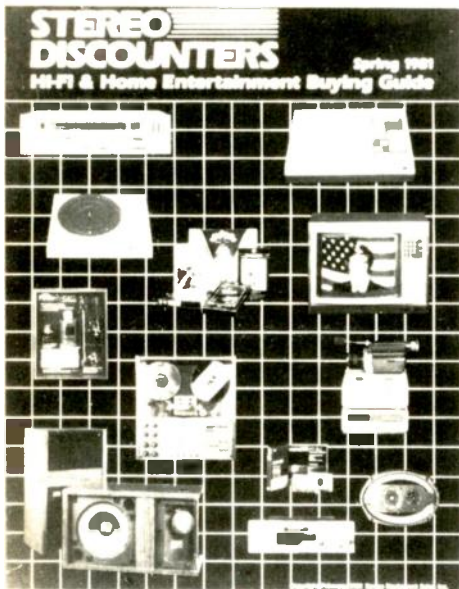
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work, and the brilliance with which he succeeded is best heard on an excellent, budget-priced anti-Barber LP by Thomas Schippers and the New York Philharmonic (Odyssey Y 33230). The Howard Hanson/Eastman-Rochester recording, at midprice (Mercury SRI 75012), is an earnest yet unfocused reading—no real alternative. *Shelley* is more subdued, both orchestrationally and thematically, and certainly the most introspective and mysterious of Barber's early scores. There are two excellent recordings available: a smooth reading by Golschmann (Vanguard) and a marginally crisper one by David Measham and the West Australian Symphony (Unicorn UNS 256).

"Sometimes I get tired of hearing the Adagio for Strings. But I amuse myself during performances because I know there's going to be a mistake somewhere. Happens every time."

Thomson may have had Barber's First Symphony, Op. 9 (1935-36), in mind when he labeled him a reactionary. The only hint that the work was composed in this century is its theme—pure Puccini. Touches of Tchaikovsky shine through, too, with nothing to suggest that this is the work of an American. To some listeners, all this may sound appealing, and the work is attractive, impassioned in places, and finely crafted throughout. Hanson (Mercury SRI 75012) is sympathetic, but his orchestra plays messily. Much better are the more accurate and incisive Kenneth Schermerhorn/Milwaukee Symphony (Turnabout TVS 34564) and Measham/London Symphony (Unicorn RHS 342) readings.

"Sometimes I get tired of hearing the *Adagio for Strings*," said Barber about his most famous work, which first appeared as the second movement of the String Quartet, Op. 11 (1936). "But I amuse myself during performances, because I know there's going to be a mistake somewhere; I just wait for it to happen. It's such an easy work, they never bother rehearsing it. And orchestra psychology is rather funny: When they see whole notes, they think, 'Oh, we don't have to watch the conductor.' Invariably, a viola or a second violin will make a mistake. Happens every time."

Splicing technique has shielded us

"New works only get done when the wives of the composers pressure the members of an orchestra's board to have certain works played. That's why I think all composers should get married as early as possible."

from those errors, by and large, yet the variety of interpretive approaches to this simple work is incredible: If you want merely a facile lushness, you can't go wrong with Eugene Ormandy/Philadelphia (CBS MS 6224). Bernstein, too, basks in a thick string sound, but he takes the work at a snail's pace, leading the New York Philharmonic through a flabby, dis-tended performance (CBS M 30573). I Musici (Philips Festivo 6570 181) takes it at a more sensible clip, but the string playing is unconscionably rough. The Neville Marriner/Academy version (Argo ZRG 845) is thoughtful and well paced, beginning soft and slow, steadily building in intensity. If you can find it, the historic Toscanini/NBC Symphony rendering from 1942 (RCA LM 7032) is a gem in every sense; of the available recordings, the Charles Munch/Boston (RCA AGL 1-3790) comes closest both to Toscanini's velvety, flawless string tone and to his brisk, no-nonsense tempo. A sterling *Adagio* in an all-Barber setting is the Schippers on *Odyssey*.

The *Essays* No. 1, Op. 12 (1937), and No. 2, Op. 17 (1942), are among Barber's most immediately engaging scores. Aptly titled explorations of orchestral sonorities, each grows from the simplest kernel of musical thought and moves from a somber, questioning mood through a contra-puntally playful one to a resounding full-orchestra climax. The only available recording of the *First Essay* is the Measham/London Symphony (Unicorn RHS 342), a tight reading that, unfortunately, is not equaled by the performance of the *Second Essay* on the same disc. Here, Measham's detail work—for instance, his emphasis of the woodwind triplets accompanying the melodic exchange between the violas and oboes early on—is often insightful, yet the performance is marred by some awkwardly broad tempos. The Schippers (*Odyssey*) is better, if not as sharply detailed, but there is a recording

flaw (oxide dropout?) at the climactic *Più tranquillo*. Thus, the best representation of the work is Golschmann's quick-moving, finely detailed performance (Vanguard), almost Wagnerian in scope and well recorded.

Between the two *Essays* came the Violin Concerto, Op. 14 (1939-40), a work that gave Barber a good deal of trouble. It was commissioned by a soap manufacturer for a young violinist who complained first that the opening two movements were not sufficiently showy, and later that the perpetual motion finale was unplayable. It's playable, of course, and the work as a whole is drenched in a sugary romanticism that certainly supports an emphasis on sweetness of tone, as in the Ronald Thomas/Measham recording (Unicorn UNS 2561). But Isaac Stern's more biting, virtuosic rendering is more to the point. He digs solidly into the strings yet conveys tonal warmth; his passagework is cleaner and more logically phrased; and he benefits from a sharply etched orchestral accompaniment from Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic (CBS MS 6713).

From 1943 to 1945, Barber was an Air Force corporal, and he dutifully devoted some of his musical energies to the war effort. The *Commando March* (1943) is a superfluous patriotic footlifter, hardly worth bothering with. But if you must, at least go for the bright, brassy sonics of the Frederick Fennell/Cleveland Symphonic Winds digital version (Telarc DG 10043).




Barber's other wartime effort is the *Second Symphony*, Op. 19 (1944). The Air Force commissioned this work, allowed him to work on it at Capricorn, and even flew him from one air base to another so he could gather atmosphere. With greater reliance on dissonance and modernistic rhythmic irregularity than any previous Barber score, the work seemed to signal a new direction. In the early 1960s, though, Barber withdrew the symphony, saying only that "it wasn't very good." From the recording he made with the New Symphony Orchestra of London, in 1950 (F-verest 3282), it's easy to see why: Although it has its thrilling moments and is, for Barber, adventurous, it's too densely packed and lacks cohesiveness. He discarded the outer movements and published a revised *Andante*, called *Night Flight*, Op. 19a. The Measham/London Symphony recording (Unicorn RHS 342) conveys the night flyer's loneliness that informs this bleak tone painting.

Overt lyricism returns in the *Capricorn Concerto*, for flute, oboe, trumpet, and strings, Op. 21 (1944), and the Cello Concerto, Op. 22 (1945), a pair of works that mix the rhythmic and harmonic simplicity

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of the violin concerto with touches of the Second Symphony's more sophisticated jaggedness. *Capricorn* is a light-textured work, full of an almost tactile weaving of string and solo instrument lines and containing a few passing nods to Copland's works of the same period, particularly in the last movement. The Hanson recording (Mercury SRI 75049) serves the score well, but surely it's time for an alternative release of this delightful work. The cello concerto, a deeper, more trenchant composition, is available in two authoritative if aging versions—the 1966 recording by the cellist who gave the work its premiere, Raya Garbousova, with Frederic Waldman and Musica Aeterna (Varèse Sarabande VCS 81057), and Zara Nelsova's 1950 disc, with Barber conducting (Decca Eclipse import ECS 707).

Barber gave most of his attention in the 1950s to stage works, and when he returned to orchestral writing with the *Toccata festiva*, Op. 36, and *Die Natali*, Op. 37 (both 1960), it was with a new outlook. *Toccata festiva* is a single-movement organ concerto, surging with energy and richly chromatic; the highlight is a tough cadenza for pedals alone. Although the recorded sound of the

[In the list that follows, performing groups are indicated with appropriate combinations of P (Philharmonic), S (Symphony), C (Chamber), and O (Orchestra). Where a set includes more than one disc, the number is given parenthetically following the record number.]

VANGUARD VSD 2083—Serenade, Op. 1; *Music for a Scene from Shelley*, Op. 7; *Essay for Orchestra*, No. 2, Op. 17; *A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map*, Op. 15 (with Robert de Cormier Chorale); *A Hand of Bridge*, Op. 35 (with Neway, Alberts Lewis, Maero); *S of the Air*, Golschmann.

NONESUCH D 79002—Serenade, Op. 1. Los Angeles CO, Schwarz. (Also works by Carter, Diamond, Fine.)

PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 059—Serenade, Op. 1. Rome CO, Flagello. (Also works by Diamond, R. Green, D. Wilson.)

ODYSSEY Y 33230—*The School for Scandal* Overture, Op. 5; *Adagio for Strings*, Op. 11; *Essay for Orchestra*, No. 2, Op. 17; *Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance*, Op. 23a. New York P, Schippers.

MERCURY SRI 75012—*The School for Scandal* Overture, Op. 5; Symphony No. 1, Op. 9; *Medea*, Op. 23: Suite. Eastman-Rochester SO, Hanson.

UNICORN UNS 256—*Music for a Scene from Shelley*, Op. 7; Violin Concerto, Op. 14

"Ah, I was waiting for this. Why haven't I changed? Why *should* I? There's no reason music should be difficult for an audience to understand, is there?"

F Power Biggs/Ormandy recording (CBS MS 6398) is rather dry, the playing is first-rate (and there are no alternatives). *Die Natali*, on the other hand, is an extended fantasy on Christmas carols and therefore aspires to a certain festive charm. But given the subject matter, the dense scoring seems heavy-handed, and the work, recorded by Jorge Mester and the Louisville Orchestra (Louisville IS 745) is one of Barber's least satisfying.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning Piano Concerto, Op. 38 (1962), shows Barber again in top form. The piano writing in the fast movements is spectacular, and the orchestral accompaniment is often hard-driv-

(with Thomas); Knoxville: *Summer of 1915*, Op. 24 (with McGurk). West Australian SO, Measham.

TURNABOUT TVS 34564—Symphony No. 1, Op. 9. Milwaukee SO, Schermerhorn. (Also MAYER: *Octagon*, with Masselos.)

UNICORN RHS 342—Symphony No. 1, Op. 9; *Night Flight*, Op. 19a; *Essays for Orchestra*: No. 1, Op. 12; No. 2, Op. 17. London SO, Measham.

CBS MS 6224—*Adagio for Strings*, Op. 11. Philadelphia O, Ormandy. (Also works by Borodin, Tchaikovsky, Vaughan Williams.)

CBS M 30573—*Adagio for Strings*, Op. 11. New York P, Bernstein. (Also works by other composers.)

PHILIPS FESTIVO 6570 181—*Adagio for Strings*, Op. 11. I Musici. (Also works by Bartók, Britten, Respighi.)

ARGO ZRG 845—*Adagio for Strings*, Op. 11. St. Martin's Academy, Marriner. (Also works by Copland, Cowell, Creston.)

RCA LM 7032—*Adagio for Strings*, Op. 11. NBC SO, Toscanini. (Also works by other composers.)

RCA AGL 1-3790—*Adagio for Strings*, Op. 11. Boston SO, Munch. (Also works by Elgar, Tchaikovsky.)

CBS MS 6713—Violin Concerto, Op. 14. Stern: New York P, Bernstein. (Also HINDEMITH: Violin Concerto.)

TELARC DG 10043—*Commando* March. Cleveland Symphonic Winds, Fennell. (Also

ing, incisive, and brilliantly hued, its acridity set off by stretches of melodic beauty. John Browning gave the premiere performance, and he had the work solidly in his fingers by the time he recorded it, with George Szell in 1964—a performance (CBS MS 6638) yet unequaled on disc. The budget price of the competing version by Abbot Ruskin and David Epstein (Turnabout QTVS 34683) may be tempting, but the distantly miked, overly ambient sound is horrid. The Browning/Szell is well worth the difference in price, and if you seek out the British import version (CBS 61621), you can get it coupled with the Stern/Bernstein recording of the violin concerto.

Barber's last finished work was the *Third Essay*, Op. 47 (1978); it begins with some strong, colorful ideas but soon loses energy and direction, leaving its promise unfulfilled. Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic give a good account of the work (New World NW 309).

Of Barber's orchestral works, only the *Fadograph of a Yestern Scene*, Op. 44 (1971), and the *Canzonetta* movement (1978) from the unfinished oboe concerto have not been recorded.

(To be continued next month)

works by other composers.)

EVEREST 3282—Symphony No. 2, Op. 19; *Medea*, Op. 23: Suite. New SO of London, Barber.

MERCURY SRI 75049—*Capricorn Concerto*, Op. 21. Eastman-Rochester SO, Hanson. (Also works by Ginastera, Sessions.)

VARÈSE SARABANDE VCS 81057—Cello Concerto Op. 22 (with Garbousova). Musica Aeterna O, Waldman. (Also BRITTEN: *Serenade*, Op. 31, with Bressler, Froelich.)

DECCA ECLIPSE ECS 707—Cello Concerto, Op. 22. Nelsova; New SO of London, Barber. (Also RAWSTHORNE: Piano Concerto No. 2, with other performers.)

CBS MS 6398—*Toccata festiva*, Op. 36. Biggs; Philadelphia O, Ormandy. (Also works by Poulenc, R. Strauss, with other performers.)

LOUISVILLE LS 745—*Die Natali*, Op. 37. Louisville O, Mester. (Also C. ADAM: Cello Concerto, with Kates.)

CBS MS 6638—Piano Concerto, Op. 38 (with Browning). Cleveland O, Szell. (Also SCHUMAN: *A Song of Orpheus*, with Rose.)

TURNABOUT QTVS 34683—Piano Concerto, Op. 38. Ruskin; MIT SO, Epstein. (Also COPLAND: Piano Concerto.)

NEW WORLD NW 309—*Essay for Orchestra*, No. 3, Op. 47. New York P, Mehta. (Also CORIGLIANO: Clarinet Concerto, with Drucker.)

The Tape Deck

by R. D. Darrell

Continuations: I. Vanguard

This month's big high-tech news is of course RCA's jumping on the audiophile specialty bandwagon. But while I impatiently await its new, as well as the first Philips, digitally recorded programs in superchromium tapings, I have fewer chromium musicassettes on hand than usual. Indeed, only three more, from the Vanguard debut list greeted last month. These also are superior new editions of analog recordings available for some years in disc and (in some cases) earlier tape formats. Now, however, we can hear far more sonic content with far less surface noise than ever.

The 1975 Somary/English Chamber Orchestra recording of the Bach *Brandenburgs*, which reaches tape for the first time in a double-play cassette (CA 471208/9, \$10.98), ranks among the best versions using (mostly) modern instruments—the exceptions being the vital harpsichord, recorder, gamba, violino piccolo, and violone parts. While I'm purist enough to go the whole hog with period instruments and pitch, I certainly don't expect nonspecialist listeners to go that far.

For a complete taping of the 1968 Abravanel/Utah Symphony "Homage to Satie" program, one must go back to the Barclay-Crocker double-play reel edition ("Tape Deck," September 1979), but cassette collectors will welcome the handy combination of Satie's ballets (*Parade, Mercure, Relâche*), plus the two *Gymnopédies* that Debussy orchestrated (CA 471275, \$8.98). And although the Janigro/Solisti di Zagreb recording of Vivaldi "Concertos for Diverse Instruments" (CA 470665, \$8.98) dates from 1965, it's now revealed as a true milestone both in its still vivid sonics and in its inexhaustibly imaginative exploitation of solo/tutti potentials. These delectably varied works feature two mandolins in RV 532, flute in RV 439 (*La Notte*), strings in RV 158, bassoon in RV 495 (not RV 501 as labeled), violin with two string choirs in RV 581 (not RV 179).

2. Great Unexpectations

I had thought I knew the music of Bach's best-known son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, fairly well, but I'm really jolted to discover the extraordinary dramatic originality of his six String Symphonies, Wq. 182, brought to distinctively virile life by Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert, on period instruments (Archiv 3310 449, \$9.98). And

while I knew something of the young Hungarian pianist Dezső Ránki, I still was surprised by the magisterial assurance and penetrating insight of his Mozart Piano Quartets, K. 478 and 493, with members of the Eder Quartet (Telefunken 4.42523, \$10.98). The ultraclean TriTec sonics are sheer aural joy; the unflagging zest of the readings almost makes me forget my treasured 1946 mono masterpieces by Szell/Budapest Quartet.

An entirely different "unexpectation" is how well a "delectable mountain" of many years ago retains its original freshness. Indeed, it is now further handicapped by the relative neglect of its composer, Peter Warlock (a.k.a. Philip Heseltine), in recent years. Not to worry, however: His *Capriol Suite* of piquantly scored dances from De Preys's *Orchèsographie* of 1589 proves as uniquely delightful as ever—now jaunty, now poignant—in its Marriner/St. Martin's Academy resurrection (included in Argo KZRC 881, \$9.98). Warlock's birthday Serenade for Delius, also famous once, wears less well (except to devout Delians), as does the heavy-handed Vaughan Williams Concerto grosso—a poor choice indeed to lead off this program. That respected Briton's oboe concerto (with Celia Nicklin as spicy-toned soloist) is a pleasant enough sample of his favored pastorale vein, though none of these companion pieces remotely approaches the magic of *Capriol*.

3. Old Reliables

Very different yet equally admirable in their individual ways, the Haydn symphony series by Neville Marriner and Sir Colin Davis (both for Philips, with the Academy and the Concertgebouw, respectively) are so well known that their devotees need only the welcome word that more examples are available: Marriner's Nos. 31 (*Hornsignal*) and 73 (*Hunt*) (7300 674), 82 (*Bear*) and 83 (*Hen*) (7300 675); and Davis' Nos. 86 and 98 (7300 773) (\$9.98 per cassette). Also equal to one's confident hopes are the well-nigh definitive versions of the poignant Berg violin concerto and Stravinsky's chipper neobaroque one, both in the superb recordings of Itzhak Perlman and Seiji Ozawa with the Boston Symphony (DG 3301 110, \$9.98). And everyone who has relished Sir Georg Solti's powerful Elgar series with the London Philharmonic (*more*)



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will find similar, though more novel, pleasure in the British master's magnificent *Falstaff* portrait, processed without the usual side break, and exuberant *In the South Overture* (London CS5 7193, \$9.95).

No fan of either Solti's or Karajan's Bruckner symphony series is likely to be disappointed in their characteristically individual treatments of the least well-known (Cinderella) symphony, No. 6 (Solti: London CS5 7173, \$9.95; Karajan: DG 3301 295, \$9.98). But others, like myself, may well find more sonic thrills than interpretative depths in the former, indulgent mannerisms and excessive contrasts in the latter. And no admirer of the late Alfred Deller's unique artistry (as countertenor and conductor) can afford to pass up one of his last and most ambitious Harmonia Mundi recordings, the Purcell-Dryden masque-opera *King Arthur* (Musical Heritage MHC 6188/9, two cassettes with libretto, \$13.90-\$9.90 to members—plus \$1.60 for shipping; Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724). Yet nonspecialists (especially those anesthetic to British oratorio singing styles) may find it difficult to suspend disbelief throughout.

4. Barclay-Crocker open reels

It was eight and a half years ago that a bold new company of reel-tape specialists issued its first catalog. Now No. 6 is out (\$1.00 from Barclay-Crocker, 11 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004). The *Reel News* supplements appear monthly, and some sixty releases are scheduled for 1981. The latest to reach me include two programs that I've reported on in earlier cassette editions but that now proffer the still more impressive sonic weight and impact that put 7½-ips Dolby reels in a class by themselves. They are the radiant Berlioz *Harold in Italy* by violist Nobuko Imai and Davis (Philips/B-C G 9500 026, \$10.95) and Schubert's Seventh Symphony, never fully scored, in Felix Weingartner's fascinating orchestration performed by Heinz Rögner and the Berlin Radio Symphony (Spectrum/B-C D 116, \$7.95).

Three more Philips/B-C reels (\$10.95 each) are led by the first tape of the 1978 DeWart/Rotterdam Philharmonic performance of Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony (G 9500 309)—a fine if somewhat studied reading in sumptuous recorded sonics. I haven't heard the cassette editions of the other two, but I doubt that they do as much justice to the poetically evocative 1978 Haitink/Concertgebouw Debussy program (*Images, Danses*, G 9500 509) or to the circus-rowdy 1977 Marriner/London Philharmonic Suppé overtures (G 9500 399). **HF**



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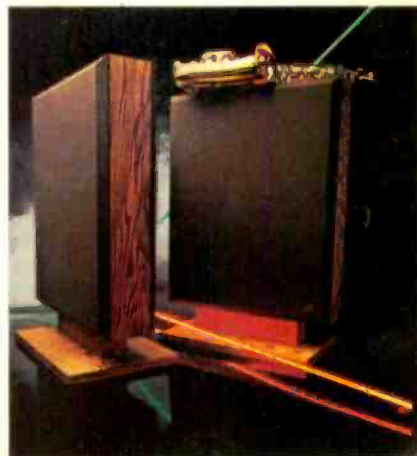
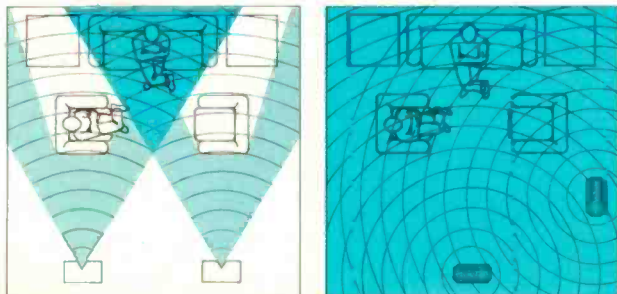
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RECENT RECORD RELEASES

The following listings are excerpts from the "New Listings" section of the April Schwann Record and Tape Guide. Some listings contain a cross-reference (+) to other works on the recording. Letters in brackets refer to language used in vocal music (G, German; E, English, etc.). Cassette editions are indicated by the symbol **c**. Quadriphonic discs are indicated by a **Q** following the record number; digital discs are indicated by a **D** following the record number.

BACH, JOHANN SEBASTIAN

Bach Program

Richner: Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring; Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland, S.659; Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, S.645; Komm, süßes Tod † Mozart: Fant. K.396; Rondo K.511; Son. 15 Tower. 1011

Goldberg Variations for Harpsichord, S.988

Varsano † Beethoven: Var. Op. 120 2-Col. M2X-36925

Organ Music

Hurford (Vol. 5)

3-Argo D207D 3; ●K207K 33

Partitas (6) for Harpsichord, S.825/30

Martins (piano)

3-Ara. 6501 (D); ●7501

Preludes & Fugues for Organ, S.531/52

Fölster (S.542) † Prel. & Fugues S.553/60; Toccata & Fugue in d

CMS/Sum. 1037; ●41037

BARTÓK, BÉLA

Concerto for Orchestra

Maazel, Berlin Phil. † Images

DG 2531269; ●3301269

Images (2), Op. 10

Maazel, Berlin Phil. † Con. for Orch.

DG 2531269; ●3301269

Quartets (6) (complete)

Tokyo Qr 3-DG 2740235

BEETHOVEN, LUDWIG VAN

Concerti (5) for Piano & Orchestra

No. 3 in c, Op. 37

Lupu, Mehta, Israel Phil. (& 2 Rondos, Op. 51) Lon. LDR-71005 (D)

Incidental Music (selections)

Bryn-Julson, Skrowaczewski, Minnesota Orch., Cho. [G]: sel. from Leonore Prohaska, The Ruins of Athens, Consecration of the House, Tarpeja † Meeresstille; Overtures

3-Vox SVBX-5156

Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt (cantata), Op. 112

Skrowaczewski, Minnesota Orch. & Cho. [G] † Incidental; Over.

3-Vox SVBX-5156

Overtures

Skrowaczewski, Minnesota Orch. (Leonore 1, 2, 3; Fidelio; King Stephen; Ruins of Athens; Consecration of the House; Coriolan; Egmont; Creatures of Prometheus; Namensfeier) (& Gratulations-Minuet in E♭) † Incidental; Meeresstille 3-Vox SVBX-5156

Serenade in D for Flute, Violin, Viola, Op. 25

Grumiaux Trio † Trios

3-Phi. Fest. 6770159; ●7699159

Symphonies (9)

No. 3 in E♭, Op. 55, "Eroica"

Markevitch, London Sym.

Phi. Fest. 6570204; ●7310204

Trios (string) (5), Op. 3, 8 ("Serenade"), 9 (complete)

Grumiaux Trio † Ser. Op. 25

3-Phi. Fest. 6770159; ●7699159

Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli, Op. 120

Varsano † Bach: Goldberg

2-Col. M2X-36925

BERLIOZ, HECTOR

Requiem, Op. 5 (Grande Messe des Morts)

Tear, Previn, London Phil. & Cho.

[L] 2-Ang. DS-3907 (D)

BRUCH, MAX

Concerto No. 1 in g for Violin, Op. 26

Mintz, Abbado, Chicago Sym. †

Mendelssohn: Con. in e

DG 2531304; ●3301304

BRUCKNER, ANTON

Symphony No. 0 in d

Barenboim, Chicago Sym.

DG 2531319

CHOPIN, FRÉDÉRIC

Études, Op. 10 and Op. 25

Pollini † Polonaises; Preludes

3-DG 2740230

Polonaise for Cello & Piano, Op. 3

Rostropovich, Argerich † Cello

Son.; Schumann: Adagio

DG 2531201; ●3301201

Polonaises

Pollini † Études; Preludes

3-DG 2740230

Preludes (24), Op. 28

Pollini † Études; Polonaises

3-DG 2740230

Sonata in g for Cello & Piano, Op. 65

Rostropovich, Argerich † Polonaise, Op. 3; Schumann: Adagio

DG 2531201; ●3301201

DVORAK, ANTONIN

Serenade in d, Op. 44

De Waart, Netherlands Wind Ens. †

Gounod; Schubert: Minuet D.72

Phi. Fest. 6570205; ●7310205

GOUNOD, CHARLES

Petite Symphonie for 9 Wind Instruments

De Waart, Netherlands Winds Ens.

† Dvořák: Ser. Op. 44; Schubert:

Minuet D.72

Phi. Fest. 6570205; ●7310205

JANÁČEK, LEOŠ

Sinfonietta

Zinman, Rotterdam Phil. † Taras

Phi. 9500874; ●7300874

Taras Bulba

Zinman, Rotterdam Phil. † Sinf.

Phi. 9500874; ●7300874

KORNGOLD, ERICH WOLFGANG

Violanta, Op. 8 (1916)

Marton, Jerusalem, Laubenthal,

Berry, Janowski, Munich Radio

Orch. & Cho. [G] 2-Col. M2-35909

MAHLER, GUSTAV

Symphony No. 10 (unfinished)

Levine, Phila. Orch. (rev. vers. by

Cooke)

2-RCA CTC2-3726 (D); ●CTK2-3726

MENDELSSOHN, FELIX

Concerto in e for Violin, Op. 64

Mintz, Abbado, Chicago Sym. †

Bruch: Con. 1

DG 2531304; ●3301304

MOZART, WOLFGANG AMADEUS

Fantasia in c, K.396

Richner † Rondo K.511; Son. 15;

Bach: Bach Prog. Tower. 1011

La finta giardiniera, K.196

Conwell, Sukis, Fassbaender,

McDaniel, Hager, Salzburg Mozar-

teum Orch. [I] 4-DG 2740234

Overtures

Newman, Hamburg Sym. (Magic

Flute, Marriage of Figaro, Don Gio-

vanni, Così fan tutte, Seraglio, Im-

presario, Idomeneo) † Ser. K.525

CMS/Sum. 1077; ●41077

Rondo in a for Piano, K.511

Richner † Fant. K.396; Son. 15;

Bach: Bach Prog. Tower. 1011

Serenade in G, K.525, "Eine kleine Nachtmusik"

Stehli, Hamburg Bach Orch. †

Overtures

CMS/Sum. 1077; ●41077

Sonatas (17) for Piano

No. 15 in C, K.545

Richner † Fant. K.396; Rondo

K.511; Bach: Bach Prog.

Tower. 1011

NOVÁČEK, OTTOKAR (1866-1900)

Perpetuum mobile, for Violin & Orchestra

Ricci, Froment, Radio Luxembourg

Orch. † Sibelius: Vn Con.; Sinding

Vox ●CT-4722

PROKOFIEV, SERGEI

Love for Three Oranges: Suite, Op. 33-bis

Black, London Fest. Orch. (March

& Scherzo only) † Peter; Sym. 1

Sine SA-2035; ●C-2035

Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67

G. Raft, Black, London Fest. Orch.

[E] † Love; Sym. 1

Sine SA-2035; ●C-2035

Symphony No. 1 in D, Op. 25, "Classical"

Black, London Fest. Orch. † Love;

Peter Sine SA-2035; ●C-2035

RAVEL, MAURICE

Boléro

Van Beinum, Concertgebouw Orch.

† La Valse; Tchaikovsky: Nutcrack-

er Phi. Fest. 6570183; ●7310183
La Valse
 Van Beinum, Concertgebouw Orch.
 † Boléro; Tchaikovsky:Nutcracker
 Phi. Fest. 6570183; ●7310183
SAINT-SAENS, CAMILLE
Introduction & Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 28
 Jenson, Ormandy, Phila. Orch. †
 Sibelius:Con.
 RCA ATC1-3972 (D); ●ATK1-3972
Preludes & Fugues (3) for Organ, Op. 99
 Rose (No. 2) (see Coll., Organ)
 Tower. 1010

SCHUBERT, FRANZ
Minuet & Finale in F for Winds, D.72
 De Waart, Netherlands Wind Ens. †
 Dvořák:Ser. Op. 44; Gounod
 Phi. Fest. 6570205; ●7310205

SCHUMANN, ROBERT
Adagio & Allegro for Horn, Op. 70
 Rostropovich (cello), Argerich †
 Chopin:Polonaise, Op. 3; Cello
 Son. DG 2531201; ●3301201

SHANKAR, RAVI
Raga Jogeshwari
 Shankar DG 2531280

SIBELIUS, JEAN
Concerto in d for Violin, Op. 47
 Jenson, Ormandy, Phila. Orch. †
 Saint-Saëns:Intro.
 RCA ATC1-3972 (D); ●ATK1-3972
 Ricci, Kuntzsch, Bochum Sym. †
 Nováček; Sinding Vox ●CT-4722

SINDING, CHRISTIAN
Suite in a for Violin & Orchestra, Op. 10
 Ricci, Froment, Radio Luxembourg
 Orch. † Nováček; Sibelius:Vn Con.
 Vox ●CT-4722

TCHAIKOVSKY, PIOTR ILYICH
Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32
 De Waart, Concertgebouw Orch. †
 Romeo Phi. 9500745 (D)

Nutcracker Suite, Op. 71A
 Van Beinum, Concertgebouw Orch.
 † Ravel: Boléro; La Valse
 Phi. Fest. 6570183; ●7310183

Romeo and Juliet
 De Waart, Concertgebouw Orch. †
 Francesca Phi. 9500745 (D)

Sleeping Beauty (excerpts)
 Walther, Hamburg Radio Sym. †
 Swan CMS/Sum. 1070; ●41070

Swan Lake (excerpts)
 Walther, Hamburg Radio Sym. †
 Sleeping
 CMS/Sum. 1070; ●41070

TELEMANN, GEORG PHILIPP
Heldenmusik
 Smedvig (trumpet), Walt (bassoon),
 Lindorff (hpsi) † Oboe Son.
 Digitech 106 (D)

Sonatas for Oboe & Harpsichord
 Smedvig (trumpet), Walt (bassoon),
 Lindorff (hpsi) (in B_♭, c) † helden-
 musik Digitech 106 (D)

THOME, DIANE
Anais, for Piano, Cello & Tape (1976)
 Thome, Finckel, Elect. Eqmpt † R.

Wilson; Yannay CRI S-437
VERDI, GIUSEPPE
La Traviata
 Sutherland, Pavarotti, Manuguerra,
 Bonyngé, Nat'l Phil., London Op.
 Cho. [I] 3-Lon. LDR-73002 (D)
VIVALDI, ANTONIO
**Concerti for Violin(s) & Orchestra (Col-
 lections)**
Four Seasons, Op. 8, Nos. 1-4
 Borok, Smedvig, Cambridge Ch.
 Orch. Digitech 107 (D)
 Menuhin, Lysy, Camerata Lysy
 Gstaad Ang. DS-37755 (D)
WILSON, RICHARD

**Eclogue, for Piano (1974); The Ballad of
 Longwood Glen, for Tenor & Harp (1975)**
 Uribe; Sperry, Allen [E] † Thome;
 Yannay CRI S-437
WOLF, HUGO
Mörke-Lieder
 Schwarzkopf (13) [G] (see Coll.,
 Vocal) Lon. 26592
YANNAY, YEHUDA (1937-)
**At the End of the Parade, for Baritone &
 Orchestra (1974)**
 Weller, J. Thome, Orch. of Our
 Time [E] † Thome; R. Wilson
 CRI S-437

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POPULAR

- Air Raid** 20th Cent. 617; ●C-617
Atlanta Rhythm Section—Champagne Jam (remastered version of recording originally released on Polydor) Mobile 038 (H-t)
Beatles—Magical Mystery Tour (remastered version of recording originally released on Capitol) Mobile 047 (H-t)
Bowers, Bryan—Home, Home On The Road Flying Fish 091
Bread & Roses Festival Of Music—Joan Bæz, Chick Corea, Leah Kunkel, Maria Muldaur, Pete Seeger, etc. (Rec. live, Oct. 1979) 2-Fan. 79011
Cline, Patsy—Country Classics, Vol. 1 Picca. 3314
Cold Chisel—East Elek. 336; ●TC5-336
Cold Fire—Too Cold Cap. ST-12096; ●4XT-12096
Cole, Natalie—Thankful (remastered version of recording originally released on Capitol) Mobile 032 (H-t)
Coolidge, Rita—Greatest Hits A&M 4836; ▲8T-4836; ●CS-4836
Doc Holliday A&M 4847
Doug & The Slugs—Cognac & Bologna RCA AFL1-3887; ●AFK1-3887
Fools—Heavy Metal EMI SW-17046; ▲8XW-17046; ●4XW-17046

Franke & Knockouts

- Millen. BXL1-7755; ▲BXS1-7755; ●BXK1-7755
Gallmor, Jon—Gonna Die With A Smile If It Kills Me Fret. 143
Gayle, Crystal—We Must Believe In Magic (remastered version of recording originally released on United Artists) Mobile 043 (H-t)
Hall, Lanl—Blush A&M 4829; ●CS-4829
Hawks Col. JC-36922; ●JCT-36922
Hooker, Frank & Positive People Panor. BXL1-3853; ●BXX1-3853
Karloff, Billy & Extremes—Let Your Fingers Do The Talking War. 3518; ●M53518
Kaukonen & Vital Parts—Barbeque King RCA AFL1-3725; ▲AFS1-3725; ●AFK1-3725
Kihn, Greg—Rockin' Beserk. 10069; ▲8-10069; ●5-10069
King, B. B.—There Must Be A Better World Somewhere MCA 5162; ▲T-5162; ●C-5162
LaSalle, Denise & Satisfaction—Guaranteed MCA 5161; ▲T-5161; ●C-5161
Lawton, John—Heartbeat RCA AFL1-3904; ●AFK1-3904
Lewis, Webster—Let Me Be The One Epic FE-36878; ▲FEA-36878; ●FET-36878

HIGH FIDELITY

- Little River Band**—First Under The Wire (remastered version of recording originally released on Capitol) Mobile 036 (H-t)
Myers, Alicia—Alicia MCA 5181; ●C-5181
Mystic Merlin—60 Thrills A Minute Cap. SKAO-12137; ▲8XT-12137; ●4XT-12137
Nazareth—Fool Circle A&M 4844; ▲8T-4844; ●CS-4844
Newton, Juice—Juice Cap. ST-12136; ▲8XT-12136; ●4XT-12136
Phillips, Utah—All Used Up: A Scrapbook Philo 1050
Pickett, Wilson—Right Track EMI SW-17043; ▲8XW-17043; ●4XW-17043
Presley, Elvis—Guitar Man RCA AAL1-3917; ▲AAS1-3917; ●AAK1-3917
Preston, Billy—The Way I Am Mo. 8-941; ▲8-941KT; ●8-941KC
Price, Ray—A Tribute To Willie & Kris Col. JC-37061; ▲JCA-37061; ●JCT-37061
Red Bow, Buddy First Am. 7745
Robinson, Smokey—Being With You Tam. 8-375; ▲8-375KT; ●8-375KC
Rogers, Kenny—The Gambler (remastered version of recording originally released on United Artists) Mobile 044 (H-t)
Greatest Hits (remastered version of recording originally released on United Artists) Mobile 049 (H-t)
Ross, Diana—To Love Again Mo. 8-951; ▲8-951KT; ●8-951KC
Scott, Molly & Sumitra—Honor The Earth Fret. 142
Searchers—Love's Melodies Sire 3523; ●M5S3523
Seeger, Peggy & Ewan MacColl—Kilroy Was Here Folk. 8562
Seger, Bob—Night Moves (remastered version of recording originally released on Capitol) Mobile 034 (H-t)
Steely Dan—Aja (remastered version of recording originally released on MCA) Mobile 033 (H-t)
Styx—The Grand Illusion (remastered version of recording originally released on A&M) Mobile 026 (H-t)
Paradise Theatre A&M 3719; ▲8T-3719; ●CS-3719
T-Connection—Everything Is Cool Cap. ST-12128; ●4XT-12128
Vannelli, Gino—Powerful People (remastered version of recording originally released on A&M) Mobile 041 (H-t)
Winter, Edgar—Standing On Rock Blue Sky JZ-36494; ▲JZA-36494; ●JZT-36494
Wood, Lauren—Cat Trick War. 3517; ●M53517
Wright, Betty Epic JE-36879; ▲JEA-36879; ●JET-36879

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BACKBEAT

The Critics Go Speaker-Shopping (and take a few friends)

- What do they listen to?
- What are they looking for in a loudspeaker?
- What records would they take to find it?

Sam Sutherland

Since my personal listening tastes touch a number of bases beyond the pop, rock, and r&b I normally write about, I've learned to be wary not only of manufacturer claims, but also of personal recommendations. While both can be useful, it's important to balance them against my own needs. Had I followed the advice of most studio and a&r pros, I would long ago have sunk my money into studio monitors like the JBL 4311s, only to rue my decision later.

What sounds razor-sharp and viscerally full with contemporary pop and rock programs can prove nasal and unbalanced with acoustic instrumentation recorded across a wider dynamic range. So what I have come to look for is that theoretical ideal of the neutral reproducer that neither adds to nor subtracts from what's in the grooves. For this reason both the more subdued, distant European designs that sound good with classics and the dazzling presence of certain U.S. speakers are equally unsatisfactory. The former pale with pop material; the latter tend to highlight surface noise, a serious problem for someone owning older LPs and singles they still want to play.

To gauge how well a given speaker



Critic Cioe en route with friends to the audio salon

will perform: with my collection, I try to listen not only to the midrange frequencies where most voices and instruments are captured, but to the lowest bass notes (pedal tones on pipe organ, synthesizer, and acoustic bass are good benchmarks) and highest upper frequencies (percussion, especially cymbals) as well. And since I have an almost pathological need to listen to records at all times of the day or night, I also look for speakers that will sound as crisp and balanced at low levels as they do at full blast. Higher volumes do give a fuller account of a speaker's abilities, but my neighbors can't be expected to swallow that rationale at 3 a.m.

In my recent year-long odyssey in search of a new set of speakers, I used close to a dozen titles for auditioning purposes.

Among my favorites: the half-speed remastered "Aja" by Steely Dan (Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab), which offers exemplary pressing quality and a wide sonic spectrum; Dire Straits' "Making Movies" (Warner Bros.), which boasts a thundering drum sound useful in evaluating a speaker's rock clout; Concord Jazz titles by the Clayton Brothers and the Louis Bellson band, both for instrumental timbres and pressing quality; any number of ECM sets for the same reasons; Michael Jackson's "Off the Wall" (Epic), which is now available in half-speed remaster as well; and any of the several recordings of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps* including the Pierre Boulez/Cleveland Orchestra on CBS and the Michael Tilson Thomas/Boston Symphony on Deutsche Grammophon (DG).

Steven X. Rea

Shopping for speakers can be a pretty intimidating experience: There you are, standing in the middle of some sound-perfect listening room, surrounded by a myriad of high-tech components and speakers, with a (usually) fast-talking, ultraslick salesperson breathing down your neck trying to unload this week's "great deal" on you. It's not easy to find the right sounds for your ears, even under ideal conditions. One sure way to narrow down the field, though, is to bring along a few discs you know very well.

My listening tastes are divided about 70:30 between, on the one hand, pop, rock, and country and, on the other, early jazz (Benny Carter, Charlie Parker) and classical. Because of the diversity of the music I listen to, I prefer speakers with a "straight" aural approach—a boomy, blasting bass or an overly lush, colored sound just doesn't wash. I like to hear what's coming off the record clean and true, with a deep, defined bass and crisp, well-dispersed highs.

There are three albums I'd take with me on a quest for new speakers. First, Antonio Vivaldi's "The Mandolin Concertos" (Musical Heritage Society, MHS 1100H), performed by I Solisti Veneti. The recording crackles with verve and clarity, and the contrasts between the high, lyrical plucked mandolins and the dark hues of the strings and basso continuo would pinpoint any weaknesses in a speaker's ability to reproduce sounds accurately and without coloration. Vivaldi's quiet, lilting largos and sweeping finales

would play off a unit's depth and volume capabilities.

Pop outfits like Supertramp and Genesis, who opt for a stylistic complexity rife with synthesizers and layers of overdubs and whose end results are sonically lucid and alive, are ideally suited to test the dynamic range of speaker systems. Unfortunately, I can't stand either group. British electro-rock upstart Bruce Woolley, an artist with a sense of fun, is my pick here, so I would take "Bruce Woolley and the Camera Club" (Columbia). Awash in a bank of synthesizers, Woolley's tunes (especially *English Garden* and *Video Killed the Radio Star*) are grand gestures, thick with guitars, keyboards, and vocals.

Lastly, I would take T-Bone Burnett's "Truth Decay" (Takoma). This is American music at its finest: gospel, rockabilly, country—all framed by ringing guitars and a resounding, surefire rhythm section. Burnett's variably whining, wailing vocals can sound merely tinny on inadequate speakers; the upright bass muffled and frayed. But on a topflight system, the vitality of Burnett's songs and the spry, easy playing of his band emerge as a sweeping aural tapestry.

Crispin Cioe

I listen to everything from hard rock to r&b to jazz. But whether reviewing, singing along in the shower, or doing the dishes, I generally want to hear the same qualities in all recorded music: a rich and resonant bass to lower midrange, low distortion at moderate to semiloud volume levels, reasonably clean and transparent

high frequencies, a decent stereo image, and the kind of transient response that accurately tracks abrupt shifts in musical register. At the same time, my ideal good sound at home has as much to do with my apartment's floor plan as it does with my musical tastes. Being a city dweller with limited space, I've avoided large speakers since proper placement is impossible, so my shopping criteria would be based on bookshelf-sized speakers.

I would take along the best produced and best-engineered samples of the musical styles I enjoy most. Ry Cooder's "Bop Till You Drop" (Warner Bros.), pop's first all-digital recording, has exceptionally resonant guitars and vocals in the midrange, along with no-frills drums and bass. Also, Cooder's pared-down, small-band approach allows for close detection of subtle frequency and distortion differences between speakers.

For bass in general, I'd take along "Fath, Wind & Fire's Greatest Hits, Vol. 1" (ARC/Columbia). Given the full-spectrum production and high-energy playing F&F purvey, the bass and drum tracks are extremely clean and precise. For rock & roll test-listening, I'd take several LPs that best represent contemporary hard-edged rock's live-sounding approach in a studio context: Bruce Springsteen's "Born to Run" (Columbia), Bob Seger's "Stranger in Town" (Capitol), and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers' "Damn the Torpedoes" (MCA). For checking stereo image, I recommend any recent production by Quincy Jones, such as George Benson's "Give Me the Night" (Quest/Warner Bros.), because Quincy is an acknowledged master of creating deep and dramatic three-dimensional stereo space.

Tom Vickers

Sometimes I listen to music, and sometimes I dance to it. Finding a speaker that fully accommodates both functions isn't easy. The very mechanics of the selection process can be cumbersome. Imagine going to your local stereo dealer, listening to a few different brands, and then pulling back the rug to do the Freak or Spacewalk. Most stores try to create an "ideal listening environment," but how many of them have dance floors?

Being a dancing fool has other drawbacks as well. Most dance music is propelled by the rhythm tracks, and many of the flat, high-accuracy speakers that



Attempts at alternative means of transport fail



have gained prominence in the past five years don't kick with the same deep resonance of their boomy predecessors. To my ears, high accuracy means high gloss: too much treble and midrange and not enough chest-pounding intensity. High accuracy is fine for pop, country, classical, and most jazz, but it often makes hard rock and funk sound tinny. It also sounds better at low volumes. I like a speaker that sounds good at low volumes, yet also has the bass and high-volume kick to satisfy my more primal dancing urges.

To find it, I would take along three albums to gauge the high, midrange, and bass response. And I'd play each disc at both high and low volumes at a flat setting. I'd use "The Pat Metheny Group" (ECM) to measure the high-end presence or gloss and to see how well the speaker responded to the delicate interplay between instruments. Steely Dan's "Gaucho" (MCA) is a fair test for the midrange. It's also a good indicator of how wearing the speakers are on the ears in terms of accuracy of reproduction and overall crispness. Finally, I would move the listening couch to one side and put on Grandmaster Flash's "Superrappin'" (Enjoy 0001), a twelve-inch rap record that has a truly furious rhythm track. If the bass's powerful pops, stops, and slides drove my feet to dancing, and if I could *feel* them as well as hear them, then I'd know the speaker had the proper amount of bass response.

Fred Miller

Since I'm in the studio business, I spend many of my days recording and listening to material I'm not crazy about. On my own time, my preferences are symphonic music, recorded as naturally as possible, acoustic jazz, and m.o.r. pop fare by the likes of Paul Simon, Billy Joel, the Pointer Sisters, and Rupert Holmes. If I were in the market for a pair of loudspeakers for the house, there would be several factors to consider. First of all, price. Second, and most important, would be accuracy of reproduction. Does the music sound natural and/or as it was designed to sound when it was recorded? Third, does the pair of speakers give a good representation of the stereo image? Are the instruments clearly definable as delivered from a particular point(s) between the two speakers?

To check those criteria, I'd take the

following records along: Gerard Schwarz's recording of Haydn's Concerto in E for Trumpet and Orchestra (Delos Digital), the digital recording of the Cincinnati Symphony performing the *1812 Overture* (Telarc), Barbara Cook's live Carnegie Hall disc, "It's Better with a Band" (Moss Music Group), "Dizzyfingers" by Bob Wilber (Bodeswell), and my two all-time favorite Paul Simon records, "Still Crazy After All These Years" and "There Goes Rhymin' Simon." Of course, I engineered most of those records. But I would use them because I know what they sounded like under ideal studio conditions. (I may have an advantage there.) If the Haydn sounded clear and crystalline—as if I was in the room with the orchestra—I'd like the speaker. If I could feel Barbara Cook whispering in my ear, I'd like the speaker. If, on "Still Crazy," I could tell it was Savuca singing along with his accordion solo and that somebody made a bad edit on the harmonica solo (both of which are true), I'd like the speaker.

What I'm looking for is accuracy. The concept of choosing a speaker for its "lush sound," "fat highs," or any other romantic attributes just doesn't make any sense to me. If it has a good, uniform frequency response, good power-handling capacity, and dispersion characteristics that are pleasing to the ear and create enough "space" for the record to sound natural, then it's a good speaker.

Mitchell Cohen

On any given Sunday afternoon, my loudspeakers may have to contend with Merle Haggard, Frédéric Chopin, the New York Dolls, Duke Ellington, and the Miracles. A speaker that imposes its own personality is not one I'd be comfortable with. Accuracy of reproduction, versatility, and stamina are important.

A speaker should not cringe at high-volume rock, nor wilt in the presence of big-band jazz, nor fail to detect nuances in string quartets. Modern technology is beyond me—most of my favorite records (Billie Holiday, Hank Williams, the Drifters, Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, even "Rubber Soul") are monaural, anyway—but I want to hear what I want to hear.

To test a speaker's adaptability to these quirky needs, I'd first put on an album filled with Nelson Riddle arrangements: lots of brass and swiny strings, a vocalist like Nat Cole, Ella Fitzgerald, or

Sinatra, straight pop melodies. Like Jack Nitzsche's work behind the Crystals, or an Ernio Morricone film score. Riddle's charts demand attention to detail amidst layers of sound. Make it Fitzgerald's "George and Ira Gershwin Songbook" (Verve).

Next I'd put on a rock record, brazen and anthemic, and crank it up to hear beefy chords, slashing, zingy guitar lines, and pounding rhythmic bass and drums. The Who isn't my favorite band, but "Who's Next" (MCA) is an impeccably constructed LP with the right instruments. It has craft, panache, a basic rock bottom, and it is one of the few *listenable* albums extant that has prominent synthesizer.

Finally, to check for perception of tone and color, for lack of menacing hiss or rumble: a spare, meditative record of small combo or solo jazz, or chamber music. Probably Bach's Six Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord (CBS) as performed by Jaime Laredo and Glenn Gould. That, or Dion's *Runaround Sue* (Laurie).

Don Heckman

I am likely to listen to anything from Gregorian chant to Béla Bartók, Charlie Parker, and the Stones. Eclectic is the proper word. I suppose, to describe my tastes. In addition to occasional fixations (lately I've been obsessed with Chopin), I find there's very little music that doesn't

Continued on page 85



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Steve Winwood: A Traditionalist Who Sells Records

by Steven X. Rea

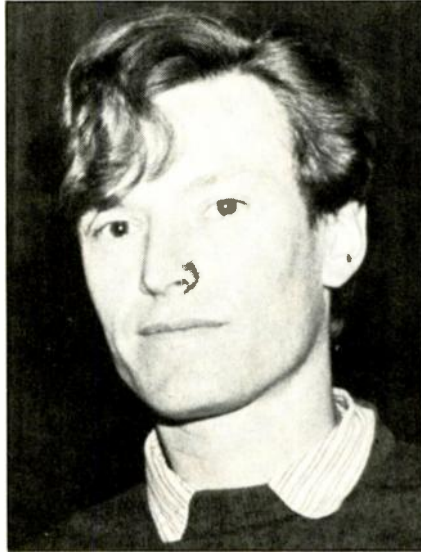
Steve Winwood wakes up to the sound of the phone ringing. He eats lunch while a reporter fires questions at him. He watches the sun go down as a photographer catches his profile. The thirty-three-year-old Britisher is in the middle of a grueling, scheduled-to-the-minute U.S. promotional tour to support his second solo LP, "Arc of a Diver." Soft-spoken, polite, and reserved, he has become adept at fielding a slew of journalists' queries: about his days in the Sixties, when his soulful tenor and dazzling keyboards were the mainstay of the Spencer Davis Group; about his work in the seminal psychedelic aggregation Traffic, and that group's later turn toward a jazz/Afro/rock fusion; and about the brief but ballyhooed super-group episode with Eric Clapton and Ginger Baker in Blind Faith.

Resigned to the fact that he can't simply issue an album and not tour (one of the reasons his 1977 self-titled effort registered meager sales), Winwood has finally emerged from his small working farm in Gloucester, England. "The question I've been asked the most," he says, running his hand through a close-cropped sprout of red hair, "is, 'What have you been doing for the last three years?' Basically what I've been doing is building a studio, writing with lots of different people, working on other people's projects—Marianne Faithful, George Harrison, Mike Oldfield—as well as on my record."

The record, which is positioned at No. 4 on the Pop LP charts, is a graceful, indelible collection of songs recorded from March through September of last year in Netherthurdonic Studios, a small sixteen-track setup he built on his farm. Winwood wrote all the music for the disc, plays all the instruments—keyboards, guitars, bass, drums, and percussion—and, of course, sings.

"The fact that it's a one-man over-dubbed album," he cautions, "can obscure what's actually there. It's an achievement that can outweigh the quality of the record, if one is not careful. Having done it, I don't think I'll do it again."

When he returns to England he plans to recruit a three- or four-member band, tour Europe, and record another



Winwood: ever the eclectic

LP. Much of the material for that disc, scheduled for a fall release, will be written in collaboration with veteran lyricist Will Jennings. (He cowrote the Crusaders' 1980 hit, *Street Life*.) In fact most of Winwood's output through the years has been collaborative.

"I tend to be more prolific working with a lyricist," he explains. "It's not just a music-lyric situation—I work with people who have musical ideas, and I have lyric ideas, so there's give and take, not just 'Bang, here are the words, now write the tune.'"

Winwood's recording career began when he was sixteen and includes such classics as the Spencer Davis Group's *I'm a Man* and *Gimme Some Lovin'*, Traffic's *Mr. Fantasy*, and *Low Spark of High-Heeled Boys*. He himself is most pleased with Traffic's "John Barleycorn Must Die" LP. Would that his first solo venture in 1977 brought such pleasant reminiscences. "I'm not happy with the way I did it," he says. "The business was going through a funny period—music in general was getting very complacent and self-possessed. The whole resurgence of punk was a satire on the music world, and it needed to be satirized. Having said that, I'm not sure that punk was any better

in the long run."

Ever the eclectic, Winwood listens to everything from American country to jazz and r&b, classical, British folk, and new wave. He manages to stay abreast of the latest developments via regular visits to London's small clubs and concert halls with his older brother Muff, now an a&r executive for CBS records. "It's like the 'flavor of the month' syndrome in London," he says. "In a way, there are too many new ideas—progressiveness just for the sake of it. Rock & roll is a very transitory thing and people are made to believe that they have to be doing something revolutionary and new, rather than doing something well. This, I think, is a misguided view."

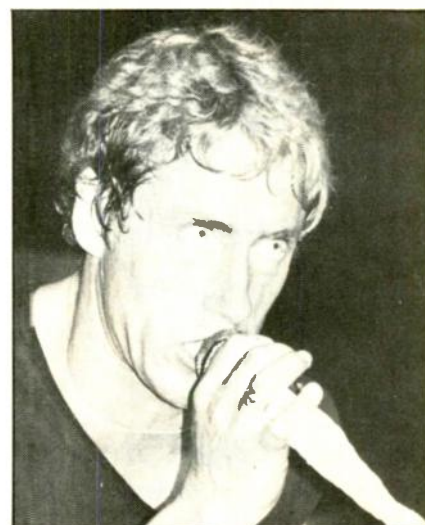
At the ripe old age of thirty-three, entering his third decade as a professional musician, does Winwood have any anxiety about losing touch with the current state of pop? What about Robert Palmer's comment in *The New York Times*: "Mr. Winwood has become a traditionalist, a rock & roll conservative"?

"Well, it's his opinion," Winwood replies somewhat abruptly. "I guess it's fair enough if 'traditional' and 'conservative' mean that I base my ideas on old values of good music and bad music, good songs and bad songs. If that's a traditionalist and a conservative, then fine, that's what I am."

Perhaps one of the reasons Winwood has stayed active in the business for so long is his very down-to-earth attitude. When asked if he had ever felt driven by the need to have a huge commercial success, he flatly replied "No, not at any cost. I'm not rich by any means, so I can't afford not to make money at records. Then again, I'm not particularly poor either. But I try not to aim at an audience. That can be dangerous—you might just miss, and then you haven't got anything. I basically make albums because I like to make them. I like to make successful albums, too, but I make them for my own ear in the hope that other people will like the same things as me." With *While You See a Chance* a No. 1 single and "Arc of a Diver" on its way to platinum, it would seem that they do. ♪



Townshend: spiritual curiosity



Daltrey: mannered vocals

The Who: Rock & Roll Meets Self- awareness

by Mitchell Cohen

The Who: *Face Dances*

Bill Szymczyk, producer
Warner Bros. HS 3516

The Who is always summing up. It doesn't make a move that doesn't take in past, present, and future ramifications. No band has a greater claim to continuity, more concern for its own place in rock history, or a more self-reflective creative output. From its crystallization of the manners and myth of the mods on *My Generation* (1966) to such archival projects as "Live at Leeds" ('73, complete with representative memorabilia), "Meaty, Beaty, Big and Bouncy" ('71), "Odds and Sods" ('74), "The Kids Are Alright" ('79, record and film), and the movie *Quadrophenia* ('73), the Who has always made sure that its contribution to rock is well documented.

Roger Daltrey, Pete Townshend, and John Entwistle record as a group infrequently—"Face Dances" is only the third album of new material in seven years. This, and the fact that the legendary constancy has been broken by Keith Moon's death and by the band's first U.S. label change, gives this new LP added significance. It's an occasion to see how the ensemble ages in the context of contemporary rock & roll. The sound of the Who isn't as exhilarating or immediate as it was when Moon was feverishly flailing away and Townshend was constructing songs around expansive chords and high adrenalin. With maturity has come some distance: "Face Dances" has a surface coolness that is difficult to cut through.

It has been some time since the Who has made a wholly satisfying album.

But, like '75's "The Who by Numbers" and '78's "Who Are You," the new disc has its rewards. As a crafter of choruses, of melodies that maintain momentum while shifting gears, Townshend is in fine form. The zing of *You Better You Bet* comes across behind the mannered vocals of Daltrey (who, more and more, is singing like an actor—on certain tracks he is the weakest link), and even when the message is as obscure or simplistic as on *Cache Cache* or *Did You Steal My Money*, the songs are rich in texture.

Most fascinating are *Daily Records* and *Another Tricky Day*, which carry forward Townshend's ongoing conversation with himself regarding his relationship to rock, his position between the leather kids and the pressed-denim marrieds. *Daily Records* is particularly revelatory and particularly triumphant: Kenney Jones hammers out the beat, the tension builds and breaks, the guitar has a sinewy twang, and the lyric is filled with plaguing doubt: "This could be suffering / This could be pleasure / I'm unaware of any difference." The rendering of the lines "Play in, play out, fade in, fade out / Making records day in, day out" is the Who at its most subtly dynamic. *Another Tricky Day*, an attempt at a Big Statement, is nearly as successful, if more didactic. There is something of the nag in Townshend ("You can dance while your knowledge is growing"), but his grand philosophical ideas are tempered by his wiser musical ones.

Coming between these two Townshend works, Entwistle's *You* comes off as empty bluster. It has considerable instrumental urgency, especially from its author and Jones, who play with a commitment

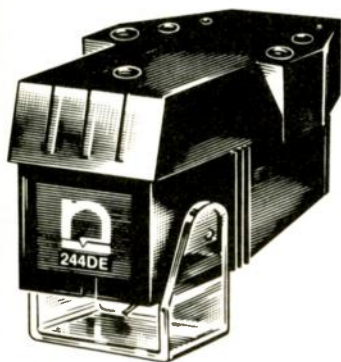
that the words don't deserve. Entwistle's other contribution is the mockingly autobiographical *The Quiet One*, a direct rocker of the sort that Townshend doesn't write any more, with a frantic sound and a strangled vocal.

Nothing goes wrong on "Face Dances." *Don't Let Go the Coat* is a curious piece that would have been right for "Empty Glass." *How Can You Do It Alone* is a catchy study of various kinds of sexual isolation, and *You Better You Bet* has the steady rock drive and singability that made *Who Are You* run neck and neck with *Emotional Rescue* as a summer single in 1978. Jones, ex (Small) Face, doesn't match Moon's maniacal style, but has a fluid precision of his own, and when Daltrey isn't preening too much, he's still an affectingly muscular singer. For all that, and for all Townshend's spiritual curiosity and songwriting ability, the album just doesn't have the sharpness of attitude that it should.

Even before Keith's death, the Who was fragmenting. Daltrey seemed dissatisfied being Townshend's mouthpiece, films beckoned. Townshend more than ever, was falling into the role of rock's grand old man, being challenged on the left by the punks and questioning his own future. Moon had energy to burn that was being wasted during the band's long sabbaticals. The music, while losing none of its intelligence, lost some of its urgency.

Townshend is too bright not to be aware of this, but awareness of a problem isn't the same as solving it. The key lines on "Face Dances" are in *Daily Records*: "And they say it's just a stage in life / But I know by now the problem is a stage / And

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they say just take your time and it'll go away/ But I know by now I'm never gonna change." When an artist as dedicated to the spirit of rock as Townshend reaches a conclusion like that, what could the future hold for the Who? With the glaring exception of "Who's Next," almost all the band's work since *Tommy* has posed some troubling questions about rock's aging anarchists, and "Face Dances" is no exception.

Joe Ely: Musta Notta Gotta Lotta
Michael Brousky & Joe Ely,
producers
South Coast MCA 5183
by **Mitchell Cohen**

Rockabilly is a music of expletives, dropped "g"s from gerunds (*Hard Livin' I Keep Gettin' Paid the Same*, the prototypical *Good Rockin' Tonight*), and a healthy dose of resilient spunk. On all counts, Joe Ely qualifies as the genuine article. Should the current revival of hot-headed, hard-bitten rock/country music take hold on a wide scale, he would be a real contender from the Texas chapter. "Musta Notta Gotta Lotta" isn't as good as Ely can be—he hasn't put out a studio album with the authoritative drive of 1980's import-only "Live Shots"—but the best of it zips along like a streamlined diesel.

The title cut, a rowdy number that celebrates late-to-bed-early-to-rise partying to a Jerry Lee Lewis-inspired piano beat, opens the album at a pace that the rest of the side doesn't maintain. The country shuffle *Dallas* and Butch Hancock's Tex-Mex ballad *Wishin' for You* (also done by the reconstituted Sir Douglas Quintet) are musically sluggish by comparison. Ely is a believable vocalist at a rapid clip, but when things slow down he begins to sound tentative and derivative: on the '50s rocker *Rock Me My Baby*, his singing doesn't rise above the second-hand bop of someone like Robert Gordon.

Remaking *Good Rockin' Tonight* wasn't a terrific idea: the song has reached a point of diminishing returns as a statement of rock principles, no matter how energetic the performance. But Ely's own working-man's lament *I Keep Gettin' Paid the Same* and David Halley's *Hard Livin'* are modern songs that really work at capturing the essential rock & roll moods of rebellious complaint and excessive release ("I wish hard livin' didn't come so

easy to me").

The band, which includes accordion, pedal steel, and sax, can swing as well as rock, and Ely has a gruff casualness that makes even minor originals like *Bet Me* and *Hold On* worth hearing. When he cuts a record that captures all his appeal as a new old-fashioned country rocker, it should be something special. Until then, "Musta Notta Gotta Lotta" will do nicely.

Robert Gordon:
Are You Gonna Be the One
Robert Gordon, Lance Quinn, &
Scott Litt, producers
RCA AFL 1-3773
by **Crispin Cioe**

Although he was a major catalyst for the late '70s rockabilly revival in America, Robert Gordon never cashed in for the kind of widespread recognition that, say, Queen did with its clearly out-of-character, pseudo-rockabilly hit, *Crazy Little Thing Called Love*. Instead he has stayed close to the roots of rockabilly, preferring to record spirited, authentic classics and their occasional modern counterparts. (He was the first to cover Bruce Springsteen's *Fire* in 1978.) By sticking primarily with oldies, though, he has run the risk of sounding a trifle mannered and, let's face it, a little like a classy Elvis imitator. "Are You Gonna Be the One" signals not only a switch in producers for Gordon, but also a concerted and quite successful effort to fuse his rockabilly passion with more contemporary rock elements.

The musical linchpin here is his new guitar player, Danny Gatton, a semi-legendary figure who has been playing in the Washington, D.C. area for years. Gatton's technical virtuosity, total command of rockabilly and related guitar styles, and driving energy push the album far beyond merely evoking the '50s. Further substantiating the spirit of contemporary rave-up are the tunes of young New York-based singer/songwriter, Mark Johnson. His *Lover Boy* is a showcase for the singer's smooth and deep baritone. (For the most part, Gordon has abandoned using Sun Records-style deep echo on his voice.) *Take Me Back* is a brilliantly down-and-dirty rocker on which Gordon simultaneously reminisces and mourns a lost love: John Gerber's gracefully greasy saxophone provides just the right foil for the lyrics' mawkish self-pity.

What distinguishes Gordon's ap-

proach throughout "Are You Gonna Be the One" is attitude. He understands and projects perfectly the unique mixture of detached cool and blunt, pared-down emotional expression that is the essence of the rockabilly style. Excluding toughness but implying vulnerability, he has finally brought his own vision of that style into contemporary focus.

Quincy Jones: The Dude

Quincy Jones, producer
A&M SP 3721

by Sam Sutherland

What's "modest" for veteran producer, arranger, and composer Quincy Jones would be daunting in its ambitions for most other pop music makers. "The Dude" is comparatively straightforward in its song-form orientation and preoccupation with romance, yet it offers as richly satisfying an aural feast as Jones's more pointedly conceptual LPs. Of a piece with the sleek, dance-oriented urban pop and r&b he has created with Michael Jackson and George Benson, Jones's final collection for A&M bequeathes the label with his most commercially potent solo project yet.

Built around vocalists James Ingram and Patti Austin, and a studio vocal ensemble dubbed Dune, these nine songs provide a sturdy framework for Jones's intricately detailed yet always spacious arrangements. The material ranges from infectious rhythmic exercises to classic pop ballads, and all of it reflects his varied portfolio: His skill at cinematic coloration shines through vivid string parts, a long-standing fascination with Afro-American synthesis yields percolating rhythm section arrangements, and Jones the jazz freak supercharges the uptempo moments with brisk brass and reed choruses and deft instrumental solos.

Yet it's Jones the pop stylist who holds center stage, adroitly balancing all this dizzying firepower against the emotive qualities of his singers. On Ingram's reading of a new Barry Mann and Cynthia Weill song, *Just Once*, the wash of strings and punctuating brasses never intrude on the classic romantic frustration of the lyric.

Even better is Austin's work, stunning throughout but especially moving on *Betcha' Wouldn't Hurt Me*, a Stevie Wonder song that provides Jones with a perfect canvas. In her fevered accusation of an estranged lover she manages to offset the tune's propulsive, syncopated pace

through her subdued dynamics, thus bringing out both the lyrics' cold fury and her own naked suffering.

Jones's long overdue vocal debut is a funny, funky rap delivered in a subterranean timbre via a vocoder. The track travels well beyond the now-familiar turf of rap stylings and surrounds Jones's street-wise aphorisms with overlapping vocal choruses.

Throughout, the songs reach for and attain a wealth of detail, and the production sound is as enticingly full and clean as we've come to expect from this pop and r&b master. Best of all, "The Dude" does double duty as a preview for his new Qwest label, which debuted last year with Benson's Jones-produced "Give Me the Night." Both Austin and Dune are signed to the company, and for Austin—a superb vocalist whose past solo work has never found the audience it deserves—that prospect is heartening indeed: With Jones at the helm, triumphs like those here won't go unnoticed for long.

Chaka Khan: What Cha' Gonna Do for Me

Arif Mardin, producer
Warner Bros. HS 3526

by Tom Vickers

Since leaving Rufus in the late Seventies, Chaka Khan's career has been a hit or miss affair. Her first album "Chaka," contained the Ashford & Simpson smash *I'm Every Woman* while the second, "Naughty," yielded no hit, and put the solo Chaka on the ropes. "What Cha' Gonna Do for Me" marks her return to center stage with a jazzier vocal style complemented (and sometimes overshadowed) by the production of Arif Mardin. Though they collaborated on her two previous LPs as well, the team has now settled into a more comfortable pop/jazz balance.

Both the material and Chaka's vocals are first-rate. Too often in the past she depended on her trademark banshee wail to put a song across, thereby overpowering the lyrics and giving the listener a headache from the shrill sameness of it all. Her high-pitched scream is still in evidence, but it is nicely tempered by some subtle phrasing and thoughtful delivery on the jazzier material.

The album opens with an uptempo reworking of the Beatles' *We Can Work It Out*. Chaka's voice is fairly controlled but the arrangement is not. Obtrusive horns



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and a galloping rhythm track rush her vocal until a synthesized bass line steadies the pace. Likewise the busy horns on *I Know You, I Live You* kick the tune along but sometimes get in her way. The chorus of *Any Old Sunday*, the standout cut, gives Chaka an opportunity to lilt and bend her phrasing with a lazy elegance. *We Got Each Other* closes Side 1 with an upbeat funk/rocker. All goes well until—once again—too many trumpets eventually overpower her.

The flip side contains the jazziest track on the album, a reworking of the Charlie Parker-Dizzy Gillespie classic *Night in Tunisia*. Though Chaka and Arif's lyrics are a bit corny, they do scan the complex melody properly, and Chaka's vocal alternates between wails and chordal block singing à la Flora Purim. The proceedings get bogged down in Herbie Hancock's clavinet solo, which is totally devoid of Parker's fluid delicacy. Dizzy comes in with some bebop licks near the fade, but it is too little too late. The rest of the side is marred by a flaccid sense of dynamics, especially apparent on *Heed the Warning* and *Father He Said*.

While it's true that Mardin has successfully eliminated Chaka's excesses, on "What Cha' Gonna Do for Me" he has created some of his own, sometimes resulting in a musical tug of war where it's Chaka that's struggling to be heard.

David Sanborn: *Voyeur*

Michael Colina & Ray Bardani,
producers. Warner Bros. BSK 3546
by Crispin Cioe

Over the past eight years, alto saxophonist David Sanborn's gritty-yet-lush, near-vocal tone and superbly economic solos have graced countless pop singles and albums (Linda Ronstadt, Pure Prairie League, David Bowie). Ironically, his solo LPs have only recently begun to capture the real essences of that style. Starting with last year's "Hideaway" and continuing with "Voyeur," he and his producers have finally stripped away the musical excesses and at times flabby over-arrangements that weighted down earlier efforts. What's left are the undiluted, driving passions that have always propelled his playing and an intense lyricism that is irrevocably welded to raw, sweaty funk.

Sanborn doesn't just play notes, he squeezes them out of his horn in a variety of timbres, shades, approaches, and releases. On his own *Let's Just Say Good-*

bye, he enunciates his bluesy, stuttering lines with a mixture of sarcasm, bitterness, and childish wit. Though the cut is an instrumental, its presumed subject of terminated love gets a fully developed and explicit treatment. *Run for Cover*, an elegant ballad written by bassist Marcus Miller, best showcases Sanborn's serpentine melodicism, as well as his remarkable sensitivity to other musicians, most notable in his interplay with guitarists Buzzy Feiten and Hiram Bullock.

Sanborn's greatest skills as a player and improviser revolve around his own melodic fusion of pop, rock, and soul elements. Few players today are more expressive within this type of pop instrumental framework, and now that he is evolving from supporting actor to leading man, one anticipates his best roles are yet to come. Certainly "Voyeur" continues to point his career in the right direction.

The Searchers: *Love's Melodies*

Pat Moran & Ed Stasium,
producers. Sire SRK 3523
by Sam Sutherland

Like their first album for Sire a year ago, the Searchers' new set offers heartening proof that there is indeed rock after forty. As virtual "original wave" rockers whose mid-'60s singles (*Needles and Pins*, *Love Potion Number Nine* to name a few) competed with groundbreaking records by the Beatles and the Hollies, surviving Searchers John McNally and Mike Pender have transcended the hokum that usually plagues rock reunions. Rather, they achieve a crisp, deceptively fresh balance between their soaring, signature harmonies and the punchy backing of a reconstituted quartet.

If anything, "Love's Melodies" is even stronger than its predecessor. Like that record, these songs wisely tap contemporary rock's current love affair with the economical arrangements and jangling, guitar-dominated accents launched during the first rock "British invasion." But what often verges on rote nostalgia in the hands of newcomers proves paradoxically convincing here.

The key to the album's brisk pace and infectious lyricism is its material. The Searchers honed their style before the advent of rock's preoccupation with self-contained writer-performers, and this incarnation continues to shrewdly respect its own limitations by using potent outside contributions. With a list of craftsmen including



Randy Bishop, Moon Martin, Creedence Clearwater auteur John Fogerty, the Motors' Andy McMasters, and Records/Kur-saal Flyers member Will Burch, the album proves a virtual primer in strong writing.

Fogerty's *Almost Saturday Night* is given a gentler reading than its author's mid-'70s solo single, trading rhythmic hard edges for a more buoyant momentum. Martin's *She Made a Fool of You* collects that writer's harmonic debt to the Searchers' peer group and in turn hews closely to Martin's own rendition. And Alex Chilton's obscure but majestic slice of Byrdsiana, *September Gurls*, originally cut by Chilton's legendary Big Star, further underlines the Searchers' rightful claim as one of the architects of the high register choral harmonies that have since become a rock and pop common denominator.

That those three tracks are matched and perhaps exceeded by at least as many others here is one index of the set's consistency. Topically, "Love's Melodies" may be old hat, offering its only flaw—and a charming one at that—in the notion of middle-aged men enraptured with young love. Musically, though, this is classic melodic rock.

JAZZ

Bill Evans:
You Must Believe in Spring
Helen Keane & Tommy Lipuma,
producers. Warner Bros. HS 3504
by Don Heckman

The unexpected death of pianist Bill Evans last fall makes listening to this new release a particularly poignant experience. Much of his work in the Seventies had been, for this listener, introspective to the point of inaccessible. Ironically, and now sadly, Evans seemed to be coming out of his shell in the last year or two with recorded performances that revived the bright, energetic spirits of his early work with bassist Scott La Faro.

"You Must Believe in Spring" is a bit more laidback than his recent recordings with horn players in attendance. But despite the dreamy quality of its rhythms, the music steers well clear of Evans' tendencies to wander aimlessly. The first side is a masterful excursion through various permutations of 3/4 time. Evans was always particularly adept with waltz-based rhythms, possibly because of his ability to superimpose a 2/4 feeling against a 3/4

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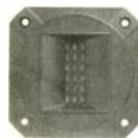
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or 6/8 rhythm (One recalls his early *Waltz for Debbie* and his remarkable accompaniment work on the Miles Davis "Kinda Blue" album.) His performances here, on his original *B Minor Waltz* and *We Will Meet Again*, Michel Legrand's *You Must Believe in Spring*, and Gary McFarland's *Gary's Theme* constitute a virtual textbook in how to improvise in 3/4 time.

Evans is aided enormously by the equal-partnership contributions of bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Eliot Zigmund. Gomez (listen to his solo on *We Will Meet Again*) had played with Evans so long that the musical interplay between them here is almost eerily intuitive—like four hands responding to the command of one imagination. Zigmund plays the perfect foil, challenging Evans with unexpected accents, never quite hitting the beat that you expect him to, and providing just the right amount of provocation for the pianist's restless rhythmic impulses.

Despite its appealing moments, however, "You Must Believe in Spring" will not rank among the top Evans performances. Yet the sad event associated with its release has given it a special cachet and, predictably enough, a sales advantage. Fortunately, both Warner Bros. and Evans' producer/manager, Helen Keane, indicate that much of his music is still in the can awaiting release. For those who admired his unique gifts, that will be some small consolation.

Woody Herman:
A Concord Jam, Vol. 1
Carl E. Jefferson, producer
Concord Jazz CJ 142
by John S. Wilson

This disc represents Woody Herman's first since he signed with Concord as both performer and producer. He returns to basics by playing only the clarinet his specialty for years before taking up the alto and soprano saxophones. And, possibly in an effort to inspire the players here—Cal Collins, Scott Hamilton, Dick Johnson, Dave McKenna, Cal Tjader, and Warren Vaché among them—his playing is stronger and more fulfilled than ever. His solo on *Woodchopper's Ball*, for instance, sounds far better than it did when he first started playing the tune in the late Thirties.

Despite its title, "A Concord Jam" has only two jam pieces in *Woodchopper's Ball* and *Apple Honey*, another

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standard for Woody. The remaining six selections are showcases for the individual musicians. Johnson, spurred by McKenna's rumbling piano, plays a brilliant alto solo on *Just Friends* that builds on Charlie Parker's version. Japanese clarinetist Eiji Kitamura recalls the days when the clarinet was a major jazz instrument, using a dark, woody tone on *Body and Soul*. Vaché, a consistently developing cornetist, reflects Louis Armstrong's imaginative attack on *Someday You'll Be Sorry* without attempting to copy Louis' actual performance.

The New Black Eagle Jazz Band: Fantasies

Black Eagle BE Five (Black Eagle Records, Ltd., 128 Front St., Marblehead, MA. 01945)

by John S. Wilson

The New Black Eagle Jazz Band, those middle-aged New Englanders who have absorbed the classic New Orleans ensemble style, herein put their best features forward: Stan Vincent's broad and rugged trombone, Stan McDonald's Bechet-like clarinet and soprano saxophones, and Eli Newberger's graceful and explosively rambunctious tuba. The material on "Fantasies," drawn from two 1979 concerts, comes from Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, and Sidney Bechet, and there are two tunes—*1919 March* and *When I Grow Too Old to Dream*—that the old New Orleans musicians still play.

At times the New Black Eagle gets unintentionally close to authenticity. When the ensemble quavers, it sounds like a group of elderly New Orleans players on their last legs. Similarly, Tony Pringle's muted trumpet suffers from moments of wobbling uncertainty. And some precarious sound mixing dooms Bob Pilshury's piano to anonymity and sometimes throws the horns into limbo.

But when Vincent, McDonald, or Newberger take over, all order is restored. McDonald gets a particularly generous whack at a mixed bag of Bechet material, from *Song of Songs* and *Indian Summer* to the sinuous and slinky *Egyptian Fantasy*. Newberger's agile tuba helps to hold the band together when the recording problems come up. And Vincent's rough puffery lends a good deal of fun to the proceedings. Led by the broad, consistent pulse of Pam Pameijer's drums, the

rhythm section supplies a strong and steady foundation.

Luckey Roberts and Willie "the Lion" Smith:

Harlem Piano Solos— Lester Koenig, producer

Good Time Jazz S 10035
(Contemporary Records Inc., P.O. Box 2628, Los Angeles, CA. 90028)

by John S. Wilson

These two sets of definitive piano solos by Luckey Roberts and Willie "the Lion" Smith, one on each side of the disc, were recorded under the supervision of Nat Hentoff in 1958. Their release is part of a Contemporary and Good Time Jazz reissue series and comes complete with original sleeve art and liner notes.

Roberts was a commanding musical figure in Harlem of the '20s, a peer of James P. Johnson and Willie the Lion. He is not as well known as they are largely because he was not recorded as frequently, but he was a strong link between ragtime and stride. This is the only solo LP that Roberts made. (He recorded one other solo session for Circle Records in 1946.) It is not only an invaluable release, but a remarkable one, for his playing is strong and full of gusto, despite the fact that he had just suffered a stroke.

Nothin' is a glowing demonstration of his ability to bridge the gap between ragtime and stride: it is filled with dancing treble figures and winds up in a stirring march. *Spanish Fandango* is a very personal exposition of what Jelly Roll Morton called "the Spanish tinge." *Railroad Blues* is a sophisticated development of the train music that was a favorite of country musicians. Mysteriously, *Complainin'* is credited to Roberts as composer, but it is close enough to Jess Stacy's *Complainin'* to have come from the same source. *Inner Space* is a rolling waltz whose inverted intervals keep turning into *Kiss Me Again*. It is a fascinatingly varied collection, as though Roberts was making sure posterity would hear the full scope of his composing and playing.

Similarly, the other side of "Harlem Piano Solos" shows the range of the Lion's talents. It includes the jaunty, spirited *Morning Air*, an easy, lilting *Relaxin'*, a journey into stride on *Rippling Water*, and his own bit of Spanish tinge, *Tango Le Caprice*.

Continued from page 73

bring me some kind of pleasure.

Speakers that are sensational for rock & roll might be terrible for, say, a Haydn string quartet. And since I can't afford several pairs custom-picked for each style I listen to, I need neutral reproducers—those that will not make their own, unwelcome, contributions to the audio mix.

In deciding which albums I would take with me to find the right unit, I would pick those with which I am the most familiar. Knowing each detail of an LP's sound provides just the reference points one needs to compare the nontechnical, purely auditory qualities of different speakers. For jazz, almost any album by Weather Report would do; I know "Heavy Weather" (Columbia) quite well and wouldn't hesitate to use it. But I'd also like to hear what could be done with the crisp rhythm-section sound that Bob James gets on virtually all his outings, especially "H" (Tappan Zee/Columbia). And, to put things in proper perspective, I'd like to hear what a speaker could do with Parker's "Complete Savoy Studio Sessions" (Arista).

The Beatles "Sgt. Pepper" (Capitol) is a good test for almost any kind of musical style. For pop and rock I would use the Rolling Stones' early Seventies "More Hot Rocks" (London); the range of rock here, despite the sometimes muddy recording, would expose any speaker's funk limitations. To cover other aspects of pop I'd use the soundtrack from *Fame* (RSO), Carole King's "Tapestry" (A&M) because I know it so well, and the Pentangle's "Sweet Child" (Reprise) for delicate string interplay.

Finally, for classical music I'd use the Pierre Boulez SQ mix of Bartók's "Concerto for Orchestra" (Columbia). While a number of recordings of this marvelous work will stretch the limits of any speaker system, I prefer this one for the bright, individual clarity of the instruments. Another choice—one that would reveal a unit's ability to produce clear, pointed distinctions between sound and silence—is the Henryk Szeryng recording of Bach's Partitas and Sonatas for Solo Violin (DG). 🎻

We're Moving

Effective immediately, all editorial correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, High Fidelity, 825 7th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.



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E.Y. Harburg, 1896-1981



Harburg: as good as his word

We sing his lyrics without being conscious that we ever learned them.

In October, 1929, the stock market crash wiped out a small but successful electrical appliance firm in New York City. The owner was thirty-three years old and a financial failure. He was also divorced with two children to support. But jumping out a window was not his plan. "I had had my fill of this dreamy abstract thing called business," he said later, "and I decided to face reality by writing lyrics."

E.Y. ("Yip") Harburg was as good as his word, and his words were very good indeed. To name only a few: *April in Paris*, *It's Only a Paper Moon*, *Brother Can You Spare a Dime*, *Last Night When We Were Young*, *What Is There to Say*, *Happiness Is Just a Thing Called Joe*, *Right as Rain*, and, from his collaboration with com-

poser Harold Arlen on the *Wizard of Oz* score, the 1939 Academy Award winner *Over the Rainbow*. On March 5, 1981, four days before he was to have received the Johnny Mercer Award from the Songwriter's Hall of Fame, Edgar Yipsel Harburg was killed in a car crash in California.

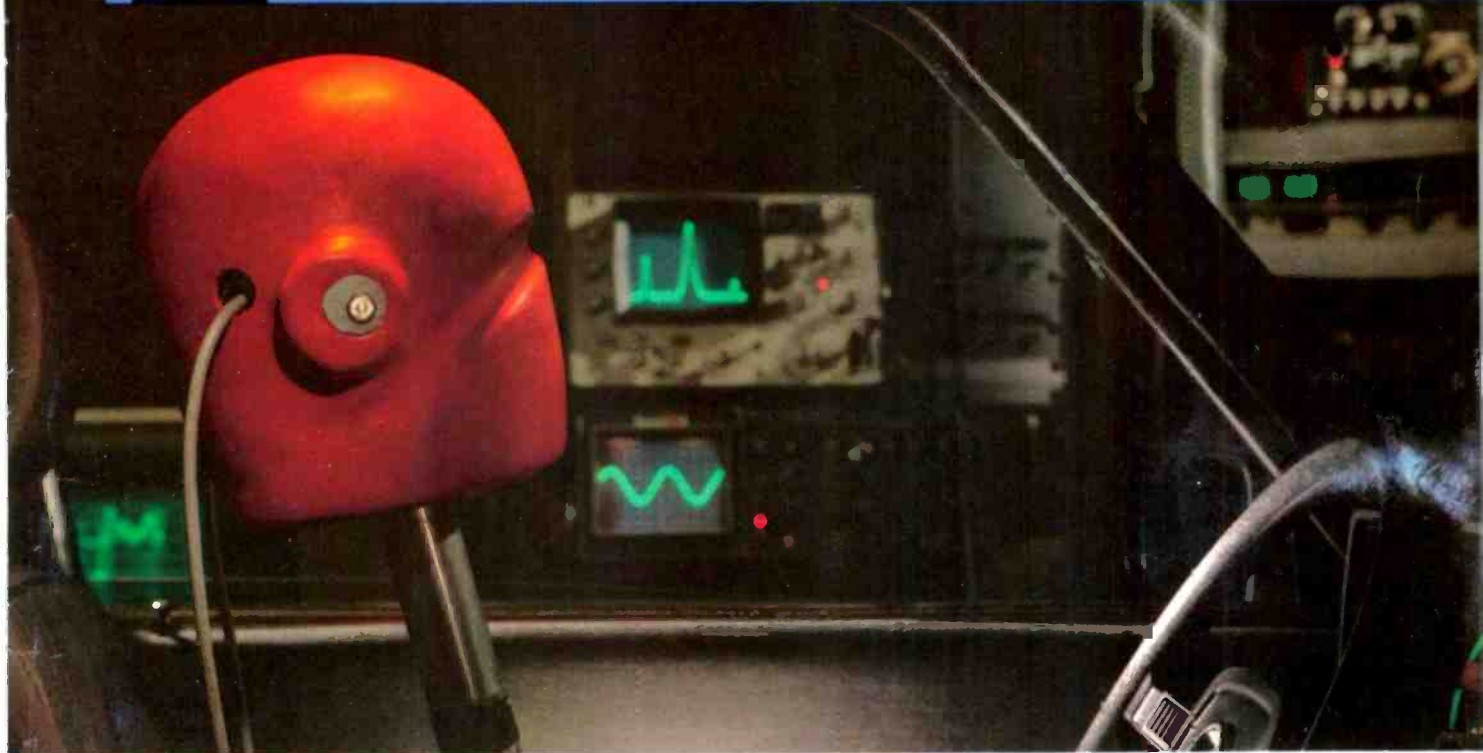
Stephen Sondheim has proclaimed one particular Harburg line as his favorite of all time: "Ever since that day, When the world was an onion" (*The Eagle and Me*, from the show *Bloomer Girl*, 1944). Gentle irony came easily to the Harburg pen; he was witty without being acerbic, and, above all, passionately convinced that social awareness was the first responsibility of a creative artist.

There were seven Broadway musicals, and he devoted himself to them as conceator and commissionaire. It was Harburg's belief that librettist Fred Saidu must stress the twin issues of women's rights and Negro rights in *Bloomer Girl*, a Civil War play about Amanda Bloomer and the women's rebellion against wearing hoopskirts. The prize-winning *Finian's Rainbow*, in which his lyrics attained their apogee, was in fact a combination of two original Harburg plots: One dealt with racial prejudice, greed, and the plight of the southern sharecropper, the other with a stolen crock of gold and a leprechaun with three magic wishes. Burton Lane, who was kind enough to share his reminiscences with me, was Harburg's own choice to supply the music, and the score surpassed anything either man had done previously or would do in the future. One has but to listen to *Old Devil Moon*, *How Are Things in Glocca Morra*, *When I'm Not Near the Girl I Love*, *Necessity*, or any of the other numbers to recognize that there is as much inner-direction and social commentary at work as there is talent and craftsmanship.

The lyrics of E.Y. Harburg are as dear and familiar to us as our own names. We know them, we anticipate them, and we sing them without being conscious that we ever learned them. He will be missed.

ELISE BRETTON

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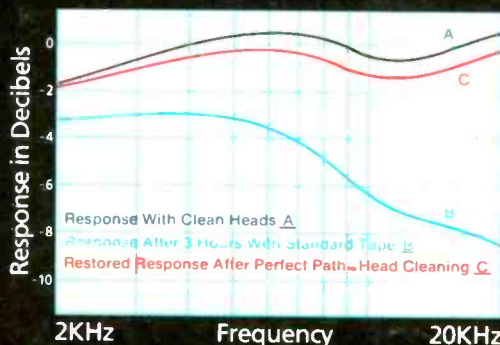
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