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POWER MIN. RMS. 20 TO 20,000 HZ	80	60	45	30	15
TOTAL HARMONIC DISTORTION	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%
PHONO OVERLOAD 11V/11	300mV	250mV	200mV	200mV	150mV
INPUT PHONO/AUX/ TAPE	2/1/2	2/1/2	1/1/2	1/1/2	1/1/1
SIGNAL TO NOISE RATIO	95dB	95dB	95dB	93dB	87dB
I/F SENSITIVITY (110 "58)	1.5uV	1.8uV	not applicable	1.9uV	1.9uV
SELECTIVITY	(wide) 35dB (narrow) 85dB	(wide) 35dB (narrow) 80dB	not applicable	60dB	60dB
CAPTURE RATIO	(wide) 0.8dB (narrow) 2.0dB	(wide) 0.8dB (narrow) 2.0dB	not applicable	1.0dB	1.0dB

U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 75 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, New Jersey 07074

\* Minimum RMS continuous power output at 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.1% total harmonic distortion.



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TX9500II  
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# THE TYPE II

work, but so far as authenticity goes, the new Cologne Musica Antiqua recording surpasses the competition on several counts.

Among its attractions, on the most basic level, is the group's by now easily identifiable sonic personality—a sound that combines astringency, brilliance, and a vivid sense of coloristic possibilities. More than Leonhardt and even the normally over-editorial Leppard, Reinhard Goebel gets to the work's pictorial roots, not only with instrumental effects (including, in some of the battle sections, a percussive string and harpsichord sound), but through textural clarity and a regulation of tension by means of tempo variation.

The work is a dramatic scene, to be acted out by the two armored combatants and described by a narrator. Tancred's and Clorinda's relatively few lines are (with the exception of Clorinda's last scene) often underplayed. Here, David Thomas portrays the most belligerent Tancred on disc, and if Patrizia Kwella does little that is either unusual or particularly striking, hers is certainly a respectable Clorinda. But the lion's share of the vocal work falls to the narrator, and here again, the new disc eclipses the others. Nigel Rogers (who sang Tancred on Leonhardt's recording) is lavish and almost athletic with his embellishment of the narrative's slow, grave sections, and remarkably fleet in the tongue-twisting "*L'onta irrita lo sdegno a la vendetta*" verse. Of the alternatives, Max van Egmond also embellishes tastefully, though not so profusely; Laerte Malaguti embellishes little and often seems on the brink of a Gigli sob; and Luigi Alva avoids thoughtful ornamentation in favor of a thickly larded modern (or rather, Leppard-style baroque) vibrato.

The vocal styles of the competing versions, in fact, are analogous to the instrumental performances that back them. Leonhardt's, naturally, approaches the ideal established by the new Archiv disc but—more understated—lacks its tension, particularly at the end. Loehrer's has a rich, modern chamber-orchestra sound that is, nevertheless, deployed effectively; despite its modernity and my reservations about its narrator, I still find this an appealing performance, particularly at budget price. Leppard's is pretty much what one has come to expect from him, with lush, often dominant strings—full of character but somewhat anachronistic.

Musica Antiqua also offers the best coupling, although again, none of the choices is bad. Leppard presents complete the Madrigals, Book VIII, in a three-disc set; Loehrer includes selections from that book; and Leonhardt fills out his disc with madrigals from Books VII and VIII and the *Lamento della ninfa*. Goebel offers another of the better-known and more trend-setting works, the *Lamento d'Arianna* from the lost opera of 1608. The version for solo voice, though less frequently heard than the later

madrigal setting, is in many ways more expressive and touching—particularly so in this magnificent rendering by Carolyn Watkinson, a young but mature-sounding alto. She is equally affecting in the *Lamento d'Olimpia*, which closes the disc.

The two laments are separated by, appropriately enough, *La Desperata*, a violin sonata by Monteverdi's contemporary Carlo Farina, a precursor of the school of Italian violin virtuoso-composers (although this, like all of his published works, dates from his years as Konzertmeister at the Dresden court). Brief and attractive, if not terribly consequential, it serves the dual purpose of separating the vocal works and providing a vehicle for Goebel's zephyrlike violin playing. A.K.

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## The Musica Antiqua's attractive sonic personality is by now easily identifiable.

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### MOZART: Overtures (8).

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra. Zdeněk Košler, cond. [Eduard Herzog and Milan Slavický, prod.] MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4575, \$7.75 (\$4.95 to members). Tape: MHC 6575, \$7.75 (\$4.95 to members). (Add \$4.60 for shipping; Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724.)

Idomeneo, K. 366; Die Entführung aus dem Serail, K. 384; Der Schauspieldirektor, K. 486; Le Nozze di Figaro, K. 492; Don Giovanni, K. 527; Così fan tutte, K. 588; Die Zauberflöte, K. 620; La Clemenza di Tito, K. 621.

#### COMPARISONS:

Haitink/London Phil.	Phi. 9500 882
Marriner/St. Martin's Acad.	Ang. DS 37879
Davis/Royal Phil.	Sera. S 60037

This 1978 recording from the Czechoslovak Opus label is another plausible entry in the Mozart-overture field that I surveyed in November. Unlike the recent-vintage Haitink and Marriner discs, which included the long and rather tedious *Lucio Silla* Overture, and the long-familiar Colin Davis disc, which included the brief but charming *Finta giardiniera*, this one offers only eight overtures, but they're the eight essential ones, and they're sensibly thought-out and tidily played. (For more exotic repertory, don't forget the scrappy but well-intentioned Faerber/Turnabout collection, QTV-S 34628.)

While it's true that Košler's performances, like Haitink's similarly foursquare though more elegantly phrased and played ones, won't often surprise you, surprises aren't always a good thing. Is the pushiness of Marriner's performances an unalloyed treat? On the other hand, Marriner's *Idomeneo* and *Clemenza di Tito* remain uncom-

monly bracing, and then there's his unexpected *Così*—not pushed at all, and really quite ravishing. There's something to be said for surprises after all.

The Slovak Philharmonic's string tone as recorded here tends to thickness, but the woodwinds sound as warm and natural as those of Haitink's London Philharmonic, giving the MHS disc a certain sonic advantage over the rather gritty Seraphim. The advantage is hardly decisive, though, and Davis' performances remain fresh and attractive. K.F.

### REICH: Tehillim.

Steve Reich and Musicians, George Manahan, cond. [Manfred Eicher, prod.] ECM 1-1215, \$9.98. Tape: M5E 1215, \$9.98 (cassette).

*Tehillim*, a setting of verses from four Psalms, shows Steve Reich embarking on a new and welcome course without sacrificing his familiar sound and style. Scored for four women's voices, strings, winds, electric organs, and percussion and sung in Hebrew (the title is Hebrew for "psalms," or more literally, "praises"), *Tehillim* brings Reich to terms with several compositional elements he has pointedly avoided in the past—chiefly, long melodic lines, replacing the repeated cells from which his earlier music grew, and tight manipulation of vocal and instrumental textures and harmonic movement.

Actually, he gave hints of this in his last major outing, *Music for a Large Ensemble* (1978; ECM 1-1168), and in some subsequent smaller works, in which instrumental groups would enter and exit more abruptly than usual (for Reich) and motivic changes were sharper than in his earlier, more smoothly flowing works. But the task of setting a text has clearly pushed the composer on to this next phase. Here the structures within each setting are clear rather than amorphous; and if the music proves entrancing, the trance is uplifting rather than soporific.

The piece has a nice cyclical feel. The first text (Psalm 19:2-5) moves through six settings based on an attractive, rhythmically angular tune heard first as a vocal solo, then in a two-voice canon. String and wind harmonies enter, giving way by the fifth section to four voices and maracas, with organs doubling the voice parts. Finally, this mass is pared back to the original solo melody, over percussion. The percussion continues beyond the melody, forming a bridge to the second text setting (34:13-15). This time, the two- and three-part vocal lines are presented homophonically, doubled at various times by different instrumental sections. (Percussion is the sole constant throughout the piece—but the kinds of percussive instruments vary.) After an interlude for organ and percussion, Reich brings his singers back for an embellished *da capo*, with sections of the melody elongated.



# LAST YEAR'S REVIEWS PRESENTED US WITH A TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW.

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# HIGH FIDELITY

JULY 1977

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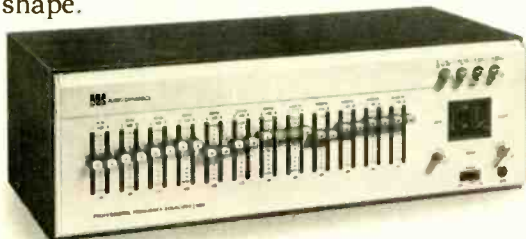
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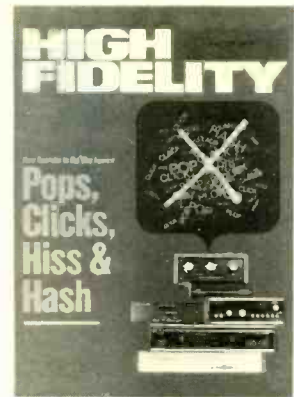
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## The Sound Shaper

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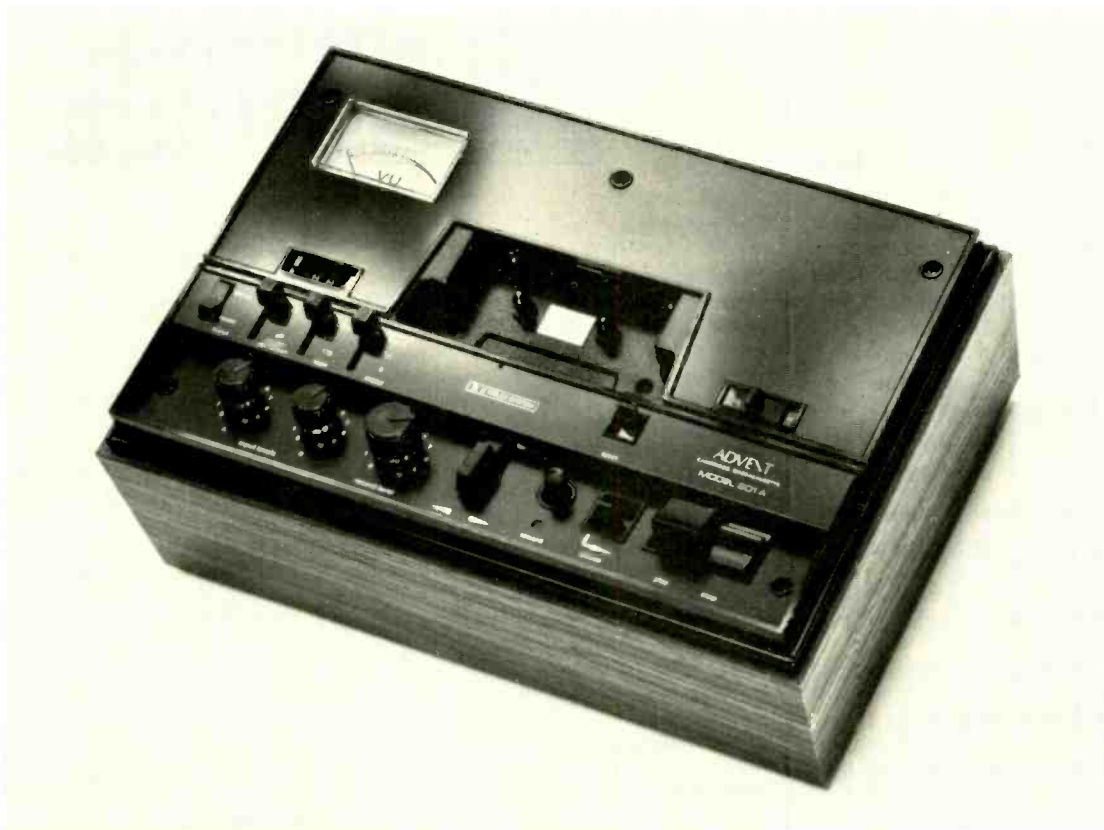
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## COMING NEXT MONTH

We'll wind our August issue around the theme of **TAPE**, beginning with Edward J. Foster's **Interpreting Tape Recorder Tests**, another in a series about applying what you read in our "Equipment Reports" to making purchasing decisions. Supplementing this will be a **Buyer's Guide to Open-Reel and Cassette Equipment**—more than 175 models. And among our five test reports will be three on late-model cassette decks. Roy Hoopes will zero in on the "oral history" revolution in **Taped Talk: Storing Tomorrow's Source Materials**, and Robert Long will review two recently published books that illuminate aspects of recording history. In **BACKBEAT**, we'll have the inside story of how the **Beatles' 1962 Hamburg Tape** was transformed from a single track into sixteen in the studio. Plus much more.

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[STEVEN D.] PRICE: [*Old as the Hills: The Story of Bluegrass Music*]

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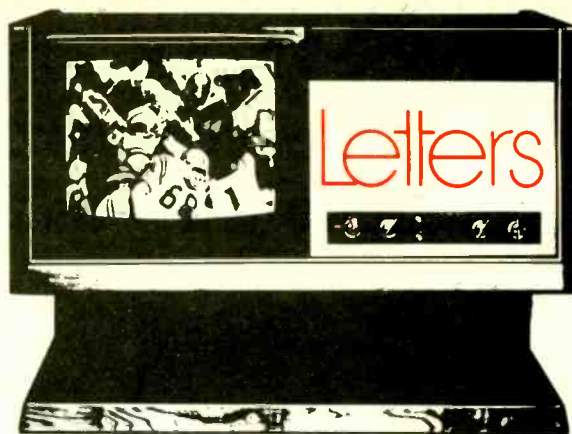
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## Videotaping

I was astounded to read Leonard Marcus' editorial, "MCA vs. Sony" [April]. The movie studios and TV networks pay the actors, production companies, etc., and should have all rights to their material. For people to be able to videotape the movies or programs violates the rights of the owners. I consider this as morally wrong as copying a record onto cassette.

You can call it changing distribution; I call it "stealing," just like the eight-track bootleggers stole from the record companies, forcing us to pay higher prices for records. I hope that MCA wins this suit and stops this sort of thing before it gets started.

Fred C. Bailey  
Apex TV & Electronics Center  
Topeka, Kan.

*Mr. Marcus replies: My point was that the copying of video material for your own pleasure should be placed in the same category as the copying of audio material for your own pleasure, which is neither "stealing" nor a crime. It is only when you distribute your homemade recordings for gain that it is illegal. The cost of a record has little—probably nothing—to do with the number of people who have made a single copy of it.*

*What I would consider a crime is making one manufacturer's product illegal because it interferes with the profits of another manufacturer.*

## Dino Ciani

I read with great interest in "Behind the Scenes" [May] the remarks of Jürg Grand, as quoted by Susan Gould, about his plans to record Italian pianists for Dischi Ricordi. He speaks of the tragic death in 1974 of the young Dino Ciani, of whom "we have two discs of Weber sonatas."

We have more than that, all on Deutsche Grammophon, though never released, so far as I know, in the U.S.: Schumann's *Novelletten*, Op. 21 (DG 2530 474), and the Debussy Preludes, Books I and II (DG 2530 304 305). These are great performances, beautifully recorded. Everything Ciani played (that I ever heard) he played with a highly cultivated sense of style and the most sensitive, intelligent kind of musicianship. And he had technique to burn.

In addition, there is a three-record album

(DG 2721 082) called "*Omaggio a Dino Ciani*," issued after his death at the age of thirty-three. It consists of the complete Chopin Nocturnes recorded in concert at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan in 1973 and a program of "the last compositions of Chopin" (Opp. 60-68) recorded in concert in Rome in 1971. The latter was a typical Ciani program in that, instead of being a conglomeration of unrelated concert pieces to please an audience, it was a thoughtful program that you could learn something from. It was this kind of high-minded artistry that made Ciani so beloved by all the best Italian artists.

There is nothing superior to the Schumann and Debussy records in the catalog, and the Chopin album is equally treasurable. DG would be doing all lovers of fine pianism a favor by bringing them out in this country.

Henry Schultz  
Chicago, Ill.

## Nonesuch Goes Fancy?

The review in **HIGH FIDELITY** [April] of our album "Songs by Stephen Foster," Vol. 2 (Nonesuch H 71333), arouses concern, since Mr. Lowens has based most of his comments on a number of serious misconceptions. He begins by recalling that he was "absolutely ecstatic" about the work of Jan DeGaetani and Leslie Guinn in the first Nonesuch album of Foster songs (H 71268). He then takes Nonesuch to task for having "gone fancy" in the sequel—i.e., for having arranged the songs for a variety of different forces, including chorus, guitar, melodeon, flute, and piccolo, in addition to piano and the vocalists, Miss DeGaetani and Mr. Guinn. This strikes us as an unfounded objection, inasmuch as: 1) The chorus appears only in songs that specifically call for four-voice "chorus"; 2) The guitar is used in three songs, all of which appeared in print in Foster's lifetime in what are presumed to be the composer's own guitar arrangements (which are faithfully adhered to in the recording—a fact documented in the credits, along with information about the album's use of historical instruments and authentic instrumental practices); 3) Vol. 1 employed not only piano, melodeon, and flute, but keyed bugle and violin as well.

On the general subject of the instrumental accompaniments in these two recordings, we take the liberty of quoting from





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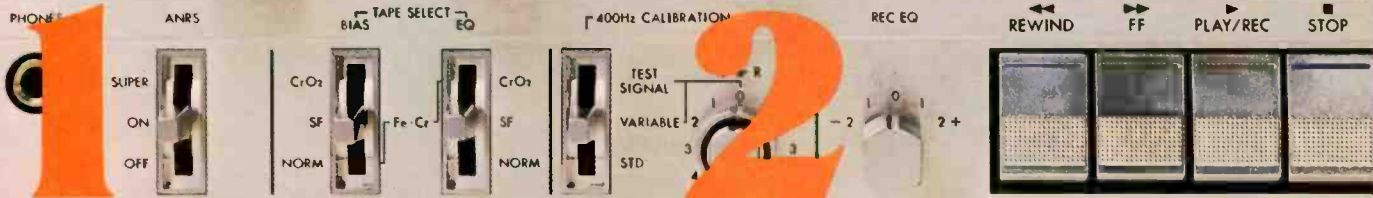
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The third setting (18:26–27), the sole slow movement, again deploys the voices contrapuntally (but not canonically), over a pedal provided by marimba and vibraphone. The percussionists gradually quicken the pace, signalling the final setting (15:04–6)—almost a good, old-fashioned recapitulation—which reprises themes and techniques heard earlier and leads up to a glorious, full-ensemble coda on “Hallelujah” (in D major, no less!).

Certain Reichian thumbprints shine through this all: The quick canonic setting of the first text over distinctly Reichian rhythmic figures recalls the tape manipulations of *Come Out*, although the textures here are obviously more sophisticated. And while the vocal lines (and their repetitions) are now full-fledged melodies, the percussion parts and some of the sustained harmony lines in the winds and strings are cut of the same cloth Reich used for *Music for a Large Ensemble* and other works. As always, he maintains the feeling of continuity that joins each of his scores to its predecessors. But this work represents a quantum leap. For one who admired Reich’s music of the late ‘60s and early ‘70s but found his more recent work a bit tiresome, it’s refreshing to discover that he has at last changed—or rather, found—his tune. A.K.

**SCHUBERT: Symphonies: No. 3, in D, D. 200; No. 5, in B flat, D. 485.**

Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. PHILIPS 6514 149, \$12.98 (digital recording). Tape: 7337 149, \$12.98 (cassette).

**SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 9, in C, D. 944.**

Dresden State Orchestra, Karl Böhm, cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 352, \$10.98. Tape: 3301 352, \$10.98 (cassette). [Recorded in performance, January 12, 1979.]

Marriner’s approach to the two early symphonies is trim and appropriate, with fastish tempos and smartly sprung rhythms. The Third is especially attractive here, with an alert, no-nonsense kind of vigor and tempos that—while driving and animated—avoid the eccentric relationships and dogmatic point-making that characterized both Carlos Kleiber’s reading (DG 2531 124) and his father’s. Without turning it into a “big” composition as Karajan (successfully) did (Angel SZ 37754) Marriner nevertheless manages, like Karajan, to find the seeds of the “Great” C major’s finale in the last movement.

If the Fifth is less successful, it is simply because of its sound, a bit bass-heavy, overblown, and deficient in detail. The winds and strings produce a blunted, general heft, but neither the violins (early in the work) nor the flute (when it takes a singing solo line, as in the slow movement) can cut through clearly. The orchestral playing here, while tasteful and civilized, is a mite genteel and lethargic.

Returning to Toscanini’s old 1953

recording of the Fifth (alas no longer available), one is immediately struck by the clarity and balance, old sound or no, and by the refreshing lack of those “feminine” phrase endings that constitute Marriner’s only eccentricity. Also noteworthy are Toscanini’s success in infusing a molten, passionate energy (e.g., in the Minuet) without in the least overloading the context and restraint of the writing, and the way his phrasing breathes and expands (albeit subtly) even in the context of a severe classicism. Basically, his is a more purposeful view of the music. Fully aware that some readers tire of my unceasing advocacy of Toscanini, I can only continue to hold up this sort of honest, inspired music-making

**Böhm’s Dresden Ninth will surprise those who know his ‘60s Berlin version.**

as a pristine example.

Karl Böhm’s Dresden account of the “Great” C major, taped by VEB Deutsche Schallplatten in concert, will surprise those who know his mid-‘60s Berlin Philharmonic version (DG 138 877). Maybe the leaner, more acute sound is a factor, but there is much more litheness and *chiaroscuro* here, a more spontaneous characterization of phrases, and more impulsiveness in the manipulation of tempo. Some of the hauling-about is of the sort one associates with Furtwängler, but with a firmer, brighter, less spongy type of sonority. Once or twice, the sudden “inspiration” produces near-anarchy (as at the approach to the first-movement recapitulation and at the end of the finale), and the Scherzo, for all its songfulness, is a bit stodgy and ungalvanic. Yet surprisingly, I found myself quite often enchanted by a heart and freedom I hadn’t known in Böhm, usually the model of a modern *Kapellmeister*. In short, an affecting memento, and one that definitely augments our view of a masterpiece. H.G.

**TCHAIKOVSKY: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in G, Op. 44.**

Shura Cherkassky, piano; Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Walter Susskind, cond. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] VOX CUM LAUDE VCL 9011, \$8.98. Tape: VCS 9011, \$8.98 (cassette).

Richard Freed’s excellent annotation generously mentions Shura Cherkassky’s earlier mono version of this work on Deutsche Grammophon (with the Berlin Philharmonic under Richard Kraus) but ironically overlooks a still earlier one on Vox (with the Santa Monica Symphony under Jacques

Rachmilovich); this was one of two works (Brahms’s Op. 5 Sonata was the other) he recorded in the earliest days of micro-groove.

In any case, it is good to have Cherkassky back in the fold. As before, he opts for the Siloti revision in lieu of Tchaikovsky’s longer, more rambling original and plays with fine-grained lyricism. His version, thus, is strikingly different from Gilels’ (also of Siloti’s version; Angel, deleted); here slashing drama is tempered by a whimsical elegance. Cherkassky is a master of what I call the *a capriccioso* style, and if some of the bravura passages lack the ultimate in rhythmic steadiness, these deficiencies are more than offset by many ravishingly phrased details and dabs of color. Occasionally, his passagework delightfully suggests that he is tickling the keys with a feather (or wand?). There are very few pianists active who can obtain his kind of limpid, pressureless sonority.

Walter Susskind does his work artistically if unimaginatively, and the resonant recording has fine balance and agreeable expanse. My copy has a few blemishes, however. H.G.

**THOMSON: Four Saints in Three Acts.**

CAST:	
St. Teresa I	Clamma Dale (s)
St. Settlement	Gwendolyn Bradley (s)
St. Teresa II	Florence Quivar (ms)
Commère	Betty Allen (ms)
St. Chavez	William Brown (t)
St. Stephen	Joseph de Vaughn (t)
St. Ignatius	Arthur Thompson (b)
St. Plan	William Penn (b)
Compère	Benjamin Matthews (bs-b)

Other soloists, Orchestra of Our Time, Joel Thome, cond. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] NONESUCH DB 79035, \$23.96 (digital recording; two discs, automatic sequence). Tape: D2 79035, \$23.96 (two cassettes).

No, this first full-length *Four Saints* isn’t so great, and I do find it hard to believe that it’s possible to rehearse and perform the piece and make this little contact with (if nothing else) those infectious rhythms drawn from Thomson’s Southern Baptist upbringing. Still, this is the only recording we’re apt to have for the foreseeable future, and since it happens that most of the principal singers are well suited to their roles, the operative question seems how we might make the performance work for us.

The best hint is provided by the composer. In a revised and expanded version of the essay written originally for the RCA reissue of his own 1947 abridged recording (last available as LM 2756), he writes of the all-black original cast, so chosen “for beauty of voice, clarity of enunciation, and fine carriage”: “Their surprise gift to the production was their understanding of the work. They got the spirit of it, enjoyed its multiple meanings, even the obscurities, adopted it, spoke in quotations from it.”

Clearly this had a lot to do with the



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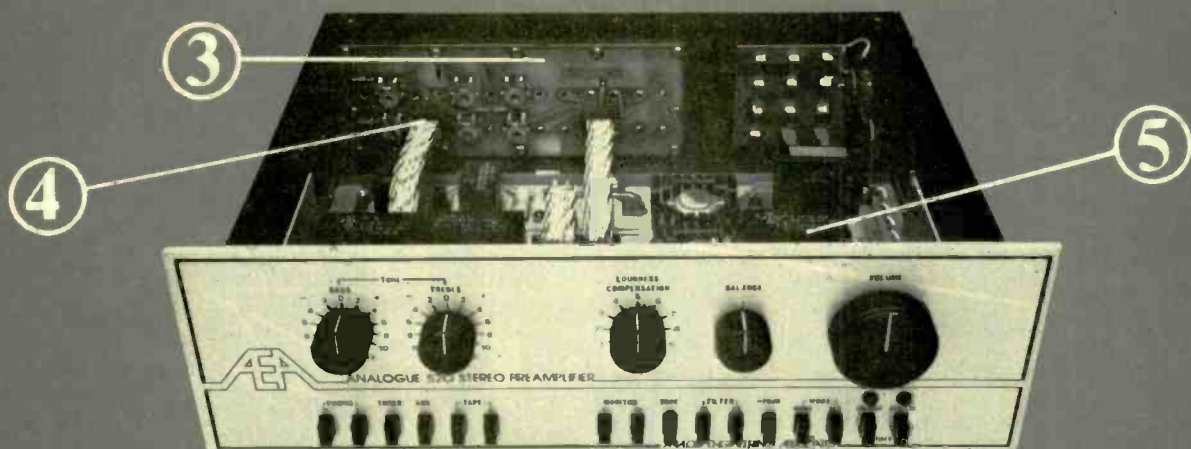
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CIRCLE 5 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

American-music historian Wiley Hitchcock's liner notes to Vol. 1: "The performers have gone back to the original sheet-music editions of Foster's songs, with their unadorned vocal lines and modest keyboard accompaniments. And they have used instruments of Foster's era. . . . By letting Foster speak for himself, his measure as a song composer is seen to be considerably greater than one might have thought."

We are frankly at a loss to understand Mr. Lowens' statement that "Guinn shows a decided tendency to veer away from the printed notes—in 'My Old Kentucky Home,' for instance, he varies both the rhythm and the melody." In point of fact, Mr. Guinn sings the notes precisely as they are printed in the 1853 version with guitar. Perhaps Mr. Lowens owns a later edition of the song?

While the reviewer is entitled to his opinion that "the materials in Vol. 2 are not nearly so well chosen as those in Vol. 1 (which, however, only scratched the surface)," the selection of songs on each disc was based on numerous readings of the complete Foster Hall collection, available at the Americana Collection of the Music Division of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., and in other archives; the programming represents the mutual agreement of the artists, producers, and several outside experts.

Mr. Lowens is wrong in asserting that "in his choral writing, Foster arranges his voices STAB [soprano, tenor, alto, bass], and the main melody is invariably given to

the tenor." To the contrary, Foster's choral writing displays all possible vocal dispositions (SATB, SSTB, SAB, etc.). He also writes that "full texts of the songs as sung are provided, but not all the verses in the originals are sung." Such pruning as there is, in our opinion, serves to strengthen, not weaken, the individual songs in the over-all program. Mr. Lowens' statement applies equally to Vol. 1.

Finally, we feel that Mr. Lowens' closing comment—"There does not seem to be any way to discover whether the piano accompaniments are being played by Gilbert Kalish or James Weaver. Or doesn't it matter?"—shows inattention on his part, since the credits make it clear that Mr. Kalish is the keyboard player of the recording and that he is joined by Mr. Weaver in only one selection, the four-hand "Soiree Polka." We take particular exception to the irresponsible tone of this remark, which—ambiguous as it is—inadvertently denigrates the distinctive work of two highly respected musicians.

Teresa Sterne  
Director  
Nonesuch Records  
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Lowens replies: In saying that Nonesuch had "gone fancy" in "Foster Songs," Vol. 2, it was my intention to question not the possibility that they could be done authentically in thirteen different ways, but the probability that this was what actually happened back in Foster's time.

In checking the recording, I used as text the facsimile complete edition of Foster, and I must respectfully disagree when Ms. Sterne insists that Guinn "sings the notes precisely as they are printed in the 1853 version" of "My Old Kentucky Home." Reference to the originals is the best way to clear up the points she raises, and I recommend this course to those interested enough in the music to pursue the matter further.

My reference to the arrangement of voices for STAB was intended to pertain only to "Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming," and my point was that the Camerata Chorus stresses the soprano line rather than the tenor line that carries the melody.

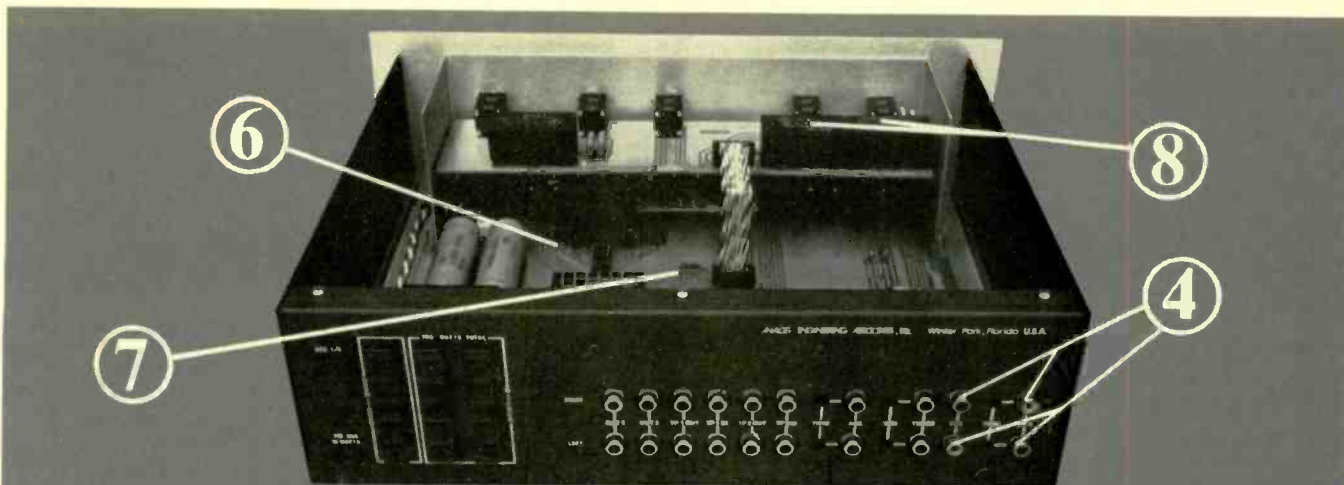
I apologize to Ms. Sterne for my density in discovering whether Kalish or Weaver played the piano: For me, the attribution seemed inexact.

### Misbegotten Rienzi?

Dale S. Harris' review of the Columbia recording of Massenet's *Le Cid* [March] was scathing, yet in the same issue Angel's recording of *Rienzi* was given a feature review by David Hamilton.

The last line of Mr. Harris' review—"a misbegotten venture"—seems much more applicable to the Angel set. What a blessing it would have been if the opera on Angel had been abridged instead of *Le Cid*; it would have saved me a few dollars on an album that contains some of the worst singing yet to be heard on a commercially produced recording.





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Bravo to Columbia for at least giving me my money's worth. This is an exciting recording of a worthy opera, abridged or unabridged.

Clayton A. Gould  
New Orleans, La.

Mr. Gould's assessment of the relative merits of the two albums is, of course, the one ultimately of greatest importance to him. We do want to point out, however, that recordings chosen as subjects of feature reviews are not necessarily the best of any bunch, but are so treated for their historical, cultural, or discographic interest.

### Frederica von Stade

I could not believe my eyes when I read the review by Dale S. Harris [March] of the Philips recital by Frederica von Stade. I have had this magnificent record for some weeks, having bought it on the day it was issued in England.

It would take quite a while to deal with all the comments made by your reviewer, and indeed I should not bother to write at all were it not that there may be somewhere one of your readers who will accept his word. Von Stade's line bothers Mr. Harris. I cannot think why, for it is smooth and seamless, quite the opposite of what he writes. Of archness, there is none, but charm and spontaneity abound. The tone is full and rounded from top to bottom.

Mr. Harris suggests that Von Stade should not be singing "Vedrai, carino," as it

lies too high for her. Nonsense! I am playing this aria right now and am again impressed by legato, phrasing, and interpretation. Not one note is beyond her, which is not the case when soubrette sopranos sing it and experience difficulty with the low notes. In fact, though I have heard the aria on countless occasions, this was the first time that I had not found it dull.

The aria from *Otello* is a truly great piece of singing. Listen to the diminuendos, legato, beauty of tone, the feeling behind the singing, and you will hear how wrong Mr. Harris is. It has, deservedly, received very high praise from British critics.

John T. Hughes  
The Recorded Vocal Art Society  
Kent, England

### Saint-Saëns Requiem

Patrick J. Smith, in his critique of Saint-Saëns's Requiem [April], was discussing the world-premiere recording of a regrettably unknown piece—not the umpteenth recording of the 1812 Overture! Yet no mention was made of the admirable airiness of the "Hostias et Preces," the gentle serenity of the Benedictus, or the pathetic beauty of the Agnus Dei. Saint-Saëns certainly merits more respect than Mr. Smith gave him.

Paul Morrison  
Rochester, Mich.

Around these parts Mr. Smith's crusading on Saint-Saëns's behalf is legendary. For the

record, he expresses delight that somebody likes the music even more than he does.

### Philadelphia Conductors

In the "Behind the Scenes" column [April] it is stated that James Levine is "only the fourth conductor other than Eugene Ormandy to record with the Philadelphia Orchestra since the war" and that "a smattering" of recordings were made by Leopold Stokowski, Charles Munch, and William Smith.

Apparently it has been forgotten that, during the late '40s and early '50s, other smatterings were recorded by the orchestra, conducted by Bruno Walter, Sir Thomas Beecham, Alexander Hilsberg, Virgil Thomson, and Harl McDonald, the last two leading their own works.

John Canarina  
Des Moines, Iowa

No excuse, just an explanation: The information was taken from a Philadelphia Orchestra press release. Thanks to all the readers who called our attention to this mistake.

### Hungaroton

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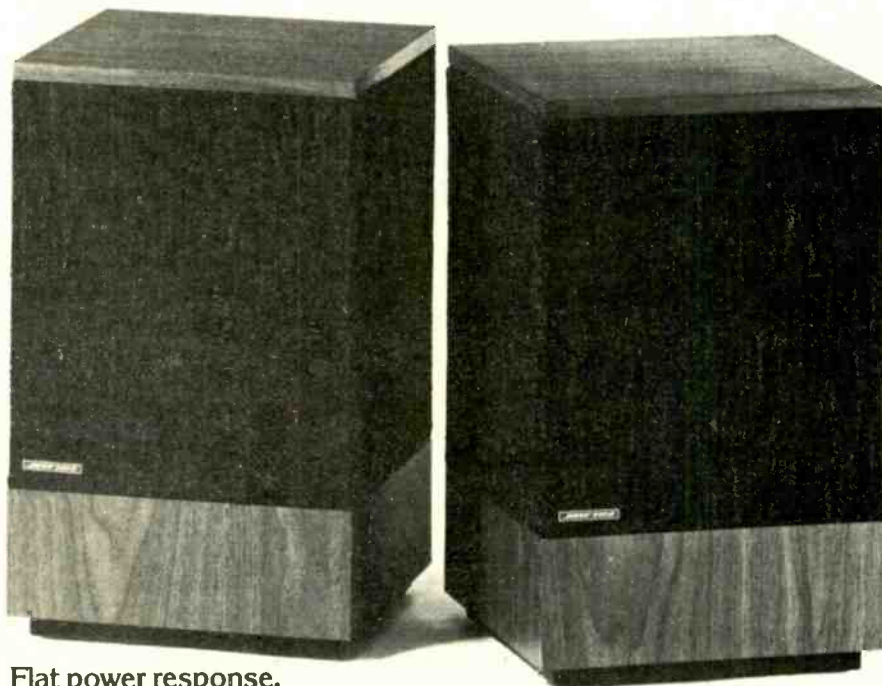
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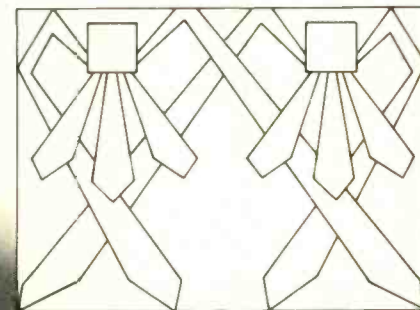
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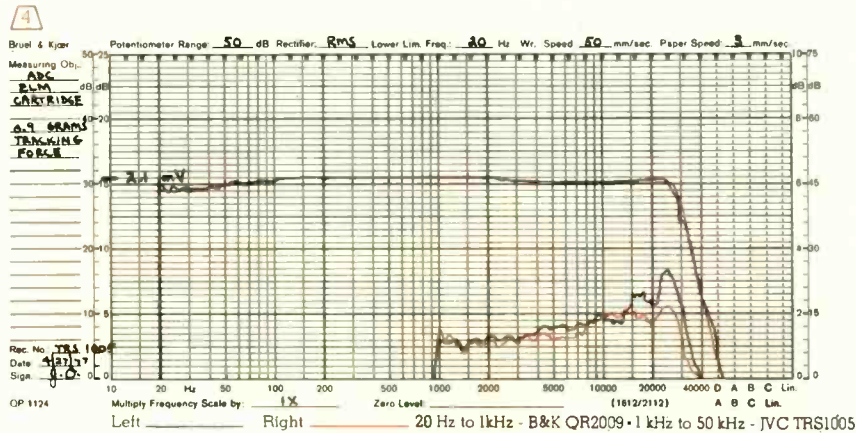
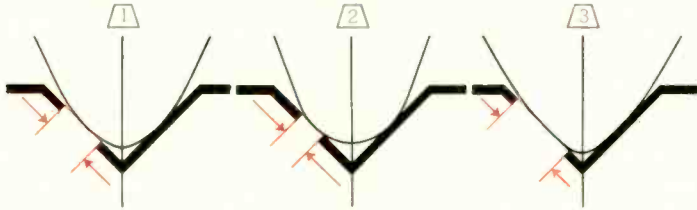
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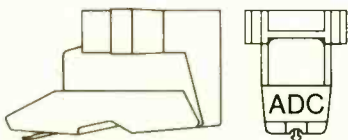
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Richard Chon  
Williamsville, N.Y.

Qualiton products are carried by many dealers but can also be purchased directly from Qualiton Records, 65-37 Austin St., Rego Park, N.Y. 11374.

### Out-of-Print Prokofiev

Those readers acquainted with Prokofiev's Sixth Symphony realize that it is not only the composer's towering masterpiece, but also one of the most compelling works to emerge from the twentieth century. Unfortunately, no adequate recording of the Sixth is in print. Rozhdestvensky (Melodiya/Angel) and Martinon (Vox) are sympathetic interpreters, but their recordings suffer from substandard orchestras and mediocre engineering. Ormandy (Odyssey) succeeds neither in sustaining the excitement nor in elucidating Prokofiev's powerful orchestration.

Erich Leinsdorf's superior recording of the Sixth with the Boston Symphony, released on RCA LSC 2834, is out of print. I therefore ask all interested readers to write to RCA and urge that Leinsdorf's brilliant and incisive performance be reissued. Letters should be addressed to: Mr. Ernest Gilbert, Director of Red Seal Marketing, RCA, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036.

Roland Flessner  
Waverly, Iowa

### Kudos

I am writing to say how much I enjoy your magazine each month and particularly to commend you for instituting the policy of publishing rebuttals to test reports from equipment producers. It not only adds a degree of credibility, but is helpful in the dialogue at a level where "good" and "bad" must be replaced by "like" or "dislike." There is little doubt that, in sound reproduction, measurements and response data do not always tell all.

Bob Oxley  
Toronto, Ont.

### Record Preservation

If Sound Guard record preservation material is as good as reported in many magazines, why don't record manufacturers apply the material to all new pressings, saving us the bother of having to do it after we purchase the copy? Certainly there would be little added expense, and the antistat would help to prevent all that embedded dust that I have observed in many new pressings lately.

Stewart Gooderman  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Besides the fact that the price of records would go up if the manufacturers were to invest the extra cost of putting preservation material on their discs, application of the material has to be renewed about every twenty-five plays.

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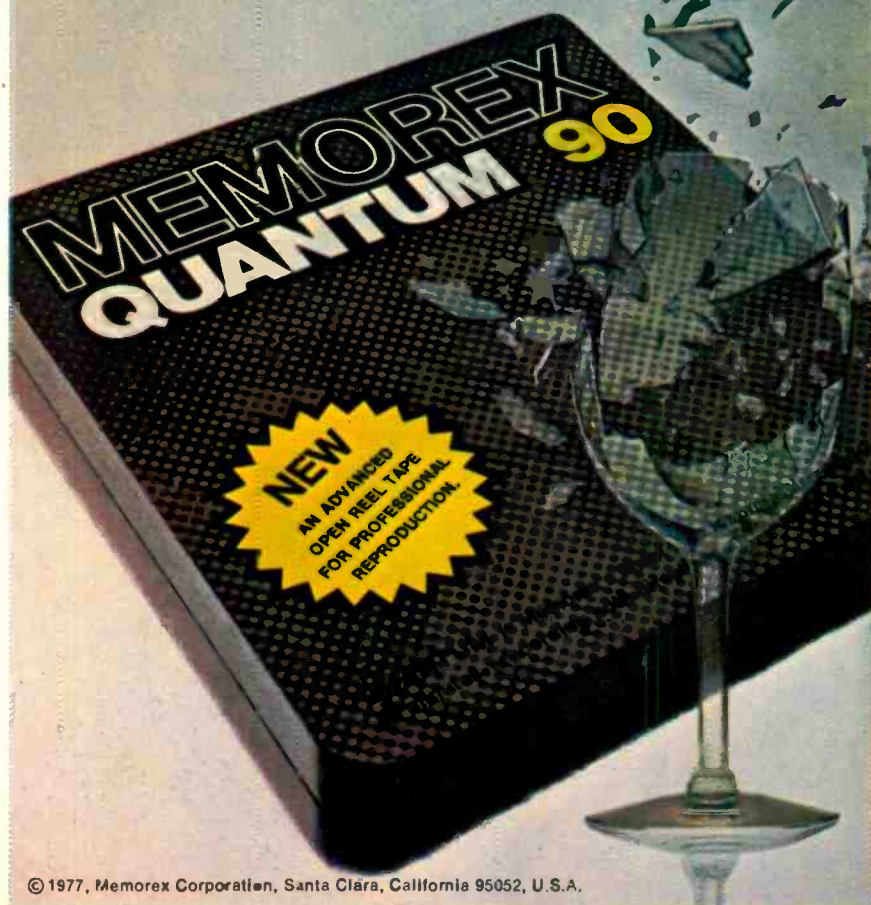
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Balinese, chanting like monkeys, doing the Ketjak.

## BALI HOO

by John Culshaw

BALI—It is indeed a terrible thing to love from a distance, especially on the evidence of hearsay, and then to find that the object of one's adoration matches expectancy by not so much as a jot. The liquid sound of gamelan music has haunted me ever since I first heard it on a record many years ago. It haunted Benjamin Britten so much after his visit to Bali in the Fifties that he simulated it not only in his ballet *The Prince of the Pagodas*, but during the "peace" aria toward the end of *Owen Wingrave*. Another friend of mine, zoologist David Attenborough, was enraptured by Bali for years, and for all I know he still is; in any event, he made three marvelous films about the culture of the island, including one devoted entirely to its music. So I could hardly wait to get there. And having got there, I could hardly wait to go somewhere else.

My quest was twofold: I wanted to hear some authentic gamelan music (the fact that there are many kinds varying from village to village was an added enticement), and I wanted to see some authentic Balinese dance. I confess that I am no sort of expert on any kind of dance, but I think I can tell the phony when I see it, and the phony is what I saw, endlessly.

The Ketjak dance is the one in which a story marginally less clear than that of *La Gioconda* takes place in a context of hundreds of men who are supposed to be monkeys and who chatter accordingly. In Attenborough's film about the music the effect was extraordinary: Cross-

rythms of such complexity that they probably couldn't be written down were held together not by a conductor, but by some intuitive communication among the performers. Thus with great enthusiasm did I set out to see my first Ketjak dance: what I didn't realize was that there were several in the vicinity, and which one you saw depended on which taxi driver you got. The audience at the first one I attended seemed to consist of half the population of Japan armed with flash cameras, plus a German sexologist in thick glasses (I was sure it was Peter Sellers) who explained throughout that he was writing a thesis on the more bizarre activities of the shady ladies of Denpasar. No wonder, then, that the performers giggled throughout; and no wonder that the cross-rhythms crossed only occasionally, and then by accident.

One of the fascinations of the Ketjak is that it has no instrumental accompaniment, so I had to search elsewhere for some gamelan music. (There were four utterly dejected gamelan players in the hotel lobby, but what they provided was certainly not worth hearing: It was gamelan Muzak.) My next stop was at one of the many Barong dances, of which gamelan music is an integral part. I should explain that the Barong is a mystical monster who protects mankind and symbolizes the good spirits, and his opposite is the witch Rangda, who haunts graveyards at night and is in control of the evil spirits. This seemed to be much nearer the mark: a

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circumstances of the 1934 production, in which essentially the same group of performers—a number of whom can be heard in the 1947 recording—worked together over an extended run, making it possible for them to absorb the piece, so that they not only found their own connection to Thomson's modes of musical speech but intuitively reached through to the underlying sense of Gertrude Stein's seemingly nonsensical words.

If the new cast hasn't achieved this with any consistency, the recording does allow us as listeners (if possible with the aid of the vocal score, to help see the shapes) to do some of this work on our own—to relax and let our response mechanisms cope, for example, with Thomson's decision to split the chiefest saint, St. Teresa, into a soprano and a mezzo part. Put on Side 2, which lands you in their first duet, consisting mostly of chromatically ascending arpeggios (standard vocalise, in other words, only set to Stein text), and you're likely to stop worrying about whether they're one character or two.

St. Teresa I, the soprano, arpeggiates upward ("Very many go out as they do"), and St. Teresa II, the mezzo, arpeggiates downward in response ("And make him prominent"), and it all makes perfect sense, just as it does a bit later in Act I when St. Teresa I launches an ecstatic hymn with the proposition: "There can be no peace on earth with calm with calm." Looking at these eleven words on paper, I haven't a clue what they mean, but as movingly sung in both recordings, they couldn't be clearer.

It's almost impossible to describe the opera for someone with no experience of it. That it has more than three acts and many more than four saints somehow doesn't seem terribly important. That it's set in Spain does. Thomson tells us that Stein "had lived in Spain and loved its landscape, its intensity," and *Four Saints* radiates sunlight and faith, though not necessarily religious faith. Perhaps for the creators St. Ignatius' Act III "Vision of Holy Ghost," the immortal "Pigeons on the grass alas," was a religious expression, but to me the faith expressed is more down-to-earth. *Four Saints* has the power to make such debased values as decency, affection, and wonder seem not at all clichéd, to seem in fact like the most important things in the world.

Thomson's musical setting is often described as "simple," which description suits it about as well as it suits Mozart's music. His sensitivity to speech rhythms has been widely commented on, and it's especially important when he is setting a text whose coherence is almost entirely nonlinear. His pleasure in Stein's words shows up most delightfully in the way stage directions are incorporated into the text, as when, in Act I, the Commère in her role as co-narrator announces, "Scene 7," and the

chorus tears into a series of descending D major scales: "One two three four five six seven all good children go to heaven. . . ." But stage directions also form the basis for the "Love Scene" of the Commère and Compère in Act II: "Scene 8" "To wait." "Scene 1" "And begun." Etc.

Without slighting the ingenuity and sensuousness of Thomson's orchestral interludes (I might note the little guitar song in Act I introduced by the St. Teresas' "Leave later gaily the troubadour plays his guitar"), I'm inclined to single out the score's sensitivity to and delight in the singing voice, whether in the form of chorus, smaller ensemble, or solo. The music's shapes should allow singers, and certainly singers as talented as Nonesuch's, to really explore their vocal properties. One good example is the St. Teresas' arpeggio-duet, which Clamma Dale and Florence Quivar sail through. Too much of the rest of the performance sounds like a quick first impression frozen in time.

Actually, Quivar is very good throughout; too bad we can't hear what she might do with this music with the kind of experience the original cast had. Dale and the lighter-weight Gwendolyn Bradley as St. Settlement both sing very prettily in a sight-reading sort of way. Arthur Thompson, for whom the Met has never found better use than the likes of the Mandarin in *Turandot* and the Jailer in *Tosca*, makes an excellent start here on what might evolve into a grand St. Ignatius, and Benjamin Matthews does a good deal of lovely singing as the Compère. The tenors sound less promising, and Betty Allen as the Commère is plain badly cast, parched-sounding and personally unsympathetic.

Nonesuch's double-fold album includes complete texts. The sound is less immediate than I'd like for so intimate a piece, and the surfaces of my copy are on the noisy side. If this adds up to an even less impressive premiere recording than New World's *Santa Fe Mother of Us All* (NW 288/9, reviewed by Conrad L. Osborne in July 1977), at least we now have both works in their entirety. With a certain amount of work, it's certainly possible to get something out of *Four Saints*, and goodness knows how desperately we need what the opera has to offer. K.F.

## Recitals and Miscellany

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basic, timeless conflict between good and evil that would suffice for me at that simple level even if I missed many of the implications of subtle hand or head movements. Well, I needn't have worried about that, since the Barong's tail fell off shortly after his entrance, which brought the gamelan players to a halt and left the audience in gales of laughter. And there was worse to come.

It was during the fifth of seven acts that the Rangda appeared, carried on the shoulders of her followers. By that time the performance was back on course and the gamelans were making some exquisite sounds. Then Rangda's headdress got caught in an artificial tree. The more she protested and struggled, the more urgently her bearers—unaware of what was happening—pressed forward. This time it was the gamelan players who collapsed in laughter, and once again the performance came to a halt.

We all know that such simple accidents can take place on the most austere stages, but the point at issue here is one of simple commercial exploitation. Neither at the Ketjak nor at the Barong dances were the performers taking themselves or their skills at all seriously. I do not want to sound sententious, but it is a miserable experience to see an art form that has developed for centuries debased and exploited for the benefit of tourists.

Though I didn't go back to find out, I have some reason to think that the accidents were deliberate, because another visitor had an identical experience on another occasion. The nearest parallel I can think of is Spanish flamenco, which in its genuine form bears not the slightest resemblance to the heel-tapping posturing nonsense that is performed nightly for tourists up and down the southern coast of Spain.

To redress the balance a bit, Bali is a beautiful island, and the Balinese I met were unfailingly kind and helpful. The temples and genuine pictures (as distinct from those trumped up for tourists) are superb. Yet what I went for, which was music, is indeed hard to find. Maybe I didn't stray far enough into the hinterland, though Australian friends who have done so say that it doesn't make much difference nowadays: There is always one act ready to be laid on for the paying tourist, and another which is the genuine thing and which is celebrated in village privacy. If that is true, it is all for the good; however, once the erosion sets in it is all but impossible to stop. So my advice is to save your fare and buy some records of gamelan music. You won't get the exquisite scents of a Balinese morning, but you won't be exploited either.



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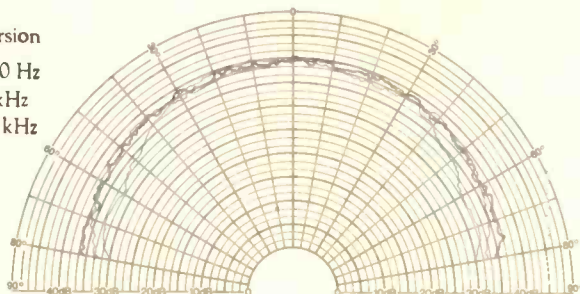
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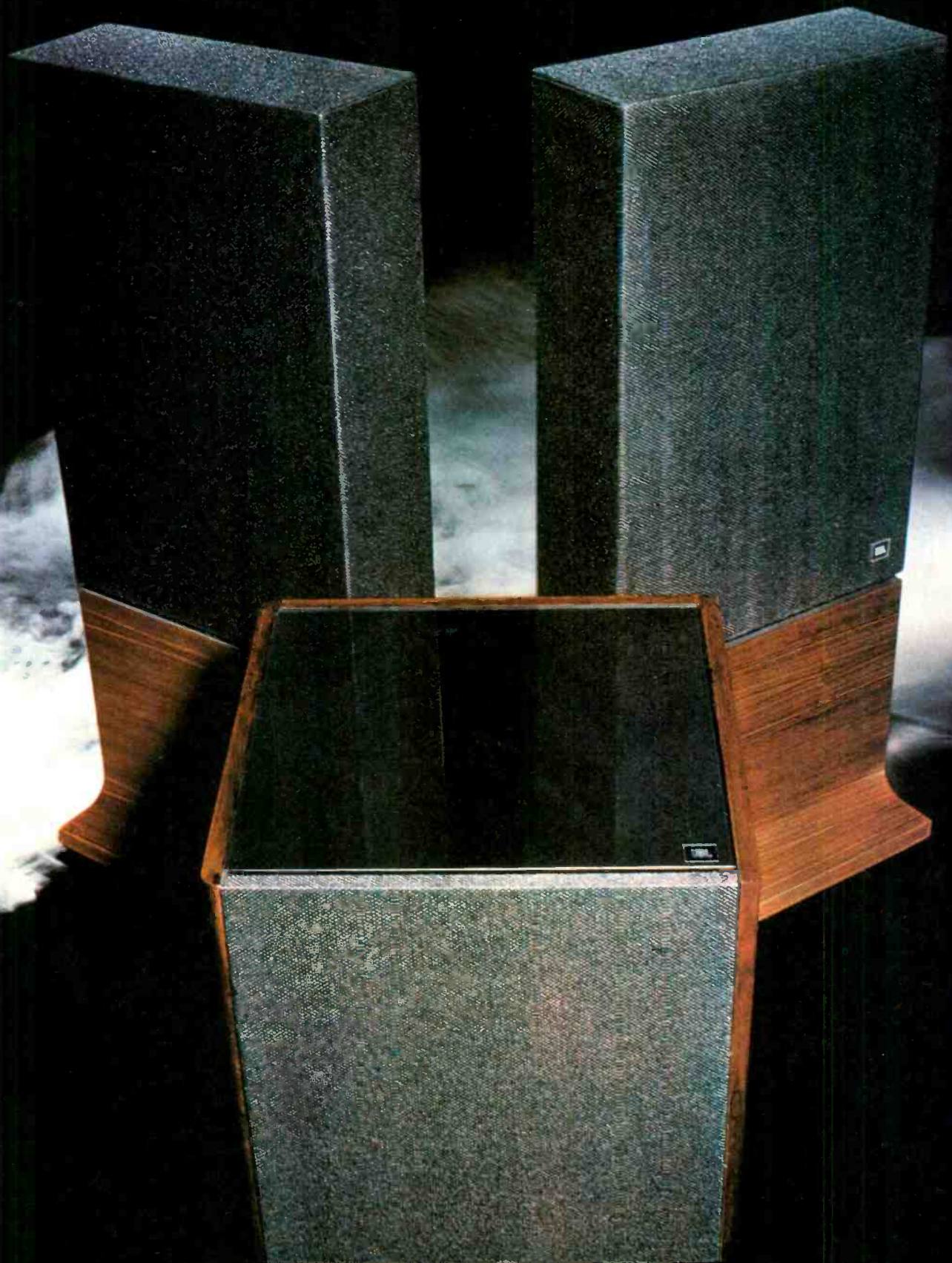
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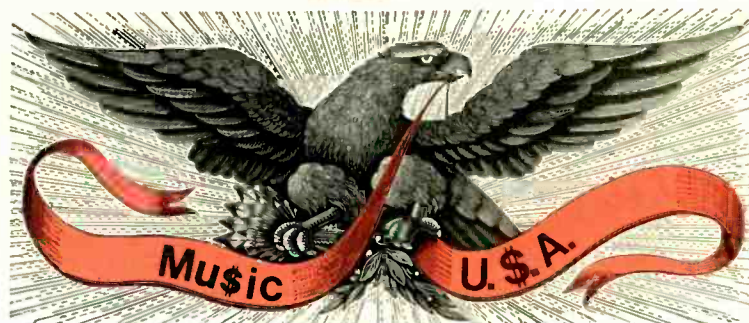
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The  
Lees  
Side



## 6. The Jewish Contribution

by Gene Lees

THE CONTRIBUTION of the Jews to American music is so out of proportion to their representation in the population as to be an anomaly. Indeed, it was not until they entered the New York theatrical scene that musical theater found an American voice and accent. To heighten the paradox, one of the most identifiably American of Jewish composers, Irving Berlin, was born in Temun, Siberia. His parents brought him to the U.S. when he was five.

In film scoring, the intelligence, inventiveness, and passion of their musicianship has made Jews so dominant that it is almost easier to list the prominent composers in the field who are not Jewish. But the following—many of them among the developers of the art of picture scoring—are (or were) Jewish: David Raksin, Walter Scharf, Bernard Segall, David Shire, Jerry Goldsmith, Jerry Fielding, Harry Sukman, Percy Faith, Victor Young, Fred Karlin, Johnny Mandel, Robert Prince, Alfred Newman, Lionel Newman, Fred Steiner, Laurence Rosenthal, Earl Robinson, Earle Hagen, David Rose, Erich Korngold, Arthur Morton, Leonard Rosenman, Elmer Bernstein, Alex North, Jeff Alexander, Billy Goldenberg, Franz Waxman, Lalo Schifrin, and Johnny Green. Dave Grusin is half-Jewish, as was Max Steiner, an Austrian whose family had converted to Catholicism.

It is obviously impossible to compile a complete list of American film composers, but my estimate is that more than half are Jewish. In musical theater, the proportion is even more startling. With the exceptions of Vincent Youmans and Cole Porter, all the major (and most of the minor) post-opera composers have been Jewish,

along with almost all of the lyricists, with the notable exception of Johnny Mercer, whose origins were Scottish. The list includes Berlin, Jerome Kern, George and Ira Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Richard Rodgers, Burton Lane, Lorenz Hart, Oscar Hammerstein II, Burt Bacharach, Leonard Bernstein, E. Y. "Yip" Harburg, Kurt Weill, Jerry Bock, and Sheldon Harnick.

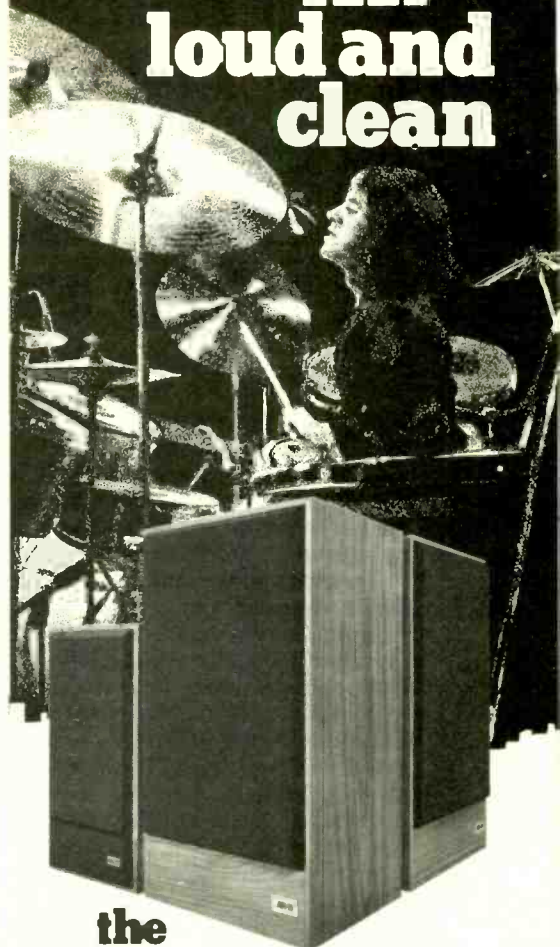
Even outside the theater, in the pop world that was known as Tin Pan Alley, the number of Jewish composers and lyricists has been inordinate: Mack Gordon, Mack David, Con Conrad, Joe Myro, Abel Baer, Adolph Deutsch, Frederick Holland, Werner Heyman, Arthur Freed, Sammy Fain, Saul Chaplin, Sol Kaplan, Richard Mohaupt, Jack Yellen, Jay Gorney, Leo Robin, Ralph Rainger, Bert Kalmar, Harry Ruby, Sammy Cahn, and Jule Styne. (Some of the aforementioned also worked in films and theater.)

Why this astonishing flowering of Jewish musicality? David Raksin has said, "I think the Jewish musical sense is very lyrical, and this has been effective in the theater and films." The explanation submitted by Harburg, one of the most literate lyricists ever to grace the theater, was that "Jewish music is inherently dramatic, and this has worked well on the stage." Neither answer is satisfactory, and in fact, with the exception of *Fiddler on the Roof* (and some scholars would quibble that its musical style is really rather Russian), theatrical and cinematic music in this country has been conspicuously un-Jewish, conspicuously American.

In the early part of this century, the musical theater, dominated by the Irish-born Victor Herbert, the Czech

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Rudolf Friml, and the Hungarian Sigmund Romberg, was derivative of European and particularly of Viennese operetta. The Jews were not yet active in the genre, although as composer Hugo Friedhofer points out, they were already responsible for some of the songs seemingly so Southern in coloration. ("Waiting for the Robert E. Lee" was written by Wolfe Gilbert.) The change came with Berlin and with Kern, who was the bridge between the older, quasi-European style and that which would become distinctly American. Kern's melodies are difficult to characterize. His music has a kind of non-national color, comparable perhaps to what actors call a mid-Atlantic accent.

Hammerstein once wrote, "Jerome Kern and I were at one time contemplating writing a musical version of Donn Byrne's *Messer Marco Polo*... I confronted Jerry with what I considered to be a serious question about the score. I said, 'Here is a story laid in China about an Italian and told by an Irishman. What kind of music are you going to write?' Jerry answered, 'It'll be good Jewish music.'

That, as Hammerstein noted, is a quick and funny reply. Unfortunately, it is no more a satisfactory explanation for the success of Jews in American music than the responses of Raksin and Harburg.

What makes the question the more tantalizing is that the Jews were not a particularly important factor in the evolution of European composition, at least until the twentieth century. This was called to my attention by the late Joseph Schildkraut, the distinguished actor who came out of the New York Yiddish theater to become an important film star. During the last years of his life, when he had returned to the stage to tour in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, I came to know him. He pointed out to me that the Jewish musical gift in Europe had been primarily re-creative, which is to say the art of the performer, the interpreter.

"Name the important Jewish composers," Schildkraut said. I faltered after Mendelssohn, Bloch, and Mahler. At a later date, I would have added Schoenberg, Meyerbeer, Solomon Ebreo, Mercadante, Honegger, and Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Even had I had those names at my disposal at the time, Schildkraut no doubt would have noted that only Schoenberg actually affected the direction of classical music in Europe. But the Jews are critical to the development of American music, including classical music.

The reason, to me, is still elusive. The most nearly satisfactory hypothesis came not from a composer, but



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The vocal attractions of this program account in part for its frustrations. Here we have a voice that actually functions under control over two full octaves (the high and low B flats are legitimately encompassed, not reached for)—a voice of pleasing if not seductive timbre, reasonably adept at difficult passagework, governed by a strong performer's will. So why aren't the results more compelling?

The Rossini/Mozart side is repertory that should ideally suit the voice's lean timbre and weight, and yet these performances, sleek and energetic as they are, rarely catch fire. The paradox is that as the program moves into progressively later and weightier material, vocally less suitable for Baltsa (I don't see how you can make even "*Omio Fernando*" happen without enough vocal force down in the vicinity of the break to be able to really roll those phrases that curl round it), she begins to demonstrate that she *is* capable of drawing on her personal resources.

Already in the Mercadante cavatina (a standard-form recitative, aria, and cabaletta), although we don't hear much projection of Bianca's immediate stakes, Baltsa does find a rhythmic impulsion that drives her through an andante that might otherwise seem a fairly humdrum nostalgic specimen, and she then contrasts this movement with the more obvious physical momentum of the cabaletta. My suspicion is that by instinct she is making an increasingly more direct expressive connection to the vocal writing as it evolves into styles that at least for a present-day performer seem emotionally more "natural."

In Lady Macbeth's "*La luce langue*," still a throwback form, a human being begins to emerge (might Baltsa have really cut loose in the formally fluid Sleepwalking Scene?), but it's not until we reach the verismo world of "*Voi lo sapete*" that we encounter a woman of real dimension. If Santuzza hardly seems a terribly healthy role for this voice, this performance of the aria conveys an aching need almost impossible to imagine from those neatly contained Rossini accounts on the flip side.

What depresses me is that a performer of such demonstrable talent, technical accomplishment, and enthusiasm seems never to have come in contact with anyone who would help her explore how the more stylized forms of Mozart, Rossini, and Donizetti express human needs as strong and urgent as those of Mascagni. Wouldn't

you love to hear a Rosina, a Cenerentola, maybe even a Sesto as "real" as this Santuzza?

The accompaniments and engineering are adequate, but the absence of printed texts will be a problem for even seasoned collectors in so rare a selection as the seven-minute Mercadante *scena*. K.F.

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Sides 3, 4: MOZART: *Serenade No. 10*, in B flat, K. 361. (Wind Ensemble)

Side 5: MENDELSSOHN: *Octet for Strings*, in E flat, Op. 20. (Brandis, Westphal Quartets)

Side 6: BRUCH: *Septet for Winds and Strings*, in E flat. (Philharmonic Octet members)

Side 7: BOCCHERINI: *Quintet for Strings*, in E, Op. 13, No. 5: *Minuet*. (Westphal Quartet) HAYDN: *Divertimento in C*, H. II:11 (*Der Geburtstag*). (Philharmonic Soloists) MENDELSSOHN: *Quartet for Strings*, No. 1, in E flat, Op. 12: *Canzonetta*. (Herzfeld Quartet)

Side 8: HAYDN: *Quartet for Strings*, in D, Op. 20, No. 4. (Brandis Quartet)

Side 9: FUNCK (arr. Kapler): *Suite in D*. HAYDN: *Baryton Trio in D*, H. XI:81: *Finale*. *Baryton Trio in D*, H. XI:113: *Adagio*. J. KLENGEL: *Hymnus*, Op. 57. A. SCARLATTI (arr. Bergel): *Concerto No. 2: Grave*; *Minuetto*. (Twelve Cellos)

Side 10: KHACHATURIAN (arr. Vogler): *Gayane*: *Sabre Dance*. (Piano, Percussion, and Double-Bass Ensemble) ROSSINI: *Rendez-vous de chasse*. (Eight Horns) *Duetto for Cello and Double Bass*, in D. (Philharmonic Duo) J. STRAUSS II (arr. E. Hartmann): *An der schönen, blauen Donau*, Op. 314. (Nine Double Basses)

This curious cornucopia, a kind of *Anhang* to DG's magnificent centenary tribute to the Berlin Philharmonic, differs in almost every respect from the main, six-volume limited-edition documentary anthology

(HF, December 1982). It doesn't represent the full orchestra or any of its famous conductors, just directorless sections and chamber ensembles. It doesn't delve into past recordings, but is entirely new; indeed, it features ultramodern digital technology. It contains too few complete works and too many snippets—and its interest is in any case narrowly specialized (executant and technical) rather than general (musical). I can recommend it to fans of the individual players involved, to their opposite numbers in other orchestras worldwide, to aspiring and apprentice instrumentalists, to connoisseur audiophiles—and to no one else at all.

Well, maybe I should qualify that condemnation a bit: There's real if minor musical fascination in the recently discovered septet for winds and strings by the eleven-year-old Max Bruch—a prodigy of near Mendelssohnian if scarcely Mozartean gifts. Haydn's quirky *Birthday* Divertimento for winds, strings, and harpsichord has been recorded before, but surely never as skillfully. The elephantine derangements of *Blue Danube* (double basses) and "Sabre Dance" (percussion, piano, and double basses) would rank among the most amusing of musical caricatures—would, that is, if played with the slightest glint of humor. Throughout, the ultrabravura virtuosity, breathtaking in itself, achieves spellbinding impressiveness in sonic realism that is sometimes even larger and more potent than life. If any orchestral horn, brass, or double-bass section has ever been captured more thrillingly, I haven't heard it. Then, too, if you've ever had difficulty differentiating xylophone, marimba, vibraphone, and percussive piano timbres, just listen to the digital distinctions in the "Sabre Dance." Remarkably, this state-of-the-art audio excellence is consistently maintained despite the number of producers (five) and recording engineers (six) involved.

Lamentably, though, such aural thrills are dearly paid for. Quite apart from a complete lack of any sense of historical stylistic authenticity, the readings betray revolting insensitivities. Many of the interpretations—like that of the gracious Mozart serenade—are so brutally ferocious, heavy-handed, and stonyhearted, that I can't help recalling the phrase of Lucan applied in this century to alleged World War I atrocities—*furor teutonicus*. And where the more characteristic Germanic Romanticism allows sentiment to stray well over the boundary of schmaltz, I'm reminded of an apt Italian term for "affected expression"—*smorfioso*.

Just as war has been deemed too important to be left to the generals, many of us have long thought musical interpretation too important to be left entirely to star conductors. But now it seems that it's no less risky to leave it to orchestra members on their own. R.D.D.

(Continued on page 91)



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from an engineer friend of mine, who just happens to like music. He said, "In Europe the Jews did not dare to be original. They became what we used to think of the Japanese as being: marvelous imitators. We were under severe restrictions in Europe, but in America there was a frontier before the immigrants and a wealth of new subject matter. . . . We were forced to be chameleons in Europe; in America, the composers didn't write Jewish music, they wrote music out of what they found here. That's why it sounds so American."

Kurt Weill's career would seem to support this theory. In Germany his music had a starkly German character, sometimes to the point of deliberate satire, but in the U.S. he wrote very American music, as in "Speak Low," "Here I'll Stay," and "Lost in the Stars." He was, of course, a professional, working in the theater and writing according to the subjects and settings of the stories.

Mendelssohn's music is not Jewish in the way one could say that Verdi's, Puccini's, Rossini's, Vivaldi's, and Corelli's is Italian. Nor is that of Mahler or Schoenberg. In a sense, there is no such thing as Jewish music, except liturgical music. And little if any of the liturgical tradition crept into secular composition. The Jews brought to this country a highly developed aesthetic sense and a respect for learning (probably no immigrant group has had so intense a belief in education) combined with a lack of musical preconception. The Italians, the Irish, the Germans all brought strong musical preferences, predilections, and stylistic sensibilities from their homelands. The Jews, denied for so long the right to express—at least publicly—a culture of their own, did not. When they embraced the art of music here, their ears were able to attune rapidly and accurately to the sounds, the rhythms, the very feeling of America.

The Jews have remained remarkably silent about the scope of their musical achievements. It is as if they did not want to be noticed as a group for distinguished contribution. The long and anguished experience since the Diaspora has taught them the wisdom of a low profile. But their impact is simply too huge to be ignored.

Two minority groups, Jews and blacks, account for less than 20% of the U.S. population, but they account for about 80% of all that is best in the country's music. Out of the meeting of their respective kinds of music grew what many persons still think of as the golden age of American popular music: the era of the big bands. I will treat this topic in the next issue. ●

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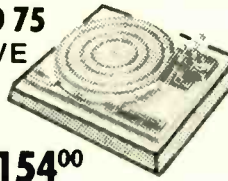
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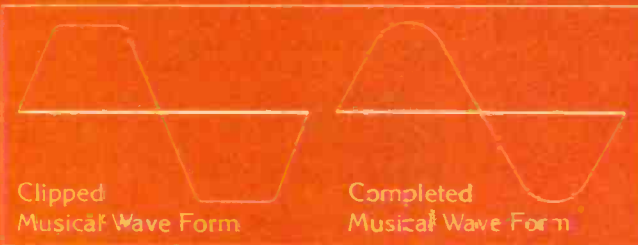


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Stereo Review  
January, 1977



Stereo Review went on to explain that this exclusive circuitry "uses...a low power and a high power output stage operating together. . . At low signal levels the lower power stage drives the speakers. The transition to the more powerful output transistors . . . takes place smoothly at the point where it becomes advantageous to do so."



The point they're talking about, of course, is where certain portions of the music you listen to demand more than the rated output to sound like they should. (Rated output on the Hitachi SR/903 is 75 watts continuous power per channel, both channels driven into an 8 ohm load, 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.1%

total harmonic distortion.) So when your music really gets thrilling, Class G cuts into a standby amplifier. Then, for just a moment, the SR/903 can pump out a lusty 160 watts per channel—without clipping.

One look at comparison wave forms will show you what we mean. See how the sound from the conventional amplifier has the top of its natural arc clipped off. That's

when you're get clipping distortion. But the same musical peak graphed on the Hitachi SR/903 is complete. So the sound you'd hear would be clean and crisp.

As a wrap-up, Stereo Review said Class G delivers "much higher overall efficiency than a conventional device, and this brings immediate dividends...in reduced weight, size and power consumption."

All they neglected to mention was that Class G doesn't cost you any more.

## Hitachi SR/903 Typical Specifications

| Amplifier                                       | Rating                |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Power, minimum RMS, at 8 ohms, 20 to 20,000 Hz  | 75 watts              |
| Total harmonic distortion at rated power output | 0.1%                  |
| FM Tuner                                        | Rating                |
| Usable sensitivity (IHF) 300 OHMS               | 1.6 $\mu$ V (9.3 dBf) |
| 50 dB quieting sensitivity                      | 3.1 $\mu$ V (15 dBf)  |
| Signal/noise ratio 100% mod.                    | 74 dB                 |



**HITACHI**  
When a company cares,  
it shows.



# Sansui unveils its

More power. More features. Finer specs.  
And all the excellence of Sansui.

A receiver is the heart of any high fidelity system. And that's where Sansui built its reputation.

Sansui receivers are all distinguished by a perfect integration of the tuner, amplifier, and preamplifier sections to give beautifully balanced musical reproduction; by clarity, the absence of noise and truest fidelity over an extremely wide range.

MODEL 9090 DB and MODEL 8080 DB.  
Dolby® Noise Reduction circuitry.  
FM 25  $\mu$  sec. de-emphasis.  
Two power outputs / Dolby® calibration meters.  
Two tuning meters. -20 dB muting switch.  
2 pre-amplifier outputs.  
Mic-mixing with mic level control.  
Triple tone controls.

Turnover switches with tone defeat and  
two stereo head/phone jacks  
are exclusive to the 9090 DB.

8080 DB



9090 DB





# The new Sansui

The new 9090 DB is not only Sansui's new top receiver. We believe it is the finest on the market. Read its description and we believe you will believe as we do.

Imagine yourself at the controls of the Dolbyized\* 9090 DB just as you see them, lifesize, on these pages. As you touch them in real life you will be thrilled at the beautiful way the 9090 DB responds to your every wish. You will love how the controls give you a sense of power, and how this magnificent receiver permits that instant surge, that instantaneous response you want to hear through your speakers.

The built-in Dolby\* Noise Reduction System does more than correctly equalize and decode Dolby FM. With it you can make and play your own Dolby-processed tapes from any source, even if your recorder lacks its own Dolby circuitry. The 9090 DB's triple-tone controls give you a choice of 2 different frequencies where the treble and bass action begins, as well as a studio-type equalizer for the vital "presence" midrange. And our easy-to-read twin power meters show you at a glance just how much power your speakers are getting.

Look at what the Model 9090 DB stereo receiver offers. Even better listen to it for yourself at your nearest franchised Sansui dealer.

## AUDIO SECTION

### Power Output:

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

### THD Distortion:

less than 0.1% at rated min. RMS power output (20Hz to 20kHz = 4:1, SMPTE method)

### Frequency Response (1 watt):

10Hz to 30kHz  $\pm 1$  dB from Aux to speaker terminals

### RIAA Phono Equalization:

$\pm 0.3$  dB, 20Hz to 15kHz

### Phono 1, 2 Sensitivity/Impedance:

2.5mV/50k ohms

### Phono 1, 2 Maximum Input Capability:

150mV at 1kHz, less than 0.2% total harmonic distortion

### Hum and Noise:

better than 80 dB (Aux, Tape Monitor)  
better than 70 dB (Phono)

## FM SECTION

### IHF Sensitivity:

9.8 dBf (1.7 $\mu$ V)

### 50 dB IHF Quieting Sensitivity:

Mono: 14 dBf (3 $\mu$ V)

Stereo: 36.3 dBf (36 $\mu$ V)

### Signal-to-noise ratio:

better than 70 dB

### Total Harmonic Distortion:

Mono: less than 0.2%

Stereo: less than 0.3%

### Alternate Channel Selectivity:

Better than 85 dB

### Spurious Response Ratio (IHF)

better than 85 dB

### Stereo Separation:

better than 40 dB

### Frequency Response:

30Hz to 15kHz, +0.5, -2.0 dB

## A whole new world of beautiful music.



### SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

Woodside, New York 11377 • Gardena, California 90247

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



# nsui 9090 DB.





## Maxell's Traveling Tape Show

For some time we had heard about the cassette taping clinics Maxell Corporation (and one or two other leading tape manufacturers) was conducting at dealerships around the country, but we had not caught up with them until this spring, when Seiden Sound's downtown Albany (New York) store was host to one. We went—in mufti, so to speak, in order to get an uncolored view of what the recordist off the street might expect—and came away with the impression that the program could be useful to the vast majority of cassette-recording hobbyists.

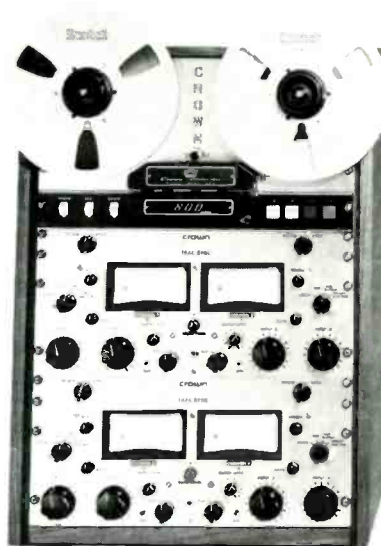
Maxell's clinics are built around a traveling road show consisting of some portable test equipment and, in this instance, at least, two genial and alert pitchmen who staged the demonstrations and answered questions. (Maxell also operates a similar program using more extensive equipment, but only for special audiophile groups and occasions.) The display involves a function generator that produces a sweep signal of constant amplitude from 20 Hz to 20 kHz, which is recorded on a variety of cassettes—including, as we watched, Maxell's UDXL-1, using a Teac A-650 deck that we understand was taken at random from the dealer's stock. The input to the deck and the tape's output are visible at the same time on a dual-trace oscilloscope with storage capacity, and comparisons can be made between rival tapes for flatness of frequency response and dropout count.

It will come as no surprise that the Maxell sample proved out extremely well in the competition. But, to the credit of all involved, the session was far from a mere platform from which to sell the home team's product. Maxell's operatives candidly pointed out that the demonstrations were limited to just two among the many yardsticks of a cassette's performance, and they underlined the importance of deck/tape matching and the effect it could have on the results we were seeing. And when one highly regarded chrome showed up on the scope with a curve equivalent in contour to Maxell's, the company's man acknowledged it graciously. More important, we—and others—asked a few down-to-earth general questions and got what we thought were sensible replies: for example, in dubbing 78s use a quality ferric-oxide and don't bother with more expensive formulations; and don't record Dolby-encoded signals directly from FM broadcasts, relying on a test tone, but rather decode and re-encode with levels adjusted for tape.

Notice of a scheduled clinic is generally posted on a store's premises a week or so beforehand, and advertising in the local media also precedes the sessions by a couple of days. Most tape hobbyists, we think, would find the half-hour-or-so session diverting—and are likely to learn something in the bargain.

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## In Memoriam



Citing declining volume, the general state of competition in the tape recorder market, and the desire of the company to concentrate its resources on its most viable products, Crown International of Elkhart, Indiana, has announced discontinuance of its Model 700 and 800 open-reel tape recorders upon the exhaustion of current production stocks. Parts and service for these machines will continue to be available for at least the next ten years.

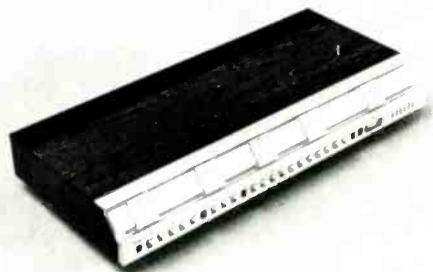
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## And . . .

Winslow Burhoe, known as the inventor of the inverted-dome tweeter and founder of Epicure Products, Inc., has started a new company called Burhoe Acoustics. Located in Melrose, Massachusetts, the company will offer a line of loudspeakers ranging from \$100 to \$500 in price.

A new type of audio cassette designed to eliminate the loss of material that occurs when recording is initiated with the recording head in contact with leader, rather than magnetic, tape has been announced by the 3M Company. Bearing the familiar "Scotch" brand designation, the IRC (Instant Recording Cassette) line has leaders made of heavy-duty magnetic tape.

## Equipment in the News



### B&O markets new receiver

Among the innovations in B&O's Beomaster 4400 receiver are a Bessel filter to control transient intermodulation distortion, split power supplies for minimum interaction between channels, and an overload indicator that lights when the amplifier is driven to maximum undistorted power. Outputs are provided both for a normal stereo speaker pair and for side speakers driven by B&O's Ambiphonic circuit. Up to six FM stations can be preset with tuning diodes. Rated power is 70 watts (18½ dBW) at 4 ohms with less than 0.1% total harmonic distortion, 20 Hz to 20 kHz. The price of the Beomaster 4400 is \$695.

CIRCLE 136 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

### Infinity enters headphone market

Infinity's first offering in the headphone line is the ES-1, an electrostatic system that comes with adapter containing transformers and power supply that can be permanently connected between amplifier and speakers. Front-panel switching makes it possible to leave the headphones hooked up whether or not they're being used. Operating in the push-pull mode, the ES-1 has a rated frequency response of 20 Hz to 25 kHz  $\pm 2$  dB. At 100 dB output, total harmonic distortion is said to be less than 0.3%. The price of the ES-1 and adapter, which accommodates two headsets, is \$275.

CIRCLE 137 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



### RG Dynamics' new expander

The RG Pro-16 Dynamic Processor functions by attenuating low levels (downward expansion) and boosting high levels (upward expansion). At the minimum setting (4 dB) there is nominal downward expansion of 4 dB; at maximum (16 dB), downward expansion is rated at 7 dB and upward expansion at 9 dB. A two position slope control lets the user select an expansion rate tailored for typical pop music or one better suited to programs with a wider inherent dynamic range. The Pro-16 may be inserted in the tape-monitor system of any receiver and provides auxiliary tape-recorder inputs, outputs, and switching. LEDs indicate the amount of expansion; the input level control is designed for input signals from 50 millivolts to 10 volts. The RG Pro-16 sells for \$250.

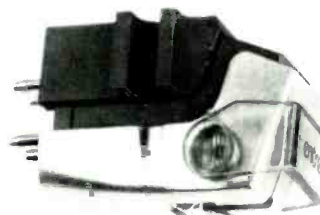
CIRCLE 138 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



### Enter the Entre-1

The Entre-1 moving-coil cartridge from American Audiopoint has a rated frequency response of 10 Hz to 50 kHz. The extremely light cartridge (it weighs 5.8 grams) is designed to track at 1.8 grams. Output impedance is rated at 3 ohms and level at 0.2 millivolt for a groove velocity of 3.54 centimeters per second at 1 kHz. A replacement program for the grain-aligned modified elliptical stylus is included in the Entre-1's price of \$200.

CIRCLE 139 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



More on page 44



# Big as life.



MHz  
100  
kHz



DR  
2

METER  
REC CAL TONE



POWER  
LEVEL  
DOLBY NR  
LEVEL



REC-1  
REC-2



SELECTOR

PHONO-1 FM AUTO AM  
PHONO-2 AUX



MIC LEVEL



MIC



BY SYSTEM



# The Tape Deck

Critiques of new cassette and open-reel releases by R.D. Darrell

## Blowing Winds

A whole galaxy of gifted young virtuosos has decisively laid to rest the ancient calumny of the oboe's being an "ill wind that nobody blows good." Witness the superb recordings of current superstar Heinz Holliger—in particular, his explorations with *I Musici* of the inexhaustible treasure house of Vivaldi concertos. Vol. 5 (Philips 7337 167, \$12.98), the first of this series to be digitally recorded and chromium-taped, is more breezily invigorating than ever, with—as usual—a couple of new discoveries (RV 446 and 452) along with the relatively familiar (RV 454; RV 545, for oboe and bassoon, with Klaus Thunemann).

If any timbres can possibly be still more pungently delectable, it's those of the oboe's alto and tenor siblings—currently provided by noted New York Philharmonic soloist Thomas Stacy, who here triples as conductor of the Baroque Chamber Players. He commands perhaps even more piquancy on the oboe d'amore, in concertos by Bach and Telemann, than on the deeper-voiced English horn, in an endearing Michael Haydn quartet and a poignant Mozart Adagio (Spectrum SC 259, \$4.95, plus \$1.50 shipping, from Spectrum, Harriman, N.Y. 10926). A best buy!

Two American star clarinetists vie excitingly in Weber's ideally idiomatic Op. 34 Quintet: David Shifrin with the Sequoia Quartet (Nonesuch digital/ferric D4 79017, \$11.98) and Richard Stoltzman with Tashi (RCA Red Seal ARK 1-4328, \$9.98, no notes). The painful choice is made easier by differing supplementary appeals. Shifrin's is primarily a chamber-music approach, and he sticks to Weber—the Op. 33 Variations and Op. 48 Grand Duo, with pianist William Doppmann. Stoltzman, for all his taut control and coloristic nuance, is more a bravura concert soloist, especially in the lighter-weight contemporary American fare—works by William Douglas and the late Ingolf Dahl. By comparison, England's Thea King seems at first over-reticent, but her subtly restrained, pure-toned artistry endows two unfamiliar (to most Americans) clarinet concertos with complete conviction: Stanford's solidly satisfying Op. 80, from the turn of the century, and Finzi's eloquently spellbinding Op. 31, of 1979, both with near ideal accompaniments led by Alun Francis (Hyperion KA 66001, \$13.98 (via Harmonia Mundi U.S.A., 2351 Westwood Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90064).

It's for his remarkable personality projection that Irish leprechaun flutist James

Galway is most celebrated. So sensation seekers will find him unduly subdued in his 1974 Seon recording, with Carl Baumgartner, of Mozart's two concertos and K. 315 Andante, now reappearing (Eurodisc chromium 55 514, \$9.98) with Dolby noise reduction markedly superior to that in the 1977 RCA edition (ARK 1-2159). But Galway reveals unexpected imagination in a welcome tribute to the underappreciated Romanticist Carl Reinecke (1824–1910). The flutist is joined by conductor Hiroyuki Iwaki in Reinecke's Mozartean/Schumannesque swansong Concerto (Op. 283!) and by pianist Phillip Moll—who also provides illuminating annotations—in the magically poetic *Undine* Sonata, both superbly played and recorded (RCA Prestige Box digital/chrome ATK 1-4034, \$15.98).

Maurice André's latest digitally recorded trumpet concertos (Angel 4XS 37905, \$9.98, no notes) are as dazzling as ever. But only the old-fashioned example by the obscure Luigi Otto (fl. 1750) is an original; the Albinoni, Handel, and Barsanti works are all transcriptions. More provocative musically is the spirited New York Trumpet Ensemble's Madeira Festival program of short pieces—a few in transcription, a few with organ—by Biber, Frescobaldi, Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, Martini, Mouret, Valentini, Wilbye, and White (Vox Cum Laude digital/chrome D-VCS 9015, \$10.98); not much stylistic authenticity, but the modern brass sonorities ring out thrillingly, and there are admirable notes by Peter Eliot Stone. The same stylistic shortcomings and sheerly sonic appeals also characterize the "Venetian Polychoral Music" by Berlin Philharmonic and Bamberg Symphony trumpeters and trombonists (Arabesque 9086, \$7.98). These bravura performances feature not only relatively familiar pieces by Frescobaldi and Giovanni Gabrieli, but more valuably, works by their lesser-known contemporaries Viadana and Giuseppe Guami—plus the quite unknown Bastian Chilesse and Giovanni Battista Grillo (who?).

**Remembrances of things past.** With the heartwarming news of Leon Fleischer's miraculous return to two-handed pianism still fresh in the news, I was more deeply moved than ever by his c. 1959–60 Epic triumphs with Georg Szell: the Beethoven Fourth and Mozart Twenty-Fifth Concertos. Not only is the playing rapturous, but the early-stereo sonics still seem admirably warm and robust in their new CBS Great Performances reissue (MYT 37762, price at dealer's option, no notes).

And every amateur pianist who once tackled *Country Gardens* and other Percy Grainger tidbits will rejoice in EMI's centenary tribute to the idiosyncratic Australian-American. It's a two-cassette grab-bag of 1970–79 English and Australian recordings featuring various conductors (Vivian Dunn, John Hopkins, Neville Dilkes) and pianists (Leslie Howard, David Stanhope, Daniel Adni, et al.) in the six pieces "everyone knows" and such fascinating extras as the *Nutshell* and *Youthful Suites*, *Colonial Song*, etc. (EMI Prestige Box TC SLS 5249, \$23.96, via International Book and Record Distributors, 40-11 24th St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11101). (Consolation prize: the same six Dunn-led favorites plus four British Proms miniatures in last year's Arabesque 9037, \$7.98.)

Another old phono-pianist friend is Shura Cherkassy—late-mono-era champion of Tchaikovsky's too seldom heard Second Piano Concerto. Luckily, he's still active, and a more persuasively eloquent proponent of this work than ever, in a grandly recorded new version with the Cincinnatians under the late Walter Susskind (Vox Cum Laude VCS 9011, \$8.98).

**The latest open reels** from Barclay-Crocker (11 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004), in line with this month's preoccupation with wind instruments, feature Jack Brymer's memorable 1967 "Virtuoso Clarinet" program (Vanguard/B-C E 71167, \$8.95). It's still a collector's "must," despite Felix Prohaska's routine accompaniments, for its rare concerto by the Czech Franz Krommer (1759–1831), plus the Weber concertino, Wagner Adagio, and an anglicized Debussy First Rhapsody. From still farther back, and even more famous, is Antal Dorati's 1957 milestone Respighi coupling—the lilted *Birds* transcriptions and evocative *Brazilian Impressions* (Mercury/B-C G 75023, \$10.95).

The current B-C/Philips programs (\$10.95 each) are all improved processings of recent disc and cassette successes: a magisterially controlled Tchaikovsky *Manfred* from Bernard Haitink and the Concertgebouw (G 9500 778); the completion of Colin Davis' Sibelius symphony series with the Bostonians, No. 4 and *Tapiola* (G 9500 143), and Nos. 5 and 7 (G 6500 959); the felicitous teaming of Alfred Brendel and Neville Marriner in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 22 and two concert rondos (G 9500 145); and the Quartetto Italiano's muscularly vital realization of the last and grandest Schubert String Quartet, No. 15 (G 9500 409). **HF**



# new top receivers.

| SPECIFICATIONS                                                                                         | 9090 DB             | 8080 DB            | 9090                | 7070               | 6060               | 5050               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Power Output Min RMS per channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms at rated Total Harmonic Distortion. | 125 watts @0.1% THD | 85 watts @0.1% THD | 110 watts @0.2% THD | 60 watts @0.3% THD | 40 watts @0.4% THD | 30 watts @0.5% THD |
| FM Sensitivity                                                                                         | 9.8 dBf             | 9.8 dBf            | 9.8 dBf             | 10.3 dBf           | 10.8 dBf           | 11.2 dBf           |
| Dolby® Circuitry                                                                                       | Yes                 | Yes                | No                  | No                 | No                 | No                 |
| Twin Power Meters                                                                                      | Yes                 | Yes                | Yes                 | Yes                | No                 | No                 |

9090C and 9090 DB, walnut veneer. All other cabinets, simulated walnut grain.

## MODEL 9090.

Two power output meters. Two tuning meters.  
Triple tone controls. Turnover switches with tone defeat.  
-20 dB muting switch. Mic-mixing with mic level control.  
Two stereo headphone jacks.

## MODEL 5050.

Two tuning meters.  
Mic-mixing with mic level control.  
High filter. Speaker Selector.



## MODEL 6060.

Two tuning meters.  
-20 dB muting switch.  
Mic-mixing with mic level control.  
High and low filters.  
Speaker selector.

## MODEL 7070.

Two power output meters.  
Two tuning meters.  
Triple tone controls.  
Mic-mixing with mic level control.  
-20 dB muting switch.  
7 position tape/play switch.  
Speaker selector.

\*Dolby, Dolbyized are trademarks of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.

CIRCLE NO. 38 ON READER SERVICE CARD





# Our new AD cassette takes the normal bias position to extremes.

We made a name for ourselves by creating the world's first non-chrome, "high" (CrO<sub>2</sub>) bias/EQ cassette tape, TDK Super Avilyn (SA). The state-of-the-art tape that has quickly become the standard of reference for cassette tape performance.

Our latest innovation is called AD (ay-dee), and we predict it will soon become the standard of performance and economy in the "normal" bias/EQ position.

We produced the first high fidelity ferric oxide cassette tape some ten years ago, and we've been perfecting the formulation ever since. Our new AD delivers superior performance, especially at the critical high-frequency range (7kHz to 20kHz), where many mid-priced cassette decks and even premium-priced cassettes tend to fall off too quickly.

AD is our ultimate ferric oxide tape designed for the "normal" bias/EQ position. Overall, it provides the lowest noise, highest frequency response and widest dynamic range of any pure ferric oxide cassette tape. In 45, 60, 90 and 120 minute lengths, AD has the same super-precision cassette mechanism found in TDK SA, in a new blue-gray shell.

And AD brings its audible benefits to all cassette decks, with and without switchable bias/EQ, including those found in cars, portables and home stereo systems.

So the music you love can travel with you, with all of the clear, crisp, brilliant sounds that make music so enjoyable.

AD is the finest pure ferric oxide cassette tape you can buy at any price. And it has TDK's full life time warranty. Give our new high-fidelity, moderately-priced AD a try—it's anything but normal.

TDK Electronics Corp., 755 Eastgate Boulevard, Garden City, New York 11530. In Canada: Superior Electronics Industries, Ltd.



The machine for your machine.

CIRCLE 48 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

**BE SURE YOU CHOOSE  
THE ONE YOU LIKE.**





# A TEAC LASTS A LONG, LONG TIME.

One of the reasons is that we've been *making* them for a long, long time. In 1955, TEAC came on the scene with the first in a long line of fine open reel tape recorders.

Since then, of course, we have developed a sister line of cassette decks. But our first love remains open reel tape recording equipment: the truest method of sound reproduction available today.

Consider the alternatives. If you want top-of-the-line quality, but only need bottom-of-the-line features, the A-2300SX is the buy of the year. From there, you can add DOLBY,\* larger 10½" reels, four heads, auto reverse, four-in/two-out mixer, memory stop, 15 ips, four channel Simul-Sync, and variations thereof.

In short, as long as you're getting a tape deck, can you conjure up a single reason it shouldn't be a TEAC?

## TEAC®

The leader. Always has been.

TEAC Corporation of America  
7733 Telegraph Road  
Monroeville, California 90640

In Canada TEAC is distributed by White Electronic Development Corporation (1966) Ltd.

\*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.



© TEAC 1977



## Tempest line from ESS

ESS's Tempest line of speakers includes the Model LS-5, a bookshelf design that employs a 10-inch woofer and a rear-mounted passive radiator to augment deep bass response. The Heil air-motion transformer included in the LS-5 is crossed over at 2.4 kHz. The oak-veneer cabinet is acoustically damped. The LS-5 costs \$219; the other two models, LS-8 and LS-4, cost \$168 and \$319 respectively. Vinyl-cabinet versions in this Performance Series are also available, ranging in price from \$149 to \$289.

## Sansui announces preamplifier

The newest member of Sansui's separate components group is the CA-2000, a stereo control preamplifier. Using a dual-transistor amplifier, it has inputs for tuner, two tape decks (allowing full dubbing), and two aux. For maximum dynamic range, a four-gang attenuator is used in place of a conventional volume control. The tone controls each have three selectable turnover frequencies: bass at 600, 300, or 150 Hz; treble at 2, 4, or 8 kHz. Rated frequency response is 10 Hz to 80 kHz,  $\pm 1/2$ ,  $-1$  dB, with less than 0.03% distortion. Other features include a separate headphone amplifier circuit and 20-dB muting switch. The CA-2000 costs \$440.

CIRCLE 140 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



## Manual turntable line from Yamaha

Topping off Yamaha's three new manual turntables is the YP-D6, a two-speed (33 and 45 rpm) direct-drive model with a DC servomotor. Among its features are automatic arm return and stop, a built-in strobe with speed adjustment of  $\pm 3\%$ , and acoustic-insulator feet. The YP-D6 is supplied with an S-shaped tone arm that has a stylus force adjustment from 0 to 3 grams. Wow and flutter is rated at less than 0.035% and S/N ratio at better than 60 dB. The \$250 price includes the base and a hinged dust cover. The other models in the line, the YP-B4 and YP-211, cost \$170 and \$130, respectively.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## GLI's Creative Controller

The GLI Creative Controller consists of the Model 3880 Mixer and the Model 1000 Signal Processor. The mixer section has two primary inputs, which will accept either phono or high-level signals. A slide fader permits transitions between inputs 1 and 2. A third high/low-impedance microphone input feeds both (stereo) outputs and may be actuated by a pull-to-talk switch. A headphone jack is provided for monitoring any input or the stereo output. The Model 1000 Signal Processor section contains meter facilities, tape-to-tape dubbing controls, stereo balance and blend controls, and a three-band equalizer. It costs \$225; the Model 3880 Mixer costs \$425.

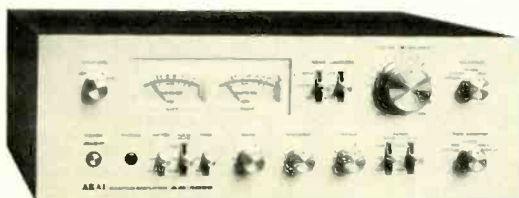
CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



## Akai launches separates line

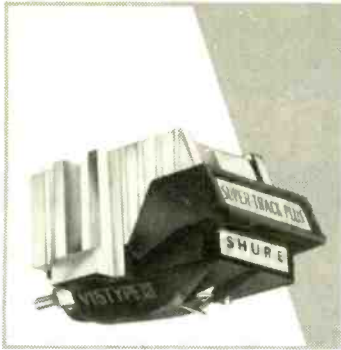
Akai's new line of separates includes the AM-2800 integrated stereo amplifier, which is rated to deliver 80 watts (19 dBW) per channel into 8 ohms from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.08% total harmonic distortion. This model has a midrange control as well as bass and treble controls. Two tape decks and two speaker pairs can be connected to the AM-2800, which also has inputs for phono, tuner, and aux. Separate volume meters are provided, as well as a two-position muting switch and two-position high and low filter switches. The AM-2800, which comes in a wood-grain vinyl cabinet, costs \$400.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



More on page 48

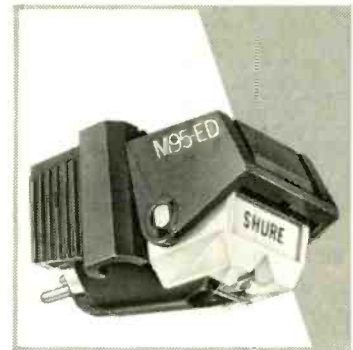




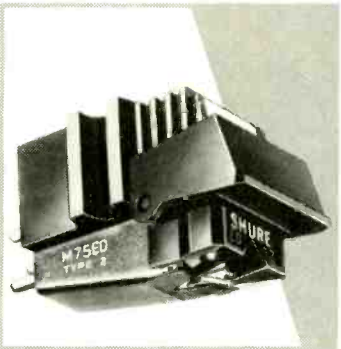
**V-15 Type III** . . . critics called the Type III the finest cartridge ever when it was introduced. The ultimate test, however, has been time. The V-15's engineering innovations, the uniform quality, and superb performance remain unsurpassed by any other cartridge on the market today. 3/4 to 1-1/4 gram tracking force.



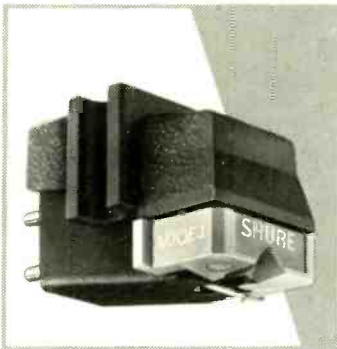
**M24H** . . . the cartridge that does not compromise stereo reproduction to add four-channel capability. Superb stereo trackability and quadriphonic carrier signal retrieval. New hyperbolic stylus tip, high energy magnet, and low-loss laminated electromagnetic structure. 1 to 1-1/2 gram tracking force.



**M95ED** . . . second only to the V-15 Type III in stereo reproduction. A thinner, uninterrupted pole piece minimizes magnetic losses. Its 20 to 20,000 Hz response remains essentially flat across the entire frequency range for excellent sound quality. 3/4 to 1-1/2 gram tracking force.



**M75ED Type 2** . . . excellent trackability at a lesser price. The M75ED Type 2 features a built-in snap-down stylus guard and a smooth 20 to 20,000 Hz frequency response. 3/4 to 1-1/2 gram tracking force.



**M70EJ** . . . the easiest way to upgrade your hi-fi stereo system without straining your budget. Basically flat response is comparable to other brand cartridges costing twice as much. 1-1/2 to 3 gram tracking force.



**M3D** . . . the original famous Shure Stereo Dynetic® Cartridge. The M3D provides extremely musical and transparent sound at a rock bottom price. 3 to 6 gram tracking force.

## The People's Choice-World-wide.

From Singapore to London to New York, Shure hi-fi pickup cartridges outsell every other brand — according to independent surveys. And for good reason: Shure cartridges, no matter where they're purchased, are guaranteed to meet the exacting published specifications that have made them the Critics' Choice in every price category.



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

CIRCLE 43 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# V-Fets are the new generation of transistors.





# And you know how hard it is to understand the new generation.

Remember the phrase "generation gap"? Well it's not only true for generations of men, but generations of machines, too.

V-Fet devices are a major advancement, needing major explanation. And nobody is more equipped to offer it, than Sony.

Sony pioneered the first generation of transistors, some 25 years ago.

Today, Sony is predictably innovative again, being: the first to offer V-Fet equipment commercially. And the only ones to bedazzle you with a whole line of it.

So with these credentials behind us, we will begin our explanation of the new generation.

## First came the Fets.

The new generation really began many generations ago. Fets—or field effect transistors—were first conceived in the 1920's. But the concept was so far ahead of its time that nobody quite knew how to execute it.

Fet's work quite differently than the bipolar transistor; the transistor you're familiar with. The bipolar transistor works by conducting a small amount of current, which then induces a high level of current. With the Fet a small amount of voltage (rather than current) controls the high level of current.

This bestows a Fet with high speed reaction time. Regular transistors have a delay in reaction time, creating problems like notch distortion and TIM (transient intermodulation) distortion.

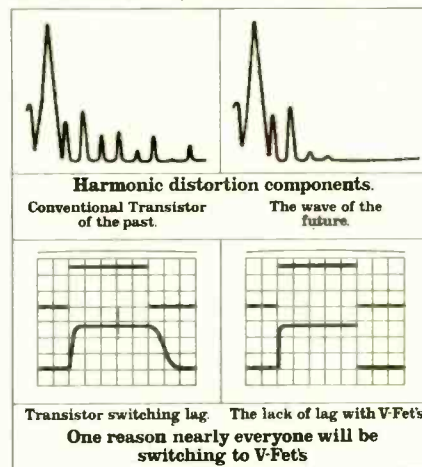
This high speed reaction means also that Fets are extremely efficient and accurate in the high frequency range. Therefore they allow more precise and stable nega-

tive feedback, and minimal distortion.

And, to heat up the argument, a Fet will never be afflicted by thermal runaway. High temperature does not induce the self-destructive current surge that you'll find in the regular transistor.

## V-Fets. Or, bye, bye, bipolar.

Wondering why Fets have not taken over, with the transistor



becoming a part of history?

Well, for one reason, a Fet will not allow high currents to pass through it. And today's loudspeakers demand high currents to drive them.

Enter the V-Fet. Vertical field effect transistor. In this structure, thousands of Fets are ordered in a parallel orientation. The current passes through the silicone chips vertically.

Thus, the ability of the V-Fet to handle a lot of current is many times greater than that of small signal Fets—like the kind found in FM tuners and pre-amps.

Sony made it possible for this complex network to be mass produced, by devising the "Selec-

tive Oxidation Process." A new technology originally developed for manufacturing large scale integrated circuits.

## Sony's V-Fets.

### A full line, from A to V.

Sony makes both integrated amps and power amps with V-Fet circuitry. The TA-4650, TA-5650, TA-8650, TAN-5550 and TAN-8550.

But if you rest your purchase decision on specs alone, V-Fets will disappoint you.

For example, Sony makes two amps, one V-Fet, one not, with identical specs. Yet the V-Fet amp costs more than a spec more.

Obviously, the true measure of V-Fets can't be measured by anything except the human ear.

## Now that you've listened to us, really listen to us.

So go ahead and measure it! Bring your favorite record to your V-Fet dealer. Ask him to play it. You'll find your favorite record will become even more of a favorite, as the sound opens up to you like never before.

And, if you want to open up a brochure on V-Fets, we'll send you one. Write to SONY, 9 West 57th Street, New York, New York 10019.

We have one note to add. V-Fet equipment is not cheap. So if you've appreciated our explanation, you'll find that a little knowledge can be an expensive thing.

# SONY® V-FETS

# Bold, Basic,



The Nakamichi 600 Series components bring a new approach to system high fidelity—a bold concept distinctly ahead of its time. Never has a group of components combined such high standards of excellence in performance and quality, uniquely attractive styling and supreme ease of installation and operation.

The basic Nakamichi 600 Series trio consists of the 600 Cassette Console, 620 Power Amplifier and 630 FM Tuner Preamplifier. Each is a study in human engineering; witness the gracefully sloped front panels with logically positioned controls. All three are timeless design expressions—sculptures worthy of artistic praise. And each performs its assigned function elegantly and flawlessly. But the three together form the nucleus of an incredibly impressive music system that is not likely to be equalled for many years to come. See and hear the trio at your nearest Nakamichi dealer. For complete information, write Nakamichi Research (USA) Inc., 220 Westbury Avenue, Carle Place, New York 11514

**600** The highly acclaimed 600 Cassette Console enjoys the established reputation as the world's best two-head cassette deck. And, as such, it actually outperforms other manufacturer's three-head cassette decks! It is loaded with unique features, including Nakamichi's famous Focused-Field Crystal Permalloy head, rock steady DC Servomotor transport, lightning-fast peak level meters with an unheard of 47dB range, front panel calibration controls, phase-corrected electronics, and special IM Suppressor circuitry. Guaranteed minimum frequency response is 40–18,000 Hz  $\pm$  3dB (EX or SX tape, with or without Dolby<sup>®</sup>). Signal-to-noise ratio is better than 65dB (Wrms at 400 Hz, 3% THD, with Dolby<sup>®</sup> and SX tape)—a greater dynamic range than today's best records.



## Cardioid microphone from Shure

Shure describes its SM-59 as a low-impedance professional grade microphone suitable for sound reinforcement and recording applications. It features an integral wire-mesh pop filter and a hum-bucking coil. To minimize off-axis coloration, the unidirectional polar pattern is designed to remain exceptionally uniform at all frequencies. Shure recommends the SM-59 for hand-held use and has incorporated a shock mount to minimize handling noise. The microphone's output impedance rating is 150 ohms, and the open-circuit voltage is -83 dB (0.071 millivolts). Power level is -61 dB. The SM-59 uses a three-pin professional audio connector and comes with 20 feet of shielded cable. The price is \$132.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## Bigston releases new cassette deck

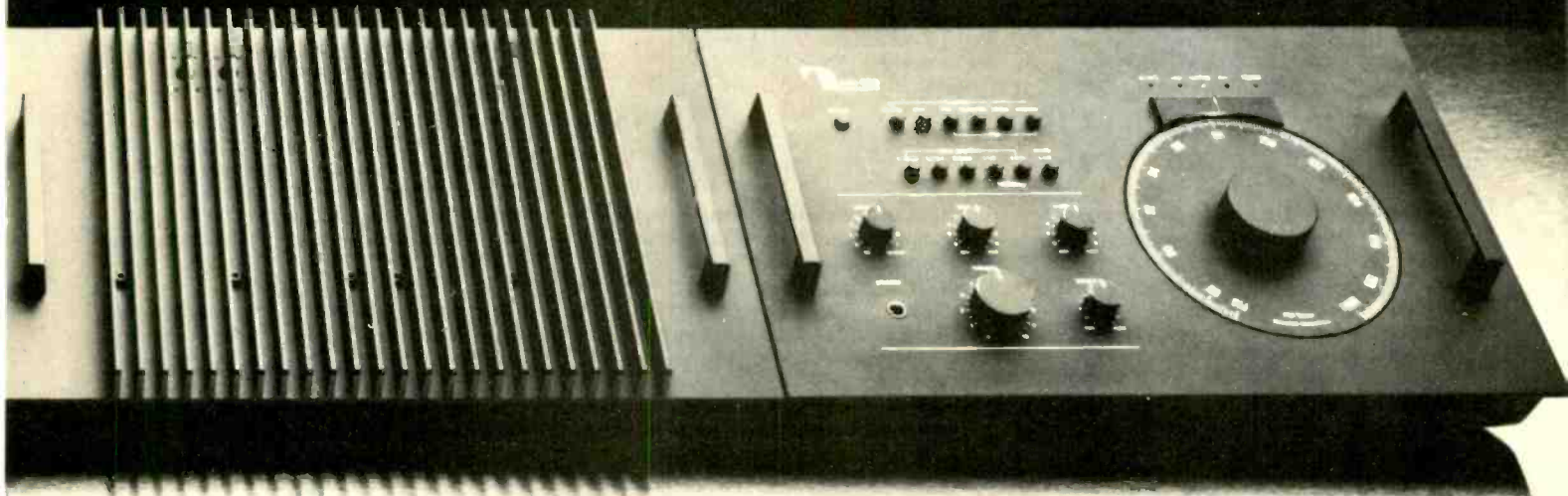
The BSD-400 Dolby cassette deck from Bigston Corporation is a front-loading model in which the cassette is inserted vertically. The deck has separate bias and equalization controls with three tape positions. Capabilities of the BSD-400 include memory rewind, automatic playback, and cue and review. Two mike inputs are provided for mixing. Frequency response with standard tape is rated at 30 Hz to 15 kHz with less than 1.5% total harmonic distortion. The signal-to-noise ratio is said to be 58 dB with Dolby and 52 dB without. The price of the BSD-400 is under \$250.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





# Beautiful... Nakamichi!



**620** Although the 620 Power Amplifier is distinguished by an unusual exterior, the real story is its impeccable performance, the result of Nakamichi's unique "complete-mirror" push-pull circuitry, which eliminates distortion without the use of high idling current or high negative feedback. A massive toroidal core transformer and two 40,000 $\mu$ f filter capacitors assure ample power reserve. The 620 handles all types of loads in stride, and its low operating temperature assures long-term reliability far surpassing conventional designs. Power output is 100 Watts per channel, minimum rms at 8 ohms, 5-20,000 Hz with less than 0.01% THD.

®Dolby is a Trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.

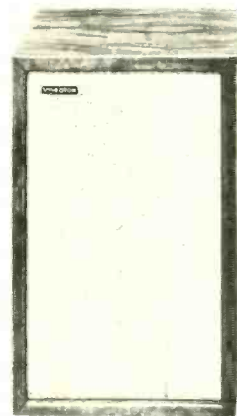
**630** The unusual and versatile 630 FM Tuner Preamplifier offers a degree of performance unmatched by receivers and rarely found in complete "separates." The tuner section boasts stereo distortion under 0.08% and separation better than 50dB (1 kHz, normal selectivity). Selectivity can be switched from normal (over 40dB) to narrow (over 80dB). Signal-to-noise ratio is better than 70dB *without* the help of built-in Dolby<sup>®</sup> Noise Reduction circuitry provided for Dolby<sup>®</sup> FM broadcasts. The preamplifier section defies conventional distortion measurement while phono equivalent input noise is an incredible -140dB.

CIRCLE 35 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## Kelso Imports distributes Hungarian speaker

The DP-202A Saphir I is the first Videoton product to be marketed in the U.S. via its current exclusive distributor, Kelso Imports. The compact speaker system can be used as a floor-standing or bookshelf model. A 4-inch tweeter and 8-inch woofer are used in the DP-202A, whose power-handling capacity is rated at 15 watts (11 $\frac{3}{4}$  dBW). Frequency response is rated at 45 Hz to 20 kHz. The DP-202A comes in a walnut cabinet and costs \$79.95.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



## Maxell empty reels make debut

Maxell has entered the tape-accessory market with four empty reels. There are two plastic 7-inch models, the PR-7 with a standard hub and the PR-7L with a large low-torque hub. Two metal reels are also offered: The 7-inch MR-7M has a standard hub and the 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch MR-10 has an NAB hub. These boxed reels range in price from \$4.40 for the PR-7 to \$15.50 for the MR-10.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# BACKBEAT<sup>®</sup>

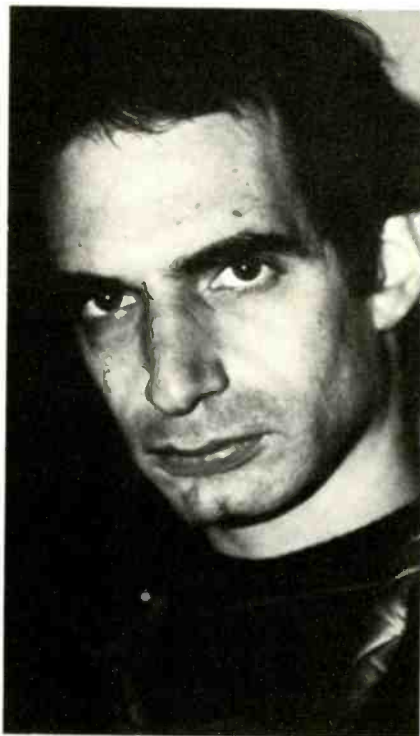
## Donald Fagen Talks

From the dark, jaded regions of Steely Dan emerges an intellectual with an album about innocence.  
by Sam Sutherland

FEW POP OR ROCK MUSICIANS in recent memory have remained as intentionally faceless as Steely Dan's Walter Becker and Donald Fagen. In defiance of the usual course of events for platinum record winners, they succeeded in creating a provocative, richly stylized body of music while becoming, if anything, less recognizable as "personalities," tucking the intimate details of their private lives cryptically into their oblique lyrics. As they transformed their original working band into an elusive entity that emerged only in recording studios, the duo edited out the few clues of earlier songs, where allusions to their days together in college evoked the cultural ferment of the late '60s.

Even photographs of the two men were rare. Their album portraits and publicity glossies were usually grainy black and white shots that looked more like wanted posters than the idealized images of their rock peers. The unsmiling faces, often hidden behind sunglasses, looked uncomfortable before the camera lens. In the interviews they cautiously granted, their day-to-day lives remained undiscussed beyond the most superficial and fragmentary details. Music was the only topic that could reliably lure them beyond a closely guarded perimeter of ironic detachment.

That reclusive aura explains the ultimately startling impact of Donald Fagen's first solo disc. His perverse croon was the duo's vocal persona, and it remains unchanged on "The Nightfly." Likewise his melodies, arrangements, and intermittent keyboard work are extensions of Steely Dan's sleek, precise pop synthesis. On closer examination, though, the album is a departure in its most fundamental respect, the songs' content. In contrast to the Dan's large cast of distinct characters and disparate settings, "The Nightfly" revolves



around just one individual—Fagen.

He himself is quick to confirm that. And the record's specific time frame strongly suggests that the idea for "The Nightfly" predated the duo's decision to stop recording.

"I had wanted to do something by myself for a year or so," says Fagen, "before we decided to 'take a vacation,' as Robert Palmer put it," in a *New York Times* article. The concept of a theme piece was an early element, if not a motive, in that decision. "In all the albums I did with Walter, we never said, 'We're going to write about a certain period or a certain motif.' And I

think that accounts for a lot of the difference right there."

Not that "The Nightfly" is an autobiographical narrative. Fagen cites as its unifying premise his own recollection of childhood, and of the dreams that carried him through adolescence. In the atypically straightforward liner note, he describes those dreams as "certain fantasies that might have been entertained by a young man growing up in the remote suburbs of a northeastern city during the late Fifties and early Sixties, i.e., one of my general height, weight, and build."

Those fantasies weren't entirely unique. Rather, they touched upon what he now describes as the "myths" of that era, shared by young Americans struggling to cope with a culture he repeatedly damns as "stultifying." The hipster myth, the science fiction myth, the romantic myth, above all, for Fagen, the jazz myth were doors outside a repressive everyday existence.

"The 'E.T.' in my bedroom was Thelonious Monk," he recalls. "Everything that he represented was totally unworldly in a way, although at the same time jazz to me seemed more real than the environment in which I was living. It was one of those developments with a thousand homes that all looked exactly the same. The houses had just been built, so there were mounds of dirt instead of a front lawn, and twigs held up by wires instead of trees.

"It was pretty barren, actually. But jazz was an escape, not only from the architecture and the landscape, but also from the climate of thought at the time, the Cold War mentality and all that."

As a child, he had been smitten by early black rock & rollers like Fats Domino and especially Chuck Berry, but as he grew older that strain of rock was supplanted by





# Too Hot to Handle

Those of us in the tropics have problems with record and tape storage. At present, I have three options: I can keep my collection with my equipment in an air-conditioned room (72 degrees, 90–93% humidity), in a hot locker (85–90 degrees, 80–85%), or out in the open (80–85 degrees, 95–99%). Which would be better?—Michael J. Hill, Majuro, Marshall Islands.

Expecting heat to be a greater enemy of vinyl than humidity, we'd be inclined to opt for the air-conditioned room. The worst problem we can think of associated with humidity is micro-organisms that feed on the plastic of the disc. This can best be avoided by keeping discs clean, making sure that they are dry before storing them, and protecting them from condensation while in their sleeves. We cannot say for certain which record-cleaning preparations are effective in suppressing such organisms, but Discwasher is the only one we know that has gone on record as addressing itself to this problem.

Recently I bought a Soundcraftsmen Model RP-2212 equalizer. I made all the right connections to my Sansui 9090 receiver, double-checked to make sure everything was okay, and then put on the supplied Soundcraftsmen record. I must have played that record at least a dozen times over a period of two weeks. Yet no matter how carefully I try to follow the instructions, I cannot do a good job of equalization. The unequalized version sounds better than the equalized one. I think the problem lies with the pink-noise bands on the record. It's difficult to match loudnesses of the test tone with the reference tones. Is there a record available that is easier to follow? It has reached the stage where I'm almost ready to sell my equalizer.—H. J. Taraporevala, Zephyr Cove, Nev.

We doubt that it is a defect in the record that is causing your problem. More likely, you are not playing the test record at your normal listening level. Probably to avoid problems with IM distortion in phono cartridges, the record has been cut at a very low level, so the position of your volume control will mislead you if you use it as a guide. And if you match the loudness of the test bands at the wrong levels, the Fletcher-Munson effect will lead you right down the primrose path. Generally, if the bass sounds too heavy, you are working at too low a level, and vice versa.

It is also possible that you have grown used to the sound of your speakers and find the equalized sound offensive even though you have used the record correctly. There is considerable debate in the audio community as to whether a flat response at the listening position is really desirable, so such a reaction on your part would not surprise us.

We can make three suggestions: 1) Try using the record at a hefty level and, if your switching arrangements will allow it, listen to

the speakers alternately while trying to match loudness; 2) Listen to the result for a while, with various types of music, to see if it grows on you; 3) If it does not, adjust the controls by ear until you get what you like best. This is difficult, but there is not much else to be done without (elaborate) test equipment.

I have become engaged in enthusiastic pursuit of true high fidelity in cassette recording. I believe that, to improve the medium, it is necessary to refine not the tape, but the tape players.

My solution to this problem is two tape speeds. The standard speed of 1½ ips is, in my opinion, too slow. Would not a higher speed cut down the wow and flutter, increase signal-to-noise ratio, and broaden the frequency response?—Doug Crabtree, Dallas, Tex.

Teac is among those who have considered a cassette transport with the higher speed (it demonstrated a prototype years ago), but Philips—which, as the patent holder, licenses all cassette equipment and tape manufacturers—elected to hold the line against the added complexity and the possibility that other manufacturers might use speed options as an excuse to increase running time at the expense of fidelity.

It's true that greater dynamic range could be achieved at a higher speed, though bandwidth as such and flutter already are so good in high-quality cassette equipment that no really significant improvements could be expected in these areas. And the higher speed would either cut running times in half or require the use of thinner tapes—which implies increased print-through and some loss, once again, in dynamic range. If you're hung up on 3¾ ips and greater fidelity than the present cassette can offer, perhaps the new Elcaset format is for you.

After a few plays my CD-4 records sound distorted through a demodulator but fine in two-channel stereo. I have discussed this with various dealers and have heard explanations and opinions amounting to: 1) "CD-4 is not perfected and should never have been invented"; 2) "CD-4 discs are poorly manufactured and lose the carrier information quickly—therefore they should be dubbed at once"; 3) "What are you talking about? I have not heard of this problem"; and 4) "CD-4 discs have been improved."

I have had my stylus examined, and it looks good. What could the problem be?—Thomas M. Osborn, Berwyn, Ill.

So far as we know, perfection has not been attained anywhere in the audio field. The companies behind CD-4 felt that it was a commercially viable product and introduced it. At its debut, the system suffered from some problems, but fairly recent improvements (upgrading of products is common in

the industry) have solved most of them. Dubbing a CD-4 disc in quad, while not a bad idea, would require a four-channel tape deck—not an inexpensive item.

From the symptoms you describe, we would suspect that the carrier on your discs is being erased. A worn stylus is apparently not the culprit, but it is possible that the tracking force or antiskating bias is not correct or that the cartridge or stylus is misaligned. Beyond that, the demodulator may not be properly adjusted and could be losing its lock on the carrier when normal wear lowers its level a bit. Finally, you don't indicate what pickup you are using. Is it really made for CD-4?

I am always interested in upgrading my system, which is excellent but, like its owner, aging. Currently I am driving seven speakers with my equipment, including two AR-3A speakers. It provokes me that ads and equipment reviews rarely list the number of speakers that the equipment will drive. Great emphasis is placed on power, but little on how speakers can be driven in more than one room, and even the most sophisticated equipment seems to be limited to two pairs of speakers at one time. With the great strides made in high fidelity reproduction equipment in the last few years, it seems that this detail should not be overlooked.—R. A. Hickman, Rogers, Ark.

The number of speakers that can be driven from a single amplifier is not predictable as such. An amp is rated for some minimum load impedance—typically 4 ohms, occasionally 2 ohms or less. A 4-ohm load could represent one 4-ohm speaker, two 8-ohm speakers, or four 16-ohm speakers. Generally speaking, if it is your intention to wire a large number of rooms for sound while using a single amplifier, a transformer-type distribution system is the best way to go. But for the best performance (and fidelity) from an amp, it is usually best to energize just the pair of speakers you are listening to—and via a direct connection to the amplifier, without pads, limiting resistors, or other elements that can interfere with damping of the speaker.

I bought a Sheffield direct-to-disc record (for 10 bucks), and I really can't hear any difference between it and conventional records. The whole thing goes back to the claim that the old 78s had something that our new LPs (made via tape) don't, because the 78s went directly from sound to disc.

This new breed has indeed removed one step: the tape. But what about microphones, cables, and—perish the thought—amplifiers? Don't they degrade the sound? Can direct-to-disc records be considered all that direct?—W. R. Augur, Claremont, Calif.

The mechanisms by which tape detracts from recorded sound are becoming increasingly understood. In addition to the noise and distortion that a tape system adds (both are quite low in professional machines) there is nonlinear phase shift, to which attention has only recently been addressed. (In the consumer field, some Nakamichi cassette decks come to mind, for example.) The fact that a Sheffield disc sounds no different from a conventional one on your system suggests either that upgrading of components may be in order or that you're not listening as carefully as you might.

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

Maxell tapes are not cheap.

In fact, a single reel of our most expensive tape costs more than many inexpensive tape recorders.

Our tape is expensive because it's designed specifically to get the most out of good high fidelity components.

So it makes no sense to invest in Maxell unless you have

no one gets into our manufacturing area until he's been washed, dressed in a special dust-free uniform and vacuumed.

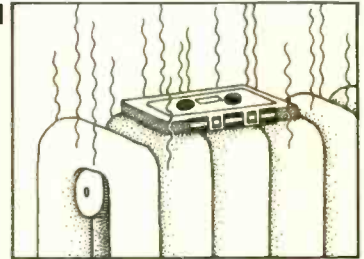
## WE CLEAN OFF THE CRUD OTHER TAPES LEAVE BEHIND.

After all the work we put into our tape, we're not about to let it go to waste on a dirty tape recorder head. So we put special non-abrasive head cleaner

## OUR TAPE COMES WITH A BETTER GUARANTEE THAN YOUR TAPE RECORDER.

Nothing is guaranteed to last forever. Nothing we know of, except our tape.

So our guarantee is simplicity itself: any-time you ever have a problem with any Maxell cassette, 8-track or reel-to-reel tape, you can send it back and get a new one.



Our guarantee even covers acts of negligence.

sounds at your nearby audio dealer.

(Chances are, it's what he uses to demonstrate his best tape decks.)



No other tape starts off by cleaning off your tape recorder.

equipment that can put it to good use.

## THE REASON OUR TAPE SOUNDS SO GOOD IS BECAUSE IT'S MADE SO CAREFULLY.

Every batch of magnetic oxide we use gets run through an electron microscope. Because if every particle isn't perfect, the sound you hear won't be either.

And since even a little speck of dust can put a dropout in tape,



Every employee, vacuumed.

on all our cassettes and reel-to-reel tapes. Which is something no other tape company bothers to do.

## OUR CASSETTES ARE PUT TOGETHER AS CAREFULLY AS OUR TAPE.

Other companies are willing to use wax paper and plastic rollers in their cassettes. We're not. We use carbon-impregnated material. And Delrin rollers. Because nothing sticks to them.

A lot of companies weld their cassettes together. We use screws. Screws are more expensive. But they also make for stronger cassettes.

## GIVE OUR TAPE A FAIR HEARING.

You can hear just how good Maxell tape

You'll be surprised to hear how much more music good equipment can produce when it's equipped with good tape.





# HiFi-Croctic No. 26

by William Petersen

|   |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Y | 1   | C  | 2   |     | L   | 3   | P   | 4   | T   | 5   |     | K   | 6   | X   | 7   | A   | 8   | N   | 9   | W   | 10  | R   | 11  | Q   | 12  |     | D   | 13  |     |     |
| E | 14  | C  | 15  |     | Y   | 16  | J   | 17  | M   | 18  |     | T   | 19  | ZZ  | 20  | P   | 21  | H   | 22  | E   | 23  | S   | 24  |     | Y   | 25  | D   | 26  |     |     |
| V | 27  | L  | 28  | Z   | 29  | O   | 30  | C   | 31  | K   | 32  |     | R   | 33  | YY  | 34  |     | A   | 35  | N   | 36  | Z   | 37  |     | I   | 38  | B   | 39  |     |     |
| D | 40  | Y  | 41  | C   | 42  | P   | 43  | X   | 44  | O   | 45  |     | E   | 46  | O   | 47  | S   | 48  |     | N   | 49  | R   | 50  | V   | 51  | I   | 52  | C   | 53  |     |
| U | 54  | G  | 55  | A   | 56  | P   | 57  |     | X   | 58  | M   | 59  |     | E   | 60  |     | N   | 61  | ZZ  | 62  | T   | 63  | S   | 64  | B   | 65  | A   | 66  |     |     |
|   | D   | 67 | Z   | 68  | K   | 69  | E   | 70  |     | S   | 71  | X   | 72  | C   | 73  | J   | 74  | H   | 75  | A   | 76  |     | Y   | 77  | T   | 78  | ZZ  | 79  |     |     |
|   | O   | 80 | D   | 81  | N   | 82  | R   | 83  | V   | 84  | B   | 85  | E   | 86  |     | C   | 87  | P   | 88  |     | O   | 89  | X   | 90  | I   | 91  |     |     |     |     |
| T | 92  | A  | 93  |     | B   | 94  | S   | 95  | K   | 96  | M   | 97  |     | D   | 98  | YY  | 99  | C   | 100 | F   | 101 | T   | 102 | O   | 103 |     | E   | 104 |     |     |
| L | 105 | P  | 106 | Y   | 107 |     | M   | 108 | C   | 109 | V   | 110 |     | S   | 111 | B   | 112 | D   | 113 | O   | 114 |     | Y   | 115 | YY  | 116 |     |     |     |     |
| Z | 117 | P  | 118 | N   | 119 |     | O   | 120 | A   | 121 | R   | 122 | X   | 123 | C   | 124 |     | Z   | 125 | H   | 126 | F   | 127 | E   | 128 |     | O   | 129 |     |     |
| W | 130 | YY | 131 | D   | 132 | M   | 133 | A   | 134 | L   | 135 | B   | 136 | X   | 137 |     | T   | 138 | G   | 139 | Z   | 140 | O   | 141 |     | O   | 142 | YY  | 143 |     |
| A | 144 | C  | 145 | V   | 146 | S   | 147 | F   | 148 | I   | 149 | T   | 150 |     | N   | 151 | P   | 152 |     | R   | 153 | X   | 154 | ZZ  | 155 | E   | 156 | W   | 157 |     |
| O | 158 |    | I   | 159 | Y   | 160 | F   | 161 | X   | 162 | O   | 163 |     | K   | 164 | V   | 165 | G   | 166 | J   | 167 | A   | 168 | L   | 169 | M   | 170 | H   | 171 |     |
| B | 172 |    | V   | 173 | X   | 174 | T   | 175 | D   | 176 | O   | 177 | K   | 178 | L   | 179 | Z   | 180 |     | W   | 181 | N   | 182 | S   | 183 |     | F   | 184 |     |     |
| U | 185 | E  | 186 | A   | 187 | D   | 188 | P   | 189 | ZZ  | 190 |     | O   | 191 | R   | 192 | G   | 193 | C   | 194 | P   | 195 | A   | 196 |     | T   | 197 | X   | 198 |     |
| J | 199 |    | U   | 200 | S   | 201 | K   | 202 | R   | 203 | N   | 204 | Z   | 205 | O   | 206 | H   | 207 | A   | 208 | C   | 209 | S   | 210 | M   | 211 | B   | 212 | K   | 213 |
| O | 214 | L  | 215 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

### DIRECTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

The answer to HiFi-Croctic No. 26 will appear in next month's issue of HIGH FIDELITY.

### INPUT

- A. Full stage name of Mrs. Bertil Niklasson, née Svensson
- B. William Schuman ballet
- C. Mussorgsky opera, completed after his death by Rimsky-Korsakov
- D. Soloist in Oiseau-Lyre recordings of Handel harp concertos (full name)
- E. Jazz pianist and organist (1904-43; full professional name)
- F. Mozart opera completed by Adolf Gollmick and Anton André
- G. Norwegian composer (b. 1906); *Draumkvædsonate*
- H. Italian-American composer (b. 1898); *Ulysses*
- I. Caterwauled
- J. German bass-baritone (1914-65), created Creon in Orff's *Antigone*
- K. Russian composer (1872-1915); *Prometheus* (var.)
- L. In ancient Greek music, a mode related to the Hypophrygian
- M. Early type of guitar
- N. Class of percussion instruments without membranes or electronics

### OUTPUT

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 208 | 134 | 8   | 144 | 187 | 35  | 66  | 121 |
|     |     |     | 168 | 76  | 196 | 93  | 56  |
| 39  | 136 | 172 | 112 | 85  | 212 | 65  | 94  |
| 73  | 194 | 31  | 100 | 145 | 2   | 124 | 109 |
|     |     |     | 42  | 87  | 209 | 53  | 15  |
| 26  | 113 | 176 | 81  | 188 | 13  | 98  | 67  |
|     |     |     |     |     |     | 132 | 40  |
| 186 | 23  | 128 | 86  | 46  | 60  | 156 | 104 |
|     |     |     |     |     |     | 70  | 14  |
| 148 | 127 | 161 | 184 | 101 |     |     |     |
| 139 | 193 | 166 | 55  |     |     |     |     |
| 75  | 207 | 171 | 126 | 22  |     |     |     |
| 38  | 149 | 159 | 52  | 91  |     |     |     |
| 167 | 17  | 199 | 74  |     |     |     |     |
| 202 | 69  | 164 | 213 | 96  | 6   | 178 | 32  |
| 105 | 169 | 215 | 3   | 28  | 135 | 179 |     |
| 133 | 211 | 170 | 108 | 18  | 97  | 59  |     |
| 82  | 49  | 151 | 204 | 61  | 36  | 9   | 182 |

### INPUT

- O. American composer (b. 1913); *Silver Thaw* (full name)
- P. Center for electronic music in New York City (2 wds.)
- Q. Soprano Harper
- R. Coda
- S. After *The*, operetta by Karl Zeller (comp.)
- T. American pianist (b. 1926; full name)
- U. \_\_\_\_\_ Norvo, jazz xylophonist
- V. American ballroom dance adapted from the turkey trot (comp.)
- W. Trade name of Acoustical Manufacturing Co. Ltd.
- X. Martín y Soler opera (3 lt. wds.)
- Y. Aida's homeland
- Z. Polish-German composer (1874-1951); *Weisheit des Ostens*
- YY. Simple phrases often repeated à la Count Basie; Saharan people
- ZZ. "\_\_\_\_\_ del passaro," soprano aria in *La Traviata*

### OUTPUT

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 177 | 214 | 120 | 80  | 103 | 206 | 30  | 129 |
|     |     |     |     |     | 142 | 45  | 158 |
| 57  | 118 | 189 | 106 | 43  | 195 | 21  | 4   |
|     |     |     |     |     | 88  | 152 |     |
| 163 | 12  | 47  | 114 | 89  | 141 | 191 |     |
| 122 | 203 | 192 | 83  | 33  | 153 | 11  | 50  |
| 71  | 147 | 111 | 183 | 48  | 201 | 210 | 24  |
|     |     |     |     |     | 95  | 64  |     |
| 175 | 78  | 150 | 102 | 5   | 138 | 197 | 92  |
|     |     |     |     |     | 63  | 19  |     |
| 200 | 185 | 54  |     |     |     |     |     |
| 84  | 146 | 110 | 27  | 173 | 165 | 51  |     |
| 10  | 130 | 181 | 157 |     |     |     |     |
| 154 | 198 | 90  | 162 | 58  | 137 | 7   | 123 |
|     |     |     |     |     | 72  | 174 | 44  |
| 107 | 16  | 160 | 1   | 115 | 25  | 41  | 77  |
| 125 | 117 | 29  | 68  | 205 | 180 | 37  | 140 |
| 143 | 99  | 116 | 34  | 131 |     |     |     |
| 62  | 190 | 79  | 155 | 20  |     |     |     |

# The Small Speaker Revolution is here

It's not how big you make it, it's how big you make it sound.



The day of the big speaker box has past. It's no longer true that the bigger the speaker, the better the sound. A revolution in speaker design is occurring with the introduction of an accurate, high-fidelity loudspeaker that fits comfortably on a table-top, bookshelf, in a corner or even in your car or van. A speaker you can live with that doesn't dominate your living space and make you a slave of your sound system.

#### **Six small speakers**

The David® series from Visonik of America is a group of six loudspeakers dedicated to the proposition that "big" is not better. The revolution starts with the pint-bottle sized D-30, D-50 and specially modified D-30M0 speaker system (with mounting bracket for car and RV music systems). Also included are the larger two-way D-60 and three-way D-80 and D-100 speaker systems. Although small, they are progressively larger with deeper bass response and greater power handling capacity.

#### **Don't be a slave to the big box.**

Each speaker is the result of extensive research and design . . . German craftsmanship wedded with high technology. The listener will find the David® speaker

extremely linear and accurate with wide dispersion characteristics. They provide full, rich, high-fidelity sound that is comfortable to listen to; there is no coloration, strident highs or boomy lows. The Davids® naturally outperform speakers many times the size and price.

#### **Your ears won't believe your eyes.**

Join the revolution—audition a pair of David® speakers and get all the specs at your Visonik® stereo dealer.

## VISONIK-DAVID®

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In Canada: White Electronics, Malton, Ontario

Manufactured by Heco-Hennel & Co. K.G. Berlin, Germany

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CIRCLE 53 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





# It's the real thing $\pm 1$ dB.

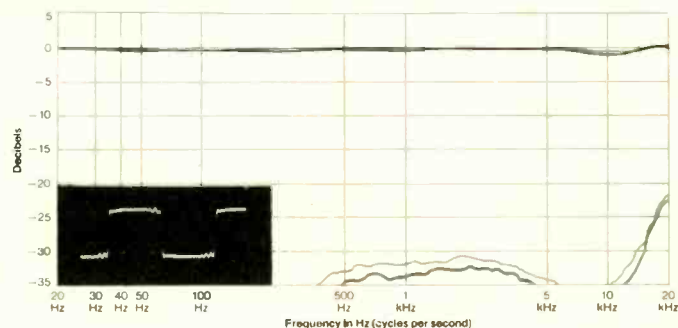
"Phono-cartridge performance has come a long way in recent years, as can be judged from the 2000Z's measured frequency response. Including the effect of arm resonance in a typical tone arm, and combining the measurements from a couple of records, the response could honestly be described as  $\pm 1$  dB from 15 to 20,000 Hz. This is comparable to the flatness of most amplifiers, especially if the tone controls cannot be bypassed."

**Stereo  
Review**

"Finally the light dawned: This is a neutral cartridge — it's supposed to sound that way. The highs are not subdued; they are just smooth, rather than peaky and shrill. Instrumental timbres are reproduced in fine detail, but without being artificially pointed up. Thus one is able to hear soft inner voices and pastel shadings that are all but obscured by the bravura of some of the competition."

"The Empire 2000Z is truly impressive. It is well worth auditioning, even though that can't be done in a hurry if you are to hear — and savor — its quality."

**HIGH  
FIDELITY**



*In the graph frequency response was measured using the CBS 100 Test Record, which sweeps from 20-20,000 Hz. The vertical tracking force was set at one gram. Nominal system capacitance was calibrated to be 300 picofarads and the standard 47K ohm resistance was maintained throughout testing. The upper curves represent the frequency response of the right (black) and left (grey) channels. The distance between the upper and lower curves represents separation between the channels in decibels. The inset oscilloscope photo exhibits the cartridge's response to a recorded 1000 Hz square wave indicating its resonant and transient response.*

For more information on the Empire 2000Z, and our free brochure "How to Get the Most Out of Your Records," write: Empire Scientific Corp., Department  $\pm 1$  dB, 1055 Stewart Avenue, Garden City, N.Y. 11530.

CIRCLE 13 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

"The Empire 2000Z offers extremely smooth response in the audible range and, even at the light tracking force (1.0 grams) at which our listening tests were conducted, never failed to track the grooves of even our most dynamically recorded musical test passages. Highs were silky smooth, never 'edgy' or raspy and there was not even a hint of 'peakiness' in the important 12,000 to 16,000 Hz range where so many other pickups often add distinct and easily identifiable coloration."

**Radio-  
Electronics**

"Frequency response was among the smoothest we have ever recorded for a stereo cartridge and actually did not deviate more than the plus or minus 1 dB specified over the entire audio spectrum. Resonance has been pushed way out beyond the audio range and we suspect that some of the stylus engineering developed for Empire's CD-4 (4000 series) cartridges has been brought to bear in this design to accomplish that feat."

**audio  
trade  
news**

**EMPIRE**

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

# New A CONSUMER'S GUIDE Equipment Reports

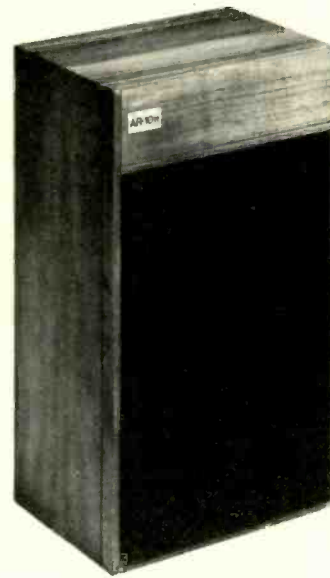
## Custom-Fitted Accuracy from AR's $10\pi$

**The Equipment:** The AR- $10\pi$  loudspeaker system in wood case. Dimensions: 13 15/16 by 25 by 10 3/4 inches. Price: \$425. Warranty: "full," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Acoustic Research, Inc., 10 American Dr., Norwood, Mass. 02062.

**Comment:** Loudspeaker designers have almost always eschewed level controls on woofers. The reasoning has been thus: Since the woofer is the least efficient of the drivers and handles the most energy, drive it flat out and adjust the other drivers to match, meanwhile conserving amplifier power. But in the  $10\pi$ , AR has taken a different approach—namely, that, being subject to reinforcement as a function of the position of the speaker in the listening room, the bass should be adjustable to compensate.

Accordingly, the system can be set for a solid angle of  $\pi$  (1/4 of a sphere) and placed at the intersection of two room surfaces, for  $2\pi$  (1/2 a sphere) and placed well away from side walls and the floor with its back against a wall, or for  $4\pi$  (a full sphere) and placed well away from all boundaries, including the floor. Each successive position of the control increases woofer level by about 3 dB and makes a slight adjustment in the crossover network. The midrange and tweeter controls—nominally producing changes of 3 dB per step—actually work in 2-dB increments, according to our anechoic measurements, and leave a region (4 to 6 kHz) that cannot be adjusted at all.

The data from the CBS Technology Center indicate that the impedance varies rather drastically with the control settings, particularly those affecting the woofer. Prudence would require that each  $10\pi$  have an amplifier channel to itself—and when the  $4\pi$  mode is used the amp will have to tolerate dips into the region between 3 and 4 ohms. As one might expect from a product born in the citadel of acoustic-suspension design, efficiency is moderately low. A 0-dBW (1-watt) noise input in the range from 250 to 6,000



Hz produces an average sound pressure level of just under 85 dB.

But the power-handling capacity of the system more than makes up for the efficiency. In the steady-state test at 300 Hz the speaker soaks up the full 20 dBW (100 watts) of the power amp—for an SPL of 105 dB 1 meter on axis in the anechoic chamber—without excessive distortion. On transients the dynamic range extends to 111 1/2 dB, which the data suggest is getting close to overtaxing the speaker, although our test amp gave up first. Distortion is low, at times astonishingly so, as witness 100 dB SPL at 80 Hz, with second and third harmonics both below 0.5%.

Average omnidirectional power response is very flat from 50 Hz to 4 kHz, with peaks and dips relatively broad and confined to  $\pm 2$  dB in amplitude. With the woofer con-

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

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trol at  $2\pi$  and the others at 0 dB, rolloff occurs at about 12 dB per octave below 50 Hz and at 3 to 4 dB per octave above 4 kHz. Transient response is clean and well defined, and the dispersion of the mid- and high-frequency drivers is better than average.

Setup for listening is very simple, and connections (via zip cord) are easily made. We are especially pleased that the  $10\pi$ 's controls can be adjusted (by moving a hinged cover) without removing the grille or stretching to reach the back panel. The woofer control really does compensate for different positions—but read the instructions carefully to be sure that you understand the definitions of  $\pi$ ,  $2\pi$ , and  $4\pi$  space; incorrect adjustments can severely compromise the speaker.

With correct adjustment the sound of the  $10\pi$  is satisfying indeed. The excellent stereo imaging holds up well even when the speakers are quite far apart. The sound is

very transparent and retains much of the vibrant quality one associates with live music, particularly when an amplifier with substantial peak headroom drives the speakers: say approaching the AR's  $23\frac{1}{2}$ -dBW (225-watt) power rating. Due largely to the unusual absence of coloration, we enjoyed the  $10\pi$ s as much with rock music and jazz as we did with classical music, and that is rare with bookshelf speakers—which the  $10\pi$  is, though the shelf must be heavy-duty. AR has, in our opinion, thoroughly vindicated its claim of accuracy.

The  $10\pi$  certainly cannot be called inexpensive, but its price seems on a par with its performance. And if you are certain you will use only the  $2\pi$  mode, it might pay to audition the AR-11, which uses the same drivers and is adjusted for that positioning. Its performance should be similar, at a considerable cost saving.

CIRCLE 132 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## Manufacturers' Comment

**We invite rebuttal from those who produce the equipment we review. The comments printed here are culled from those responses.**

**Shure M-615AS Equalization Analyzer System (May 1977):** It has been demonstrated that under most circumstances the smoothed frequency response, created at the sound system's equalizer with the aid of the M-615AS, should include some gradual high-frequency rolloff for most natural sound quality. There are two major reasons: the predictable differences between the response characteristics of the microphone used with the M-615AS and that of the ear; and the response of recording-studio monitor systems, which typically includes some high-frequency rolloff. For the reproduction system to match the tonal balance created in the studio, this rolloff must be included in the equalization.

It is suggested—for high fidelity as well as sound-reinforcement applications—that the Equalization Analyzer first be set with the analyzer in the ROLLOFF mode to give a smooth equalizer response curve, flat at low frequencies and rolled off at 3 dB per octave above 1 kHz. Since studio monitors are not standardized, some further adjustment by ear, using tone controls, may be needed to change the rolloff slope for altered brightness without affecting the smoothness created by the equalizer. If, using this method, excessive treble boost is required for proper high-frequency clarity, the equalizer adjustment may then be repeated in the FLAT mode.

We recommend this touchup by ear over any attempt to compensate for published microphone response characteristics as such. The response averaging inherent in octave-band pink-noise equalization makes response variations such as those shown for the ES-615 microphone of no practical consequence. In addition, control calibrations on most equalizers may not be sufficiently accurate to make the small adjustments mentioned without significant error.

Finally, the current price of the M-615AS is \$514.80—a cost that might be shared by groups of audiophiles or borne by high fidelity dealers who then make it available to audiophiles as a service.

WILLIAM R. BEVAN  
Shure Brothers, Inc.

**HF replies:** While the price is \$200 less than we had been given to understand at the time of preparing our review, the unit still is not cheap, and Mr. Bevan's suggestions about cost-sharing are well taken. If a dealer were to offer the M-615AS for rental or to include its use free with the purchase of a pair of speakers plus an appropriate equalizer, we would expect him to have many takers.

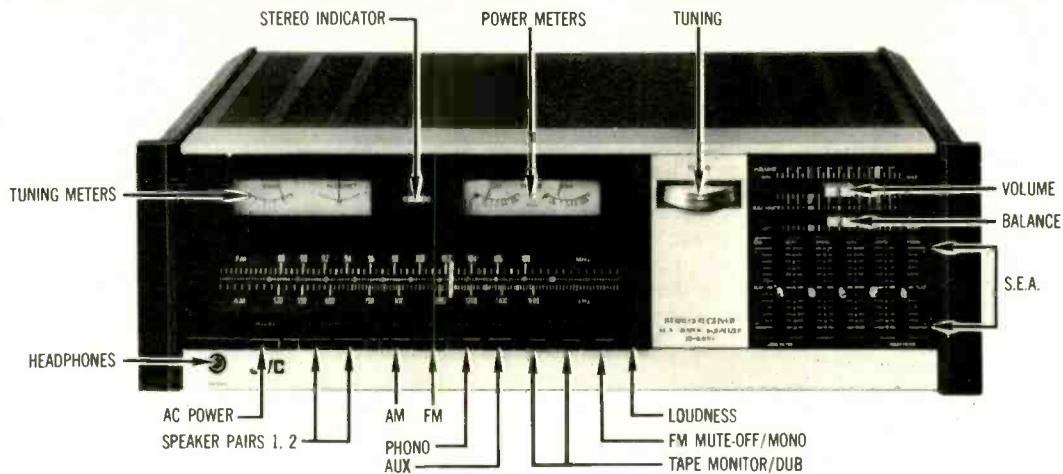
*The following comment came to us from the designer, rather than the manufacturer, of the product.*

**Sonic Energy Systems' Paradox TA-12 loudspeaker system (March 1977):** You correctly surmise that the ability of the TA-12 "to distinguish clearly between direct and reverberant sound in a recording," which you mention in your excellent review, is not due "to phase coherency alone." The Time-Align Technique causes the fundamental and the overtones of a complex transient to be accurately aligned at the first instant it is heard and—since it corrects for time offset *in addition to* phase nonlinearity—should be considered separately from the argument over the importance of phase to the quality of reproduced sound. A loudspeaker could be phase-corrected and still have a tweeter that "speaks" two, three, or more complete cycles ahead of the woofer, because phase is a steady-state condition related to frequency—or so it would appear to a designer using only square-wave reproduction as a criterion. The Time-Align Technique is a real-time design method that utilizes proprietary instrumentation and allows the driver placement and network parameters to be adjusted simultaneously to achieve near-perfect alignment of the components of a complex transient signal, as heard by a listener.

Also, the term Time-Align and its derivatives are trademarks of our company.

EDWARD M. LONG  
E. M. Long Associates

**HF replies:** The initial capital letters in tradenames and other proprietary phrases, as used by HF and other publications, specify the proprietariness (by treating them like proper nouns) but not the source to which they are proprietary. Thus Mylar recording tape made by Ampex uses a proprietary brand (Mylar) of polyester (the generic) as the base material. But Mylar is a Du Pont (not Ampex) tradename; similarly, Time-Align is the trademark of E. M. Long Associates, which licensed it—and the speaker design as well—to Sonic Energy for the TA-12 and other speaker systems.



## A "Twistless" Receiver from JVC

**The Equipment:** JVC Model JR-S300 integrated stereo FM/AM receiver in wood case. Dimensions: 6 5/16 by 19-11/16 inches (front panel); 13 3/16 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$399.95. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Victor Co., Japan; U.S. distributor: JVC America, Inc., 58-75 Queens Midtown Exp., Maspeth, N.Y. 11378.

**Comment:** One striking characteristic of the current JVC receiver line is its total avoidance of conventional rotary controls; a second (which seems more important) is that each model offers the audiophile a super-flexible tone-control section in the form of a five-band SEA equalizer. In the JR-S300, JVC adds to this a good tuner and a medium-powered amplifier in a package that is attractive in both price and appearance.

The equalizer uses JVC's Semiconductor-L active-equalizer elements that eschew conventional coil inductors. Its five bands have their center frequencies at 40 Hz, 250 Hz, 1 kHz, 5 kHz, and 15 kHz. JVC claims a maximum 12-dB boost or cut in each of the bands, which the tests verify almost precisely. Each band is controlled by a slider with thirteen detented positions in 2-dB steps. While outrigger equalizers typically offer a greater number of bands, we regard JVC's five-band system as adequate for most applications and a darned sight better than simple tone controls. Even a boost as modest as 2 dB in the 5-kHz band does wonders to the presence of a distantly miked disc.

Sensitivity of the tuner section is a shade below average, but the quieting curve is quite steep and reaches 50 dB with an input of 15 dBf in mono and just under 38 dBf in stereo. Thus, the JR-S300 has enough sensitivity for most installations short of deep-fringe areas.

Stereo switching occurs at 25 dBf, at which point quieting of 39 dB is achieved. A single button controls both interstation muting and stereo/mono selection, and as a result the mute always remains on in the auto-stereo mode and off in the mono-only mode. We find this a minor annoyance but one that we can live with. The S/N ratio at a 65-dBf input is an adequate 62 dB in stereo and only 2 dB better in mono.

The capture ratio and alternate-channel selectivity reported by CBS are ample for relatively uncongested areas. The total harmonic distortion figures are better than we would expect to find and approach those of more expensive receivers. The rise in distortion at 10-kHz in the stereo mode, fairly common in tuner sections, is better controlled than average in the JR-S300.

The frequency response is virtually the same in either mono or stereo—within 1 dB of flat from 35 Hz to 10 kHz and rolling off rapidly above 11 kHz as the 19-kHz filter comes into play. Stereo separation is very good—35 dB or better out to 10 kHz.

The amplifier section of the JR-S300 meets its specs with room to spare and has an extra dB of headroom before clipping occurs. At rated output of 17 dBW (50 watts) per channel, THD remains below 0.15% at all audio frequencies. At 10 dBW, the THD is 0.10% or less and, at -3 dBW, lower yet—0.05% or less. The lab measurements substantially verify the IM spec (0.3% into 8 ohms at rated power). The damping factor of 45 is sufficient to control any loudspeaker.

There are no rumble or scratch filters as such since the equalizer can be used for these purposes. With the 15-kHz slider set for maximum cut, the response is down 3 dB at 5,300 Hz and 12 dB at 15 kHz. Although the response rises again above 15 kHz, we find the control fairly effective in reducing hiss. The 40-Hz slider can be pressed into service as a low filter but not without removing a good bit of the music as well. At its minimum position, its response is down 3 dB at 220 Hz. (We suggest that better over-all results might be achieved by setting the 40-Hz slider at minimum and then using a judicious boost on the 250-Hz control.)

The phono preamp is exceptionally fine. The noise level is low (70 dB below rated output or -82 dB with respect to a 10-millivolt input); the equalization is excellent; the overload point is up there at 200 millivolts. The sensitivity is adequate for all but the most inefficient pickups. The sensitivity and noise levels of the high-level inputs are also very good.

The JR-S300 will handle two tape decks, with dubbing possible only from TAPE 1 to TAPE 2. The TAPE 1 inputs can also be used to hitch up an external noise-reduction unit. The preamp output connects to the main amp input via a jumper. By removing the links, one can connect additional processing equipment into the chain or—with the optional RU-1 SEA Recording Adapter—a tape deck can be connected at this point so that the graphic equalizer will tailor the signal prior to recording.

The signal strength and center tuning meters are sufficiently sensitive and generous in size to make tuning a breeze despite the relatively short tuning dial. Stations snap out of mute decisively and with only a minor transient. A pair of output power meters, calibrated in watts into an 8-ohm load, use a wide-range scale, with calibra-

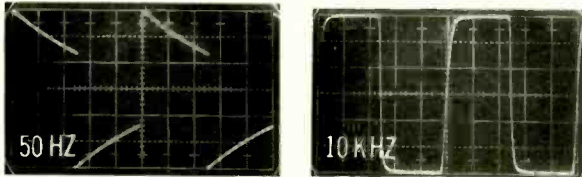


tion points from 0.25 watt (-6 dBW) to 50 watts (17 dBW).

Antenna options include the typical ferrite bar AM antenna or an external long-wire type. FM antenna connections for both 75-ohm coaxial cable and 300-ohm twinlead are available, and there are (via spring-loaded terminals that accept bared wires) connections for two pairs of speakers.

As you might have gathered, our over-all impression of the JR-S300 is very favorable. The tuner, the weakest section of this middle-of-the-line receiver, should be quite satisfactory for most home installations. Couple that with a fairly powerful amplifier, a five-band graphic equalizer, and an excellent preamp, and the JR-S300 looks quite competitive in its price class.

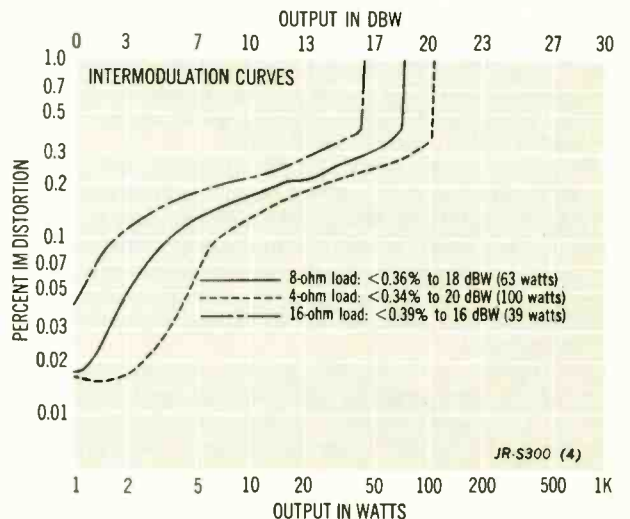
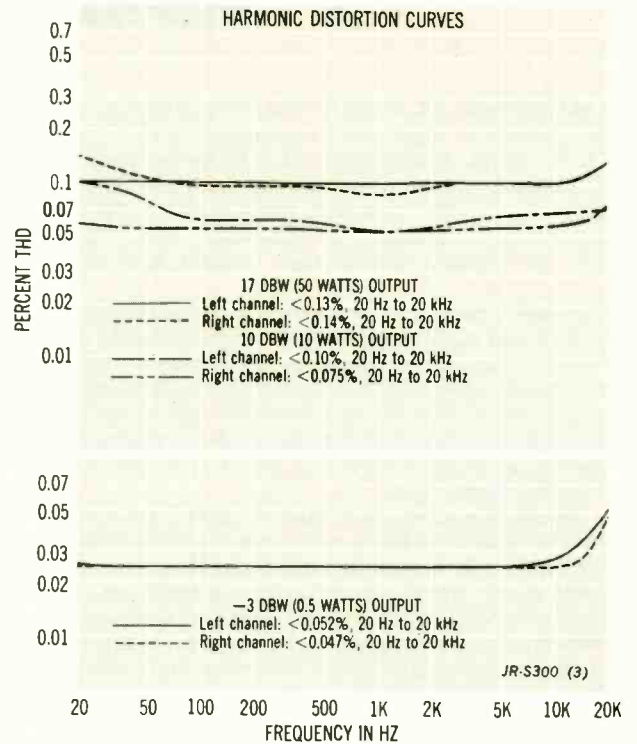
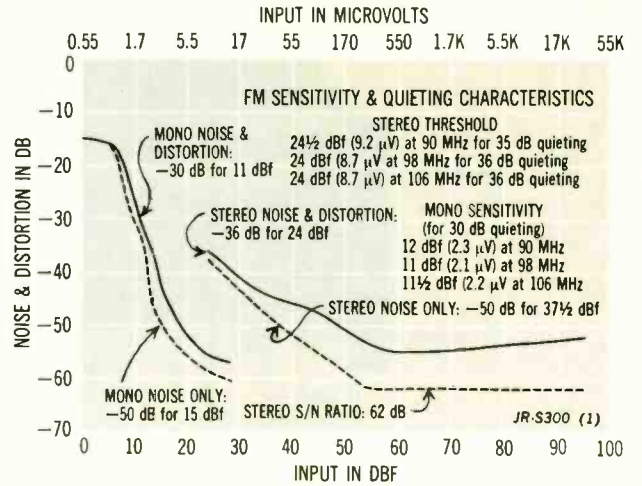
CIRCLE 133 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Square-wave response

### JVC Model JR-S300 Receiver Additional Data

| Tuner Section                                             |                                  |          |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Capture ratio                                             | 2½ dB                            |          |           |
| Alternate-channel selectivity                             | 62 dB                            |          |           |
| S/N ratio (mono)                                          | 64 dB                            |          |           |
| THD                                                       | Mono                             | L ch     | R ch      |
| 80 kHz                                                    | 0.15%                            | 0.20%    | 0.32%     |
| 1 kHz                                                     | 0.14%                            | 0.15%    | 0.16%     |
| 10 kHz                                                    | 0.18%                            | 1.2%     | 1.3%      |
| IM distortion                                             | 0.24%                            |          |           |
| 19-kHz pilot                                              | -65 dB                           |          |           |
| 38-kHz subcarrier                                         | -60 dB                           |          |           |
| Frequency response                                        |                                  |          |           |
| mono                                                      | +1, -3 dB, 20 Hz to 11 kHz       |          |           |
| L ch                                                      | +½, -3 dB, 20 Hz to 11 kHz       |          |           |
| R ch                                                      | +1, -3 dB, 20 Hz to 11.5 kHz     |          |           |
| Channel separation                                        | >40 dB, 250 Hz to 6.5 kHz        |          |           |
|                                                           | >30 dB, 20 Hz to 11 kHz          |          |           |
| Amplifier Section                                         |                                  |          |           |
| Power output at clipping (channels driven simultaneously) |                                  |          |           |
| L ch                                                      | 18¼ dBW (77 watts) for 0.3% THD  |          |           |
| R ch                                                      | 18¼ dBW (77 watts) for 0.3% THD  |          |           |
| Frequency response                                        | +0, -¼ dB, 30 Hz to 30 kHz       |          |           |
|                                                           | +0, -3 dB, below 10 Hz to 80 kHz |          |           |
| RIAA equalization                                         | +¼, -½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz       |          |           |
| Input characteristics (for rated output at full gain)     |                                  |          |           |
|                                                           | Sensitivity                      | Noise    | S/N ratio |
| phono                                                     | 2.5 mV                           | -53 dBW  | 70 dB     |
| aux                                                       | 180 mV                           | -74½ dBW | 91½ dB    |
| tape 1, 2                                                 | 180 mV                           | -73½ dBW | 90½ dB    |
| Phono overload (clipping point)                           | 200 mV at 1 kHz                  |          |           |
| Damping factor at 1 kHz                                   | 44½                              |          |           |





## Elac PC-870 Has Belt Drive—and More

**The Equipment:** Elac PC-870, a two-speed (33 and 45 rpm) turntable with integral arm, supplied with wooden base and hinged dust cover. Dimensions: 18½ by 14½ inches; 6¼ inches high with cover closed, 17½ inches fully open. Price: \$219.95. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Elac Electroacoustic, W. Germany; U.S. distributor: Adcom, 114 E. 32nd St., New York, N.Y. 10016.

**Comment:** Claiming the longest effective arm length of any integrated turntable on the market, the Elac PC-870 tops the line of this well-respected German manufacturer. It is a two-speed model using a combination belt and rim drive and purportedly encompassing the best features of each. This ingenious belt-drive-plus design manages to provide both speeds with vernier controls, working from a single constant-speed AC motor. A narrow rubber idler engages the motor shaft and rotates a pulley that is then belt-coupled to an inner rim of the platter. Raising or lowering the idler so that it contacts the appropriate section of the motor shaft determines the speed; a slight taper in each of these two sections permits the fine tuning—simply, elegantly, and effectively.

This is a fully automatic single-disc player. On startup the arm positions itself automatically in the lead-in groove of a 12-inch disc (at 33 rpm) or that of a 7-inch disc (at 45). You can adjust the setdown point at the arm pivot. The PC-870 continues to repeat the record side until you press the stop bar, at which time the arm returns to rest and the system shuts off. Actuating the cue lever raises and lowers the tone arm in a fairly rapid but well-damped manner; the arm returns one to two grooves early. You also can adjust the cue height to accommodate a variety of cartridges.

The arm is a straight, low-mass tubular design with an offset, removable headshell. Mounting the cartridge and adjusting it for overhang is quite simple. The mounting screws slip through slots in the headshell so that the pickup can be slid back and forth to set the stylus position. With the tone arm locked in its rest, the optimum stylus position is indicated by a conical gauge that pulls up out of the turntable base. Move the cartridge in its slotted mount until the stylus lines up with the tip of the gauge, tighten, and this critical adjustment is complete.

The arm mounts in ball-bearing raceways whose pivot friction is negligible. A two-section counterweight balances the system: The main counterweight clicks into a detent, while a second section slides over the first to provide fine adjustment. Achievement of balance is problem-free, if not quite as easy as on tone arms with screw-type counterweights.

The stylus force gauge, calibrated from 0 to 3 grams in ¼-gram increments, is quite accurate, the measured force being 0.1 gram higher than indicated. Two sets of calibrations are included in the antiskating control—one for spherical styli, the other for elliptical and CD-4 styli. With a Shure V-15 Type III cartridge, the tone arm resonance is fairly well situated at 7 Hz and very well damped, exhibiting only a 1-dB rise. With this combination, the PC-870 should be above average in ability to track warped records.

Once set for 120 volts in the line current, the platter speed remains exact for either 33 or 45 rpm at 105 and 127 volts, though changing from one speed to the other does require a touchup with the vernier. The well-illuminated hole pattern on the outer flange of the platter conveniently acts as a strobe. The vernier range is fully adequate; about a semitone is provided: -1.7% to +3.8% at 33, -1.8% to +5.0% at 45 in the lab's sample.

The maximum weighted peak flutter is exceptionally good at ±0.06%, with the average readings lower than that (±0.04%). Rumble, at -58½ dB using the ARLL weighting, is passable.

Setting up a turntable is generally a do-it-yourself job. Without a really good instruction book, it's also an exercise in frustration. Elac's three-language manual is all right if you ignore statements addressed only to the European market—our sample did *not* come with the Elac cartridge already mounted, nor did it come with a five-pin DIN plug (it mercifully had RCA plugs), nor was it meant for 50-Hz operation. Here's a case where too literal a reading will mislead. But that aside, setup is simple and took us less than half an hour.

The PC-870 proves that it is indeed possible to attain excellent speed stability and low flutter without resorting to a direct-drive system—that is, with engineering as imaginative as Elac's.

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more formularized, safer fare: "When I discovered jazz—I was about eleven or twelve—it sort of coincided with the time when rock & roll was losing a lot of its vitality. It had been taken over, and there were a lot of white groups. I don't know if I was conscious of what was at work there; in fact, I probably didn't connect it to a racial thing."

He refers to the jazz he heard on late-night radio stations in New York as "my lifeline to urban life." His first jazz LP was "probably the first jazz record a lot of people got, a Dave Brubeck record, 'Dave Brubeck at Newport, 1958'—a great album, which I still have." Brubeck led to Miles Davis and his seminal '50s quartet and quintet records, and then to Sonny Rollins, Monk, Mingus, and beyond.

It's no accident that "The Nightfly" begins at about this point in jazz history, or that its title character, Lester the Nightfly, is Fagen's wry but fond composite of those wee-hours deejays he listened to, and portrays in the cover portrait. "I was born in 1948," he says. "In '58, the International Geophysical Year, I was ten years old. I sort of started [the record] in that year and covered the territory up to about the Kennedy era."

*I. G. Y.*, the opening track and first single, is a sharply rendered portrait of the technological optimism and underlying ideological turmoil that reverberated during that global celebration of post-war science. From there, Fagen proceeds to offer personalized vignettes punctuated by carefully chosen details of the culture at hand. He also provides glimpses of the era's mores: Romantic encounters are edged with dewy innocence, sex is spicy and forbidden, confined to exotic fantasies set in far-off lands or back alleys.

The music, too, bears evidence of the age, although here Fagen's handiwork is less obvious since Steely Dan's later albums incorporated prominent elements of post-war pop and jazz. Still, such references have been sharpened to fulfill his goal of "mating the lyrics stylistically to the period, and the music as well."

*Walk Between Raindrops*, for instance, is built around a swinging, husky Hammond organ that Fagen plays with the right mix of fluid jazz attack and r&b-derived momentum, pointing directly to the soul-jazz combos of Jimmy Smith and Jack McDuff: "The organ at the studio where we were working was very funky sounding, which is unusual. I think it was broken, which is probably why it sounds so good."

*The Goodbye Look* mates the gallows humor of its exotic fantasy of Caribbean revolution with an outright samba, an observation that extracts a chuckle from Fagen. "I love bossa nova," he admits, going on to cite the early '60s recordings of Luis Bonfá, Astrud Gilberto, and their peers for their "delicacy." He also offers a

surprising insight into his singing when he cites an array of favorite vocalists like Frank Sinatra and Mose Allison ("he was an influence on the phrasing") and singles out Brazilian vocalists for their studied lack of vibrato and offhand precision.

But Fagen asserts that while the arrangements and lyrics consciously refer back to that era, his solo vocals aren't deliberately altered from his usual approach. Still, on the coolly longing *Maxine* and Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller's 1955 gem *Ruby Baby*, Donald Fagen is unquestionably a crooner.

"I think that's basically the way my voice sounds superimposed over those sorts of changes," he suggests. And what changes. Both songs use close intervals and chromatic relationships seldom heard in contemporary pop. He confirms that their rich choral backdrops are "takes on typical four- and five-part harmony of the period."

The chromaticism is especially strik-

ing on *Ruby Baby*, best known to most listeners from Dion's early '60s version. As it turns out, Fagen hadn't even heard that recording until after he cut his own. "I sort of based it on the Drifters' version," he says. "I threw in a lot of other jazz chords and basically made it sound like a big, r&b party situation. But it has a lot of dissonance—it's pretty strange, in a way."

"I love the lyrics," he continues, referring to the protagonist's determination to win his indifferent love object. "That song really fit in with the concept because it's very innocent."

Innocence may, in fact, be the quiet bombshell in "The Nightfly," the single most pronounced shift in tone from the Steely Dan recordings. Fagen agrees that, in that respect, the Dan was antiromantic. "I was more concerned with first love," he says of this album, "which is part of growing up. There are some extremely idealized versions of high school romance here."

(Continued on page 89)

## Recording "The Nightfly": Digital Success

ENTER ANY HIGH-END audio salon to audition new equipment, and it's a safe bet one of the fixtures in its record collection will be Steely Dan's "Aja" or "Gaucho." Donald Fagen's "The Nightfly" maintains the high technical quality of those discs, yet it does differ from the band's past efforts in two respects: First, it represents Fagen's and longtime Dan producer Gary Katz's oft-discussed interest in using digital technology; second, and less obviously, the album arrived much closer to its projected delivery date than Fagen's collaborations with Walter Becker. Midway through these sessions, an ebullient Katz reported Fagen was on schedule, and the early word among musicians on both coasts confirmed the project's heartening momentum.

Fagen now says "The Nightfly" was not without its headaches, however, chief among them the decision to take the digital path. Concern over the delicate maintenance requirements of multichannel digital gear previously had led Fagen, Katz, and Becker to abandon their original plan of cutting "Gaucho" digitally.

"I was pretty wary this time, too," says Fagen. "On several occasions, I was ready to transfer to analog and give it up, but my engineering staff would keep talking me into it." "The Nightfly" was recorded and mixed on 3M's 32-track and 4-track digital recorders. Working in New York at Soundworks Digital Audio/Video Recording Studios and Automated Sound, as well as in Los Angeles at Village Recorders, most of the recording's gremlins were rooted in maintenance. "The machine was up on the rack a lot," says Fagen, "although toward the end we were using it with total

freedom from problems. It's a matter of getting to know the machine and not abusing it.

"They need a lot of maintenance. If you really take care of them, there are no problems; the problem is finding out how to take care of them."

The solution was to send three members of the technical staff, including chief engineer Roger Nichols, to 3M's Minnesota headquarters to take courses in how to operate and maintain the system. "They stayed in a sleazy motel, went to classes in the daytime, and came back knowing how to work it," reports Fagen.

Now he feels "it's a preferable way to record." Sony has expressed interest in using the album for transfers to both its Compact Disc (see page 50) and digital cassette formats for hardware demonstrations at upcoming audio trade shows.

In other respects, "The Nightfly" reflects the same meticulous studio approach used by Steely Dan. The players were, as usual, culled from the cream of both coasts and include such alumni as Larry Carlton, Rick Derringer, Hugh McCracken, Jeff Porcaro, Ed Green, Chuck Rainey, Rob Mounsey, and Greg Phillinganes, among many others.

As for the front man, who continues to claim he usually prefers keyboard players other than himself (on this project, Phillinganes and Michael Omartian), Fagen did take center-mix on piano, electric piano, organ, and synthesizer on various tracks. And on the lush ballad *Maxine*, his renowned one-man chorus reaches a new zenith in its deft overdubbing and close harmonies.

S.S.

# Dynavector 20-B— a Computer-Designed Moving-Coil Pickup



**The Equipment:** Dynavector 20-B moving-coil phono pickup with Shibata stylus. Price: \$189. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Onlife Research, Japan; U.S. distributor: Audioanalyst, Inc., P.O. Box 262, Brookfield, Conn. 06804.

**Comment:** Whether or not moving-coil phono pickups ever can capture a major part of the high-end U.S. audio market it is too early to say, but recent months have seen these erstwhile exotica become far more readily available. Lately we have been amazed at how many exhibitors at audio shows play their demo discs with moving-coil cartridges. Up to now the distinguishing characteristics of these transducers have included low output (requiring the use of a transformer or additional amplification), styli replaceable only by the factory, low compliance, high tracking force, high price—and their reputedly excellent sound. But recent changes in technology have made possible moving-coil designs free of some of the inconveniences. The Dynavector 20-B, like a few competing models we have seen, has sufficient output to drive a conventional magnetic phono input directly.

Another feature of the Dynavector (again, it is not unique in this respect) is its use of a Shibata stylus even though it is not intended primarily for CD-4 use. The Shibata, originally designed to spread a necessarily high tracking force over as wide an area of the disc vinyl as possible, makes a particularly happy marriage with a cartridge of relatively high mass that tracks at somewhat higher than average forces.

Since the instructions accompanying the cartridge give no preferred load impedance, the CBS Technology Center used 47,000 ohms in parallel with 300 picofarads, which is representative of a normal phono input. A Dynavector spokesman has indicated to us that 47,000 is an acceptable load (the cartridge output impedance of about 100 ohms makes capacitance in the picofarad range virtually negligible) but that 10,000 ohms gives a subtle improve-

ment. Subtle seems rather an understatement, as tests repeated with a load of 8,000 ohms show no discernible differences from the 47,000-ohm data. (As we shall see, loads of about 100 ohms do make some difference.)

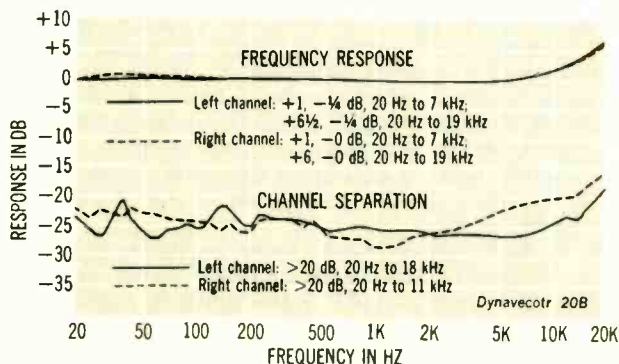
The recommended vertical tracking force is 1.5 grams with a tolerance of  $\pm 0.3$  gram. In the lab, reliable tracking was not achieved at less than 1.4 grams; yet at 1.5 grams the unit seems capable of tracking everything we can find to challenge it. As far as we are concerned, 1.5 grams is it; forget about the tolerance—unless some peculiarity of your equipment dictates the use of a slightly higher tracking force.

Measuring just over 2 millivolts for a modulation level of 3.54 cm/sec at 1 kHz, the output level is sufficient for practically any magnetic phono input. The match between channels is close to 1 dB. In practice the signal-to-noise ratio attainable with the Dynavector is higher than the numbers suggest, as the low source impedance is very close to the condition (usually a short circuit) under which a phono stage develops minimum noise.

The almost spectacular cleanliness of the sound of this cartridge led us to expect extremely low distortion measurements. The CBS figures, however, are little better than what we have come to expect from the average high-quality cartridge—an instance in which the connection between measured data and psychoacoustic effect is unclear. Frequency response is within 1 dB of flat to about 8 kHz, after which there is a rise to a peak of about +6 dB in the region between 20 and 30 kHz. Useful output extends to 50 kHz, which is more than adequate for CD-4.

Channel separation is 20 dB or better right down to the low bass and reaches 25 dB at 1 kHz. It tends to diminish slowly with rising frequency beyond this point but remains better than 15 dB to 20 kHz. Square-wave response shows rapid rise and fall with moderate overshoot and some ultrasonic ringing. In the SME-3009 tone arm, the low-frequency resonance is very well placed at 9.0 Hz, which is what one would expect from a fairly noncompliant cartridge. The stylus tip, which meets the disc surface at an unusual 29-degree angle, measures 8.8 by 14.6 micrometers and is excellent in polish, shape, and orientation.

The sound of the Dynavector 20-B is nothing if not clear, detailed, and crisp. Some of that is attributable to its beryllium cantilever. (The 20-A, identical except for an aluminum cantilever, is a little less crisp.) The high-frequency peak gives a polite tweak of extra brightness to cymbals, drums, brasses, and higher strings. Interestingly, loading the cartridge with 100 ohms per channel smooths the highs out quite a lot while lowering the output by perhaps 2 dB. Whether you will wish to take this step or not (assuming you are equipped to do so) is largely a matter of taste; for us the choice often depended on the recording we were listening to.

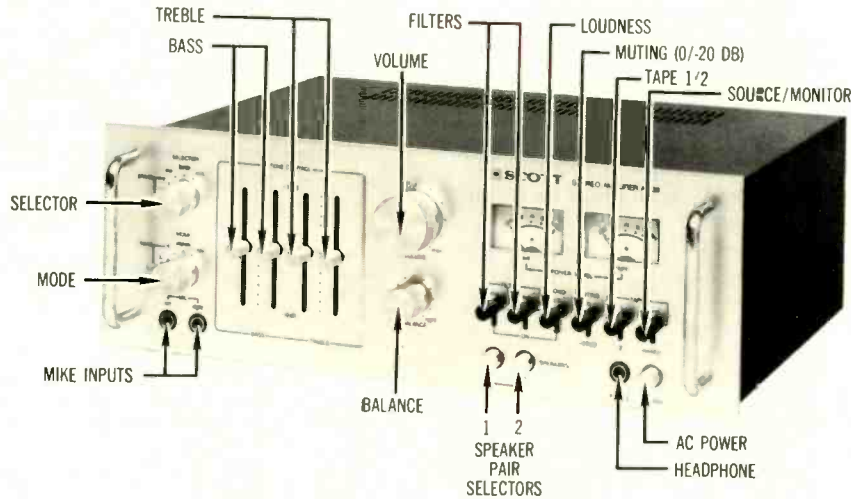




We cannot recall a stereo image more precise and well defined than that of the 20-B. The sound sources are securely fixed in place, with none of the tendency to dither back and forth slightly that we so often encounter. The clever little knack this cartridge (or its stylus) has for finding a reasonably clean surface in a well-worn groove lets it extract more goodies from your older records than you

might have imagined were there. The price is steep (the Dynavector 20-A is about \$40 cheaper), but if you have a lot invested in a high-quality system, there are few changes you can make for the cost of a 20-B that will offer such a sparkling new perspective on the records you already own.

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## “Pro” Styling, Features in an Integrated Scott

**The Equipment:** Scott Model A-436 integrated amplifier in wood case. Dimensions: 5½ by 15¾ inches (front panel); 12¾ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$299.95. Warranty: “limited,” three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: H. H. Scott, Inc., 20 Commerce Way, Woburn, Mass. 01801.

**Comment:** At the top of the Scott three-model amplifier line stands the A-436, a reasonably priced, medium-power integrated amp with “professional” styling. Its “unmatched pair” mate is the Scott T-526 tuner. Unusual in an amplifier of this price is the inclusion of dual output meters and separate bass and treble tone-control sliders for

each channel. The meters use a wide-range logarithmic scale, calibrated in percent of rated power output with 100% corresponding to full power: 42 watts (16¼ dBW) per channel. The calibrations descend in decades down to 0.001% of the maximum rating: the equivalent of -23¼ dBW, or 4.2 milliwatts.

The various inputs are selected via a five-position rotary switch in conjunction with a pair of two-position levers—one to choose between the two tape-deck inputs, the other to switch between the decks (MONITOR) and the other sources (NORMAL). A DIN input/output jack duplicates the TAPE 1 connections of the typical dual pin-jack array on the back panel. The front-panel mike inputs are phone jacks.

### About the dBW . . .

We express output power and noise in terms of dBW—meaning power in dB with a reference (0 dBW) of 1 watt. We repeat herewith the conversion table so that you can use the advantages of dBW in comparing current products with those we have reported on in the past. You can, of course, use the figures in watts that accompany the new dBW figures for these comparisons, but then you lose the ability to compare noise levels for outputs other than rated power and the ability to figure easily the levels to which specific amplifiers will drive specific speakers—as explained in the June 1976 issue. If you do not have that issue and would like a reprint of the full exposition, send 25¢ (U.S.) to: dBW, c/o High Fidelity Magazine, The Publishing House, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230.

| WATTS | dBW | WATTS | dBW | WATTS | dBW |
|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|
| 1.00  | 0   | 10.0  | 10  | 100   | 20  |
| 1.25  | 1   | 12.5  | 11  | 125   | 21  |
| 1.6   | 2   | 16    | 12  | 160   | 22  |
| 2.0   | 3   | 20    | 13  | 200   | 23  |
| 2.5   | 4   | 25    | 14  | 250   | 24  |
| 3.2   | 5   | 32    | 15  | 320   | 25  |
| 4.0   | 6   | 40    | 16  | 400   | 26  |
| 5.0   | 7   | 50    | 17  | 500   | 27  |
| 6.3   | 8   | 63    | 18  | 630   | 28  |
| 8.0   | 9   | 80    | 19  | 800   | 29  |

You can wire two sets of speakers to push-to-insert color-coded posts designed for bared wires. Either left or right signals can be routed to both channels via the MODE switch, or they can be paralleled (normal mono) or reversed in connection (reverse stereo).

The output transistors of each channel are protected with a quick-blow 3½-amp fuse—which can be replaced by one of lower capacity when you use speakers whose power capacity is below the output capability of the A-436. You can disconnect the main amp from the preamp by removing jumpers on the rear panel; auxiliary equipment, such as a graphic equalizer, can thus be inserted into the system. Each of the two convenience outlets—one of them unswitched—is rated at 150 watts maximum.

Lab data taken at CBS Technology Center indicate that the Scott meets its power output ratings with a bit to spare. At the rated output the THD is below 0.11% across the board. IM distortion also stays below 0.11% from -9 dBW (½ watt) to +16½ dBW (44 watts) into an 8-ohm load. Into 4 and 16 ohms, the amp delivers better than 15 dBW (31½ watts) at comparable distortion. The damping factor of 40 is more than adequate.

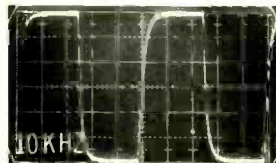
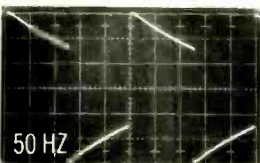
The frequency response and the accuracy of phono equalization are well within specs, and the noise levels are adequately low. From the phono input, the noise is 77¼ dB below a 10-millivolt input reference. Although the input sensitivities appear adequate for normal cartridges, tuners, and decks, they are low enough that you might be operating the volume control above midpoint for reasonably loud reproduction. The phono overload point should be sufficient to avoid clipping with normal cartridges and discs, but it is not exceptional.

The tone-control circuitry is of the typical Baxandall type, and the curves are similar to those of many amplifiers we have tested. The low filter slopes off gently (6 dB per octave), with a very high cutoff frequency (200 Hz); it certainly eliminates the effect of record warps but with it, unfortunately, much of the music's underpinning. The high filter (also 6 dB per octave) has a cutoff frequency (8.5 kHz) too high to do a really effective job on a noisy disc or tape.

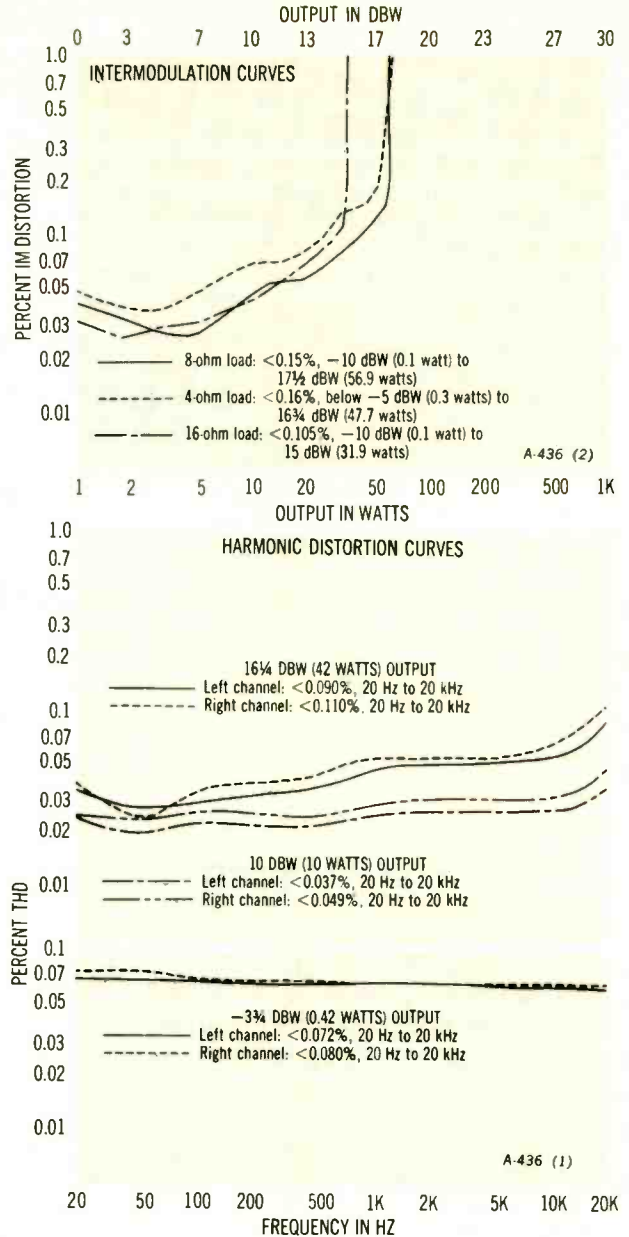
While the A-436 does not include a delay circuit to protect the speakers from turnon transients, it powers up smoothly; its "thumps" should prove innocuous to typical speakers. Switching between inputs is notably noise-free, and the residual noise from the phono input can barely be heard right at the speaker. We find it unnoticeable at listening positions. We experienced no signs of phono input overload using a Pickering XUV/4500Q and, over-all, would give high marks to the phono preamp section, which is fully comparable with others in this price range.

With 8-ohm speakers of average efficiency the output capability of the A-436 proves adequate to attain fairly loud listening levels in a fair-sized room. During loud passages with such a setup, the output meters peak somewhat above the 10% point. Unless you use speakers of very low efficiency, or multiple pairs of speakers, the A-436 should provide sufficient listening levels under most circumstances—along with some unusual features for an amp of this price class.

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Square-wave response



### Scott A-436 Integrated Amp Additional Data

|                                                           |                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Power output at clipping (channels driven simultaneously) |                                                                 |
| L ch                                                      | 16½ dBW (46 watts) for 0.048% THD                               |
| R ch                                                      | 16¾ dBW (47 watts) for 0.055% THD                               |
| Frequency response                                        | +0, -1¼ dB, 20 Hz to 40 kHz<br>+0, -3 dB, below 10 Hz to 60 kHz |
| RIAA equalization                                         | +½, -2 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz                                      |
| Input characteristics (for rated output at full gain)     |                                                                 |
|                                                           | Sensitivity    Noise    S/N ratio                               |
| phono 1, 2                                                | 3.6 mV    -52¼ dBW    69 dB                                     |
| mike                                                      | 5.3 mV    -57¾ dBW    74 dB                                     |
| tuner, aux                                                | 170 mV    -64¾ dBW    81 dB                                     |
| Phono overload (clipping point)                           | 60 mV at 1 kHz                                                  |
| Damping factor at 1 kHz                                   | 40                                                              |
| High filter                                               | -3 dB at 8.5 kHz; 6 dB/oct.                                     |
| Low filter                                                | -3 dB at 200 Hz; 6 dB/oct.                                      |



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Our Master I cassette is for normal bias recording. It features an excellent dynamic range, low distortion, uniform high frequency sensitivity and output that's 10 dB more than standard tapes.

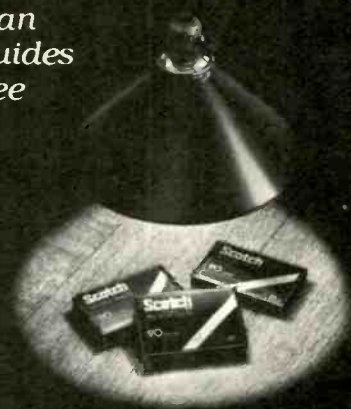
Our new Master II replaces chrome cassettes and is designed for use on hi-fi stereo systems with chrome bias (70 microsecond equalization). It features some spectacular performance characteristics, including a special coating that gives it a 3 dB better signal-to-noise ratio at low and high frequencies than chrome cassettes, yet it's less abrasive.

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**3M**  
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**Scotch Recording Tape.**  
The truth comes out.

by Robert Long and Harold A. Rodgers

# Get the **Noise** Out of Your System

The burgeoning noise-reduction field now includes products that attempt to prevent pops and clicks, as well as hiss and hash, from marring your musical enjoyment.

THE RELATION BETWEEN audible noise in music systems and equipment designed to combat it might be compared to that between sickness and medicine—it would be preferable if the former did not exist and the latter were unnecessary. Nevertheless, because of the ubiquity of the problem, it behooves us to understand such countermeasures as are available, even if they seldom seem to restore an absolutely pristine state of affairs. Since our last look at this subject (in March 1976) there have been significant changes: New equipment has appeared, some has been upgraded, and some has fallen by the wayside. More types of noise can be suppressed more effectively than ever before, though less than desirable side effects sometimes remain.

The perception and psychological effect of noise is a complex matter that has, in some key respects, received insufficient attention from scientists. Our own investigations suggest that the listener and his auditory physiology and conditioning are extremely influential factors in the equation. Thus, we—the authors—find that our perceptions don't always agree perfectly in these matters. When we speak of them, therefore, you—the reader—must understand that they may differ from your perceptions as well. And we urge that you use our judgments to hone your own perceptions rather than accepting them as gospel.

## **Burwen DNF-1201A**

The first of the new units we decided to investigate for this report is a noise remover, rather than a noise preventer like the familiar Dolby circuit. That is, it requires no previous "encoding" in the signal chain in order to produce its effect but attacks the high-frequency noise that is so often encountered in normal (nonencoded) signal sources. It is not, however, altogether new. The original

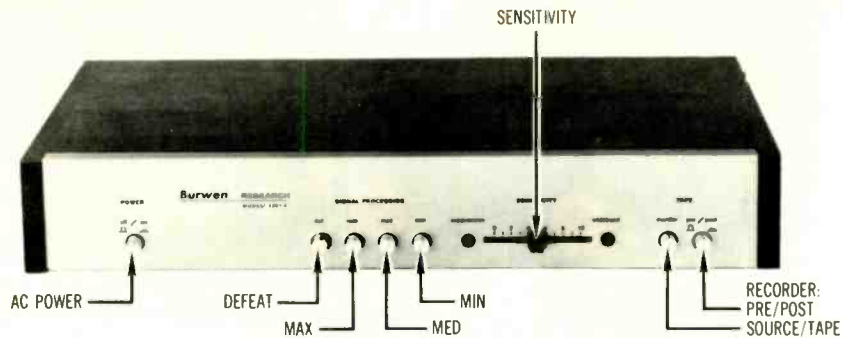
Model DNF-1201 was the subject of a test report in our April 1975 issue. Since then there have been some circuit changes, a thorough facelifting of the cosmetics, and a change in corporate identity: Burwen Labs has become Burwen Research, a subsidiary of KLH.

Basically, Burwen's Dynamic Noise Filter is a variable-bandwidth device that closes down its high end as signal level (particularly in the upper frequencies) drops, so that there is maximum filtering of unmasked high-frequency noise and minimum suppression of high-frequency program content. With high signal levels the DNF is essentially a 30-kHz low-pass filter (having, therefore, no discernible effect on audible frequencies, below 20 kHz); as signal levels are reduced it becomes an adjustable low-pass filter with a slope of 9 dB per octave.

The manual adjustments (as distinct from the automatic adjustment with program content) consist of a horizontal slider to set threshold in conjunction with a pair of LEDs (red for filtering action, green for full 30-kHz bandwidth), a series of buttons for filtration action (MIN, MED, MAX, and OUT), and a pair of buttons for the tape connections. Since Burwen intends the DNF to be connected to a stereo system's tape recording and monitor jacks and the pre-empted tape deck to be outboarded from the Burwen's own jack panel, the MONITOR switch is necessary and the PRE/POST switch a welcome addition. It makes possible the filtration of signals going to the deck for recording or of the playback signals; in most systems the previous model (which didn't even have the MONITOR) could not do both without reconnection.

The three basic control buttons affect both the frequency range to which the control circuitry will respond and the time constants that it will apply in imposing and removing filtration. The MIN and MED buttons feed signals up to 9 kHz to the





control; MAX (which is intended for poor-quality signals in which upper overtones generally are lost in the noise anyway—this setting was designated for 78-rpm discs on the earlier model) cuts off everything above 5 kHz to the control. The control response becomes progressively slower as one switches from MIN to MED to MAX to alleviate audible noise pumping as the quantity of noise increases. Additional settings can be achieved by pressing more than one button simultaneously or by releasing them all (by depressing an out button part way), thus giving the control scheme a great deal of versatility.

So far as memory can be relied on in such phenomena, we find the new version appreciably more efficient than the old in reducing audible noise without introducing unwanted side effects. Among the side effects noted for all such noise removers, particularly as indexes that the unit in question is being used overaggressively, are audible "breathing" or "pumping" of the noise content in response to the signal, and noise that, because it is kept synchronous with the signal, sounds more like distortion or coloration in the signal itself: a certain raspiness or breathiness in a solo voice, for example. The out button makes it easy to tell when this is happening with the Burwen because, with the filter out, the noise is once again perceived as noise and the voice as free of the "defect." The cure: Either adjust the sensitivity control until the remaining noise is removed or, if this introduces excessive muffling of the highs, back off on the control until the noise is only partially filtered and can be perceived as noise.

Our original judgment of this device remains basically the same, however. It is at its best where signal quality already is good—that is, where only relatively small quantities of noise need to be removed. Where noise levels are high the listener must, as with all such units, make a choice between less noise and less side effects.

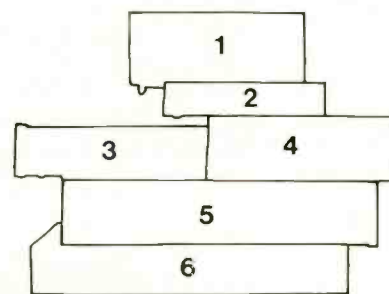
### Source Engineering Noise Suppressor

Like DNF, the Source Noise Suppressor is a dynamic filter, the most striking difference being the filtration slopes. While Burwen uses 9 dB per octave, Source Engineering has a feedback system that produces more complex curves and is capable of cliff-like cutoffs at the bottoms of its control

bands—3 and 7 kHz. The rotary controls (one per channel; we would have preferred a single knob) have positions to defeat the suppressor. The mode switch's interesting array of options includes two filter positions—again, at 3 and 7 kHz.

There are some ancillary units that should be considered along with the Noise Suppressor. If level mismatches inhibit adequate range in the sensitivity controls, you can add the Model M, which can boost or reduce levels passing through the Noise Suppressor by roughly 10 dB without affecting the over-all unity gain of the system. More interesting, however, is the Model UEA phono preamp, which—like the Model M—derives its power through leads that plug into the back of the Noise Suppressor and connect to its power-supply section. The UEA offers a normal RIAA stereo mode for LPs plus a series of settings for mono 78s. All the latter are padded down to compensate for the greater groove velocities encountered in 78s and automatically parallel the two input channels from the pickup.

The UEA preamp, in particular, reveals where Source Engineering (a new company that we had not heard of when we prepared the last article) is at: providing capabilities appropriate for modern signal sources while adding others of unique value to collectors of historical recordings and other "problem" sources. The UEA's adjustments to match the recording equalization of old discs make it, hands down, the best currently available device for playing 78s we know of—a must for all



**On the cover:** (1) Source Engineering Noise Suppressor: \$250 (suggested retail value); (2) MXR Compressor: \$129.95; (3) SAE Impulse Noise Reduction System: \$200; (4) DBX Model 128 Dynamic Range Enhancer and Tape Noise Reduction System: \$450; (5) DBX Model 3BX Three-Band Dynamic Range Extender: \$650; (6) Burwen Research Dynamic Noise Filter Model 1201A: \$379.



collectors. (So are the owner's manuals for both the UEA and the Noise Suppressor, incidentally; they contain information that we have seen nowhere else.) The Model M may come in handy in some situations but certainly is unnecessary with the UEA, whose output already is tailored to the requirements of the Noise Suppressor.

The filter positions of the Noise Suppressor also are extremely valuable for this sort of use. It is astonishing how good a sound can be extracted from worn, scratched, and otherwise virtually unplayable Salvation Army discs with the 3-kHz filter—or, with a better copy, the 7-kHz filter. The key here is the extremely sharp cutoff. It also is the key to the model's dynamic behavior. It can lop off heavy surface scratch like no other noise reducer we've worked with, but a radical change in the program then may produce an equally radical change in the quantity of surface noise that is let through. The results therefore depend heavily on the program. With some orchestral recordings in which levels are fairly consistent, the Noise Suppressor can work wonders; conversely, and especially with "forward" vocal recordings, every musical outburst may trigger passage of noise that was previously suppressed—with disconcerting results.

### The SAE 5000

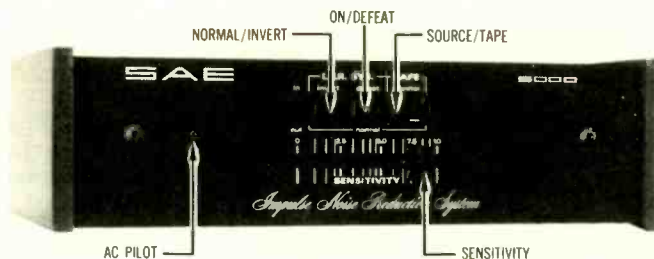
The SAE 5000 is an unusual, not to say unique, antinoise system. As its name—Impulse Noise Reduction System—implies, its targets are the ticks, pops, and crackles that often make phonograph discs sound as if they were recorded at a pistol-firing competition. The unit does this one, special job

and has no discernible effect on hiss or other continuous noise.

The manufacturer is rather reticent in describing how the system distinguishes the interfering "spikes" of noise from the music but does disclose that rapid fall time, as well as rapid rise time, is one of the decisive factors. Having "identified" a noise pulse, the 5000 closes a "gate" in the audio signal path to bypass a time-delay circuit and inserts information to smooth over the omitted moment in which the noise pulse occurred. The pop that initiated this activity is thus suppressed and replaced by a tiny segment of music, which is automatically "spliced" in from elsewhere. The material used to make the patch, therefore, is heard twice in extremely rapid succession.

Unlike some equipment that is fine at reducing moderate noise but less competent when the noise is severe, the SAE does its best job (which is very good indeed) with the worst spikes. This is ostensibly because the "decision" that the system must make—is this pulse music or noise?—is most clear-cut when the interference is grossest. Under those circumstances, the sensitivity control can be set to leave the music relatively intact and the spikes virtually absent.

It is when the spikes are fairly gentle (and hence more like music) that problems begin to arise. Now a fairly critical adjustment of the sensitivity control is needed to prevent the system from censoring bona fide transients. To make this easier, SAE has included an INVERT function that lets the user hear the material that is removed from the program. Interpreting the contents of the sonic trash heap thus uncovered is not a simple matter, for the rapid switching of the decision circuitry makes





just about everything heard with the INVERT mode engaged sound as if it started out as a click, even when a recheck of the passage shows that the rejected material consists entirely of innocent transients. It is best, therefore, to make the recheck before accepting a setting of the sensitivity as optimum. Most often the system can be adjusted to kill off pops and leave the music alone, but the situation can get dodgy with brassy or percussive music—especially on direct-cut discs.

What can seem to confound the SAE 5000 and cause it to produce sounds suggesting distress are a series of small scratches such as might be caused by rubbing sandpaper or some other abrasive across a disc (ouch!). Assuming that the sensitivity can be set so that the scratches are differentiated from music, the system will respond by making a number of patches in rapid succession. Since each patch results in a tiny parcel of music being shifted in time, the result constitutes a kind of random phase modulation that makes the program source sound as if it had developed a terminal case of flutter. (The same effect occurs when the sensitivity is set too high and the unit mistakenly collars a line of transients.)

This leads to the single complaint of any substance that we have about the Model 5000: We wish that SAE had included some means of disabling the patch feature. When a relatively pristine record with just a few scratches is being played, having the holes filled in is pleasant indeed, but a high density of such patches is, in our opinion, very little improvement over the noise.

### Some Comparisons

The SAE 5000 does a job that is not even attempted by any other component available to the consumer. And when used within reasonable limits, it does that job well. That a listener can tell a scratch from music on a disc—not always easy to do, especially in very complex or percussive music—is evidence of the high order of signal processing done in his brain. It is well nigh amazing that a relatively compact and inexpensive electronic device can make that same discrimination with reasonable accuracy.

There is no redundancy whatever between the SAE and the other two devices, which, with the Autocorrelator built into the Phase Linear 1000 discussed in the previous installment, address themselves to continuous (i.e. "nontransient") high-frequency noise. One might want to remove pops via the SAE, then hiss via one of the other three, for example. And even the continuous-noise suppressors are not entirely redundant. We have had excellent results in dubbing antique discs via the UEA preamp (for its excellent equalizer), then one of the fixed filter positions on the Source Engineering (to cut out all noise above the top fre-

quencies in the music), then the Autocorrelator (to cull a little more noise from among those frequencies and, perhaps, reduce rumble—a unique capability), and only then feeding the signal to the tape deck.

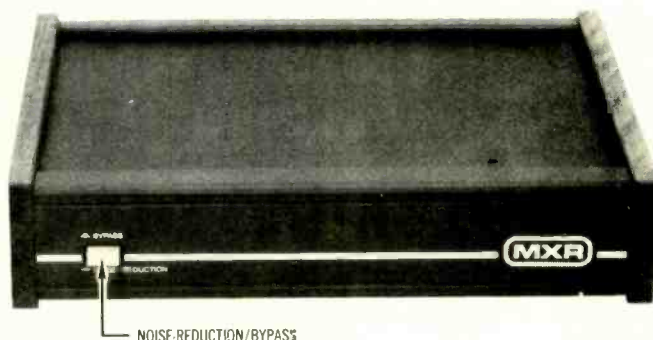
Considered individually, however, these three units may be ranked in order of what might be called the vigor of their respective attacks on high-frequency noise: from the Source Engineering (the most vigorous) to the Burwen to the Phase Linear. The more vigorous the attack, the more noise can be removed but the more danger of exceedingly audible side effects. In all, the hand at the controls is critical for optimum results and the ear of the listener for determining what are optimum results.

### MXR Componder

The MXR Componder is, as its name indicates, a double-ended device—the signal is compressed for recording and expanded on playback. It is similar in general operation to the DBX companders (its compress/expand ratio is 2:1, in decibels) and theoretically doubles the dynamic range of the recording system with which it is used. It is not *identical* to the DBX, as it does not use the high-frequency pre-emphasis/de-emphasis found in that unit and its detector appears to have a different time constant. The two devices are certainly not compatible—neither will correctly decode tapes encoded on the other.

The comparatively low price of the MXR seems to result in part from the omission of convenience features. The only front-panel control is a push-button that cuts the device out of the circuit. There are separate COMPRESS (recording) and EXPAND (playback) connections on the back panel, plus a LEVEL MATCH adjustment.

The unit works—and almost undetectably if the music has a fairly broad spectrum. But signals without sufficient high-frequency content to mask the hiss (whose level is continually being raised and lowered by the playback expansion) tend to be accompanied by "breathing" or to have a false brightness added as they grow louder. The extra headroom added by the device is not available for very fast transients; the compressor is not always



fast enough to lower gain before they saturate the tape, and the resulting distortion is not ameliorated by the expander.

In one sense, our test of this compander was particularly severe in that we used a cassette deck as the recording medium. The relatively high noise level of the cassette displays the limitations of the MXR rather mercilessly. We suspect that the situation would be far different with an open-reel deck. The lower noise level of such a machine would make the need for a compander less compelling but at the same time would betray less about its operation. Used with a reasonably quiet live-recording setup, the MXR can be expected to add significantly to the available dynamic range with minimal loss of sound quality—and minimal stress on the budget.

### Expanders as Noise Reducers

The noise-reduction devices we have discussed so far aim to achieve their goal with (ideally) no audible alteration of the program material; the principal purpose of an expander, as its name suggests, is to increase the dynamic range of the system by expanding the intensity difference between the loudest and softest passages. But since the gain manipulations needed to accomplish this affect the noise as much as the desired program, the apparent signal-to-noise ratio of the system is improved by expansion. As with the other types of devices, the most successful noise reduction via an expander depends on the signal-to-noise ratio's being favorable to begin with—that is, the noise in the program must start out below the level of the desired signal.

It probably is best to regard an expander's noise-reduction capabilities as an incidental benefit and try to adjust it so that the reproduced music sounds as natural as possible. Setting the sensitivity of a dynamic filter too high can produce a dull sound or an occasional "swish"; over-

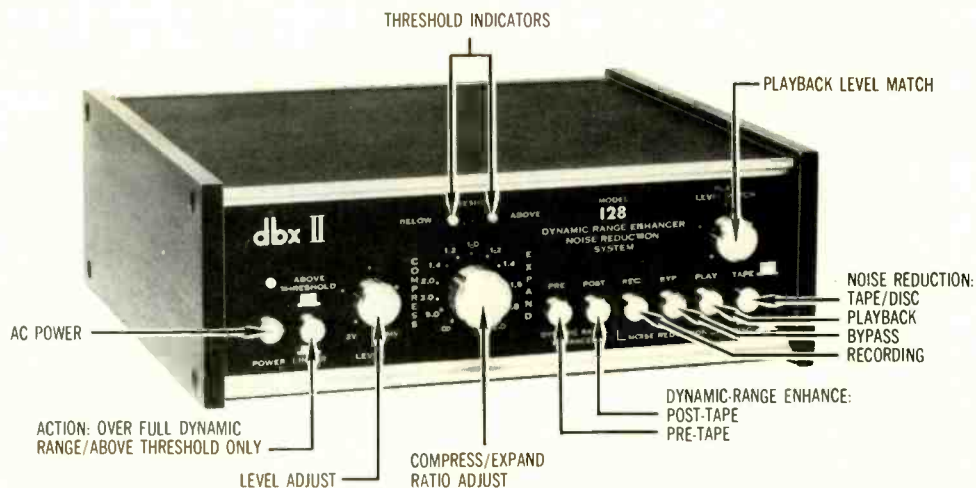
expanded musical dynamics are likely to seem simply gross. So turning up the expansion in search of a few extra dB of noise reduction must be done with care—if it is viable at all.

The correct setting of an expander is one that exactly counteracts the compression, if any, that was applied to the recording when it was made. Since there are no real standards as such for compression, it is most unlikely that any consumer gear will be able to exactly undo what was done; even if it could, the problem of finding the correct adjustment by trial and error would remain. But it is not difficult to find a setting that is acceptable or even better-sounding than the original.

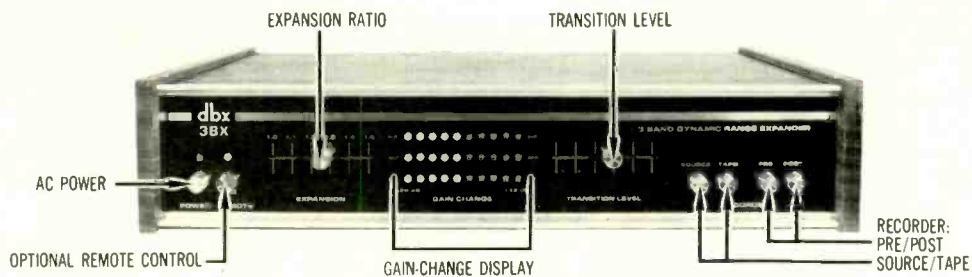
Our recent experiments with expanders were centered on the DBX Models 128 and 3BX. Model 128 is an adjustable compressor/expander combined with the familiar DBX encode/decode system discussed in March 1976. This double-ended (componder) system is a noise-prevention system comparable in this respect to Dolby and intended for tape recording; by including a variable compressor/expander as well, DBX makes it possible to expand the original music and record it—in "final listening form"—on tape, though without the encode/decode section the resulting dynamic range might be more than the tape could encompass. Conversely, desirable expansion may be added to the necessary decoding expansion in playing back DBX-encoded tapes.

The compressor function, useful as it is for generating background music and preparing tapes for use in noisy environments (such as automobiles), is really outside the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that the unit has virtually no audible effect other than reducing dynamic range when used in this mode. It would appear that the ear is relatively tolerant of compression.

When it comes to expansion, however, the ear is a harsh critic indeed, particularly with respect to equipment that, like the 128, operates on the entire audio band at once. The compromises necessary







in the speed with which the unit reacts to the program tend to make adjustment fairly critical, and music expanded much beyond its original dynamic range seems beset with oddities. Nevertheless, the device is fairly effective at moderate degrees of expansion.

Model 128 has a second operating mode in which it expands only those parts of the program that exceed a certain level, which can be set by the user. This mode seems to work best when the threshold is fairly high and the expansion ratio fairly large (1.4:1 or more) so that the 128 acts as a peak unlimiter (to borrow Phase Linear's term for yet another feature of its Model 1000), a function it performs at least as effectively as any device we have investigated.

The relatively short times for which the gain is raised seem to make the settings less critical than they are with full-time expansion. That is, there seem to be few if any audible penalties incurred by unlimiting the peaks a bit too much, while the substantially increased dynamic range does add "punch" and "liveness" to the music. The listener may wish to reduce volume slightly to leave more headroom for the peaks to pass without being clipped, but peak unlimiting hardly makes the music seem any louder and thus is of small value in reducing perceptible noise.

With the DBX Model 3BX, the situation is quite different. This unit is a straight expander (no compression, no peak unlimiter, and no compander) that divides the music into three frequency bands before processing it. Each section can, therefore, change its gain at a rate appropriate to the range of frequencies it handles—rapid for the highs, less so for the middles, and fairly slow for the lows. Besides minimizing audible anomalies sometimes associated with expansion (a trumpet solo doesn't bring up the turntable rumble, and bass-drum pulses don't turn the hiss on and off), the sophisticated three-band approach allows expansion to be more liberally applied and makes control settings less critical. At the same time, the system is so effective that even modest settings of the controls give a noticeable improvement, both in dynamic range and noise.

The 3BX has two controls: One varies the expansion ratio between 1:1 and 1.5:1, and the other sets the point at which the unit switches from reducing

gain to increasing it. This second setting is non-critical as long as the device (as indicated by the scintillating LED display) operates in the middle of its range.

Once you get used to the LED display, your eye begins to recognize patterns characteristic of certain types of music. This can be helpful in adjusting the expansion ratio. It is difficult to describe the relation between the visual and sonic rhythms when everything is adjusted for the best sound, but it is not hard to see it. Visually, you can find the right neighborhood; then you can zero in by ear. We would have preferred it had DBX included provisions to let the LEDs monitor the output level in each band rather than the gain change. This would have allowed the user to learn the patterns characteristic of music that is not compressed in recording (if any can be found). This, however, is a highly rarefied complaint.

Incidentally, we find that, being frequency-sensitive, the 3BX can be influenced for better or worse by equalization applied ahead of it in the signal chain. Overexpansion of the midrange, for example, can be alleviated somewhat by the introduction of a slight dip in that part of the spectrum. Post-expansion eq. also has an effect on the sound, of course, but it cannot affect the dynamic balance as much.

When overapplied, the expansion of the 3BX can still produce some very peculiar results. Excessive variations in gain between two adjacent bands, each containing a part of the spectrum of a voice or instrument, can cause changes in timbre. The effect can be somewhat akin to a very fast "wah-wah." If the program material has had no previous compression, exaggerated dynamics—overdone crescendos, secretive pianissimos, and roaring climaxes—are a likely result; we reiterate, therefore, that effects such as these are the limiting factors on the noise reduction available. In addition (and despite the ameliorating effect of the three-band approach), too much noise in the program can confuse the expander into treating the noise as signal. Yet, used for its intended purpose, the 3BX can restore much of the sparkle that the sound of a live performance loses when compressed in recording. The noise reduction is gravy—and if you like light shows, the LED display will entertain as well as inform. ●

# Reviews

## Ronstadt Gets Closer, Closer, and Closer....

**Linda Ronstadt: Get Closer**  
Peter Asher, producer  
Asylum 9 60185-1

Let's hear it for Gilbert, Sullivan, and Joe Papp. All three deserve credit for luring Linda Ronstadt away from her Malibu lair and bringing her to New York where she stretched her cords beyond anyone's wildest dreams as Mabel in Papp's production of G&S's *The Pirates of Penzance*. The result of her Broadway (and forthcoming film) light-opera experiences has been that Ronstadt, already in possession of one of pop music's finest vocal instruments, is now singing with such unwavering control and gusto that all (fourteen) of her past studio efforts sound reed-thin by comparison.

There's really no other reason to account for the sustained level of quality on "Get Closer." Everything else is as before: The players include drummer Russell Kunkel, bassist Bob Glaub, keyboardist Bill Payne, guitarists Waddy Wachtel, Danny Kortchmar, Dan Dugmore, and the ever-present Andrew Gold; the material is a mix of snappy rock & roll, country oldies, mushy Jimmy Webb ballads, and contem-



Ronstadt: Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan have had a profound effect.

porary ditties by the likes of Rod Taylor and Kate McGarrigle; the production is Peter Asher's sleekest.

Ronstadt wraps her voice around these songs with incredible finesse. On McGarrigle's nostalgic *Talk to Me of Mendocino* she unleashes bursts of melisma that are at once spare and intense. In fact, this piece is so exquisitely beautiful that it's worth the price of the entire album. Accompanied by Dennis Karmazyn on cello, Lindsey Buckingham on accordion, David Grisman on mandolin, Kenny Edwards on acoustic bass, and Gold on acoustic guitar, she gives what has to be the single most stunning vocal performance of her career.

But there's more. Her aggressive warble rides Payne's weird, wheezy Wurlitzer electric piano on the title track. The Knickerbockers' Sixties smash *Lies* sounds at first like just another cover version, but then grows on you with its insidious, nervous little guitar riffing and Kunkel's thumping, crashing drums. The solid, speedy reading of the Exciters' *Tell Him* (featuring Gold and Wachtel's gear-grinding guitar intro) is destined for radio-hit heaven.

The final two tracks are pre-Mabel sessions. Smokey Stover's *Sometimes You*

*Just Can't Win* is a duet with J. D. Souther, recorded around the time of "Simple Dreams." Dolly Parton's *My Blue Tears* is one of the few finished tunes from the aborted Ronstadt-Parton-Emmylou Harris project. Though both are pretty enough, neither has the positively exuberant energy that permeates the rest of "Get Closer." Their inclusion is something of an anticlimax to what is, in fact, Ronstadt's best and brightest album.

STEVEN X. REA

### **Toni Basil: Word of Mouth**

Greg Mathieson & Trevor Veitch, producers. Chrysalis CHR 1410

*Mickey* is a stomping, peppy tribute (with authentic high school cheerleaders) to a boy who's "so fine," and a plea for his attention. It's one of those novelty records that jumps out at you from the radio. Written by Mike Chapman and Nicky Chinn, who have a string of such pop artifacts in their oeuvre, the song harks back to the sound of the early-'60s girl groups while its synthesizer-driven pulse places it squarely in the modern age of rock technology. Not much else on Toni Basil's album debut, "Word of





Conductor Lorin Maazel is flanked by producer Robert Woods and sound engineer Jack Renner as they listen to a monitor tape after the first modern symphony orchestra recording cut directly onto disc. Behind Maazel is Dr. Bruce Maier, president of the Discwasher Group, Inc., distributor of the recording. The cutting lathe is visible over Renner's right shoulder.

# On Making the First Symphonic Direct-to-Disc LP

Lorin Maazel talks to Leonard Marcus

*The following conversation has been adapted from the radio program Concert Stage. For a review of the Maazel/Cleveland Orchestra disc under discussion here, just released by Telarc/Advent, see page 122.*

LEONARD MARCUS: Hello, Lorin.

LORIN MAAZEL: Hello, Leonard.

MARCUS: Nice to see you again. And this time it's a formal interview. Not like the old days, hm? How long has it been now?

MAAZEL: Could it be twenty-five years that we've known each other?

MARCUS: Good grief, don't give away our ages! Anyway, to the point, you recently made a recording using a—can I say a unique?—technique: direct-to-disc. Not that there haven't been direct-to-disc recordings before. Sheffield's, for instance, or a rock company called Direct Disco. But isn't yours with the Cleveland Orchestra the first with a major symphonic ensemble?

MAAZEL: Well, direct-to-disc is as old as the recording industry....

MARCUS: Of course, until—you'll pardon the pun—the advent of the LP, all discs, even cylinders, were recorded directly.

MAAZEL: Right, you simply cut a record. But the technique at that time was very primitive, and the sound produced, as we all know, was dreadful. And then magnetic tape was discovered as a medium of recording sound, and the sound recorded on tape could be transferred with a minimum of loss to the LP.

MARCUS: And it could be edited.

MAAZEL: Well, Leonard, that's another question. With tape you could simply cut a piece out and snip a piece in that sounded a little bit better, and from this there emerged the whole era of the edited tape, giving rise, unfortunately, to an extraordinary number of careers which were in fact simply recording careers—careers based on putting together all the right notes, splicing out all the wrong notes, putting together all the felicitous turns of phrase and leaving those that were not so felicitous in the scrap heap.

Still, most recordings—most great recordings—made

on tape are by conductors and artists who, for all practical purposes, don't have recourse to editing. Recording pressures are such today that you don't have much more time than two complete takes for any one movement—and perhaps a correction or two here and there—so that the result is often very questionable on the technical level. I can cite chapter and verse of mistakes that have gone by everybody, from the conductor and the recording producers to the listening public and the music critics, unfortunately. Just notes left out, wrong notes, bad ensemble, operas with incorrect words being sung, and so forth. This is due to sloppy editing, and it's unfortunate that there is that problem. But I think you'll find that in many of the recordings we've made for London, we take entire movements of a symphony in single takes.

MARCUS: Yes, but you do more than one take of the single movement, don't you?

MAAZEL: We may, and we may not. If we're happy with it, it may go. But for a whole record, well, let's see. I've made some 150 recordings by now, and I've always insisted—I suppose many of my colleagues do—that we hear the master tape. And I don't ever remember hearing a master tape without homing in on two or three errors of some sort . . . some of which are musical in the sense that—oh, let's say a flute may have been out of tune. But sometimes a bad edit has been made and you've got a wrong note. Then you've got to re-edit.

MARCUS: A lot of artists want to believe, and do believe, that their recordings are not edited, but I've seen the tapes being edited at the various record companies.

MAAZEL: Oh, inevitably.

MARCUS: But the companies just don't tell these artists, who then can still think their performances are unedited.

MAAZEL: Right. Inevitably there's something that has to be done. A horn may have burred someplace, or there may be an oboe note that's not completely in tune or whatever.

MARCUS: Well, Lorin, with your direct-to-disc recording you didn't have that option. You had to play it correctly all the way through. Or did you?

MAAZEL: We simply played it, that's right. But we not only had to record the work in question in one take, we had to play everything that was on that particular side of the recording, with just a ten-second break between pieces during which time they turned off the microphones while we switched music and took a couple of breaths.

MARCUS: And the lathes kept going?

MAAZEL: And the lathes kept going. It's the kind of recording technique that divides the men from the boys. Very few orchestras—in fact, no orchestras that I know of—have been prepared to take that risk. And it was a risk, because no one really knew what would happen.

MARCUS: Those pre-tape recordings, which were, of course, all direct-to-disc, contained only five-minute segments. You had an entire LP side, so that is unique.

MAAZEL: Right. It was a great challenge but one I accepted quite readily, because I knew what our track record was during the normal course of our commercial recording sessions. We've been able to record huge segments of music without a blemish, simply because we don't go into the recording studio until we have the music down pat. We record performed works, and every performance of ours is always prepared with a great deal of care, and *slowly*. We don't rush things. And of course the capacity of the orchestra is quite extraordinary, so I didn't hesitate to take that risk.



At the recording session in Cleveland's Masonic Auditorium



MARCUS: And how did you like the results?

MAAZEL: To tell you the truth, I haven't heard it yet. It's just been pressed in the past day or so and I haven't seen a copy yet. I've only heard the tapes.

MARCUS: It just so happens that I've got a copy here and wonder . . . Tapes?! What tapes?

MAAZEL: They had a small tape recorder monitoring in the studio, making a tape—of no commercial interest or value, but just as a guide, a monitor—since we could not play the actual recordings.

MARCUS: No, you'd ruin them.

MAAZEL: Right, because these are not recordings, these are masters, which are then processed, silvered, and then you have ten "mothers" made from the master, or matrix, each one of which then can be used to make so many hundreds of records . . . that's the process.

MARCUS: Well, as I was going to say, I have one of those first pressings here. Why don't we hear how it sounds?

*The final dance of Falla's Three-Cornered Hat and the Polonaise from Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin were played.*

MARCUS: Well, I must say that this has got to be one of the clearest recordings of a full orchestral work I have ever heard. There were certain inner happenings in the Falla—I can't really call them inner voices—that I always miss on the trumpet, those little duddle-duddle-dumps, and some string passages. . . .

MAAZEL: Right. Here you have an ideal combination. We took a recording hall where we've made all our recordings for London; it has a magnificent recording ambience. Secondly, our "thing" in Cleveland is clarity and transparency of texture.

Thirdly, the engineers used by Advent Records really trained on London sessions. That is, they attended all these sessions. And they were very keen at the placement of microphones and made sure the quality of the microphones was of the highest level and greatest accuracy. So we had a combination of all these factors going for us. And then, of course, without tape hiss you don't need Dolby to suppress it, which eliminates another process. You have what ought to be the ideal acoustical product. It's pure sound. You take it from position A, you put it into position B. That's it. You just change its source.

MARCUS: Now, why did you decide—or was it your decision—to record five potboilers, small things, rather than take advantage of having to record an entire side from beginning to end anyway and do a tour de force with a nonstop piece?

MAAZEL: Well, Leonard, because this recording is, for all parties, obviously a trial balloon. I was as skeptical as the rest of the world. I did not want to record anything of world-shaking significance at this point, or something that I wouldn't record under other condi-

tions, until I actually heard the result. Theory is one thing, of course; practice is an entirely different pot of fish. Here we are: Is that recording really going to stand up? How is it going to sound? What are the results going to be? Can the process function? Will the lathe cut at the proper time? There are a lot of difficulties. Lathes cost \$85,000 to \$90,000. They're very sophisticated hunks of machinery—anything might happen. It didn't. It worked perfectly.

MARCUS: Were there any bloopers that caused you to have to do "this damn side over again"?

MAAZEL: No, I think we had no problems whatsoever, simply because we knew we had one chance and one chance only. And that was going to be it. So it's really a question of mental discipline. Everyone simply dug in and said, "All right, this is it." And now that I've heard at least part of the disc and know that it can function, I look forward to a series of such recordings and perhaps a repertoire of greater significance.

MARCUS: That would be sensational. Literally. You'd certainly have a niche in the recording industry that no other orchestra has.

MAAZEL: Right. And the joy of this is that you're listening to a live performance. These are interpretations of the works such as we give at actual concerts, so that, in fact, you have a live performance with a live sound.

MARCUS: A live performance, though, usually isn't played over and over again in somebody's house, where if something goes wrong, it can drive you up the wall after the third or fourth listen. Isn't it a little hair-raising?

MAAZEL: Well, of course, this is one of those shibboleths. I don't know how many times I've heard so-called "perfect performances" with major errors in them.

MARCUS: Has this ever happened to you?

MAAZEL: Since the recording producers have confidence in me, they look forward to our final listening sessions because very often the tapes have been edited by the cutter. Of course, it's against instructions given by the recording producer. Still, in the heat of recording, because everybody has a great deal to do these days, mistakes can be made. So when we sit down and hear the master tape it is a time for re-editing the edited master.

MARCUS: I was asking whether any of your final recordings have come out with errors.

MAAZEL: Not in my recordings. I don't think there's an error in all the 150 recordings I've made. Maybe something slipped through someplace, I don't know. But unfortunately, I find that that is not a record that others have been fortunate to have, because I think many of my colleagues simply circumvent that final process—that is, having the master tape played and going at it very carefully, being very skeptical that it's all put together just as one would like.

MARCUS: Thank you, Lorin. 

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THE DISCWASHER GROUP OF COMPANIES  
which produce and distribute quality audio products

*present*

HIGH FIDELITY'S

# 100 Years of Recording

A series of four original acrylic paintings by Jim Jonson

Inspired by the centennial of the phonograph and planned and commissioned by HIGH FIDELITY'S editors, the series depicts the development of recording through its leading figures in music and the recording business, its dominant means of sound reproduction, and its principal innovations in audio technology. The first of the four, "The Cylinder Era," appeared in February, and the second, "The Acoustic Era," in April. The final painting will be reproduced in these pages later this year.

Jim Jonson, a Connecticut resident, has produced paintings for *Saturday Evening Post*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Fortune*, *Reader's Digest*, *Boys' Life*, and other journals and has fulfilled commissions for corporations ranging from Capitol Records to American Airlines and the Ford Motor Company. His work has been exhibited in the Denver Art Museum, Art Museum of Sport, and the Los Angeles County Art Museum, among others, and his one-man shows have been seen in many major galleries. A portfolio of Mr. Jonson's drawings and paintings was recently published by Prentice-Hall.

The Discwasher Group is proud to present the third of this distinguished artist's portrayals of "100 Years of Recordings."

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Part III: The Electrical Era



# 100 Years of Recording

**The Electrical Era** Two conductors and a microphone dominate the third painting in our series. Arturo Toscanini and Leopold Stokowski bore very different relationships to the revolution that overtook commercial recording in 1925. Toscanini had already made a handful of acoustic discs (for Victor), but they must be considered unsuccessful in catching even the basic sound of his touring orchestra. On hearing early Brunswick electricals, however, he was persuaded to return to the studio; but his high musical standards demanded much of the engineers, and he seemed basically to mistrust the craft by which his art was to influence generations of musicians and music-lovers. Stokowski, on the other hand, was ever the audio activist and busied himself endlessly with the medium itself. His acoustic discs were marvels in that they sounded something like the Philadelphia Orchestra, with which he recorded; his electrical ones created a sensation. Within only a few years he had learned enough about the new medium to remake some of his earliest electricals with stunning sonics that remained models into the LP era.

If the microphone was a necessity for the adequate recording of large orchestras, it was hardly less important in catching the subtleties of tone and nuance that characterized the great instrumentalists. Wanda Landowska, who single-handedly rescued the harpsichord from oblivion, was in special need of its accuracy to convey the unique sound of her instrument. She appears above the RCA ribbon microphone. To its right is the young pianist Vladimir Horowitz, who with violinist Jascha Heifetz (at the upper right) epitomized breathtaking virtuosity for the era.

With electrical playback — which established itself more slowly than electrical recording — came the ubiquitous record-shop listening booth. Note the poster for Paul Whiteman, whose “respectable” quasi-jazz orchestra continued as a major factor in the electrical era and laid the groundwork for the big-band swing orchestras of the Forties.

Continuing clockwise, the four men at the bottom right were among the most eminent of those who saw the industry through the trauma of depression and built the structures on which it still stands. Sir Louis Sterling first strengthened European Columbia through acquisition of labels like Pathé and Odeon, then merged it with the Gramophone Company (HMV) to form EMI. William S. Paley was attracted to radio as an advertising medium and guided the Columbia Broadcasting System through the acquisition of Columbia Records and the formation of CBS International. David Sarnoff, whose vision of radio broadcasting had almost swamped the recording industry, led RCA through the acquisition of Victor, the building of NBC, and the forging of the symbiosis between these groups (the establishment, for example, of Toscanini's NBC Symphony). Sir Edward Lewis saw British Decca (London) grow from an awkward independent into a major company.

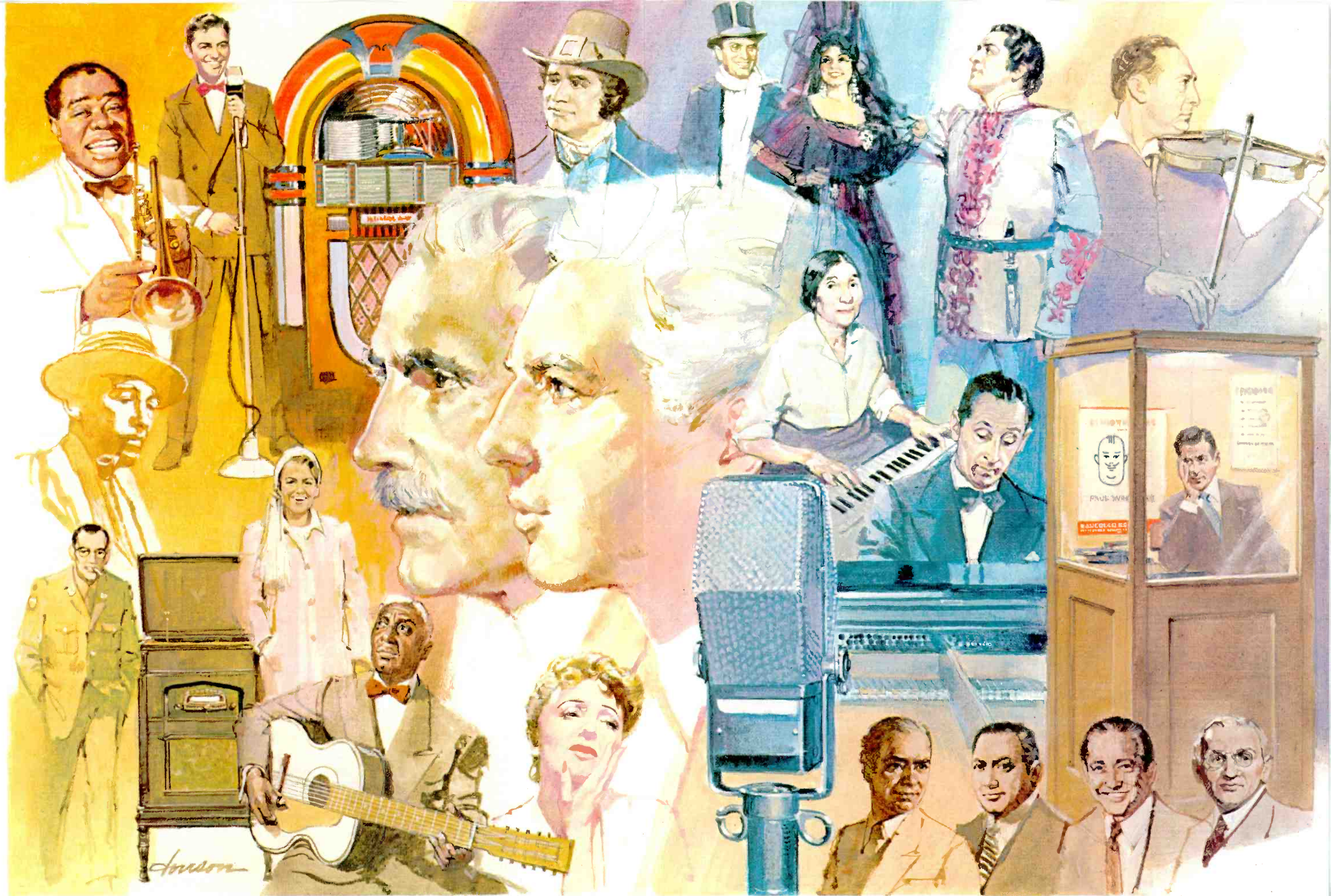
The microphone meant that artists could be chosen on the basis of expressive talents alone, rather than their affinity for the horn. Three towering examples appear past the microphone: oracle of the *chansonnette française* Edith Piaf, American folk artist Huddie “Leadbelly” Ledbetter, and British entertainer Gracie Fields. Between Fields and a uniformed Glenn Miller stands the radio-phonograph, symptomatically the “standard” reproduction instrument as the electrical era encouraged stars to build parallel careers in the two media, most prominent among them crooner Bing Crosby, shown directly above bandleader Miller. Still clockwise are Louis Armstrong, who replaced Whiteman as the public's symbol of jazz, and Frank Sinatra, who made the microphone a veritable musical partner. From the beginning of the Depression until after World War II (when broadcasters' prejudice against airing recordings began to break down), the jukebox was the king of the hit-makers.

Although the expanding variety of recorded music robbed concert and opera singers of full limelight for the first time, some became recording stars, like Italian tenor Beniamino Gigli, Austrian operetta king Richard Tauber, Spanish mezzo Conchita Supervia, and American tenor Richard Crooks.

By the time many of these artists were at the peak of their popularity, a new technical revolution was on its way — the long-playing record.

ROBERT LONG





High Fidelity's 100 Years of Recording Part III: The Electrical Era by Jim Jonson



# HOW NOT TO RUIN YOUR RECORDS

## PART II

### *Avoid sticky coatings*

#### THE PROBLEM:

No vacuum device, duster machine or wonder cloth can remove fingerprints, jacket particles or dust containing smog/smoke from your records. Yet such contamination ruins records.

A chemically correct fluid can pull these ruinous contaminations into solution, but record preservation requires lifting both fluid and problems off the record without leaving residues.

#### COMMON ERRORS:

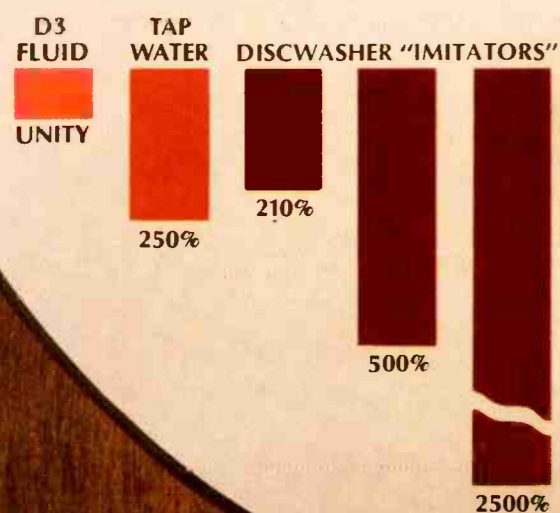
In spite of much written advice and wild claims, most disc cleaning liquids (also soap and water) gum up record grooves. This sticky problem has two origins: high dry weight residue in the fluids; plus the actual chemical affinity of most cleaners for vinyl. Even the use of tap water causes a deposit on vinyl and a loss of high frequency definition.

#### AN ANSWER FROM RESEARCH:

Use a system that cleans and removes contamination safely. The most researched and chemically non-adhering fluid is D3 by Discwasher, which includes an anti-static formulation that does not stick. See the table for actual dry weight residues of tap water and "record cleaners" costing over \$11 each. D3 is chemically "active" only against common record contaminants—not the vinyl, and D3 literally lifts contamination off the record surface without coating.

Properly used as a system, D3 and the Discwasher brush draw all contaminants and fluid off the disc by the capillary action of micro-fibers into the absorbent fabric backing. Nothing is left on the record except encoded sound.

#### COMPARATIVE DRY WEIGHT RESIDUES



# HOW NOT TO RUIN YOUR RECORDS

## PART III

### *Don't age your vinyl*

#### THE PROBLEM:

Record vinyl contains additives—chemical stabilizers—which protect the vinyl from aging and breakup during both pressing and playback. If stabilizers are extracted from the record surface, then the life of the vinyl is shortened, and the vinyl surface begins to break down during playback because of chemical weakness. (Typical stylus pressures exceed 16 tons psi, even with the finest equipment.) Long-term record life is very much dependent on leaving bound stabilizers in the vinyl.

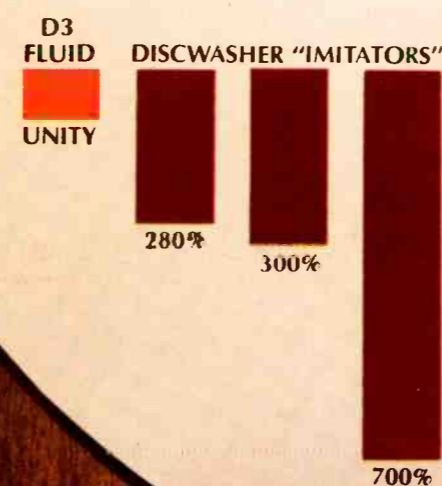
#### COMMON ERRORS:

Large amounts of almost any liquid (even water) on the record surface will extract tiny amounts of stabilizers. But large amounts of these precious stabilizers are extracted with a "cleaning operation" that uses liquids containing large amounts of alcohols, common detergents, alkaline soaps, or many standard anti-static agents. All of these compounds, very common in record cleaners, are much more destructive to record vinyl when combined with a physical brushing action.

#### AN ANSWER FROM RESEARCH:

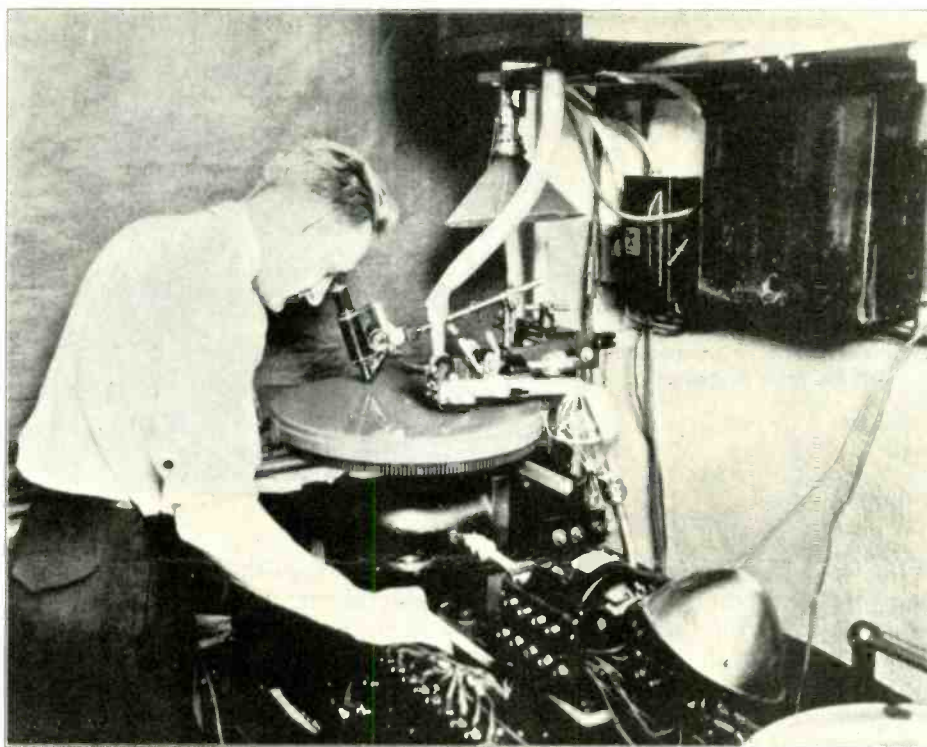
The exclusive Discwasher System is chemically buffered, tested, and designed to preserve record vinyl. D3 fluid is "targeted" to remove record contamination but not stabilizers from the vinyl surface. This patented chemistry, developed at the Discwasher laboratories, allows the directional fibers of the Discwasher pad to pick up both debris and solubilized contamination. All without shortening vinyl life. Only Discwasher has this perfect combination of safety and function.

#### COMPARATIVE STABILIZER EXTRACTION





# 100 Years of Recording



Electrical disc-cutting equipment, including Western Electric cutter, of the late Twenties.

## Electrical Recording: The Covert Revolution

Arguably the most momentous technological advance in recording history was concealed by its instigators.

by R. D. Darrell

THOSE MOMENTOUS CHANGES in a political, social, or technological situation we label revolutions may be variously characterized as inevitable, premature, glorious, catastrophic, and so on. But by their very nature they all pit impassioned Partisans of Something New against stubborn Defenders of the Status Quo. And such conflicts by definition take place in the public spotlight—they are never characterized by reticence.

Well, almost never. In the world of recorded music there once was an extraordinary exception: a revolution so effectively muted for a time that it escaped public awareness until the changes it brought about had become *faits accomplis*. That contradictory example obviously wasn't the hulla-

baloo over quadriphony nor that, in the late Fifties, over stereo, nor yet the noisy war of record speeds (33 vs. 45, and both of these vs. the traditional 78 rpm) precipitated by the advent of the microgroove in the late Forties. We must peer back a full fifty-two years to find the unique case of the hushed-up revolution.

Yet that quiet, mostly behind-the-scenes turn-about from a half-century of mechanical/acoustical recording methods to predominantly "electrical" (more accurately, electronic) means was a truly momentous change—probably the most consequential in the history of audio technology. It is dated 1925 (though many "authorities" seem vague or conflicting, even today, on this basic point of



Photos from RCA and the Smithsonian Institution show Rosario Bourdon conducting an orchestra for the benefit of the recording horn . . .



fact), but it had earlier harbingers on the basis of which an aware public might have predicted recording's ultimate escape from the horn and recourse to the microphone. On the contrary, contemporary record buyers knew only that a few current releases represented some startling sort of technical departure; the term "electrical recording" was assiduously avoided. Even Frederic William Wile's biography, *Emile Berliner, Maker of the Microphone*, which appeared in 1926, gave no hint that any relationship might exist between the microphone and Berliner's other major audio invention, the flat-disc record.

So in the present phonographic centennial year it's surely high time for clarification of at least some of the chronological and other confusions. For one, Michael Biel, in a paper for the 1977 convention of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections, has explored for the first time in any real detail the surprisingly long prehistory of electrical recording. What I'd like to present here are identifications and datings (more definitive than have been available before) of the most significant electrical firsts—together with some reconsiderations of the epochal events themselves and of the unique conditions that permitted them to take place in obscurity.

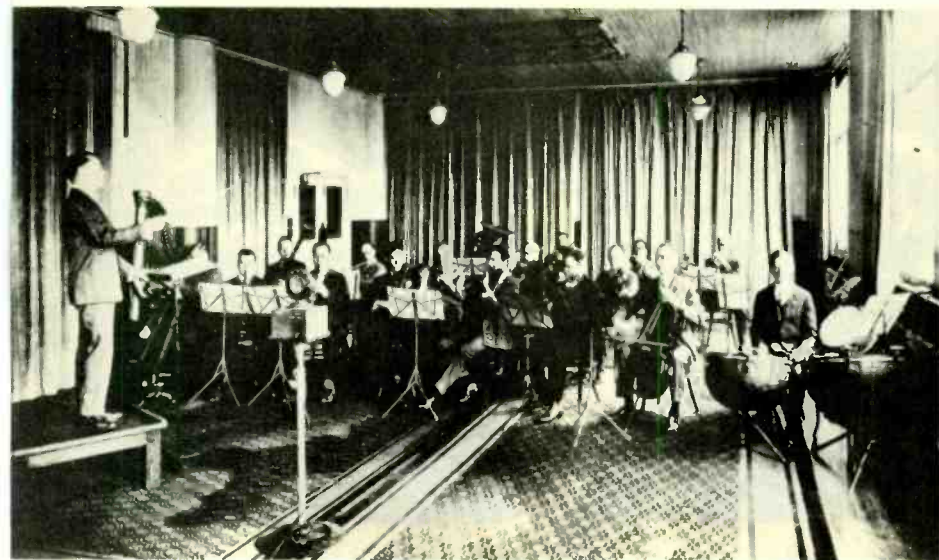
### Out of the Past

The background story of the "new" technology has been told often enough (perhaps best in Roland Gelatt's *The Fabulous Phonograph*, recently reissued in its third edition by Macmillan) that it need only be sketched here. Schemes for electrical recording go back to Edison, but it was not until 1920 that an electrically made disc achieved anything approaching public availability. On November 11 two mustered-out RAF officers—L.G.W.

Guest, son of the first Baron Wimborne, and H. O. Merriman, a Canadian—applied an electrical recording system of their own devising to the ceremonies attendant on laying to rest the remains of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey. The two record sides that resulted were pressed by British Columbia as a twelve-inch disc and offered for sale in December as a fund-raiser for the Abbey. The results, by all accounts, were not particularly successful, and since the disc was not available on the open market (only through the Abbey and the *London Times*) it does not qualify as a "published" recording. But it was a start.

Through the early Twenties, parallel development of several electrical systems went forward. Most important, from our hindsight view, were those at British Columbia, a light-beam system at Brunswick in this country, and—above all—that of the Bell Laboratories, which reached fruition in the Maxfield-Harrison cutter built by Western Electric, a Bell company. (A curious sidelight is that it was the film industry that inspired Western Electric's research. In 1923, sometime after Lee de Forest demonstrated his "talking pictures," Western Electric mounted a display of a rival system at a trade show: electrically cut discs synchronized with films.) In 1924, the Western Electric system was offered to Victor, which, for a variety of reasons, did nothing about it at the time.

Late that year, Frank Capps of American Pathé, which had been pressing test recordings made with the Western Electric cutter for Bell, sent copies to his old friend Louis Sterling at British Columbia. Sterling listened on Christmas Day; on December 26 he boarded a liner for the U.S. His hopes for eventual perfection of his company's own system had been cut short by the realization that Bell's had bested it, at least for the time being. Bell was unwilling to license through any but



... and for the microphone. Note that Stroh violins are gone, and the augmented orchestra no longer needs to crowd close to the sound pickup.

American companies. Once on these shores, Sterling quickly bought a controlling interest in the financially ailing Columbia Phonograph Company of New York, which signed the license and made the system available to its British parent.

In the meantime Victor had suffered a change of heart. Examining its rapidly dwindling profits and the equally rapid rise in income for the recently formed Radio Corporation of America, Victor swallowed its pride (having looked askance at everything to do with radio) and asked for further demonstrations of the microphone-compatible recording system. Those demonstrations, early in February of 1925, precipitated three contracts: nonexclusive licensing by Victor of the Western Electric cutter; exclusive licensing of a folded-horn acoustic reproducer, developed by Bell Laboratories as cheaper and more reliable than electrical reproduction for its electrically recorded discs and styled the Orthophonic Victrola when Victor unveiled it in November; and an agreement in May with RCA (the "enemy") that the latter would provide radios for inclusion in Orthophonic Radiola models. And the Western Electric cutter became available, through the Victor license, to the Gramophone Company in England and its associated HMV labels around the world.

Brunswick, which had been working with Charles A. Hoxie of General Electric on a light-beam electrical recording system (one of several under development in the Twenties), announced its Panatropé all-electric reproducer (the first ever to be offered for sale) at about the same time as the Orthophonic Victrola. The electrical recordings had been demonstrated, using a prototype of the Panatropé, on August 14, but recording dates of the early Brunswicks remain shrouded in mystery, and the first commercial issue apparently did not take place until October. In any event, the light-

beam recording system did not hold out for long, and Western Electric's triumph soon was absolute.

Nor do the Brunswick electric discs—as distinct from the Panatropé reproducers—seem to warrant any claims to primacy. The chart (see page 84), which may in some respects surprise readers used to accepted accounts of the chronology, is based on information supplied—or confirmed—by Martine J. McCarthy and J. D. Bicknell, archivists for CBS and EMI, respectively, and the late A. A. Pulley, onetime RCA Victor audio-engineering administrator. I'm deeply indebted to them all. I, for one, had not previously realized that Victor's "Miniature Concert," often given precedence, had been anticipated by Columbia's "Whispering Pianist," Art Gillham. One of the sides (*I Had Someone Else Before I Had You*), eventually issued as Columbia 328-D, the company's first ten-inch electrical, was recorded the day before the Victor. The other side was made even earlier: As reported in these pages by George Blacker ("Speaking of Records," April 1973) and recently confirmed by Columbia, the master of *You May Be Lonesome* was cut on November 6, 1924, apparently during a period of experiment Columbia is known to have undertaken in its studios with Western Electric equipment before Sterling's decisive intervention.

In fact, even Art Gillham's pioneering sessions (again I rely on Blacker) may have been preceded by some jazz recordings of such artists as Jelly Roll Morton and King Oliver released by a small independent, Marsh Laboratories of Chicago, on its own Autograph label. Some of these, Blacker asserts, have been dated reliably to September of 1924. Let him tell the story:

I have heard these records, and they are electrically recorded. The sound is awful—tinny and distorted in loud passages—but they are electric. I have also heard three Marsh pipe-organ record-



Mouth," manages to get the spirit so right. *Shoppin' A to Z* is an amusing alphabetical run-through of the items on a supermarket list ("... liver! matzoh! nuts! onions! pizza!"), and Basil does an earnest version of Burt Bacharach and Hal David's *Little Red Book*, but the rest of the LP is ordinary and overly mechanical rock.

A message on the album's cover gives a clue to the motivation behind its content: "Motion on record. Music on video. The complete Toni Basil experience. Get it on video cassettes. Conceived, directed, choreographed, and edited by Toni Basil." Basil is primarily known as a choreographer/actress. Recently she worked with David Byrne on Talking Heads' promotional videotapes, and her terpsichorean involvement with rock goes back to the mid-'60s. One can assume, then, that the videos for some of these cuts are more fun than their audio renditions; I'd rather see her dance to David Essex's *Rock On* than hear her sing it.

The members of Devo (whose robot antics were prefigured by Basil's dance troupe the Lockers) have contributed instrumental support on three songs that they wrote, and like so much Devo material, the tracks gurgle and blip to little purpose. They make a tedious band, and they drag Basil into their groove. And much as she tries, with the help of drummer Rick Parnell (a thumper in the Dave Clark tradition), she can't make *Nobody*, *Thief on the Loose*, and *Time After Time* into anything exciting. The arrangements seem constructed to sound like arcade games and the songs themselves are academic exercises. (Nick Gilder's *Time After Time* pinches its chorus from Lennon & McCartney's *You Won't See Me*.) By album's end, the bubbly vigor of *Mickey* and *Shoppin' A to Z* has almost been forgotten, gobbled up by all the humorless rigmarole that characterizes most of Basil's "Word of Mouth."

MITCHELL COHEN

### Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five: *The Message*

Sylvia, Inc. & Jigsaw Productions, producers. Sugar Hill SH 268 (96 West St., Englewood, N.J. 07631)

Aside from issuing several highly recommended "Greatest Rap Hits" configurations, Sugar Hill Records specializes in funky twelve-inch rap singles. Give a band a major hit, though, and all the rules change: To wit, Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five's "The Message."

The title track is, quite simply, the state of a most troubled union. "It's like a jungle, sometimes it makes me wonder, how I keep from going under," is the tie that binds *The Message*'s seven minutes of urban imagery. It's that song's very volatility that renders the rest of the album slight, as if a switchblade had been packaged alongside butter knives. Rap is not neces-



EBET ROBERTS

Mitchell: a teasing self-awareness

sarily a singer's medium. A club deejay like Grandmaster Flash mixes records together to create a brand new beat; the Furious Five then adds words to flesh out the groove. With an album to fill, however, Grandmaster and the Five try to be everything to everybody; while the results aren't totally desultory, much of it is second-rate soul.

Take *Dreamin'*, a literal love song to Stevie Wonder. Though the singing and arrangement are competent, its moment of revelation comes when one of the Five steps back into character and says, "Hey Flash, do you think we'll ever meet Stevie?" That very line, guileless and grand, illuminates the distance between studio soul and the art of the street.

But *The Message* itself remains loud and clear—"Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge." Over a hypnotic synthesizer squiggle and a lock-step beat, it paints a picture of mean streets getting meaner. Peppered with details of homes hooked to the TV set and hero hustlers spending twenties and tens, the song is a nightmare that builds to a screaming climax. The last verse, a wicked thicket of words, is a bone-chilling biography of a kid who is born of the ghetto and dies by it. Buy the twelve-inch, but by no means fail to get *The Message*.

JOHN MILWARD

### Hall & Oates: *H<sub>2</sub>O*

Daryl Hall & John Oates, producers. RCA AFL 1-4383

The tag of blue-eyed soul is so easily pinned on Hall & Oates that people tend to forget their quick touch with a pithy pop tune or a blast of rock & roll. They're an elemental pair—Daryl Hall the piano-playing soul man, John Oates the swarthy guitarist with the hearty harmonies. The duo's albums are consistently spiced with standout tracks buffed shiny by meticulous studio tech-

nique. The result is that we don't remember LPs as much as individual songs, and often lift the needle from favorite to favorite. But then, good songs are nothing to sneeze at, and "H<sub>2</sub>O" has a healthy share of them.

*Maneater* starts things off by adapting the bass line from the Supremes' *You Can't Hurry Love* to introduce a finger-snapper about a shark of a woman. Although their mix of pop and soul is often reminiscent of Motown, Hall & Oates's performing spirit is more in tune with the clean, crisp style of Philadelphia soul. Their attention to detail is especially evident on ballads like *One on One*—on which Daryl's falsetto skates atop the slick surface of his electric piano—and on the side-ending big-beat production numbers, *Open All Night* and *Go Solo*.

*Family Man* showcases the rock element of "H<sub>2</sub>O," its grinding guitar telling a tale of temptation that blends a loose and limber verse with a stone-hard chorus. *Delayed Reaction* is a sprightly pop-rocker built on a featherbed of rhythm guitars and a melody that's pleasantly twisted by a Caribbean patois. Similarly charming, albeit more characteristic, is *Guessing Game*, a midtempo soul shuffler about the games lovers play.

Though rarely deep, Hall & Oates are profoundly professional, and theirs are among the most stylish songs to grace the top of the charts. With seven out of eleven likely candidates, "H<sub>2</sub>O" is not apt to dampen their commercial fire.

JOHN MILWARD

### Joni Mitchell: *Wild Things Run Fast*

Joni Mitchell, producer. Geffen GHS 2019

Previews of Joni Mitchell's first album for Geffen Records hinted at a return to the rhapsodic pop bloom of 1974's "Court and Spark," her most popular recording to date. While there's truth in that early assessment, Mitchell's new songs still bear the stamp of her more recent experiments with jazz instrumentation and vocal stylization, elevating "Wild Things Run Fast" beyond the cynical prospect of mere commercial retrenchment.

The studio lineups do opt for a fuller, ostensibly more pop-oriented ensemble sound than the skeletal chamber settings of "Hejira" or the fusion and bebop that prompted catcalls from the rock intelligentsia in the late '70s. Yet Mitchell retains specific traits from those controversial forays. Larry Klein's electric bass employs the thick chordal textures and fretless tonal slurs Jaco Pastorius brought to his sessions with her. Guitarists Steve Lukather and Michael Landau may bring a more pointed rock kick to her work than before, but their use of dissonance fits squarely within Mitchell's post-"Spark" harmonic palette.

Eccentric time signatures and the singer's own modal guitar figures, played on a

A revolution in microcosm: From left to right, we have a typical genuine acoustic recording; the Stokowski *Danse macabre*, which, though electrically recorded, masquerades in the acoustic label; the Orthophonic label that acknowledges electrical recording (note "VE" symbol at top and bottom); and an electrical remake of the first disc, here with a later (RCA) label. Note the "VE" symbol (arrows) embossed into all electrically made masters.



ings by Jesse Crawford; the master numbers suggest that they were recorded weeks or months earlier. Curiously, the Marsh organ recordings have excellent sound, free of the distortion and tinniness that mar the later sides.

But the Marsh discs are extremely rare, and I have been unable to corroborate Blacker's assertions. For the moment this must be numbered among the still unsolved mysteries of the era.

Chart I might have been extended to cover a still wider variety of artist/music categories. But I have tried to keep it compact, even to the extent of excluding an often-cited early session (Victor's "first when the chips were actually down," according to Pulley) with the Red Seal pianist Olga Samaroff (-Stokowski). She recorded at least three sides, pieces by Brahms and Mendelssohn among them, on March 11, 1925, in the Building 15 Studio, Camden, New Jersey, the site of all of Victor's electrical recording activity during the first three months. But none of these was released.

McCarthy's Columbia-archive diggings turned up some other provocative, novel information about unreleased items. For instance, the six released selections by the Associated Glee Clubs (see the chart) were not the only ones recorded "live" then (in the Metropolitan Opera House itself, not via telephone lines, and presumably under the supervision of S.S.S. Watkins, who represented Bell Labs at Columbia as J. P. Maxfield did at Victor for the early electrical recording sessions). At least six other side-matrices were made, including one of a speech by Walter Damrosch, but never were issued for sale. And there is the curious (to us, today) substitution for two sides electrically recorded—March 2, 1925, by a pop group. The Mandoliers—of acoustical recordings made on March 21 and eventually used for the release of Columbia 345-D. Difficulties encountered

with the new techniques—or perhaps with artists' dissatisfaction with those techniques—also are reflected in the archivist's citations of several very early Columbia song and instrumental selections that had to be re-recorded (still electrically) in several sessions before an acceptable version was achieved for release.

### A Conspiracy of Silence?

No historian can deny that there was a conspiracy in 1925. The first licensing contracts between Western Electric and the two leading American record companies (and their European affiliates) specifically proscribed—for a year—any promotional exploitation of the term "electrical recording," and that proviso seems to have been observed at least formally. Certainly, though several pre-1925 experimental recordings were labeled or described as "electrical," that word never appears in any of the 1925 and early 1926 Columbia and Victor monthly supplements of new-release lists. One weekly trade paper slipped up by headlining its April 29, 1925, report on the initial Associated Glee Clubs discs "First Electrical Records Stir High Favor in Columbia Trade," but this was an exception to the rule. And where the 1925 musical public was concerned (readers of *Musical America* and *Etude*, say), little enough was published about records and the phonograph in general, and nothing I can trace specifically about electrical recording.

The seminal technical paper (in which the description of electrical recording itself was ironically subordinated to that of the new, but still acoustical, Orthophonic Victrola and a then-novel scheme of mechanical/electrical transmission-line analogies) was not published until February 1926: J. P. Maxfield and H. C. Harrison's "Methods of High Quality Recording and Reproduction of





Music and Speech Based on Telephone Research” in the *Transactions of the American Institute of Electrical Engineering*. The first popular description addressed specifically to record buyers was, to the best of my knowledge, an article titled “How the Sounds Get into Your Records by the Electrical Process,” by “Experts of the Western Electric Company” and made available for a promotional prospectus for (and subsequently reprinted in) the first issue of the first American recorded-music magazine, *The Phonograph Monthly Review (PMR)*, dated October 1926.

And if I may be permitted a personal footnote, even I, as a New England Conservatory music student and faithful Boston Symphony concertgoer, went through the year 1925 ignorant that any recording revolution was taking place. I must have heard about the Associated Glee Clubs’s *Adeste Fideles*—the key tipoff that the old recording horns had been superseded by microphones. Yet I cannot remember listening to anything I identified as an electrical recording until I began reviewing them for the *PMR* in 1926.

### The Need for a Coverup

More interesting nowadays than the existence of a conspiracy of silence are the reasons one was felt necessary in 1925 and why it succeeded as well, and for as long, as it did. To understand why Victor and Columbia agreed—or insisted—on a hush-up, one must realize that they were frightened by the double bugaboo of radio broadcasting (with its “free” music) and a post-1920 recession that sent U.S. retail record sales tumbling from \$106 million in 1921 to half that by 1925. The record companies and their dealers had such heavy investments in acoustical-disc stocks that the last thing they wanted was a forced writeoff of these as obsolete. And it was not only in merchandise that the com-

panies had such a stake: More important, perhaps, was their accumulated experience. What were the movers and shakers of acoustic recording to do, faced with a technology in which they had no competence? Of course they resisted. And given dwindling sales and profits, the decision to scrap everything and embark on electrical recording was a hard one to make. New equipment had to be leased and installed, new technicians hired (and older ones replaced), artists paid again to make acoustical discs over electrically, and so on.

Today, it’s easy to sympathize with the not unreasonably economy-sensitive merchants of that critical time. What’s harder to grasp is the ease with which the electrical revolution could be covered up. To understand that, we have to wrench our minds back to the era when most musicians and educators belittled all records as “canned” music and discophiles rarely possessed a special interest in the technical aspects of recording. Contemporary musical periodicals might run occasional gossip news items about prominent recording artists, but they paid scant attention to records, and general magazines and newspapers paid practically none at all. American collectors had nothing even remotely comparable to England’s *The Gramophone* (est. 1923) until Axel B. Johnson launched *The Phonograph Monthly Review* in the fall of 1926.

### Progress: At First Controversial . . .

Also contributing to the ease of the hushup was the fact that electrical recordings were not immediately and unmistakably preferable to their acoustical predecessors. Early on, they often seemed inferior, at least in most respects other than loudness. The general realization of their superior potential was delayed while recording and processing engineers learned how to cope with the

## Electrical Recording's Chronological Firsts

The following list of chronological firsts is confined to recordings actually released commercially.

| Recording Date | Release                                                                                                                                                                             | Recording Date          | Release                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1924</b>    |                                                                                                                                                                                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                          |
| November 6     | Art Gillham (The Whispering Pianist): "You May Be Lonesome." Columbia 328-D, issued July 1925.                                                                                      |                         | ery." Bliss: "A Plainsman's Song" (238-D). (From Metropolitan Opera House concert.) Special mid-April release; regular issue June 1925.                  |
| <b>1925</b>    |                                                                                                                                                                                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                          |
| February 25    | Art Gillham: "Hesitation Blues" (Columbia 343-D); "I Had Someone Else Before I Had You" (328-D), July 1925.                                                                         | April 29                | Leopold Stokowski/Philadelphia Orchestra: Saint-Saëns: <i>Danse macabre</i> , Op. 40. Victor 6505, July 1925.                                            |
| February 26    | A Miniature Concert (performed by Banta, Wiedoeft, Burr, et al.). Victor 35753, June 1925.                                                                                          |                         | Borodin: <i>Polovtsian Dances</i> ; Ippolitov-Ivanov: <i>Caucasian Sketches</i> : "In the Village." Victor 6515, September 1925.                         |
| March 16, 20   | International Novelty Orchestra: "Joan of Arkansas" medley, "Buenos Aires" Waltz (from Mask & Wig Club of Philadelphia production). Victor 19626, special local release April 1925. | May 15;<br>October 6, 7 | Leopold Stokowski/Philadelphia Orchestra: Dvořák: <i>New World</i> Symphony. Victor 6565-9 (later as album M-1), May 1926.*                              |
| March 21       | Alfred Cortot: Schubert: <i>Litanei</i> (arr. Cortot); Chopin: Impromptu No. 2, in F sharp, Op. 36. Victor 6502, June 1925.                                                         | July 20, 21, 27         | Sir Landon Ronald/Royal Albert Hall Orchestra: Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4, in F minor, Op. 36. HMV D-1037/41, released in Great Britain, December 1925. |
| March 31       | Associated Glee Clubs of America: "Adeste Fideles," "John Peel" (Columbia 50013-D); Grieg: "Discov-                                                                                 |                         |                                                                                                                                                          |

\*The long delay in releasing this recording gives the entry that follows a sounder claim to being the first electrically recorded complete symphony.

new technological problems. Indeed, the trial-and-error period might be said to have lasted into 1929 in some studios, particularly where high-frequency resonance problems were concerned. Recognition was handicapped for several years, too, by the slow development and distribution of adequate playback means.

Now, I surely don't need to remind any collector of historical disc treasures that many acoustical vocal recordings were astonishingly fine—and still are, properly reproduced. But since fewer instrumental and, particularly, orchestral acoustic discs are reissued in LP transfers today, I should stress that the best of these also sometimes transcended their theoretical limitations. All really good acoustical recordings played on the best acoustical phonographs of the mid-Twenties were, for all their inherent frequency- and dynamic-range restrictions, relatively free of certain immediately

audible types of distortion. In sharp contrast, all very early electrical discs not only were distorted in the making, but were almost invariably marred by further, often gross distortions in playback. For a long time, most home listeners had to play the new as well as old recordings on acoustical phonographs equipped with heavy "sound-boxes" using steel or fiber "needles." Obviously, the electrics sounded quite different from, and often worse than, acoustics. And they almost invariably sounded decidedly worse on the earliest electrical reproducers: the first Brunswick Panatrope and Columbia-Kolster Viva-Tonals, which were introduced in late 1925 and in 1927, respectively, but only gradually thereafter achieved any considerable distribution.

So it was that record buyers got no guidance as to whether a specific disc had been acoustically or electrically recorded from manufacturers'



monthly release listings. Only cognoscenti knew enough to search the discs themselves for an inscribed symbol—VE in an ellipse for Victor Electric or a "W" matrix-number prefix for Western Electric on all early electrical Columbias except the very earliest.

### ... But Eventually Unmistakable

The slow acceptance of the new technology was markedly aided by several discs that were arrestingly impressive and different from anything ever heard before. Outstanding among these was the best-selling Columbia *Adeste Fideles*. For if only a few of its claimed 4,850 voices don't require a healthy imagination to be heard, the over-all effect at least suggested a big performance in a big hall far better than any recorded earlier. And on a smaller scale, Victor's demonstrations of its Orthophonic Victrola on November 2, 1925, featured—among other electrical recordings—the twenty-voice Victor Male Chorus singing the *Faust* Soldiers' Chorus and Elgar's "Land of Hope and Glory" (V-19873) in direct comparison with the older type of acoustical recording using only eight voices.

Probably it was the greater volume capability of electrical recording, rather than any increase in tonal fidelity, that enabled it to achieve dominance of the pop-disc market by the end of 1925. The classical repertory required longer to be completely encompassed—perhaps less as a consequence of connoisseur-listener dubieties than because there were so few releases of serious musical materials in the mid-Twenties. It was only in the spring of 1926 that the first true musical/technical masterpieces appeared. (The chart to the right lists my Milestone/First candidates.) Even in the inadequate reproduction of contemporary home phonographs, the first genuine triumphs of the new era could be eloquently persuasive to any music-lover and magically spell-binding to any audiophile willing to listen.

Inevitably there were losses. For when the revolution came fully out into the open and the market demanded that everything be electrical, some excellent recordings made with the despised older method were summarily withdrawn. For example, Fernand Anseau and Amelita Galli-Curci, two leading singers of the period, had qualities in the early Twenties that they had lost, to some extent, by 1926. Some of their best recordings were on sale for only a short time and now are exceedingly rare, whereas the inferior electrical remakes forced upon them by the times stayed in the catalogs, in some cases, right up until World War II. Unfortunately it is these recordings by which they are generally remembered; indeed, Anseau's reputation might be less in eclipse today were the earlier sides more widely known.

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## Electrical Recording's Early Milestones

| Recording Date                   | Release                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1925</b>                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| June 10, 11                      | Percy Grainger: Chopin: Piano Sonata No. 3, in B minor, Op. 58. Columbia 67158/60-D (in Masterworks set M-32), December 1925; British Columbia L-1695/7, February 1926.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| August 5, 11, 17;<br>September 9 | Albert Coates: Wagner: <i>Die Walküre</i> : Magic Fire Music. HMV D-1079, April 1926; Victor 9006, November 1926.<br>Wagner: <i>Götterdämmerung</i> : <i>Siegfried's Rhine Journey</i> . HMV D-1092, June 1926; Victor 9007, November 1926.<br>Mussorgsky: <i>Boris Godunov</i> : <i>Revolutionary Scene</i> . HMV D-1090/1, June 1926; Victor 9507/8, November 1929. |
| October 28, 29;<br>November 1    | Felix Weingartner/London Symphony Orchestra: Berlioz: <i>Symphonie fantastique</i> , Op. 14. British Columbia L-1708/13, March 1926; Columbia 67174/9-D (in Masterworks M-34), March 1926.                                                                                                                                                                            |

It is lamentable that none of these musical/technical milestones is currently available—to the best of my knowledge—in LP transfers. The earliest outstanding electrical recording I know of that is available, through Peters International, is Holst's own version of his *Planets*, recorded at various sessions with the London Symphony from June through October 1926 (EMI HLM 7014). A later example is Stokowski's second electrical recording of Dvořák's *New World Symphony*, made October 5 and 8, 1927, and reissued along with his 1972 version of the work in RCA Red Seal CRL 2-0334. In the Red Seal "Stokowski 60th-Anniversary Commemoration Album" (VCM 7101), the earliest recording is Liszt's *Second Hungarian Rhapsody*, which dates from November 18, 1926, and March 10, 1927.

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But once the word about such recordings began to spread, the electrical process swept all before it. By 1927 such gestures as the release of no fewer than twenty new album "specials" in a single month by a single company (Columbia)—in commemoration of the centenary of Beethoven's death—were possible. Recording history has seen revolutions since, but none that worked a more fundamental change. ●



As Marguerite de Valois in *Les Huguenots*, about 1895

# Melba's Farewell Concert

by W. R. Moran

The electrical recording process, with its attendant microphones, gave rise to the phenomenon of "live" recordings. Dame Nellie's was an early landmark.

"NOSTALGIA" IS A POPULAR WORD today, its meaning having shifted in modern parlance from its older connotation of homesickness toward that of a general worship of things past. Everyone from the baker to the candlestick maker is busily promoting synthetic recollections of a not too distant past, with these efforts directed largely toward a generation too young to have personal experience of the product. Surely it is easier to sell books on, or models of, the horseless carriage to those who never had to start or drive the things! But nostalgia is not always a synthetic commodity. The phonograph has reached the sophisticated age where today we can take part in historical events that were preserved on recordings. This can certainly bring recent history closer to us, and with a real sense of involvement, by allowing us to eavesdrop, as it were, in a far more dramatic way than we can participate through the printed page.

*Honorary curator of the Stanford University Archive of Recorded Sound, W. R. Moran has written many articles and assembled many discographies on opera singers.*

There are probably few events that were such veritable orgies of sentimentality (today's "nostalgia"?) as the night of Tuesday, June 8, 1926, when His Master's Voice captured on eleven wax plates some of the goings-on within the walls of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, London. The occasion was the farewell performance of Dame Nellie Melba, the Australian soprano who had made her debut in this house just a few days more than thirty-eight years before.

Historians have a way of pointing to a certain event or date and designating it as the "close of an era." Actually, massive changes in life-style usually come about by a more gradual transition. The seeds of the so-called Edwardian era had been sown and were well on their way to flourishing by the time of Victoria's death in 1901, and there was little indication of the close of that era on the assumption of the English throne by George V on Edward's death in 1910. By the time Melba made her European operatic debut in Brussels in 1887 and had sung her first performance at Covent Garden



in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 1888, there had been a reversal of the old mid-Victorian view that singers, musicians, and others "of the stage" were a risqué lot that the better class did not want to associate with socially.

Victoria herself had been largely responsible for this change in viewpoint, as she took great delight in enlivening her social functions by "command performances," which took place at Windsor and the other royal abodes and which drew on the finest in London's artistic world. Melba was a special favorite of the old monarch. Her presence was in demand at private parties held in London and at weekends at country estates, and by the mid-Nineties she was the acknowledged Queen of Covent Garden. "Melba nights" were something special, were sold out long in advance, and frequently were attended by local and visiting royalty.

Writing in 1932, the year after Melba's death, Percy Colson had this to say:

A Melba night at the opera some thirty years ago! It recalls not only that thrillingly lovely voice, and the personality and magnetism which caused Melba to rule over Covent Garden with all the power and prestige of such queens of song as Catalani, Jenny Lind and Patti, but also a social epoch which, though we knew it not at the time, was fast drawing to its close, and which was stricken to death in that fatal blow of 1914.

When the Gramophone Company persuaded Melba to make commercial recordings in 1904, it was an event that was much advertised. Her records were distinguished by a mauve-colored label and bore a replica of her signature. The Victor issue of these discs in the U.S. also bore the special label with the banner "VICTOR MELBA RECORD." They were supplied in an imitation leather envelope provided with an isinglass window through which the label could be read: a picture of the singer appeared when the record was withdrawn. A twelve-inch single-faced Melba record sold for \$5.00, the ten-inch size for \$3.00. (Caruso records sold at that time, for example, bore the regular Red Seal labels of the period and sold for \$3.00 and \$2.00, respectively, with no special envelope.)

Melba's first domestic recordings for Victor, which were made in 1907, appeared with the standard Red Seal label, but her name was given merely as Melba in a type size larger than any other used in the title block. Only in his single duet with Melba, from the first act of *La Bohème*, does Caruso's name appear in the large type along with hers. Melba's name was one to be reckoned with. Not only was she considered one of the world's greatest sopranos—perhaps the greatest—but she was a personality and the symbol of a way of life. In many ways, certainly, she typified the Edwardian age to perfection.

Much happened in the thirty-eight years between Melba's Covent Garden debut and her farewell performance, and World War I was of course

the most cataclysmic of the period's events. Colson describes the changes in this way:

I have always regretted going to hear [Melba] after the war. It was in June, 1923, and the opera was *Faust*. It was the saddest evening I ever spent at Covent Garden. Where was the brilliant audience which was wont to frequent the beautiful theater—the exquisitely dressed, bejewelled women, the smart men? All vanished. . . . In the stalls there were young women holding their hats, and men either not in evening dress, or wearing dinner jackets, and I could not bear to look at the boxes. *Faust* was played by a third-rate American [sic] tenor, or rather tenorino, named Johnson, and when Melba appeared, matronly enough to be Marguerite's mother, I could have wept. The art was still there, but the voice was only the ghost of that silvery wonder of former years.

The farewell performance on June 8, 1926, had been announced well in advance with the initial prospectus of the season, which was published December 5, 1925. The program was to consist of Act II of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* (with its famous balcony scene), Acts III and IV of Puccini's *La Bohème*, and the opening of Act IV of Verdi's *Otello*, with its long scene for the soprano. Percy Pitt was to conduct the Gounod, Vincenzo Bellezza the Puccini and Verdi.

The matter of casting, however, was not soon settled. For her *Roméo*, Melba chose the American tenor Charles Hackett. For her companions in *Bohème*, she wanted some fellow countrymen. Browning Mummery and Frederic Collier, both Australians, were already at hand on the Covent Garden roster for the roles of Rodolfo and Colline and presented no problem. But Melba had taken a liking to a young Australian baritone, John Brownlee, who was then singing his first roles in a small French opera house, and she made up her mind that he was to be her Marcello. Melba called him at seven o'clock one morning in Paris and issued the invitation. She asked if he knew the role, to which Brownlee replied affirmatively, even though he had never even heard the opera! He recalled:

I went home, my head swimming. Here was I, an unknown, inexperienced Australian singer, and I was going to sing before the King and Queen in my debut at Covent Garden. I'd always learned music fast, and I knew the part of Marcello at the end of the week. We rehearsed in Melba's place with Maurice Renaud, the great baritone, who helped me a lot and gave me some of his costumes. It was an experience. Even rehearsing was exciting when Melba was around.

It was quite a night to make one's debut. The King and Queen were there, the Prince of Wales, and other members of the Royal Family. Practically the whole of England had come to Covent Garden that night to pay homage to Melba. The auditorium was a sea of gowns and tiaras and uniforms and decorations and white shirtfronts. The atmosphere was charged almost beyond endur-



The farewell concert was not Melba's first encounter with the microphone. Here she is in the summer of 1920 at Chelmsford, England, singing into a "wireless-phone" for a broadcast.

ance. A lot of people had come with dire forebodings. They were afraid it would be a pathetic spectacle and wished it were over. Some were sorry for the old girl of over 67 [she actually was just a little over 65] and for what they thought would be Melba's ordeal.

It didn't turn out that way. Melba's ordeal became Melba's triumph. She confounded her staunchest admirers. She sang so beautifully that years seemed to recede as in a fairy tale, and there stood again the great prima donna of a quarter of a century ago. The voice had almost a youthful charm and freshness. The heavenly legato was still there, and the wonderful technique. It was a miracle. The people who had come out of a sense of duty were as in a trance. Then they went wild with excitement.

After the last act of *La Bohème*, the curtain came down and the stagehands quickly arranged onstage all the flowers that Melba had received. When the curtain went up, she stood in front of a six-foot high sea of flowers. In all my life at the opera, I've never heard another ovation that had such overtones of love, affection and adoration. Only the supposed cold English can bestow such a tribute upon an artist whom they worship.

And thanks to the art of electrical recording, imperfect as it was, we can be a part of that scene today.

It is not known just when Victor's English affiliate, His Master's Voice, made the decision to attempt a recording of this historic event. The first experimental recordings by the new Western

Electric system had been made in the U.S. in February 1925. The first "live performance" recordings had been made at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York at a concert March 31 of the same year, and—as the companies licensed to use the new system had to build up a catalog of newly recorded discs—public announcement of the advent of electrical recording was actually delayed until November 1926. HMV had recorded the first full-length symphony by the new process and had released the disc in December 1925 to a roasting criticism by *The Gramophone's* Compton Mackenzie and others who thought the new recordings "sounded more like a complicated cat fight in a mustard mill than anything else." By the spring of 1926, however, a smattering of better recordings, accompanied by better-tempered reviews, had been produced.

Apparently feeling nothing ventured, nothing gained, HMV decided to record Melba. Chaliapin made his Covent Garden debut May 25, 1926, in *Mefistofele*, and HMV planned an experimental run at a repeat performance May 31, presumably to try out the equipment for the great Melba affair a week or so later. Immediately one new problem arose: Chaliapin was under exclusive contract to HMV for recordings, but other members of the cast (Bianca Scacciati and Francesco Merli) were exclusively Columbia artists. No compromise was reached in this situation, so all that was recorded were some bits and pieces of the performance in which the rival company's artists did not appear. The results of this "session" were nine twelve-inch sides (matrix nos. CR 382-390), of which four eventually were released. In spite of problems with balance between the orchestra and the singers as they moved about the stage, the sides were impressive.

For the Melba night of June 8, the issue of exclusive contracts again was raised. Her *Roméo* was Hackett, under contract to Columbia, so unfortunately no attempt was made to record that portion of the performance. (Today, with both the HMV and British Columbia labels under the same aegis, that of EMI, this problem has disappeared.) Eleven twelve-inch sides were cut. Details are shown in the chart.

July 1926 saw the publication of DB 943, containing the *Bohème* "Addio" and the farewell speech. Compton Mackenzie wrote in *The Gramophone* for August:

Of the vocal records [for the month] the most sensational are the two made at Covent Garden by His Master's Voice. The disc of Dame Nellie Melba singing Mimì's "Addio" and her speech of farewell on the other side, definitely mark a new epoch in the power of the gramophone. . . . I wish to express nothing except our profound homage to a great singer and a great lady and our intense appreciation of what the Gramophone Company has done in preserving that solemn occasion forever. This record may wring tears from those as yet unborn, for I cannot believe that the world



# Nellie Melba's Covent Garden Farewell

June 8, 1926 \* The Individual Recordings

| Matrix No. | Catalog Nos. (from HMV masters)      | Selection                                                   | Artists                                              |
|------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| CR 411     | officially unpublished               | <i>Bohème</i> : "Entrate... C'è Rodolfo?"                   | Melba, Brownlee                                      |
| CR 412     | DB 943; DB 1500; 7ER 5201 (45 dub)   | <i>Bohème</i> : "Donde lieta" ( <i>Addio</i> )              | Melba                                                |
| CR 413     | 7ER 5201 (45 dub); unpublished on 78 | <i>Bohème</i> : "Addio, dolce svegliare"                    | Melba, Brownlee, Rettore, Mummery                    |
| CR 414     | officially unpublished               | <i>Bohème</i> : "Gavotta. Minuetto."                        | Melba, Brownlee, Rettore, Mummery, Collier, Cotreuil |
| CR 415     | officially unpublished               | <i>Bohème</i> : "Sono andati?"                              | Melba, Mummery                                       |
| CR 416     | officially unpublished               | <i>Bohème</i> : "Oh come è bello"                           | Melba, Mummery, Rettore, Brownlee, Collier, Cotreuil |
| CR 417     | DB 1500; IRCC 2; 7ER 5201 (45 dub)   | <i>Otello</i> : "Piangea cantando" (Willow Song)            | Melba                                                |
| CR 418     | officially unpublished               | <i>Otello</i> : "Scendean l'augellia" (Willow Song, part 2) | Melba                                                |
| CR 419     | officially unpublished               | <i>Otello</i> : "Ave Maria"                                 | Melba                                                |
| CR 420     | officially unpublished               | address                                                     | Lord Stanley                                         |
| CR 421     | DB 943; 7ER 5201 (45 dub)            | farewell speech                                             | Melba                                                |

Matrix numbers—here presented in sequence—were assigned only after the concert. The scene from *Otello* was sung before the two acts of *Bohème*; the order otherwise is that of the concert. Until the recent first integral edition from EMI, most masters were available only as test pressings or pirated copies. Published editions all were on HMV except for the IRCC pressings (from HMV's masters) of CR 417.

will ever grow too old to be touched by the sincere emotion of a great artist. A record like this may not draw the sting of death, but it does rob the grave of a complete victory.

The next of the farewell recordings to receive publication was DB 1500, which was first listed in the October 1931 *Connoisseur Catalog*: the first part of the *Otello* "Willow Song." Because it was coupled with a previously released side (CR 412), it was assumed that it was the only remaining unissued side that had been approved by the artist. Presumably it was issued in commemoration of her death, which had occurred in Sydney earlier the same year. Thus it was a surprise to find the *Bohème* quartet (CR 413) making its tardy debut in dubbed 45-rpm seven-inch form on 7ER 5201, along with the three previously released recordings, in September 1961.

For many years, the Gramophone Company would press special editions (at a special price) of discontinued recordings. If one ordered by matrix (and not catalog) numbers, those in charge of such things apparently ran the orders through the factory without bothering to check up to see if the requested pressings had been passed by the artist or not. Thus it was that a few knowledgeable collectors came into possession of pressings of the entire set of the Melba farewell recordings, and inevitably the complete set has found its way onto various "pirate" LPs. And in 1976, at long last, the full farewell performance was "officially" issued by EMI as part of the HMV Treasury series album "Nellie Melba: The London Recordings 1904-26" (RLS 719, five discs, available as a Capitol import).

[A review by Andrew Porter is in the works—Ed.] I am proud to have been able to help EMI's staff organize this set.

Listening to the complete set of recordings today, most auditors agree that they contain some exquisite singing, and the number of places that show strain or faulty intonation are remarkably few. Actually, some of the unpublished sides seem flawless, except perhaps for an occasional imbalance in volume or a faulty cut in or out of the microphone at the beginning or end of a side. Certainly there is nothing on these records to mar the memory or reputation of Nellie Melba, and there is much of value and interest.

Points of comparison with earlier recordings are afforded by only three of the sides. Melba had previously recorded "Addio" with piano in London in March and again in November of 1904, and with orchestra in the U.S. in March 1907, January 1909, and November 1910. While there are minor differences in phrasing, there is remarkably little change in Melba's voice over the period of time represented by these acoustical recordings and that of June 1926. Aside from the "Addio," the rest of the 1926 *Bohème* material is new to the Melba discography and, of course, lends a new perspective to her ensemble work. The *Otello* selections had been previously recorded (the "Willow Song" in truncated form) in 1909 and 1910 by Victor; once again, comparison does not detract from the farewell performance. These recordings, unique in the history of the phonograph, captured a moment of artistic consequence and a technological development poised on the brink of its triumph. ●

**Philips' Haydn and Verdi.** Philips has penciled in sessions for new installations in two ongoing operatic projects, expected to yield two Haydn operas and one Verdi.

Scheduled for May in Lausanne was Haydn's *L'Isola disabitata*, with a cast including soprano Linda Zoghby, mezzo Norma Lerer, tenor Luigi Alva, and baritone Renato Bruson. As in the three Haydn operas previously recorded (*La Fedeltà premiata* was reviewed by Andrew Porter in June 1976, *La vera costanza* will be reviewed next month, and *Orlando Paladino* awaits release). Antal Dorati conducts the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra; they will reassemble in September for the best-known of Haydn's operas, *Il Mondo della luna*, featuring mezzo Frederica von Stade and tenor Anthony Rolfe Johnson.

On the Verdi front, Philips continues the collaboration with Austrian Radio that produced last year's *I due Foscari*. *Foscari* principals Katia Ricciarelli and José Carreras will return to Vienna in July for *La Battaglia di Legnano*, which will also feature bass Nicola Ghiuselev. The conductor will be Lamberto Gardelli.

**New Horizons.** Two conductors who have loomed large in the baroque discography are now actively expanding their repertoires.

As reported last month, Neville Marriner's new exclusive Philips contract will not confine him to the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and indeed in May he was scheduled to record a group of Suppé overtures with the London Philharmonic. Later projects are to include sessions with the Concertgebouw Orchestra. Marriner will not be deserting either the baroque era or the Academy, of course: coming up is the Bach B minor Mass.

Meanwhile, Raymond Leppard is showing his versatility. In addition to Virgil Thomson's *Mother of Us All* for New World Records (reviewed in this issue by Conrad L. Osborne), he has recorded Mendelssohn's *Italian* and *Reformation* Symphonies for Erato.

**Edgar complete.** By the time this appears, the last gap in the Puccini operatic discography should be closed, thanks to Columbia's decision to continue its collaboration with Eve Queler and the Opera Orchestra of New York with a live recording of *Edgar*. (When RCA recorded Puccini's first opera, *Le Villi*, a few years back, Act II of his second opera was added as a filler, but a complete *Edgar* remained undone.) The scheduled cast had Renata Scotto as Fidelia, Gwendolyn

## Behind the Scenes

Killebrew as Tigrana, Carlo Bergonzi as Edgar, and Vicente Sardinero (fresh from his Metropolitan Opera debut in another Puccini role, *Marcello*) as Frank.

**Giulini and friends.** Carlo Maria Giulini has apparently found new happiness in the recording studio, where he is of late spending more and more time. (His first Chicago Symphony records for DG, including the Mahler Ninth Symphony, are reviewed this month; his newly issued Dvořák Seventh with the London Philharmonic for EMI will be reviewed next month.) And this seems to suit not only record buyers, but some distinguished musicians as well: Within one week in May, Giulini (at the helm of the London Philharmonic, for EMI) was scheduled to collaborate with two of the world's foremost soloists on the centerpiece of each's concerto repertory.

Mstislav Rostropovich was making the latest in an almost uncountable sequence of recordings of the Dvořák cello concerto, along with the Saint-Saëns First Cello Concerto. Itzhak Perlman, by contrast, was making his first recording (a long-awaited one) of the Beethoven violin concerto. Perlman and Giulini, of course, had only a few months before taped the Brahms concerto for EMI in Chicago, as reported in February.

**CBS in Pittsburgh.** Shortly after the Pittsburgh Symphony made its long-awaited return to the recording microphones with music director André Previn ["Behind the Scenes," April 1977], orchestra and conductor were loaned by EMI to CBS, to accompany Isaac Stern in George Rochberg's violin concerto, which Stern premiered in Pittsburgh in 1975.

**Karajan's Salome.** Although Herbert von Karajan has two partially completed operatic projects in limbo (*Lohengrin* for EMI, *Don Carlos* for Decca/London) as a result of scheduling problems and disputes with cast members, EMI hopes to proceed on schedule with Strauss's *Salome*, to be done not with the Berlin Philharmonic, but with the Vienna Philhar-

monic. Hildegard Behrens, who made her Met debut this past season in *Il Tabarro*, sings the title role, with Agnes Baltsa as Herodias, José van Dam as Jokanaan, and Wieslaw Ochman (who comes to the Met next season) as Narraboth, which he also sang in the Böhm/DG recording.

**Verdi from Chicago.** Sir Georg Solti is scheduled to re-record the Verdi Requiem this summer for RCA, this time with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. The announced solo quartet: Leontyne Price, Janet Baker, Vladimir Atlantov, and Nicolai Ghiaurov.

**The British Solti.** Sir Georg is building up his discography of British composers with two recent Decca/London projects featuring the London Philharmonic.

With Kyung-Wha Chung (his recent collaborator in the Bartók Second Violin Concerto), he has added the violin concerto to his series of Elgar recordings. Solti was still recovering from an attack of flu that had just forced him to cancel a concert, but two weeks later he was able to perform and record Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*. The "searingly exciting" Royal Festival Hall performance (in the words of European editor Edward Greenfield) took place on the eve of the composer's seventy-fifth birthday, with Sir William in attendance.

**Dafne No. 3.** "In a world with two *Dafne* sets and two *Navarraise* sets," Andrew Porter wrote in February 1976, reviewing two recordings of Marco da Gagliano's *La Dafne*, "anything is possible."

What Mr. Porter was proposing was yet another recording of this, history's fourth opera, with a cast headed by Janet Baker, Ileana Cotrubas, Jon Vickers, and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Well, that hasn't quite come to pass, but a third recording of *Dafne* has. In the Kurhaus of the small German spa of Hitzacker, DG's Archiv division assembled Jürgen Jürgens' Hamburg Monteverdi Choir and Camerata Accademica for a sequel to their recording (reviewed in February 1975) of the third opera, Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. Some of the *Orfeo* cast members (including tenors Nigel Rogers and Ian Partridge) are heard again in *Dafne*. (The first two operas were settings of *Euridice*, first by Jacopo Peri and then by Giulio Caccini; a recording of Peri's *Euridice* made over a decade ago by Amadeo has been reissued by both Musical Heritage Society, on OR 344/5, and Telefunken, on 26.35014.)



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## Technics

by Panasonic







DEBORAH FEINGOLD

*Terre, Maggie, and Suzzy Roche: as much fun as eavesdropping on a pajama party*

warm and emphatically electric hollow-bodied guitar, also give the new songs their own flavor. But ultimately it's her singing and topical concerns that suggest this music's current vintage. The overdubbed vocal choruses and girlish asides may point back to the Mitchell of the late '60s and early '70s, but the romantic weariness and sense of mortality identify a sadder but wiser adult.

*Chinese Café* intercuts lyric fragments from a remembered jukebox (prominently quoting *Unchained Melody*) with intimations of a new generation gap—this time, between yesterday's rock & roll rebels and their own children. On *Be Cool*, Mitchell suggests that cynical gamesmanship is a means for romantic survival, advice that seems far removed from the ebullient lover of so many early songs. On *Man to Man*, she turns a hard gaze on her own lack of romantic constancy and the underlying spiritual dissatisfaction.

That track reunites Mitchell with one of her most publicized paramours, James Taylor, and the pairing works both musically and thematically as each singer's overdubbed choir calls and responds from opposite sides of the stereo mix. These and other touches suggest a level of self-awareness that sometimes teasingly hints at parody, an angle from which "Wild Things Run Fast" largely benefits. There's even a successful version of Leiber and Stoller's (*You're So Square*) *Baby, I Don't Care*, which succeeds in updating its message with an unexpectedly hard-edged, guitar-driven arrangement.

SAM SUTHERLAND

**Gerry Rafferty: Sleepwalking**  
Christopher Neil & Gerry Rafferty,  
producers. Liberty LT 51132

It has been over four years since *Baker Street's* mesmerizing saxophone refrain

dominated the airwaves. Since then, Scottish singer/songwriter Gerry Rafferty has been plodding merrily along, his pleasantly nasal timbre delivering fine if unremarkable songs about life and love and loneliness.

"Sleepwalking" isn't much of a departure, but it is so ingratiating and so straightforward in intent that it's hard not to like. From Hugh Burns's Knopfler-esque guitar work to keyboardist Alan Clark's synthesizers to Maurice Pert's clangy percussion, all the elements are forged into one smooth sound. Over, in, and through it, Rafferty's easygoing wail prevails. So, occasionally, does his McCartney persona (understandable, since, as one-half of Stealers Wheel, he used to make his living sounding like the Beatles). *The Right Moment*, a dreamy ditty of a ballad in the best Pauly tradition, features Rafferty's high, aching notes floating over a soft swirl of synthesizers and strings to wonderful effect.

The album abounds with nifty little nuances and embellishments: Ian Lynn and Alan Clark's percolating rhythms in *On the Way*; Rafferty's muffled "yeah-yeahs" on the fadeout of *Standing at the Gates*; the subtle Dylan motifs and loping drum synthesizer on *Good Intentions*; the spacy clicks and pings Pert brings to *As Wise as a Serpent*. Rafferty's smart, polished sound is seductive in a way that's neither smarmy nor pretentious. There's nothing earthshaking on "Sleepwalking"; just good old-fashioned, easy-listening pop.

STEVEN X. REA

**The Roches: Keep on Doing**  
Robert Fripp, producer  
Warner Bros. 23725-1

Listening to the Roches can be like eavesdropping on a late-night conversation at a pajama party: these three sisters communi-

cate an infectious intimacy and a guileless ability to share their private jokes and points of vulnerability. Their whimsy seemed strained on "Nurds"—the title song and *The Death of Suzzy Roche* took their goofy self-deflation too far. But "Keep on Doing" is a charming return to the form of the trio's debut, "The Roches." They have struck a balance between the subtly crafted romantic songs of Maggie and the off-the-wall spontaneity of Terre and Suzzy, keeping the production simple while achieving a lush texture with the interweaving of their guitars and voices.

Terre and Suzzy's point of view has slowly been asserting itself, as Maggie's role as a composer has been diminishing. On "The Roches," Maggie wrote or cowrote seven songs; on "Keep on Doing" only two: *Losing True*, a simple dissection of an affair coming to a bad end, and the obscure *The Scorpion Lament*. The snappier, less studied approach of Terre and Suzzy provides the album's lighter moments. The younger sisters seem to come out with whatever pops into their heads, from the rapid-fire confusion of Terre's *The Largest Elizabeth in the World* to the casting aside of possessions and expectations on the dual effort, *Want Not Want Not*, which has the creamy harmony and brisk tempo of pop-jazz vocal groups such as the Boswell Sisters.

Another Terre-Suzzy collaboration, *I Fell in Love*, is a delightfully performed ode to a "switchblade flashing motorcycle freak" who shows up at his mother's house in a suit and tie. The singer, spying on him in this uncharacteristic garb, falls in love. This standard rock subject—a girl who sees the softer side of a notorious rogue—is given a plaintive folk treatment. So is David Massengill's traditional-sounding ballad *On the Road to Fairfax County*, whose quaint phrasing ("joyful did we dance") and musical clarity make it an example of an old form handled with skill and feeling.

"Keep on Doing" starts with an a cappella version of *The Hallelujah Chorus*, and winds up with advice to someone on a (metaphorical?) ledge: "You work too hard to take this abuse/Be on your guard/Jerks on the loose." It's that dichotomy that helps make the Roches' new album such a rebound. Their flakiness is under control, their music is tuneful and unfussy, and their practical philosophy makes perfect sense.

MITCHELL COHEN

**Supertramp:**  
". . . famous last words. . ." *Supertramp & Peter Henderson*,  
producers  
A&M SP 3732 (LP); CS 3732 (cassette)

Supertramp's long-awaited followup to 1979's highly successful "Breakfast in America" offers subtle revisions to that set's lush pop/rock songwriting and arrang-



# The New Releases



In Santa Fe studio, the operatic Susan B. Anthony (Mignon Dunn) is regarded benignly by members of the opposite sex—conductor Raymond Leppard (c., seated), producer Andrew Raeburn (r.), and two soundmen.

## Who Can Resist *The Mother of Us All*?

*New World's recording of the witty and profound Thomson-Stein opera, whatever its limitations, "is one that must be owned."*

by Conrad L. Osborne

IT HAS TAKEN thirty years, but this exhilarating, stirring, and touching opera, one of the six or eight works of the American musical theater that have both true artistic stature and proven popular appeal, has at last been put on records. The performance and recording are less than ideal, but they are adequate, they show the work's qualities, and no one with the faintest interest in our culture (this broadest of terms is deliberately chosen) should be without a copy.

*The Mother of Us All* is a fine, rare, and sophisticated artwork. But it is also a common, accessible, and simple hunk of entertainment, and for this reason it is theater-tough, as is true of such works as *Pagliacci* and *La Bohème*, and untrue of many works nobler than those. I can bear witness to the observation made by Robert Marx in his long, well-judged, and informative essay that accompanies this album that *Mother* can survive the skimpiest of treatments—indeed, I have never seen it under circumstances that were not in some way reduced, and have never come away feeling cheated. Hearing it for the first time with full (undoubted) cast and orchestration, and with instrumental interludes drawn

from the composer's suite from the opera, has really added nothing essential to my feeling for or knowledge of the work—which is not to say that it is anything other than very pleasant to hear it this way.

The performances I have seen of *Mother* have shared a certain progression in audience reaction. At first, there tends to be a separation in the audience, with the majority in some puzzlement over what seems the problem of Gertrude Stein's complexity of syntax, and of how this squares with the nearly insulting simplicity of Virgil Thomson's music, while a minority audibly indicates its with-it-ness. Then, somewhere along in the second scene (the appearance of Daniel Webster and the parade, "He digged a pit, he digged it deep," or Jo the Loiterer's explanation of what it is you must do when you are funny, or, at the very latest, the marvelous nondebate between Susan B. Anthony and Daniel Webster), nearly everyone is with it, showing appreciation of how charming and amusing are Stein's curlicues and their funny perch atop Thomson's melodic homilies.

But not long thereafter, a second reaction sets in, as it dawns on both groups that Stein's language is

really as direct as Thomson's, more direct than the one we normally use, that there is really not much to be "with" except the people on-stage and the matters that concern them, and that these matters are a great deal else besides charming and amusing—though they remain that. So the smiles and chuckles never disappear, though they turn inward and are intermixed with other reactions, through stretches of absorbed silence.

Similar shiftings take place with respect to the work's actual content, for *Mother* is about issues and attitudes; at some point, everyone's sympathies are enlisted, and at some other challenged. At one recent production, there was forceful vocal approval from feminists in the audience at Susan B.'s discussion of men's fear (Act II, Scene 1), then, just moments later, very sober silence in the same quarter at her speech about women attaining the vote: "By that time it will do them no good because having the vote they will become like men, they will be afraid . . ." to say nothing of this portion of the reflective final monologue: "But do we want what we have got, has it not gone, what made it live, has it not gone because now it is had. . . ?"

Sober silence, but not, I think, hostile. For Susan B. takes nothing back ("We cannot retrace our steps, going forward may be the same as going backwards"), she only sees that ends are elusive, that solutions only raise new problems, and that the apparent solution is not the reason for the struggle. For the embroiled activist, of course, the solution *appears* to be the reason—she wants to believe that Susan B. is right the first time, wrong the second. But it is very hard to believe this when the matter is put as logically, as lovingly as it is by Stein and Thomson, just as no one can ever again quite comfortably assume the marriage name-change once that most guileless and tuneful of married couples, Indiana Elliot and Jo the Loiterer, have become Indiana Loiterer and Jo Elliot, and all have agreed it is "so harmonious."

This sort of gentle incision is made a hundred times in the course of the piece. We are riled and made to see black, mollified and shown the white, left with both and all the gray, with our thoughts and feelings flowing. We are made to feel together but not homogenized, tranquil but not complacent, all in the memory of a delightful time in the theater. That, I think, is as valuable a thing as an artwork can do.

The opera's form, theatrical and musical, is of a nature to disarm criticism, at least from an American listener. It trades shamelessly on our associations without ever becoming cheap or exploitative. Its dramatic form recalls every civil ritual we have known—our school assembly pageants and graduations, our political rallies and demonstrations, our holiday parades and unveilings. Yet through its delicacy of taste and its literary and musical solidity, it never awakens the suspicion (as do many works of "Americana") that our affections are being toyed with or presumed upon. It evokes but transcends all these events, and becomes a sort of apotheosis of our apotheoses.

The format also recalls more specifically theatrical native events: plays like *Green Pastures*, outdoor historical heritage pageants, populist cantatas like *Bal-lad for Americans* (especially in those spoken

queries and comments thrown out from the ensemble), vaudeville, revues, the nonbook musical. Not to mention more recent events of musical theater—I think of Eric Stokes's opera *Horspfa!*, which deserves more productions than it has had, or the most recent Sondheim effort, *Pacific Overtures*, or even (farther afield, I admit, but sounding echoes of the Lost Generation ferment that so influenced both Stein and Thomson) such works of the contemporary avant-garde as the Foreman-Silverman operas or Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach*. And in its way, *Mother* transcends all these, too, for it is neither a commercial masscult work trying to stretch nor a "special wavelength" experiment.

Thomson's score is the precise musical equivalent of this form. Where have we heard this hymn tune, this campaign march, this parlor ballad? Everywhere, back before our jukeboxes, our transistors, our piped coffee-shop-and-elevator drool. (And there is a "back before" for us, even today.) Or nowhere, for what Thomson did was to write some piercing, sticky-fingered melodies of his own, in the fashion we know. And there is no cornball affectation (no honky-tonk piano, no carousel organ, no nightclub sax) on the one hand, or "perky" wrong-note baloney on the other. Just very nicely crafted harmonies, piquant but unforced orchestration, and some of the best American musical prosody ever—not the only model for it, nor the only inflectional choices for these lines, but a model of one sort at least, and consistently sane and subtle selections. The French models for both vocal and instrumental settings are often cited, and justly; but in the listening, one happily forgets all about that. It is a witty, inventive, talkative score, but when it needs to strike deep it can, and without ever overblowing.

The New World performance is built around the Santa Fe Opera's new production of the work last summer, a full-scale affair with elaborate designs by Robert Indiana (an obvious choice, and he had already designed the first of two productions given the opera by Minneapolis' Center Opera). The recording is not directly from the live performances, however, but is a studio job done in Santa Fe's Armory for the Arts, using mobile units from Viking Studios in Denver. Perhaps the producers felt that the company's open-air house would create extra-difficult conditions for "live" recording.

As longtime HF readers know, I can normally be counted upon to champion recordings based upon live performances or at least designed to take advantage of the values that emerge from stage rehearsal and performance by a stable cast. No doubt these values count here, mostly in the general musical comfort and security of the performers. But some drawbacks are in evidence, too. Santa Fe has made an enormous contribution to the American operatic scene, introducing many difficult new works, reviving intriguing old ones, setting a high visual standard, and affording its productions much longer than average rehearsal periods. It has also maintained the most significant of the apprentice programs by means of which several regional American companies now filter promising young performers into the profession, and in as large a cast as this the policy figures strongly.



At the same time, the company has shown some rather weird leanings in the casting department, directorship on-stage and in pit that is often less than galvanic, and the sort of "good taste" in its meticulously prepared productions that sometimes seems to aim for a well-ordered avoidance of gross embarrassments rather than a positive, imaginative artistic statement. These qualities are to some degree evident in this recording, which is musically very neat and thorough, but just a bit mild-mannered and very unevenly cast.

Unfortunately, the pivotal role of Susan B. is among those poorly, not to say inexplicably, cast. Part of the shame of this is that Mignon Dunn is an excellent and valuable artist who has recorded very little, and it is to be regretted that such an important assignment is one so ill suited to her vocal and expressive strengths. Her voice is a large dramatic mezzo capable of good line, but it is not an especially "long" voice and does not have ease at the lower dynamics, especially above the staff. Susan B. is written specifically for a dramatic soprano with easy access to the top and a special ability to float soft tones in high-lying passages with a sense of repose—many of the role's most important moments depend on these characteristics.

Dunn gives it an admirable try. She is never sloppy, she sings all the notes (save the one optional high C), and sounds her customary imposing self in the middle. But many of the top notes (A's and B flats she can't quite get set for) sound driven or whoopy, and her best effort cannot summon the sense of calm and ease for the soft suspended phrases; the last monologue, which should put the icing on the whole work, becomes an exercise in squeaking through. Finally, because of the resonance properties that go with her type of big sound (particularly from the upper F upwards), too much of the text suffers. This is simply not a well-judged matching of role and singer.

Among the remaining female roles of some length, good impressions are made by Batyah Godfrey (quite a lush, round contralto sound), Ashley Putnam (a fresh, steady high soprano), and Linn Maxwell. Helen Vanni, though, is in mushy voice as Constance Fletcher, and though Aviva Horvath sounds like a promising enough talent, her light, bland timbre has none of the maturity one feels should belong to Gertrude S.

The most prominent male roles are Jo the Loiterer and Daniel Webster. The former is in good hands: The young American character tenor James Atherton, though clearly at the top of his effective range on a sustained A, has the right sort of ingenuous timbre for the part, sings firmly and with crisp rhythm, and makes every syllable of text lucid. Philip Booth has just the kind of solid *basso cantante* needed for Daniel Webster, and is on the whole effective; however, his technique does not yet successfully embrace the upper range, and his dry, unresonant E flats and E's compromise the role's two or three climactic moments.

William Lewis, a veteran all-purpose tenor, sings John Adams, sounding clear and pleasing in the middle, rather awkward and tight as he moves to the top. A young light baritone, Gene Ives, handles the high *mezza-voce* phrases in Virgil T.'s music quite

adeptly, but hasn't the punch for the more forceful writing at "Pity the poor persecutor," etc.

The mixture of comprimarios and apprentice artists that fills in the other parts is up and down. Among those emerging for a few lines apiece to nice effect are the Henry B. (Ronald Raines), the Lillian Russell (Karen Beck), and the Ulysses Grant (Steven Loewengart). The others range from the acceptable downward.

The Santa Fe orchestra is a good one: not often really challenged by its leadership, it maintains a level of solid, clean execution. The conductor of this performance, Raymond Leppard, secures good balances and chooses easy, natural tempos—to get all these simple, exposed little sections flowing and developing must be much harder than it appears, and the performance is in general live and unforced. It is also rather unambitious musically—Leppard does not really demand a great deal from his cast in terms of phrasing, or anything extra in the way of fine pointing from his orchestra. (Example of the former: Thomson's frequent swell-and-diminish markings, a prominent characteristic of the indicated vocal style, are not even attempted more than ten or fifteen percent of the time; the writing is not *this* flat. Example of the latter: The little entr'acte to Act I, Scene 5, is built on the beautiful tune stated several times by Susan B.—"Will they remember that it is true?"—and brought back hauntingly in the final monologue. At its first repeat, where it moves from tonic to dominant, the ascending melody is marked with accents and a crescendo is indicated, so that the emphasis builds before a sudden drop to *ppp* when the restatement starts at the rise of the curtain. But here, there are no accents to be heard, and scarcely a crescendo, so that at the return the contrast is lost.) The over-all effect is a little pale, and the reading tends to die in some of the longer subdued passages, as in the two domestic scenes.

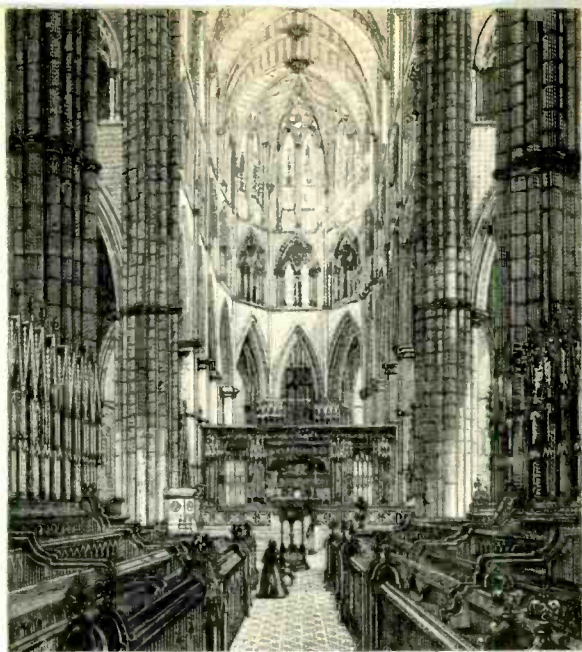
The discs have also been cut at an extremely low level—I had to employ an uncomfortably high setting to get much presence from quieter passages, and after vigorous statements of the interludes, the voice entries are on the dim side. It's an opera, guys. Apart from this, the sound is warm and balanced, with a nice spread, and though I heard some traces of echo, the surfaces themselves are excellent on my copy. The album's accompanying material is thorough (the Marx essay, complete libretto, bibliographic and discographic lists and a checkpoint chart on woman's suffrage, besides the usual information and pictures on performance) and attractively laid out.

To wax Steinian for a moment, all this matters urgently and matters not at all: While it is hardly a great performance and recording, it is one that must be owned.

#### THOMSON: The Mother of Us All.

|                    |                    |                      |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Constance Fletcher | Helen Vanni (s)    | Jo the Loiterer      | James Atherton (t) |
| Angel More         | Ashley Putnam (s)  | John Adams           | William Lewis (t)  |
| Gertrude S.        | Aviva Horvath (s)  | Virgil T.            | Gene Ives (b)      |
| Susan B. Anthony   | Mignon Dunn (ms)   | Daniel Webster       | Philip Booth (bs)  |
| Indiana Elliot     | Linn Maxwell (ms)  | (plus smaller roles) |                    |
| Anne               | Batyah Godfrey (a) |                      |                    |

Santa Fe Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Raymond Leppard, cond. [Andrew Raeburn, prod.] NEW WORLD NW 288/9, \$15.96 (two discs, automatic sequence; distributed by Peters International).



## The Not-So-Bland Organs of Britain

*Producer Michael Smythe's  
Vista label provides aural evidence  
of an invigorated generation  
of English organ builders  
and players.*

by Scott Cantrell

THE ORGAN seems to have maintained a more central position in European musical life than it has in America, and nearly every one of the larger European countries has at least one substantial series of records devoted to its own important organs. (Would that it were so here!)

England, during the 1960s, had EMI's Great Cathedral Organ Series, but since its demise a few years ago the loss has been more than amply compensated by Michael Smythe, an independent producer who has proved both indefatigable and immensely skilled in recording some of England's finest instruments and performers. Some of his recordings have been released in the U.K. by RCA and Decca (and some of the Decca recordings have appeared in the U.S. on the Oiseau-Lyre and London Treasury labels), and Smythe has produced some forty discs on his own Vista label, which is now being marketed here by HNH Distributors.

English organs and organists have a not wholly un-

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*Mr. Cantrell, a professional organist, has written for Music magazine and produces a weekly program, The Organ Loft, on WMHT-FM, Schenectady, New York.*

deserved reputation for blandness, but these new Vista releases demonstrate some real imagination and fire in some of the newer crop of instruments and performers. The newer and more recently rebuilt organs are immensely brighter and more articulate than those of an earlier generation, though they seem so far to have avoided the shrillness of too many contemporary American instruments.

The British practice of burying cathedral organs in muffling chambers at the sides of the choir still makes tonal projection into the nave a virtual impossibility and recording a nightmare, but Smythe has overcome some tremendous obstacles to produce recorded sound that is at once clear and atmospheric. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about these recordings is that, with one exception, they were made with a single Neumann SM-2 stereo microphone and a Revox A-77 or A-700 recorder, a persuasive argument for simple recording techniques.

The Vista pressings do not do as much justice to Smythe's recordings as some of the Decca ones I've heard—they tend to lack a truly solid fundamental tone in the low bass, and the sound (particularly in the inner grooves) is not always as clean as one would like—but they are definitely above average. The presentation of the albums is, for the most part, a model of care and thoroughness: Most of the sets include complete organ specifications and histories and some particularly fine program notes on the music. (Those by Felix Aprahamian are exemplary.) Not the least among the attractions of these records is the performers' willingness to venture beyond over-worked repertory into worthy literature that is rarely performed.

"Six Famous British Organs" (VPS 1033), a followup to Vista's earlier "sampler" (VPS 1010), presents mostly shorter works. None of the six instruments sounds especially distinguished, but they really haven't time to make much of a case for themselves. The exception is Edinburgh Cathedral's 1971 Walker rebuild, the sonorities of which are amply demonstrated in Healey Willan's substantial and impossibly grand Introduction, Passacaglia, and Fugue. It is good to have this piece back in the record catalog, but John Turner's performance sounds a bit flaccid next to Francis Jackson's splendid reading on one of the now-deleted Great Cathedral Organ Series albums. Shorter pieces by Salomé, Karg-Elert, and Peeters are given energetic performances at Stirling, Ripon, and Canterbury, respectively, but neither David Hamilton nor the bland Dunfermline Abbey organ has anything compelling to say about Messiaen's *Dieu parmi nous*. At Ely, Arthur Wills plays Couperin with some very French-sounding reeds and cornets, but his use of *inégalité* is rather less convincing.

The organ in Wakefield Cathedral (VPS 1034), a 1951-52 Compton rebuild, offers an attractive balance of clarity and richness, and Jonathan Bielby is a dynamic player. Both instrument and performer are as superbly suited to the Reger-influenced textures of C.H.H. Parry's dramatic Toccata and Fugue (The Wanderer) as they are to Kenneth Leighton's jazzy 1968 *Festival Fanfare*, and Bielby projects real conviction in such disparate works as Guilmant's Third Sonata and Richard Rodney Bennett's *Alba*. This last



work, by the way, is one of the most stimulating and convincing of the more avant-garde organ pieces I've heard, and Bielby's registrations are illuminating.

Walter Hillsman's bicentennial program of American organ music at Southwark (VPS 1038) struck me as a rather unflattering one, since the only selection that really held my attention was Samuel Barber's charming "Wondrous Love" variations. The *Concert Variations on "The Star-Spangled Banner"* by Dudley Buck (who could win with a name like that?) is a veritable catalog of the Victorian clichés that Ives satirized so cleverly in his own "America" variations. Unfortunately, the latter's *Adeste fidelis* is merely tedious, the *Choral No. 1* strongly suggests that Roger Sessions was uncomfortable writing for the organ, and Copland's *Episode* reminds me of the preacher who wrote in the margin of his sermon, "Shout loudly—argument weak here." Anyone wanting a record of American organ music would do much better to get George Baker's Delos album (FY 025), which offers a vastly superior selection of works by Sowerby, Berlinski, Persichetti, Anderson, and Roberts and the best romp through the Ives "America" that I've heard.

The brothers Stephen and Nicholas Cleobury have been unearthing and commissioning music for organ duet during the past couple of years, and they have now recorded some of the results on the 1937 Harrison & Harrison organ of Westminster Abbey (VPS 1039). The instrument's tone is rather ugly—with blunt, forced diapasons and reeds—but the playing is fine indeed. Among the curiosities are S. S. Wesley's duet transcription of Bach's "St. Anne" fugue (an arrangement that would have been necessitated by the inadequate pedal divisions of early nineteenth-century British organs) and a pleasantly Mendelssohnian D minor Sonata by Gustav Merkel (1827-85). Of the two modern pieces, Leighton's *Dialogues on the Scottish Psalm-Tune "Martyrs"* struck me as much more successful; Elizabeth Luytens' static *Plenum IV* will probably sound more annoying than interesting to most listeners.

At Ripon, Ronald Perrin proves quite a skilled player (VPS 1040), and his 1964 Harrison & Harrison organ is well balanced except for an overly prominent 32-foot reed. Among the solo works the most interesting is a splendid *Fantasia and Toccata in D minor* by Charles Villiers Stanford (who, like Parry, was one of Vaughan Williams' teachers). Perrin is joined by his pianist wife, Mary, in a virtuosic and imaginative performance of a colorful *Concerto for Organ and Piano* written by the Belgian organist/composer Flor Peeters in 1957. The piano sounds a bit hard and cavernous in the cathedral acoustic, but the balance between organ and piano has been handled well.

The huge Hull City Hall organ (VPS 1042), rebuilt in 1951-52 by Compton, can produce a thrilling full-organ sound, and the softer stops are equally beautiful. Peter Goodman plays with panache, and he generously demonstrates his instrument's tonal variety in Guilman's noble *Fifth Sonata* and in shorter pieces by Sweelinck, Kellner, Harwood, and Hollins. While the Hollins *Trumpet Minuet* is barely respectable, one is glad for an opportunity to hear Hull's glorious orchestral trumpet stop.

Although it can't match Hull's grandeur or beauty, the 1969 Rushworth & Dreaper rebuild at Chester (VPS 1044) is pleasant and versatile. Roger Fisher has used it persuasively in his previous Vista recordings of Rheinberger sonatas, and he does so here in the Reger *Halleluja! Gott zu loben* fantasia and two shorter chorale preludes. His ample musicianship shows some weaknesses, though, in the Bach and Buxtehude pieces. He fails utterly to make any kind of rhythmic (and thus structural) sense of Buxtehude's magnificent *Prelude, Fugue, and Chaconne in C*, and one searches in vain for such stylistic niceties as cadential trills. The Bach *Passacaglia* fares better, although the fugue is too slow and the big reeds heard at the end are noticeably anachronistic. So buy this record for the Reger side—and beware that the record labels may be (as mine were) reversed.

**BRITISH ORGANS.** Various organs and organists. [Michael Smythe, prod.] VISTA (various numbers), \$7.98 each (distributed by HNH Distributors).

**SIX FAMOUS BRITISH ORGANS.** Richard Galloway, David Harrison, Ronald Perrin, John R. Turner, Allan Wicks, and Arthur Wills, organ. VPS 1033.

**THE ORGAN OF WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL.** Jonathan Bielby, organ. VPS 1034.

**AMERICAN ORGAN MUSIC FROM SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL.** Walter Hillsman, organ. VPS 1038.

**ORGAN DUETS FROM WESTMINSTER ABBEY.** Stephen and Nicholas Cleobury, organ. VPS 1039.

**THE ORGAN IN RIPON CATHEDRAL.** Ronald Perrin, organ. VPS 1040.

**THE ORGAN IN HULL CITY HALL.** Peter Goodman, organ. VPS 1042.

**THE ORGAN IN CHESTER CATHEDRAL.** Roger Fisher, organ. VPS 1044.

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HAVING DEVELOPED a distinguished catalog of organ recordings for his Vista label, producer Michael Smythe has begun to add some choral records as well, including the newly released "Famous Hymns of Praise from St. Edmundsbury Cathedral." Twenty hymns are performed by four massed choirs in the English cathedral, with organ accompaniment. The choral tone is not always very refined—there is, in particular, a tendency among the trebles and sopranos to strain on high notes—but the accompaniments and descants demonstrate the sensitivity, imagination, and taste characteristic of the English cathedral tradition.

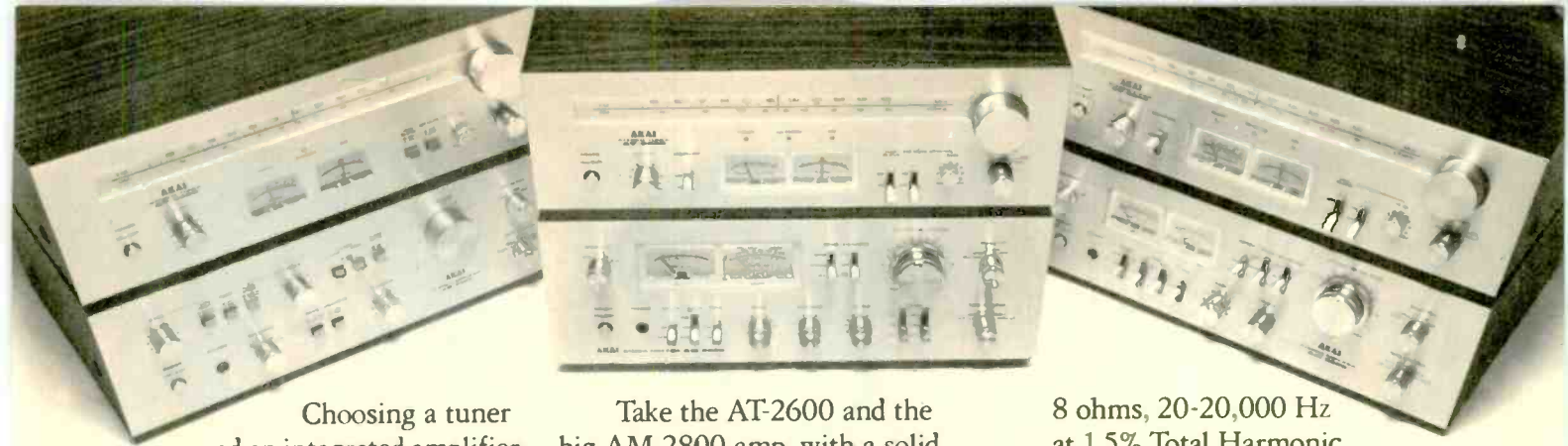
Of the twenty hymns, American churchgoers will probably recognize between a half and three-fourths, and the unfamiliar ones are certainly worth attention. Indeed, anyone who is at all interested in hymnody will find much to admire—not, however, including the recorded sound, which is rather thin and not entirely free of noticeable distortion.

Michael Booker's program notes are both informative and chatty, and we are given the number for each hymn in the English hymnal *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. S.C.

**FAMOUS HYMNS OF PRAISE FROM ST. EDMUNDSBURY CATHEDRAL.** St. Edmundsbury Cathedral Choir, St. Edmundsbury Bach Choir, Garland Street Baptist Church Choir, and Silver Jubilee Girls School Choir, Harrison Oxley, cond. [Michael Smythe, prod.] VISTA VPS 1036, \$7.98 (distributed by HNH Distributors).

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# Classical

reviewed by ROYAL S. BROWN

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Angel

Neville Marriner and Janet Baker—a resoundingly successful partnership

**BACH:** Arias. Janet Baker, mezzo-soprano; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL S 37229, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

Cantata excerpts: No. 6: Hochgelobter Gottessohn; No. 11: Ach, bleibe doch; No. 34: Wohl euch ihr auserwählten Seelen; No. 129: Gelobet sei der Herr; No. 161: Komm, du süsse Todesstunde; No. 190: Lobe, Zion, deinen Gott. Magnificat, S. 243: Et exultavit. St. John Passion, S. 245: Es ist vollbracht. Christmas Oratorio, S. 248: Bereite dich, Zion. Easter Oratorio, S. 249: Saget, saget mir geschwinde. Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach: Bist du beim Ir, S. 501 (arr. Connah).

This record's appeal should extend beyond the hard-core Janet Baker fans, for the singer is heard in congenial repertory and in resoundingly successful partnership with Neville Marriner and his players.

The congenial repertory is important, for Baker's vocal resources are severely limited in range, power, and color (it is hard to think of a comparable singing career built on such modest endowment), and Bach's writing makes very considerate demands indeed in these areas. Possibly for this reason, Baker sounds far more solid and secure than she has on recent recordings (e.g., the Angel Schumann songs, the Philips Gluck arias and Mahler *Das Lied*), and the directness and sincerity of her expression count for a great deal in this music. The lengthy "Ach, bleibe doch" from the *Ascension* Oratorio (Cantata No. 11) doesn't hold together, but the rest ranges from agreeable to

quite lovely. Baker doesn't strike me as the ideal of even this sort of Bach mezzo (i.e., a relatively small, pure voice giving direct utterance through careful, unfussy treatment of words and skillful modulation of one basic tone color); Julia Hamari, for one, has a finer, more consistent instrument. But her artistry is doubly welcome for its reminder of the expressive power of Bach's vocal writing, which is so often subordinated to other facets of his mastery.

As suggested, the accompaniments—played with vigor and precision and yet no lack of tonal allure and expressive beauty—are a major factor in the disc's success. All the wind soloists are justly credited, and it is no doubt unfair of me to single out Celia Nicklin's oboe da caccia solo in "Hochgelobter Gottessohn." The engineering, finally, is the best I have heard on an Angel SQ disc—for once there is no loss of pinpoint detail. K.F.

**BEETHOVEN:** Quartet for Strings, No. 15, in A minor, Op. 132. LaSalle Quartet. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 728, \$7.98.

This performance is like one of those "restoration" jobs on the great masters that removes most of the paint and canvas along with the grime. The LaSalle, whose spe-

cialty is twentieth-century music, appears to be seeking a Beethoven purged of all interpretive rhetoric, and to a certain degree the group succeeds. I am no devotee of the turgid, vibrato-swollen, tempo-heaving "traditional" approach that transforms Beethoven's sinewy energy into Brahmsian obesity, and at least in theory should be sympathetic to the LaSalle's outlook. I must admit that the performance is gleaming and focused in tone, right on in tune, and precise in ensemble. Dynamics and phrasing indications are accurately read. Tempos incline toward briskness, no bad thing in itself.

Still, this Op. 132 is jaunty, trivial, and

## Explanation of symbols

Disc:

-  Budget
-  Historical
-  Reissue

Recorded tape:

-  Open Reel
-  8-Track Cartridge
-  Cassette

shockingly insensitive. It runs where it should march (the introduction to the last movement) and marches where it ought to be giving thanks (the third movement is light, skimmed-over, and given to hard-edged, sledgehammer fortes in the contrasting sections). The inappropriately bouncy, metronomically straitjacketed treatment of the lyrical second theme in the first movement really hurts. Dotted-note figures bob about like a cork in the ocean.

The 1942 Budapest performance (which may reappear on *Odyssey*; it is far preferable to the group's 1951 mono LP version) had much of the LaSalle's concision, with tonal interest and comprehending musicality thrown in as bonuses. Other excellent readings are available already—by the Quartetto Italiano (Philips 802 806), the Yale (Vanguard Cardinal VCS 10005), the Bartók (in Hungaroton SLPX 11673/6), the Guarneri (in RCA VCS 6418), and the Végh (in Telefunken 46.35040). H.G.

**BEETHOVEN:** Symphonies (9). London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond. PHILIPS 6747 307, \$39.90 (seven discs, manual sequence).

Symphonies: No. 1, in C, Op. 21; No. 2, in D, Op. 36; No. 3, in E flat, Op. 55 (*Eroica*); No. 4, in B flat, Op. 60; No. 5, in C minor, Op. 67; No. 6, in F, Op. 68 (*Pastoral*); No. 7, in A, Op. 92; No. 8, in F, Op. 93; No. 9, in D minor, Op. 125 (with Hannelore Bode, soprano; Helen Watts, alto; Horst R. Laubenthal, tenor; Benjamin Luxon, baritone; London Philharmonic Choir).

In the decade and a half since his emergence on the international conducting scene, Bernard Haitink has won respect—and, I dare say, a devoted following—for his scrupulous musicianship. His recorded Mahler and Bruckner cycles, for example, are prized in many quarters for their structural clarity and tasteful moderation, and his new set of the Beethoven symphonies, in the same mold, goes pretty close to the top of the list of modern versions. These are civilized performances, lovingly and fluently played, full of low-keyed lyricism. If there is a weakness, it is an excess of moderation: After a while, the underplayed coloring of timbre, the avoidance of really ferocious sforzandos and other accents, the maintenance of centrist tempos slightly dull Beethoven's emotional drive and revolutionary concentration.

Haitink's handling of repeats is a model of sensibility. He observes them all in Nos. 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 (which includes still unusual ones: that in the second movement of No. 1, the double one in the scherzo of No. 9). He takes the crucial exposition repeat in the first movement of No. 5, throws in the repeat of No. 7's scherzo (a brusque intrusion I am coming to like increasingly) and also that spurious da capo one of the first part of No. 1's Menuetto (which I don't like!). Wisely, I think, he bypasses the repeat signs in the opening movement of the *Eroica*, the finale of No. 5, and the outer movements of No. 7. All of these, though to be sure indicated by Beethoven, tend to arrest the onward flow and impede dramatic development. (Incidentally, Sir Georg Solti, who in his recent recorded Beethoven cycle ardently defended his observance of every repeat as crucial to the composer's

structural concept, this season performed No. 7 with no repeats.)

In order to accommodate the symphonies on seven discs, there is one deviation from strict sequence: No. 1 follows the last movement of the longer No. 2 on the second side of the first disc. No. 4's first movement follows the finale of the *Eroica*; the other three movements share a disc with No. 5. Since Philips has announced a single-disc issue of the *Eroica* with *Coriolan* as a filler, it seems likely that other overtures not included in the set will also turn up as fillers.

The refined, poised playing in No. 1 is suggestive of that heard in the Toscanini/NBC version. The first movement is elegant, straightforward, and a bit shapeless. The *Andante* is a shade fast and metronomic; the "cantabile" could be given more expansiveness of phrase. The minuet-cum-scherzo and finale have plenty of spring and life. The totality is less boisterous than Solti's but rather similar. Kubelik's, though somewhat more restrained in its last two movements, has a bit more character and expressive warmth. Haitink's is, in its way, equal to either, and I might have been even more enthusiastic had I not concurrently heard the superb Masur/Leipzig performance (recorded by East Germany's Deutsche Schallplatten and issued in western Europe by Philips), which—apart from an ungainly pause before and after the

third-movement trio—is clearly the outstanding version of No. 1 on modern discs.

The first-movement introduction to No. 2 is rather casual and brisk—much in the manner of Toscanini's RCA performance but with firmer rhythmic control—and this carries over into the first movement proper. The *Larghetto* is a little slow and inflexible; the rollicking scherzo is slightly sedate but unblemished by any tempo change for the trio. The finale has plenty of push and would do Toscanini proud. On the whole, an admirable Second, but less eloquent and passionately expressive than Kempe's virile, pointed performance (Seraphim).

Haitink's is an admirable *Eroica*, as long as his reserve doesn't bother you in the combative opening movement. Contrapuntal details are well delineated in all four movements, and the *Marcia funebre* has both power and dignity. The trio is taken at the same basic tempo as the scherzo proper (though the horns, accurate as they are, lack courage and incisive thrust). The finale builds to a commanding climax. This is a firmer, more committed reading than the several I have heard from Haitink with the Concertgebouw.

In No. 4 the Haitink formula produces memorable results. In its chaste lyricism, beautifully gauged tempos, and unanimity of phrasing and ensemble (listen to the exquisite dovetailing in the scherzo's recur-

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## Critics' Choice

The best classical records reviewed in recent months

- ALBÉNIZ:** Iberia. Block. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2120 and 2121 (2), June.  
**BACH:** Cantatas Nos. 92, 126. Schreier et al., Richter. ARCHIV 2533 312, Apr.  
**BACH:** Goldberg Canons (with Reger). Marlboro soloists. MARLBORO MRS 12, May.  
**BRAHMS:** Cello Sonatas (2). Piatigorsky, Rubinstein. FCA RED SEAL ARL 1-2085, June.  
**BRAHMS:** Violin Sonatas. Grumiaux, Sebok. PHILIPS 9500 108, 161 (2), Apr.  
**BRUCKNER, VERDI:** Te Deum. Stephani. TELEFUNKEN 6 42037, June.  
**CARTER:** Brass Quintet et al. American Brass Quintet. ODYSSEY Y 34137, May.  
**CHOPIN:** Polonaises. Pollini. DG 2530 659, Apr.  
**COUPERIN:** Concerts royaux; Nouveaux concerts. Holliger et al. ARCHIV 2712 003 (4), Apr.  
**DONIZETTI:** Gemma di Vergy. Caballé, Queler. COLUMBIA M3 34575 (3), June.  
**HANDEL:** Double Concertos; Overtures. Marriner. ANGEL S 37176, May.  
**HINDEMITH:** Brass Sonatas. Various soloists, Gould. COLUMBIA M2 33971 (2), May.  
**MUSSORGSKY:** Boris Godunov. Reizen, Golovanov. RECITAL RR 440 (3), May.  
**OFFENBACH:** La Vie parisienne. Crespín, Mespé, Plasson. ANGEL SBLX 3839 (2), June.  
**PROKOFIEV:** Symphonies Nos. 1, 7. Weller. LONDON CS 6897, June.  
**RACHMANINOFF:** Concertos Nos. 1, 2. Vásáry, Aranovich. DG 2530 717, June.  
**SAINT-SAËNS:** Violin Concerto No. 3. VIEUXTEMPS: Violin Concerto No. 5. Chung, Foster. LONDON CS 6992, Apr.  
**SCHOENBERG:** Variations, Op. 31 (with Elgar). Solti. LONDON CS 6984. Chamber Symphonies. Inbal. PHILIPS 6500 923, Apr.  
**SCHUBERT:** Trout Quintet. Tashi. RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-1882. Beaux Arts Trio et al. PHILIPS 9500 071, June.  
**SHOSTAKOVICH:** Symphony No. 14. Rostropovich. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M 34507, June.  
**SIBELIUS:** Symphony No. 1; Finlandia. C. Davis. PHILIPS 9500 140, June.  
**VERDI:** Macbeth. Cossotto, Milnes, Carreras, Muti. ANGEL SCLX 3833 (3), May.  
**WEILL:** Vocal and Instrumental Works. London Sinfonietta. DG 2709 064 (3), May.  
**WOLF-FERRARI:** Segreto di Susanna. Chiara, Weigl, Gardelli. LONDON OSA 1169, May.  
**PAUL JACOBS:** Piano Recital (Etudes). NONESUCH H 71334, May.  
**YOLANDA MARCOULESCOU:** French Songs. ORION ORS 76240, Apr.
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rent two-note phrases), this Fourth brings to mind the winged, subtle Toscanini/NBC version of 1951. The geniality of the very British (in the best sense) orchestral playing, however, will appeal to those who cherish Toscanini's 1939 recording with the BBC Symphony. This version outclasses even such excellent newcomers as the Kubelik, the Solti (whose Adagio is overly turgid), the Kempe, and the Davis. It is, in every respect, a classic.

I first heard Haitink's Fifth with headphones, in which form it sounded like a crisp, powerful performance in the Toscanini tradition. At least with my speakers some of that impact vanished, but it remains an impressive, intelligently militant reading with ample shape and profile. Haitink takes pains to convey the difference between the one- and two-bar fermatas in the introductory motto, a point also successfully made by Karajan in his Philharmonia version—and attempted, if with less conviction, by some other conductors such as Leinsdorf and Kubelik.

The Pastoral is another of the set's glories. Haitink gives the slightest nod to "tradition" in allowing the bassoons to make a bit of a ritard at first-movement bar 190, but for the most part this is a wonderfully mercurial, pellucidly classical, bucolic reading of music that can—and so often does—bog down in heavy sentimentality. The dance-like pulse is beautifully captured in each of the five movements (cf. the recent Davis and Kubelik editions, not to mention the dreadful Solti). This is an interpretation very much of the Toscanini persuasion, played with finish and communicative naturalness by the LPO. Of recent versions, only the Ferencsik on Hungaroton comes within hailing distance.

In No. 7, however, conductor and orchestra seem a bit out of focus. Haitink makes none of the usual rhythmic mistakes, and the only objective fault I can find is the sluggish third-movement trio. But the general impression might be likened to Cantelli's chaste interpretation drained of that account's color, fire, and rhythmic populiveness. The trumpets in the bacchanalian, fast-paced finale are blunted of impact, and perhaps it is the recording, more than anything Haitink does, that gives this reading its mushy, monochromatic neutrality of temperament.

No. 8 is another relative disappointment. The first movement is solid but never quite sardonic enough. The Allegretto's ticking sounds disconcertingly fast after the first movement's heft (and the distant, uncharacteristically drab, recorded balance hurts). The Menuetto similarly sounds rather sleepy, and the well-played finale could have more thrust and grimness in its mocking humor. No match for Scherchen, Casals, Toscanini, Szell, Kubelik, or Karajan/Philharmonia. I recall liking Haitink's old Concertgebouw recording more.

Finally, No. 9 abounds, to borrow a Gilbertian phrase, with modified rapture. The first movement is steady but decidedly staid. The climaxes rumble but don't really blaze; the rich instrumental detail is generally pacified into a thick orchestral impasto, gray of sound, soggy in impact. The scherzo, though well paced, could also have more thrust and spring. (The kettledrum



Mike Evans/Photogram

Bernard Haitink  
Civilized Beethoven performances

solos aren't kindly treated by the hollow, reverberant acoustic.) Things improve in the Adagio, which benefits from Haitink's dignified, undemonstrative phrasing and sense for clarity. The finale, aside from a questionable tempo or two (e.g. the rather brisk, spineless *alla marcia*), is cogent and reliable. The soloists are not outstanding one way or the other, and the choral forces are rather woolly and muted. Still, there is integrity and musicianship to the interpretation. H.G.

**BRAHMS:** Piano Works, Opp. 117–19. Dmitri Alexeev, piano. [John Willan, prod.] ANGEL S 37290, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

Dmitri Alexeev, the young Soviet pianist who won the 1975 Leeds competition, plays these late, autumnal pieces of Brahms with fine, round tone and, for the most part, commendable sobriety, and he has been agreeably—though somewhat reverberantly—recorded. (The recording was made in London by EMI.)

I wish I could be more enthusiastic about his interpretations, but I'm afraid that his playing, like that of so many contest winners on both sides of the Atlantic, is mostly bland and unformed. Generally his tempos are on the slow side, and there is a decided absence of both flow and internal shaping. Moreover, although Alexeev's sonority is warm and agreeably colored, there often is a lack of truly magical pianissimo, and as a result the music sounds turgid and uncomfortably close, lacking the atmosphere that distance can create. Some of this can perhaps be blamed on the microphone placement, but I suspect that the performer is mostly responsible.

Alexeev occasionally shows the distressing habit of slowing up for middle sections or for memorable harmonic turns. It is important to distinguish this sort of static and rhythmically disjointing effect from the meaningful manipulation and stress of a

great artist and stylist like Kempff. Alexeev's playing, while certainly not offensive or unmusical, sounds musclebound and thick alongside Kempff's (DG 138 903, deleted), which constantly delights with its tensile urgency, uncanny flow, and little dramatic spurts. Often the great German pianist barely seems to be touching the keys, but the force of his personality could project to the farthest recesses of any large concert hall. And despite its dozen years of age, the Kempff disc is often superior to the new Angel in plangency and dynamic range. A reissue of Kempff's Opp. 117–19 (and the companion Brahms disc, DG 138 902) is an absolute must. H.G.

**BRUCKNER:** Symphony No. 4, in E flat (*Romantic*; ed. Haas). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Michel Glotz, Hans Hirsch, and Magdalene Padberg, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 674, \$7.98. Tape: ●● 3300 674, \$7.98.

Comparison:

Karajan/Berlin Phil.

in Ang. SC3779

Like his recent Bruckner Eighth (DG 2707 085, March 1977), Karajan's second stereo Fourth Symphony reflects changes in both interpretive and engineering philosophy. The 1972 Angel Fourth (issued in a three-disc set along with the Seventh) was a spacious, steadily controlled reading that must have sounded forth in the hall with grandeur and deeply bronzen sonority—but detecting that takes some imaginative effort, as EMI's production team mired the proceedings in the sonic equivalent of quicksand (at least as heard in the Angel edition).

Karajan's rethink involves general briskening of pulse, most strikingly in the Andante, which is pushed along with something close to the vigor of Klemperer (Angel S 36245). The beat seems less rock-steady than of yore, for Karajan perceptibly accelerates at crescendos and often does so when the writing involves shorter note values. Conversely, he takes an unmarked ritard at bar 237 of the finale, where the brass play a chorale variant of the movement's second theme. Climaxes, in keeping with the more nervous character of this reading, are explosive rather than majestic.

The sonics of this new release are crisp and bright but somewhat closely miked. Wind passages sound a little bigger than life in contrast to strings. Big tutti are uncomfortably crowded. I kept wishing the ambience to expand, to yield some sense of space around the choirs. Indeed, in the closing fortissimo outburst of the scherzo, the perspective is so overpowering that rhythmic definition suffers.

So Karajan and DG have managed to give us a Bruckner Fourth more impactful and extroverted than the same conductor and Angel/EMI a half-dozen years ago. Nonetheless, next to the nobility and sweep of the aforementioned Klemperer and of the Böhm set (London CSA 2240), the new issue seems a strident bulldozer indeed. The brilliant Haitink (Philips 835 385) and Kertész (London Treasury STS 15289) versions also retain their standing in the discography of the *Romantic*, sonically undimmed by age.





Columbia

Michael Tilson Thomas  
A rousing American Flag demonstrates his programming innovativeness

As with the Karajan/DG Eighth, DG has compounded the confusion surrounding Bruckner texts, billing this Fourth as the "original version 1878/80." While the 1878-80 version published by Robert Haas (presumably what's meant) does represent an earlier score than the version published by Leopold Nowak, who incorporated Bruckner's minor revisions for an 1886 New York performance, it is not the "original version," which was completed in 1874 and never published. The confusion can be avoided by adopting the late Deryck Cooke's nomenclature—"first definitive version, 1878-80"—as set forth in *The Bruckner Problem Simplified* (available in pamphlet form for \$3.00 from *Musical Newsletter*, 654 Madison Ave., Suite 1703, New York, N.Y. 10021). A.C.

**DVOŘÁK:** The American Flag, Op. 102\*; Suite in A, Op. 98b (*American*; orchestral version). Joseph Evans, tenor\*; Barry McDaniel, baritone\*; St. Hedwig's Cathedral Choir\*, RIAS Chamber Chorus\*; Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Michael Tilson Thomas, cond. [Paul Myers, prod.] COLUMBIA M 34513, \$6.98.

There are certain pieces of music that the head and heart evaluate differently—Moses and Aron at one extreme, *Carmina Burana* at the other—and another such could be Dvořák's *The American Flag*, a cantata based on the poem of Joseph Rodman Drake. He composed it in 1892-93 as a sort of housewarming gift to his newly adopted country, where he served as director of New York's National Conservatory, but never heard it performed. (He didn't take it home with him to Bohemia.) The present recording is its first.

Smart critics and other professional cynics will delight in sneering at the poem's rhetorical patriotism (not very trendy nowadays), and Dvořák's own behavior

lends credence to the notion that he was at best ambivalent about it. Others will confer "party record" status on this disc in response to tenor Joseph Evans' earnestly bleating (if solidly focused) rendition of the line "Flag of the brave" (and the Berlin choruses are occasionally marked in their Teutonic accents). There are plenty of eighteenth-century-type pictorial effects in the writing (e.g., the "ocean waves" of the seventh section, the "shoots of flame on midnight's pall" of the sixth); the march interlude starts out like Verdi's claptrap with a tune almost borrowed from Schubert; and for present-day listeners the last four lines of the sixth section may evoke nothing less than the closing of Mahler's *Das klagende Lied*.

An amusing hybrid. Or is it?

With the shades pulled down and no conservatory-trained sophisticates eavesdropping, I found myself playing the piece over and over again—and completely captivated by Dvořák's endless bag of surprises. He manages to throw in rejuvenating slabs of harmonic color, an ever-evolving melos, an uprising of rhythmic panache just when doubts arise. The instrumentation is always resourceful (e.g., that little harp solo opening the second section). The corny march mentioned before keeps transmuted itself into pungent and caressing riots of coloristic invention. The enthusiasm of the performance is contagious, and Michael Tilson Thomas is due renewed gratitude for demonstrating again that he is one of his profession's most innovative programmers.

The second side of the record is no less auspicious. Though the piano original of the five-movement *American Suite* is available played nicely by Radoslav Kvapil on Genesis GS 1025, the orchestration hasn't been recorded, to the best of my knowledge, since a resplendent Sejna/Czech Philharmonic reading of the Fifties. The music certainly deserves wider dissemination. The first and fourth movements are tender ballads; the second is something of a furiant,

heroic and fierce; the third is a gaily syncopated polonaise; the finale, an exuberant and swinging Indian war dance, also contains a cyclical throwback to the work's opening. Thomas' performance is hard-driving and infectious, and Columbia has provided both sides with lively sonics. A.C.

**GLINKA:** Songs—See Rachmaninoff: Songs

**MAHLER:** Symphony No. 9, in D. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond. [Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 097, \$15.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: ●● 3370 018, \$15.96.

**MUSSORGSKY:** Pictures at an Exhibition (orch. Ravel). **PROKOFIEV:** Symphony No. 1, in D, Op. 25 (*Classical*). Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond. [Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 783, \$7.98. Tape: ●● 3300 783, \$7.98.

Giulini's Mahler Ninth is quite unlike any other I've experienced. The movement timings—among the slowest on records—don't quite prepare one for the vaulting momentum of the interpretation, far from the static, immobilized, or autumnally introspective style of some others. It is a reading in the grand manner, urgent and emotional in its cantabile phrases, taken in wide arching strokes, always molded with the utmost plasticity. The dramatic climaxes come in rolling billows rather than the cubistic stabs of the grimmer "doomsday" renditions. Clearly, some Mahlerians will miss the biting irony that comes from a more intellectual approach. The analytic shortcomings of Giulini's way are evident mainly in the second movement, where the three dance tempos aren't carefully enough related to one another. Thus, the second of these (marked "*poco più mosso subito*") is too slow to allow the subsequent transition to the third dance to bring a markedly more sentimental effect.

The Chicago Symphony responds with a rich and characterful sound. I can scarcely imagine more generous observance by trombones and tuba of the "*mit höchster Gewalt*" mandate at the climax of the first-movement development (bar 314). I imagine that the rich, not to say overpoweringly lush, string playing will cause some controversy; the vibrato of the solo violin in the last page of the opening movement may be too warmly consolatory for music of such existential desolation. And at the close of the final Adagio, Giulini gets more like a respectable *pp* than the seraphic *pppp* Mahler indicates. To exhaust my smallish list of reservations, balances occasionally seem inconsistent: While the violas in the opening of the *Ländler* can for once be heard as clearly as the bassoons whose lines they double, the shuddering sixteenth-note viola figures near the opening of the symphony are barely audible.

Lest the above unbalance this review, let me add that Giulini, the players, and DG's engineers have realized the texture of that great contrapuntal tour de force, the Rondo-Burleske third movement, as well as any preceding disc version. Over-all, this Ninth belongs in any serious Mahler collec-



ing. As before, Rick Davies and Roger Hodgson's deceptively straightforward pop melodies are mated with tinges of introspection and disillusionment and sung in alternately robust and airy voices. Multiple keyboards, falsetto harmonies, and Bob Siebenberg's widescreen drum sound continue to achieve an orchestral sweep, and John Helliwell's saxophone injects mirth or soul-deep brooding as needed.

Yet "... famous last words ..." isn't quite the sequel it may seem. Production style has been softened slightly but significantly. Although the LP uses a new high-tech American pressing compound and the first-rate cassette reaches for an audiophile standard through the use of chromium dioxide tape, the recording's sound-field eschews the quintet's usual mindboggling sonics to create an often dreamy, soft-focus image. More pointedly, the band's collective persona seems to have undergone additional self-criticism since "Breakfast." The opening *Crazy* promises that Supertramp has no heavy messages to deliver, offering the cynical explanation that "Nobody listens when you're singing the blues," yet the singer's unspecified angst recurs even as he insists the song is mere diversion. Likewise, *Put on Your Old Brown Shoes* emerges as a curiously upbeat exercise in fatalism with the flat pronunciation, "We're all helpless."

Such bittersweet juxtapositions reap-



Young: one tough marsh-mellow

pear throughout, as on the album's most immediately infectious song, *It's Raining Again*, already shaping up as a single hit. An internal dialogue, the piece is designed as a pep talk after a collapsed affair; as elsewhere, the jaunty melody line and joyful arrangement prove more convincing arguments than Hodgson's intermittently mournful vocal.

Supertramp's preoccupation with disillusionment may provide an easy target for

some critics, but the group's soaring music is difficult to dismiss. As declaimed against a wash of twelve-string guitars on *C'est le Bon*, Davies and Hodgson see their craft as the one unerring positive in their lives. When the results are this ear-filling, that sentiment seems sincere indeed.

SAM SUTHERLAND

**Jesse Colin Young:  
The Perfect Stranger**

Michael James Jackson, producer  
Elektra 60151-1

The advance word on Jesse Colin Young's new LP was that the ex-Youngblood with the honeydew voice was going to toughen up his act. That was good news, for the solo career of one of rock's sweetest singers has emphasized mush at the expense of muscle. "The Perfect Stranger," however, turns out to be tough only in the California sense, which is to say add a pinch of the Doobie Bros., a dash of the Eagles, and shake well.

The album opens with its two best tunes—*The Perfect Stranger* and *Fight for It*—both composed by Young and Wendy Waldman. The title track is a warm and languid picture of a most chilly affair; *Fight for It* is a stylish duet with Carly Simon that presents a more agreeable picture of romantic wrestling. The trouble is that its fairly basic theme ("If you want this love, you're going to have to fight for it") is presented as

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tion and should be carefully auditioned by anyone seeking one or two representative recordings of the work, along with those of Solti, Bernstein, Abravanel, and the 1938 Walter/Vienna.

Turning to the companion Mussorgsky/Prokofiev disc, there is virtually nothing to cavil at in terms of dynamics or balances. It is simply a perfect job of recording an orchestra. Just try the beginning of Side 2, "Hut on Fowls' Legs" from *Pictures*, and bask in the awesome combination of velvety rich tone, tightly impactful transients, and top-to-bottom-of-the-page linear transparency.

Fortunately, Giulini has also contributed one of the most distinguished readings of the Mussorgsky/Ravel suite to appear in recent years. The initial "Promenade" theme makes it clear that he is strolling through the gallery with aristocratic poise and deliberation. In subsequent promenades, he pays close attention to the slight *rallentandos* indicated at the end—stopping short, as it were, before looking at the next picture. If his "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle" has a less sensational trumpet solo than in the orchestra's first recording of the score, under Kubelik, that is also true of every other version known to me. In any case, Giulini evokes a beautifully atmospheric "Old Castle," the "Unhatched Chicks" squeak most audaciously yet musically, and the children in "Tuileries" have just the right singsong rhythm without coyness or exaggeration. The majestic "Great Gate at Kiev" and the superbly controlled *rescendo* and *decrescendo* in "Bydlo" round out a real interpretive triumph.

In truth, to find a *Pictures* of equal distinction would require RCA to reissue the mono-era Cantelli/NBC version, or perhaps the Leibowitz/Royal Philharmonic version of the early Sixties (coupled with the conductor's intriguing arrangement of *Night on Bare Mountain*). Giulini's unusual coupling, Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*, receives a leisurely but eminently gracious, witty, and spiffily played performance fully up to the best of the many that have gone before (Marriner, Weiler, Abbado). A.C.

**MENDELSSOHN:** Piano Works. Ilse von Alpenheim, piano. PHILIPS 9500 162, \$7.98.

Rondo capriccioso, Op. 14; Caprices (3), Op. 16; Variations sérieuses, Op. 54; Sonata in B flat, Op. 106.

**MENDELSSOHN:** Piano Works. Constance Keene, piano. [Jane Courtland Welton and Herschel Burke Gilbert, prod.] LAUREL-PROTONE LP 12, \$6.98 (distributed by Consortium Recordings, 2451 Nichols Canyon, Los Angeles, Calif. 90046).

Rondo capriccioso, Op. 14; Fantasy in F sharp minor, Op. 28; Variations sérieuses, Op. 54; Etudes (3), Op. 104; Book II; Songs Without Words: No. 5, Restlessness, Op. 19, No. 5; No. 40, Elegy, Op. 85, No. 4.

More than anything else, the effective performance of Mendelssohn's piano music depends on a certain pulse. For Mendelssohn was above all a master of figuration, often meant to be performed at breathtaking velocities, with the melodic content frequently existing as brief swells that give the preponderantly minor-key music a particularly dramatic quality. Even his more developed themes are often presented in a warm midrange sounding in



Robert M. Lightfoot III

Carlo Maria Giulini

*Vaulting interpretation of Mahler's Ninth*

the midst of chordal or passagework embellishment.

One pianist who has excelled at capturing the Mendelssohnian pulse is Rudolf Serkin, who seems to have imparted this sensitivity to his student Anton Kuerti, whose recording of some of the solo piano music on Monitor (MCS 2128) is one of the best. Of the two artists on these new releases by Philips and Laurel-Protone, Constance Keene proves an outstanding Mendelssohn interpreter, while Ilse von Alpenheim for the most part does not. What is especially attractive about Keene's performances is the dramatic vitality of her interpretations. With skillful pedaling, a superb legato, and an excellent sense of dynamic shading, she maintains a smooth, supple flow while at the same time moving in perfect sync with the subtle, romantic swells. She certainly has the *con fuoco* to go along with her allegros, and these are exciting performances indeed. She also proves capable of identifying with the more straightforward lyricism of a piece such as the *Song Without Words* "Elegy," in which she shapes the somewhat melancholic themes with apparent care and affection. Only in the rondo section of the famous *Rondo capriccioso* did I find Keene just a shade too delicate and breathless, flaws that do not mark her full-bodied renditions of pieces such as the rich Op. 28 Fantasy or the *Variations sérieuses*.

Von Alpenheim approaches most of the pieces on her disc in a rather arid and heavy manner that does not serve the music very well. Her lack of a good legato is especially damaging in some of the rippling passagework, and her tone struck me as harsh. In fact, while Keene reaches volume levels even more imposing than Von Alpenheim's, the latter's pianism often sounds just plain loud because of the poor tone control. This is most apparent on the first side, which contains a ponderous *Rondo capriccioso* and a very unconvincing rendition of the Op. 106 Sonata, an early work (in spite of its opus number), complete with obeisances to Bach. Von Alpenheim fares better in the *Variations sérieuses* and in the *Trois Fan-*

*taisies ou caprices*, Op. 16, which include the famous E minor Scherzo. Even here, however, she shows a certain coldness and restraint that tend to clip the wings of that all-essential pulse.

The sound on both recordings is quite good, with Laurel-Protone stressing overall tone and resonance above the Philips-type presence. Philips also deserves credit for reproducing on the cover one of Mendelssohn's own, rarely seen paintings.

R.S.B.

**MOZART:** Serenade No. 5, in D, K. 204; March in D, K. 215. Uto Ughi, violin; Dresden State Orchestra, Edo de Waart, cond. PHILIPS 6500 967, \$7.98.

This latest American release in De Waart's Mozart serenade series shares all the admirable executant and technical characteristics of his *Haffner Serenade* (Philips 6500 966, November 1976), again demonstrating how much De Waart has matured as a Mozartean interpreter since he began the series with the Netherlands Wind Ensemble.

The Serenade No. 5 (along with its allied introductory march) was composed in August 1775, probably for the academic year-ending ceremonial concert of Salzburg University. And like its two immediate predecessors of 1773 and 1774, this multimovement work includes—following its invigorating opening *Allegro assai*—a little violin concerto (played in this performance by the almost too deft and silken-toned Ughi). It comprises a songful *Andante moderato*, an insistently active *Allegro*, and the skittery trio section of the sturdy first Menuetto. Next are two less usual *concertante* movements: an *Andante* featuring piquant flute, oboe, and bassoon soloists; and a brightly festive second Menuetto, the *grazioso* trio of which has a starring role specifically assigned to the second flutist. (One wonders what accounted for this deliberate passing-over of the normal first-flute soloist.) The work concludes with an oddly quirky, highly individual (even for Mozart) finale that alternates zestfully between an *Andantino grazioso* beginning and a busy rondo.

This serenade may be one of the least known in the whole series, but—as De Waart reminds us so stimulatingly here—it surely is one of the most immediately interesting and permanently delectable of all these inexhaustibly fascinating diversissements.


R.D.D.

**MUSSORGSKY:** *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

**PROKOFIEV:** *Visions fugitives*, Op. 22. Tedd Joselson, piano. [Peter Delheim, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-2158, \$7.98. Tape ●● ARK 1-2158, \$7.95; ●● ARS 1-2158, \$7.95.

A most attractive disc. Joselson obviously has a feel for Prokofiev: His way with the bittersweet *Visions fugitives* has the same lyricism and coloristic nuance I admired in his recordings of the Second Concerto and Second and Eighth Sonatas, but this time he succeeds better in balancing those admirable ingredients with the composer's wry humor and sardonic bite. His dynamic scheme seems to be a little wider, with



A black and white photograph of Ed May, a man in a light-colored shirt and tie, standing next to a large, dark, rectangular speaker cabinet. He is leaning his hand on the top of the cabinet. The background is plain white.

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some wispy pianissimos that nevertheless project like spun glass. In short, the young pianist's work is growing in profile, refinement, and sheer authority.

He does right well with the *Pictures*, too. His interpretation, once again, is basically lyric. "The Old Castle" is expansively shaped, and the two whimsical episodes, "Tuileries" and "Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks," have particular humor and grace. Perhaps there could be more ferocity in "Baba-Yaga's Hut" and more heroic breadth in "The Great Gate at Kiev." One might also quibble over Joselson's use of the corrupt ending to "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle" (C, D flat, C, B flat, instead of the starker, more authentically primitive C, D flat, B flat, B flat) and comment that some of his voicing lacks the uncanny control heard in Michel Beroff's recent Angel version (S 37223, December 1976). On the other hand, there are grounds for preferring Joselson's added geniality and personal accent.

Lovely, deeply cushioned piano sound but obtrusive surfaces—the processing is not what it ought to be on a premium-priced release. H.G.

**MUSSORGSKY:** *Pictures at an Exhibition* (orch. Ravel)—See Mahler: Symphony No. 9.

**PROKOFIEV:** Symphony No. 1—See Mahler: Symphony No. 9.

**PROKOFIEV:** *Visions fugitives*—See Mussorgsky: *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

**PUCCINI:** *Suor Angelica*.

|                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Suor Angelica         | Renata Scotto (s)         |
| Suor Genovieffa       | Ileana Cotrubas (s)       |
| Suor Dolcina          | Margaret Cable (s)        |
| First Alms Collector  | Shirley Minty (s)         |
| First Lay Sister      | Ursula Connors (s)        |
| A Novice              | Della Jones (s)           |
| La Zia Principessa    | Marilyn Horne (ms)        |
| Mother Superior       | Patricia Payne (ms)       |
| Sister Monitor        | Gillian Knight (ms)       |
| Mistress of Novices   | Ann Howard (ms)           |
| Suor Osmina           | Doreen Crier (ms)         |
| Nursing Sister        | Elizabeth Bainbridge (ms) |
| Second Alms Collector | Gloria Jennings (ms)      |
| Second Lay Sister     | Amy Gunson (ms)           |

Desborough School Choir, Ambrosian Opera Chorus, New Philharmonia Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, cond. [Paul Myers, prod.] COLUMBIA M 34505, \$6.98.

**Comparisons:**

|                                   |                 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Tebaldi, Simionato, Gardelli      | Lon OSA 1152    |
| De los Angeles, Barbieri, Serafin | in EMI SLS 5066 |

*Suor Angelica* has generally been dismissed as the weakest part of Puccini's *Trittico*. For many people, indeed, it is an insufferable exhibition of religiosity and mawkishness. Yet played with conviction and insight it creates a powerful impression. At the Met in 1976 Renata Scotto almost single-handedly transformed it into great art, making it not merely the worthy partner of *Il Tabarro* and *Gianni Schicchi*, but, as Puccini intended, the emotional climax of the entire evening. Because of the overwhelming poignancy of Scotto's performance, I found it possible to understand for the first time why the composer thought *Suor Angelica* the best of the three operas.

In the theater Scotto's effectiveness



Renata Scotto as Suor Angelica  
*Transforming the mawkish into great art*

seemed to owe as much to the eloquence of her acting as to the expressiveness of her singing. Merely hearing her, however, turns out to involve no loss. On disc this remains an extraordinary performance, irrefutable evidence that Scotto's primary distinction is vocal. Her *Suor Angelica* triumphs here because it is so wonderfully sung. By vocal and verbal means alone she can create a character, a situation, an unfolding drama. She does not sacrifice the musical integrity of Puccini's score, she does not break the musical line with sobs, she simply inflects, points up and colors her singing so that no appropriate nuance of character is left unrevealed. Only an artist of rare quality could, for example, invest a simple phrase like "sei qui" in "Senza mamma" with so much vividness.

The vocalism here is not only expressive, but also for the most part very beautiful. Except for her excursions above the staff, where Scotto sounds (as usual these days) pinched and squealy, her tone is basically round, pure, and sweet. Often it is simply ravishing—as it is, to take but one instance, in the line "O sorellina bionda da che vai sposa" during the scene with her fearsome aunt.

The latter role is short but striking. Giulietta Simionato in the London set (featuring Renata Tebaldi in the title role) makes a formidable but human antagonist, as did Fedora Barbieri in the mono De los Angeles recording conducted by Tullio Serafin, now available in a British reissue, imported by Capitol, coupled with EMI's mono *Tabarro* and stereo *Gianni Schicchi*. Marilyn Horne to my ears is merely fierce and over-emphatic. She settles for melodrama rather than drama. Ileana Cotrubas, in her best recording so far, makes a charming, unaffected Suor Genovieffa; her bright, easy top notes are a great asset in this role. The other singers are on the whole good, though their Italian pronunciation is sometimes not quite idiomatic enough.

Lorin Maazel leads a slow, even stately, performance. Though only some two minutes longer than Serafin's, it sounds much more protracted. Gardelli on London keeps things moving with the right kind of fervor. Nevertheless, I have no hesitation in recommending the new recording over the London one. The excellence of Scotto's performance seems to me to outweigh all other

considerations. Columbia's sound is good, if rather unatmospheric and one-dimensional. Libretto and translation. D.S.H.

**RACHMANINOFF:** *Songs, Vol. 2*. Elisabeth Söderström, soprano; Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano. [Richard Beswick, prod.] LONDON OS 26453, \$7.98.

Op. 4: No. 3, In the silent night; No. 6, So many hours. Op. 8: No. 4, The Soldier's Wife; No. 5, A Dream. Op. 14: No. 1, I wait for thee; No. 2, The Little Island; No. 5, Midsummer Nights; No. 6, The world would see thee smile; No. 7, Believe it not; No. 11, Spring Waters. Op. 21: No. 1, Fate. Op. 34: No. 4, Day to night comparing; No. 5, Arion; No. 6, The Raising of Lazarus; No. 7, So dread a fate; No. 8, Music.

**RACHMANINOFF AND GLINKA:** *Songs*. Galina Vishnevskaya, soprano; Mstislav Rostropovich, piano. [Karl August Naegler and Cord Garben, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 725, \$7.98.

**RACHMANINOFF:** Oh never sing to me again, Op. 4, No. 4; Spring Waters, Op. 14, No. 11, Night is mournful, Op. 26, No. 12; Music, Op. 34, No. 8; Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14. **GLINKA:** Doubt: I remember the wonderful moment; How sweet to be with thee; To Her; I only knew thee; Venetian Night; The Lark; Barcarolle.

Grateful as I feel to Elisabeth Söderström for recording so many fine, unfamiliar songs by Rachmaninoff (the present record was preceded by OS 26428, September 1976), I must nonetheless register my disappointment that she did not do so a few years back when her voice was in better shape. Her artistic caliber is never in doubt: She invariably sounds like an intelligent, conscientious musician, and, like every singer of genuine quality, she is capable of surprising us with sudden insight into a phrase, a stanza, an entire song. "So dread a fate," with its eerie, hushed conclusion, is memorable, and so is the lyrical opening section of "The Little Island."

Yet there is no doubt that an impression of strenuousness and unease predominates here. Vocal flaws—sketchy low notes, raw high notes, an over-all lack of sensuousness—stand between the songs and our enjoyment of them. Even a highly dramatic piece like "Fate"—almost, in fact, a dramatic scene—demands more facility than Söderström nowadays can offer. Vladimir Ashkenazy's piano playing is beautiful, however, and the recital is worth having for his contribution alone.

The contrast with Galina Vishnevskaya is instructive. Vishnevskaya is an uneven, sometimes erratic, vocalist whose very Russian method of vocal production often falls ungratefully on Western ears. (I am thinking in particular of the unnervingly vibratoless, almost dead sound she produces in the Glinka "Barcarolle.") Yet for all her faults she hardly ever fails in conviction. Her emotional grasp of this material is absolutely secure. In the two songs common to the two recitals—"Spring Waters" and, above all, "Music"—she is clearly the more persuasive, the more profoundly musical, the more grateful in sound.

Actually, a great deal of Vishnevskaya's singing is lovely, especially where a soft and floating lyrical line is called for. Even the famous "Vocalise," which exposes all the awkward places in her vocal technique (and is to be counted on the whole a mistake), has some enchanting passages. But it is as an interpreter that Vishnevskaya is treasurable, and, vocal problems notwithstanding, the fact is plainly in evidence in



# Some of the rather special adjectives the test labs have been using to describe LUX.

Unless this is the first high fidelity publication you have read, you know that equipment reviews are almost always favorable. We don't suggest that the reviews are inaccurate or that they don't reflect the editors' sincere judgments. Rather, we understand that the publications prefer to use their limited space for equipment that they can recommend to their readers.

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For an apt example, the Hirsch-Houck report (in *Stereo Review*) on the Luxman L-100 integrated amplifier concluded: "Obviously the performance and operating characteristics of the Luxman L-100 require the use of superlatives for an adequate description... Externally, internally and in respect to performance, (it) must be considered a simply beautiful product. The harmonic distortion (THD) at 1,000 Hz and 10 watts output was 0.0087 per cent and it remained at that figure up to the rated 110 watts..." (Our claimed THD at rated power, 20 to 20,000 Hz, is 0.08 per cent).

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nearly every band of this record. Rostropovich, like Ashkenazy, is a wonderfully poetic accompanist.

London supplies transliterations of the Russian texts and translations. Deutsche Grammophon offers translations in English, French, and German but, I'm sorry to say, no Russian texts. Both discs are excellently recorded. D.S.H.

**RESPIGHI:** *The Birds*; *Trittico Botticelliano*. Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL S 37252, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

Comparison—same coupling:  
Vlach/Skvor/Prague Ch.

Supr. 1 10 1769

Comparison—*The Birds* only:  
Dorati/London Sym.

Mer. SRI 75023

Marriner already has demonstrated, with his Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, how well he can play the Respighi transcriptions of *Ancient Airs and Dances* (Angel S 37301, July 1976). Now he shifts to his British Academy for the comparably bewitching orchestrations of avian keyboard pieces by Pasquini, De Gallot, Rameau, and an anonymous Englishman. He and the Academicians play *The Birds* beautifully too, if perhaps with almost too much grave restraint, and they are still more richly and expansively recorded. That's even in stereo-only playback; in quadriphony the sonics become more grandly spacious than in any previous example I know of the EMI back-channels' ambience-only technique. In comparison, the long-reigning 1958 Dorati/Mercury version now seems over-heavy and occasionally overvehement. The 1976 Vlach/Supraphon account is more competitive: perhaps a bit less stylishly played in lighter-weight, sharper-edged sonics, but with more distinctive individual personality and humor.

The coupled *Botticelli Triptych* is scarcely less fascinating for its imaginative scoring, but—as always when Respighi has to rely on his own powers of melodic invention—he can't transcend a fatal coarseness of taste. However, the work hardly could be better played and recorded, except perhaps by a considerably larger orchestra of the same quality. It certainly wasn't done as well in the Skvor/Supraphon version coupled with Vlach's *Birds*. I haven't yet heard what probably was the first stereo recording of the *Trittico*: the Avison/CBS Vancouver Chamber Orchestra version in the CBC's Canadian Collection, which was brought to my—and most readers'—attention by Michael Quigley of Vancouver in the November 1976 "Letters" column.

R.D.D.

**SCHUMANN:** *Album for the Young*, Op. 68; *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15. Alexis Weissenberg, piano. [Michel Glotz, prod.] CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS2 2110, \$15.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

This intimate, nonexhibitionistic music is odd repertory for Weissenberg, and I can't say that the performances are to my taste. Most of the *Kinderszenen* tempos are painfully slow, with Weissenberg employing languishing reverse accents and dragging



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out final cadences tortuously. Occasionally, however, he "creates interest" by sharpening rhythmic figures (e.g., in No. 2, "Curious Story") in an unpleasantly brash manner. In No. 4, "Important Event," he adds an unmarked repeat of the first section (as I recall Cortot did) and sounds more portentous than festive. No. 9, "Knight of the Stick Horse," is rattled off at breakneck speed, with neither solidity nor rhythmic "swing." No. 11, "Fright-making," is waywardly phrased and contrived. The whole suite is soaked in a debilitating ambience of sentimentality.

Unlike the *Kinderszenen*, the *Album for the Young* pieces—actually written for children—are not particularly pretentious. Weissenberg plays them with a straightforward, deadpan quality and with a muffled tone that suggests his left foot is permanently nailed to the *una corda* pedal—all the polyphonic color and texture simply vanishes from the music.

My review discs were plagued with blasting distortion. H.G.

**SIBELIUS:** *Four Legends*, Op. 22; *Karelia Suite*, Op. 11. Helsinki Radio Symphony Orchestra, Okko Kamu, cond. [Cord Garben, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 656, \$7.98.

This hour of Sibelius at his most sweepingly sonorous and elemental couples two scores that complement one another perfectly, and Kamu's interpretation of the larger work, the Op. 22 *Legends*, has all the seamless and driving urgency I found so lacking in those of Groves (Angel S 37106, November 1975) and Jalas (London CS 6955, November 1976). The poetic intensity of Kamu's "Swan of Tuonela" and the sense of climactic ebb and flow that crowns the

last pages of his "Lemminkäinen and the Maidens of Saari" likewise put to rout the otherwise crisp and exciting Foss recording (Nonesuch H 71203).

What even this version lacks is a virtuoso orchestra and richly translucent sound. The Helsinki Radio Symphony, though clearly better than Foss's Buffalo Philharmonic and no worse than Groves's Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, has a way to go in terms of finesse, tonal variation, and glowing power. DG's engineers have done their best with what sounds like an acoustically dead hall, which hinders instrumental definition. Still, better this than the dull and distant Angel, the dry and overmiked London, or the wiry Nonesuch.

Kamu, by the way, seems to be the first conductor to record the *Legends* in the order of publication, wherein "The Swan of Tuonela" follows, rather than precedes, "Lemminkäinen in Tuonela." I find this as valid dramatically as the more familiar sequence on which Sibelius later settled. The original order places the biggest and most epochal movements in succession, followed by the two shorter movements, and that may have prompted the composer's second thoughts.

In the *Karelia Suite*, Kamu himself is more routine. This is a "bandstand in the park" approach compared to the sinuous, if slightly stuffy, Barbirolli (Seraphim S 60208, with other brief works of Sibelius) or the rousingly imaginative Hannikainen (EMI SXLP 30149, with the Fifth Symphony). Kamu's "Intermezzo" is rather slow, without Barbirolli's swagger, and his "Ballad" reposeless, without Hannikainen's lyric passion.

Nonetheless, if only for the *Legends*, this disc is the first I've heard to truly justify Kamu's reputation as a new talent worth watching. A.C.



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Angel

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**SOLLBERGER: Riding the Wind I—See Wyner: Intermedio.**

### STRAUSS, J. (arr. Müller): Wiener Blut.

Countess Gabriele Zedlau Anneliese Rothenberger (s)  
Franzi Cagliari Renate Holm (s)  
Pepi Pleininger Gabriele Fuchs (s)  
Lisi Heiga Schramm (s)  
Lori Karin Stranig (s)  
Count Bitowski Gerd. W. Diebertz (spkr)  
Count Zedlau Nicolai Gedda (t)  
Josef Heinz Zednik (t)  
Prince Ypsheim-Gindelbach Klaus Hirte (b)  
Kagler Hans Putz (spkr)

Cologne Opera Chorus, Philharmonia Hungarica, Willi Boskovsky, cond. [Helmut Storzjohann, prod.]. ANGEL SBLX 3831, \$15.98 (two SQ-encoded discs, automatic sequence).

Though *Wiener Blut* is a pastiche of already existing orchestral pieces by Johann Strauss, the arranger, Adolf Müller, a Viennese conductor and composer, went about his task with Strauss's full approval. The latter's trust was well placed, for Müller's handling of the material displays a thoroughly convincing sense of dramatic architecture. Despite the preponderance of numbers in three-quarter time, there is variety enough to ensure that the action moves with ease and naturalness, and, as a consequence, though high spirits predominate they never become wearisomely insistent.

The lyrics, by the team of Viktor Léon and Leo Stein (who later worked with Lehár on *The Merry Widow*), fit the music well. The libretto is another matter, a complicated, thoroughly unengaging series of amorous intrigues, set during the time of the Congress of Vienna (1814–15). I can only suppose it is the weakness of the book that keeps *Wiener Blut* from being seen more often outside Central Europe, for the music is enchanting, a succession of melodies of the highest distinction that makes for wonderful home listening—especially in this performance, which is very persuasive.

Boskovsky is not the most distinguished of conductors. If you compare his treatment of the score with Otto Ackermann's on the long-deleted Angel recording, you see how much more elegant Ackermann is, with what greater refinement and clarity he controls orchestral textures, with what greater subtlety he handles rhythms and dynamic contrasts. Ackermann gives the waltzes an almost insinuating grace that is beyond Boskovsky's reach. But Boskovsky is, all the same, lively, good-humored, and affectionate, and his cast is highly attractive.

Both Anneliese Rothenberger and Nicolai Gedda have seen fresher vocal days. The soprano's upper register is beginning to lose definition, and the tenor (especially by comparison with his work on the Ackermann set) sounds effortful and overloud. Yet, especially in this kind of music, they are resourceful and convincing performers whose work is still capable of giving satisfaction. The rest of the cast is very adept. Heinz Zednik and Klaus Hirte bring a great deal of relish to their roles. Renate Holm makes a strong impression: She has both a serviceable voice and a striking ability to characterize her music, a gift she shares with Gabriele Fuchs, who makes something very positive of her soubrette role.

The orchestra plays well, the chorus is lusty. The atmosphere is admirably dealt with: in Act II some brief, amusing party conversation, and in Act III the popping of champagne corks. The recording is wide in range and vivid, if a bit overblown. The German-English libretto is a shoddy piece of work. It looks as if it has been derived photographically from the one included in the Ackermann set, but with insertions for the many passages not to be found in the earlier, much-abridged recording. The trouble is that Boskovsky uses a different edition, so that what one is listening to now bears only an approximate relationship to what one is following. D.S.H.

**THOMSON: The Mother of Us All.** For an essay review, see page 92.

**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis; Concerto Grosso; Partita for Double String Orchestra.** London Philharmonic Orchestra, Adrian Boult, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.]. ANGEL S 37211, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

It's a splendid idea to program these three works with their contrasting ways of grouping string players. The earliest (1921) and most popular of the lot is the Tallis Fantasia, where a large string orchestra (whose first chairs form a string quartet within it) is echoed by a smaller second orchestra consisting essentially of a string octet and double bass. The bumptious, good-humored Partita (1946–48) is an expansion of a 1938 double string trio for two antiphonal bodies, each consisting of a section piece of violins, violas, and cellos, with double basses added to the second orchestra. The affecting and warmhearted Concerto Grosso (1950), composed for the Rural Music Schools Association, pits a smaller string body of advanced players against a larger one of intermediate students, with an ad lib third ensemble of the beginners (omitted on both recordings of the work) who duplicate the simplest material from the other sections.

Since the three works are of roughly equal length, one is split between disc sides, and the Concerto Grosso is the loser. It is heard uninterrupted in Norman del Mar's recording (a British EMI disc, ASD 2351, also containing works by Elgar, Warlock, and Delius), which has a bit more drive and vigor than Boult's somewhat better-executed version. The Boult recording also makes more of the contrast between the string bodies, with slightly more reverberant sonics around the larger one.

Boult's earlier recording of the Partita (London Treasury STS 15216, with the Eighth Symphony) made the work seem clumsy, without compensatory jollity. The less aggressively engineered remake has a bit more rhythmic "give" and a sense of leisure and sweetness, which renders the music more approachable, for my taste.

This is Sir Adrian's fifth recording of the Tallis Fantasia. Rehearing the four LP versions in sequence, I found the new one clearly the fullest in sonority, the most inward in feeling. It is broader than the mono Westminster (later issued on Vanguard)



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and more carefully inflected than either the stereo Westminster (with the Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Westminster Gold WGS 8111) or the Lyrita (with the London Philharmonic, issued domestically on MHS 1397). There are certain details that Boult continues to gloss over, however—for example, the quickening of pulse before letter P and the return *tempo del principii* at U. But he is at his best an instinctive rather than analytic musician, and the love he bears the piece radiates through every moment of the performance. A.C.

### WEBER-MAHLER: Die drei Pintos.

|                                           |                       |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Clarissa                                  | Lucia Popp (s)        |
| Laura                                     | Kari Lovaas (s)       |
| Inez                                      | Jeanette Scovotti (s) |
| Don Gaston Viratos                        | Werner Hollweg (t)    |
| Don Gomez de Freiros; Major-Domo          | Heinz Kruse (t)       |
| Ambrosio                                  | Hermann Prey (b)      |
| Don Pantaleone Roiz de Pacheco; Innkeeper | Franz Grundheber (b)  |
| Don Pinto de Fonseca                      | Kurt Moll (bs)        |

Netherlands Vocal Ensemble, Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, Gary Bertini, cond. RCA RED SEAL PRL 3-9063, \$23.98 (three discs, automatic sequence).

Alfano's completion of *Turandot*, Jarnach's of *Doktor Faust*, Deryck Cooke's of Mahler's Tenth Symphony—all these are self-evidently justified by having rescued a composer's final work, in some sense perhaps his testament, from oblivion. Mahler's own work on Weber's unfinished comic singspiel *Die drei Pintos* has a fascination all its own, but it is a rather different case.

The opera was by no means Weber's last project. He had begun it in Dresden some five or six years before his early death, in fact soon after finishing *Der Freischütz*, but other commissions supervened, notably *Euryanthe* for Vienna and *Oberon* for London: the Pintos were pushed to one side, and work on them was never resumed very seriously. When Weber died in London in June 1826, all that had actually been written down was the first seven of the seventeen numbers in which he had planned the work, and those only in more or less incomplete sketch form—enough to tantalize anyone who wanted a comic Weber singspiel to set beside the dramatic *Freischütz* and the fantastic *Oberon*, but not enough to make the process of completion at all easy.

Weber's widow took the apparently sensible step of handing the sketches over to the most famous operatic composer among her acquaintance, Meyerbeer, who had been a friend of Weber's since their student days with the Abbé Vogler; unfortunately he did no more than keep them out of circulation for twenty years. Further well-meant attempts to salvage the work proved equally fruitless until 1887, when Weber's grandson, an army officer established at Leipzig, showed them to a young conductor called Gustav Mahler (who happened to be having a passionate affair with his wife at the time). Here at last was a composer with enough skill, enough affection for Weber's style, and above all enough confidence in himself to tackle the job successfully. By immersing himself in the faded jottings, he was able to discover—at least to his own satisfaction—what Weber's intentions had been for the seven sketched numbers. At first he wanted to stop there, to judge by

what he told his young friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner, but at the urging of Captain Weber and the Leipzig opera director he agreed to set the remaining numbers, too, so that the work could at last be produced on the stage.

He seems to have accepted this not as a straightforward act of creativity, but as an exercise in affectionate pastiche. With praiseworthy responsibility he hunted through Weber's obscurer works (of which, then as now, there were a great many) for musical ideas—melodies in particular—that could be adapted to the text of the uncomposed numbers. Alterations, of course, he had to permit himself, both of phraseology and of instrumentation, but by and large the task seems to have been done with both ingenuity and subtlety. (John Warrack describes the process in some detail in his book on Weber, pp. 251-61.) The only dramatic change Mahler made was to switch the order of the first two acts, as they stood in the libretto Weber had accepted; this may have been for reasons of dramatic effectiveness but was also, I suspect, because he did not want to use up all the genuine Pintos music in the first hour or so of the opera.

The result, in any case, was a "new" opera to add to the pitifully small Weber canon, and at its first performance (Leipzig, January 20, 1888) it was enthusiastically received as such both by the critics, present in force from all over Germany, and by the general public. The great conductor Hans von Bülow seems to have been almost alone in rejecting it root and branch. The young Richard Strauss, who had just made Mahler's acquaintance and heard him play through the first act on the piano, wrote ecstatically about it to his mentor and patron: Bülow's rejoinder, six months later and after an examination of the piano score of the whole work, was uncompromising: "an infamous antiquated hash."

Was this the reaction of a wholehearted modernist, incapable of seeing much good in a simpleminded singspiel, or of a purist unduly conscious of the liberties with Weber's style that the young Mahler had permitted himself, particularly as regards instrumentation? Strauss seems to have understood it in the latter way, for in writing to retract his earlier recommendation he singled out some characteristic Mahlerian extravagances in the ranges of horns and woodwinds. But whatever Bülow meant, he may not have been entirely wrong. For an opera with a doubly distinguished ancestry, *Die drei Pintos* has made very little headway on the stage. Even in Germany its initial popularity soon dwindled, and it had to wait until 1962 for its first performance on an English-speaking stage—and then an amateur one.

Why is this? The reason may lie partly in the music, but more, I think, with the libretto Weber had saddled himself with. One knows, of course, that he was upset to find what a farrago Planché had made of Wieland's *Oberon*, but this does not necessarily mean that he had much dramatic acumen; indeed if he had, it is hard to see how he could have accepted Helmina von Chezy's ludicrous libretto for *Euryanthe*. Even *Der Freischütz* is not much better as drama and survives more through the



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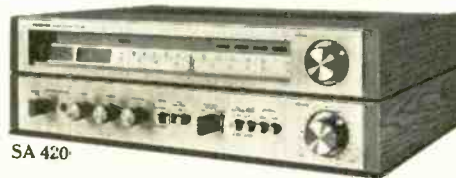
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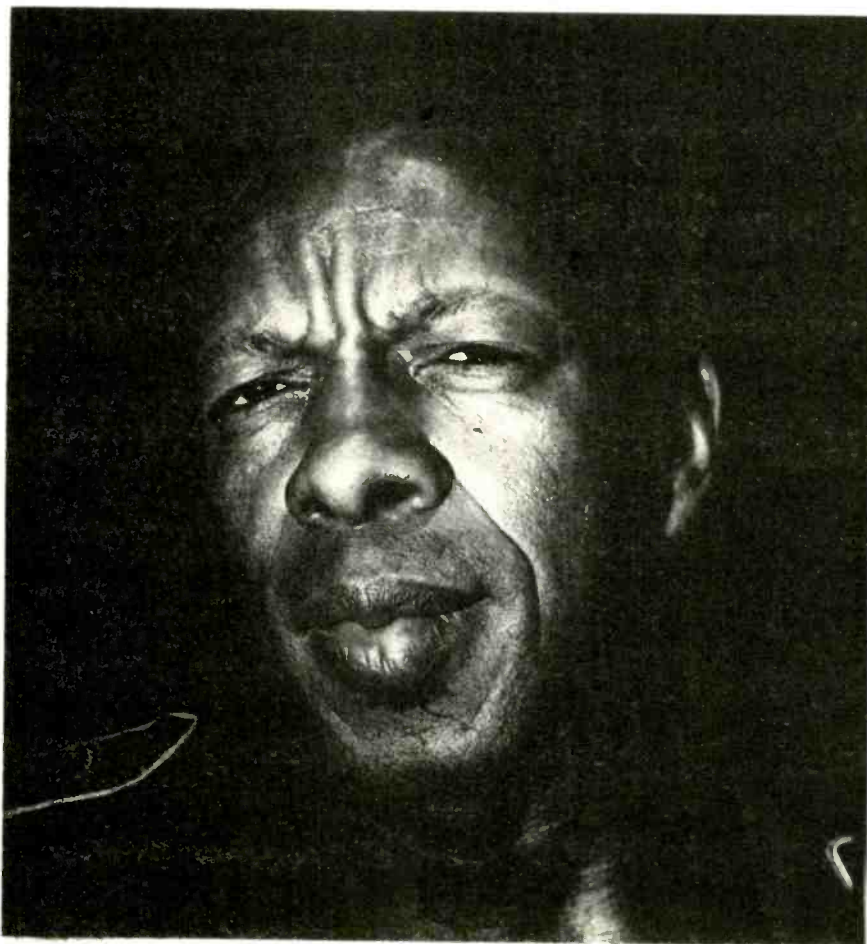
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# Ornette Coleman's Legacy to Black Rock

"Broken Shadows," recorded a decade ago, finally sees the light.

Reviewed by Don Heckman



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

**Ornette Coleman: Broken Shadows**  
James Jordan & Jim Fishel, producers  
Columbia FC 38029

WHEN ORNETTE COLEMAN signed with CBS in 1971, it was his seventh label in a little over a decade. The hope for the saxophonist's fans was that he had found a home, as Miles Davis had before him, at Black Rock. But it was a short-lived dream: "Science Fiction" was released in September; "Skies of America" followed the next year; and, in 1973, Coleman (along with Keith Jarrett, Charles Mingus, and Bill Evans) was dropped from the roster.

Unreleased material remained. And

incredibly, CBS has waited nearly ten years to make it available. So much for the jazz enlightenment of the various regimes at West 52nd Street. Reissue producer Jim Fishel should be given special credit for finally bringing this extraordinarily valuable chronicle to light. I have no doubt that it took a great deal of effort on his part.

It was worth it. At least two-thirds of "Broken Shadows" approaches the brilliance of Coleman's classic Atlantic performances. And all of it is creatively and commercially superior to the shallow meanderings that have dominated his recent work. *Happy House*, *Elizabeth*, and *Broken Shadows* are performed by an ensemble similar

to the Coleman Double Quartet of the early '60s. With bassist Charles Haden as a firm, middle foundation, trumpeters Bobby Bradford and Don Cherry and drummers Ed Blackwell and Billy Higgins are placed to the right and left, respectively, in the mix. Coleman and tenor saxophonist Dewey Redman are nearer the center.

The wide stereo spread works perfectly for Coleman's music. *Happy House*, a herky-jerky, stop-and-go line that rebounds between the drums and the horns, brims over with musical joy. Blackwell and Higgins, at top of their form, build throughout the various solos until they reach a dramatic, pas de deux improvisation near the close of the piece. Despite the devil-may-care ground rules, they exercise an amazing degree of discipline as they echo, imitate, and vary each other's phrases.

*Elizabeth*, one of Coleman's New Orleans dirge-style lines, provides a stunning sample of his improvisational methods. Placed directly in the middle of a nonstop filigree of sounds from his peers, he rips off phrase after phrase. He is, at heart, a sequential player who builds solos fragment by fragment: a two-bar phrase followed by the same phrase a note higher or lower; a sweeping run countered by another one, a half-tone away. But Coleman is far too sophisticated to be restricted by such an admittedly simple method of construction. Using his rhythm section as a backdrop rather than as a framework, he plays his sequences in uneven patterns; a two-bar phrase starting on a downbeat may be followed by the same phrase slightly altered and starting on an upbeat or, perhaps, somewhere between the beats. Another sequential repetition will be varied by an additional eighth note or a stretching of the rhythm. (This accounts, I suspect, for the notion that Coleman plays in unusual meters. The truth is that most of his phrases are based on an *implicit* 4/4 feeling.)

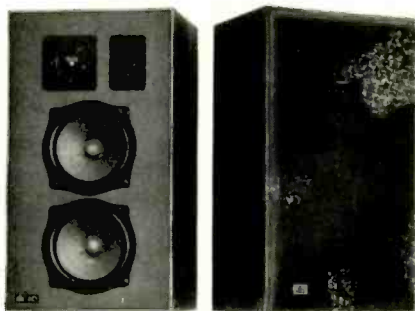
On *Broken Shadows*, Coleman had the (again) simple, but extremely effective idea of permitting the players to solo over a continuous repetition of the keening, melodic theme. First comes a trumpet (presumably Cherry), chipping away as the line continues; next, an interplay between Haden's



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freshness and vitality of Weber's music than because of any merit in the text. For *Die drei Pintos* he had accepted, apparently without any misgivings at all, a three-act libretto by his friend Theodor Hell (the pen name of the Dresden Hofrat, Carl Winkler), based on an exceedingly slender novella recently published in the local evening paper.

The mainspring of its plot is a decision by the eccentric Don Pantaleone to repay a long-standing debt of honor by marrying his daughter Clarissa, sight unseen, to the son (Don Pinto) of an old friend who had once saved his life; Clarissa's heart is already given to another, namely Don Gomez. Meanwhile, on his way to Madrid, the bumpkin Don Pinto has told the story of his good fortune to a dashing student, Don Gaston, who immediately conceives the idea of stealing the suitor's papers and impersonating him. Before he can claim Clarissa, however, he encounters Don Gomez, who persuades him to withdraw; with some reluctance he does so, suggesting that Gomez in his turn had better pretend to be the expected Don Pinto. Gomez is predictably accepted not only by Pantaleone, but by Clarissa, and even the appearance of an exceedingly ruffled Pinto cannot long delay the equally predictable happy ending.

Sillier stories than this had no doubt been made into successful comic operas, particularly in the eighteenth century, but the real trouble with this one is that the opportunities it gives for music are so peripheral to the action. Whether this would be true if Mahler had left the order of events as Weber originally planned them is not quite clear, but as it stands the present first act takes an inordinate time to get going. The innkeeper's daughter Inez makes a good enough excuse for introducing some fashionable Spanish color (she gets a solo number of her own as well as a seguidilla with Don Gaston), but she has nothing at all to do with the plot. Similarly in the second act we have to put up with an extended triolet from Clarissa's soubrette-style maid before the heroine herself gets a chance to comment on her plight. Nor do the finales convince me that either Weber or Mahler had the secret of getting music to mirror action at the speed that comedy demands.

By his own lights, then, Bülow had some reason to dismiss the piece as "an antiquated hash." What he chose to ignore, though, was first of all the very real charm of such numbers as Inez' mock-Spanish folksong, of the canonic trio in Act III or the later rondo-trio in the same act, and in the second place the unmistakable flavor (which he could hardly be expected to relish as much as we do) of the young Mahler. This, the flavor of the First Symphony and the *Wayfarer Songs*, emerges whenever he sets out to develop Weber's themes more elaborately—as in the double finale of Act III and, most of all, in the entr'acte that separates the first two acts. This is the piece that I would recommend to the attention of anyone who finds it easier (as I confess I do) to respond to Mahler's sophistication than to Weber's naivete: With sharply profiled dynamics, its prominent use of woodwinds and horns, the subtle mixture of sweet and sour in harmony and orchestration, it is as valuable a postscript to Mahler's First as the work as a whole is to the canon of Weber's operas—and perhaps even more so.

Clearly, given the impossibility of making it work effectively on-stage, this is the kind of opera that we need to have on record, and we can be grateful that the sesquicentenary of Weber's death (last year) has brought us such a good one. Not quite ideal, perhaps. Gary Bertini, a conductor whom I have much admired in the music of Webern and Dallapiccola, bustles the music along, but seems to lack the sense of fun, the instinctive *Schwung*, that it ideally demands. The rather thankless part of Clarissa seems to me to call for a more clarinetlike soprano than Lucia Popp, one of nature's oboes, and Kari Lövaas is on the frail side as Laura the maid.

Of the women it is Jeanette Scovotti as the dramatically irrelevant Inez who gives me the most consistent pleasure; I found myself wishing that she had something to do after the end of Act I. Werner Hollweg is good, in a very German way, as the dashing Don Gaston and copes excellently with the role's tricky coloratura; I can't help feeling that Clarissa might have done better to choose this fake-Pinto rather than the other, since Heinz Kruse's Gomez rather lacks personality. Kurt Moll as the real Don Pinto has plenty of that, but he sounds a little old for the part and perhaps not quite enough the country bumpkin of the libretto. Some of the best singing of all comes from Hermann Prey in the subordinate but still important role of Don Gaston's servant Ambrosio. It's a pity that Weber (or Mahler?) commits him to making the old falsetto joke quite so often, but he does it musically each time and consistently manages to infuse into the proceedings a sense of that easygoing, lighthearted enjoyment that some of the others miss.

Not a masterpiece, then, but well worth having on records and indispensable both to Weber and to Mahler aficionados (the local color is catching). RCA has done handsomely by the recording, which is cleanly and clearly balanced, with enough sense of movement to create the illusion of the stage performance that most of us will never see.

A special word of praise for Jack Dieter's typically informative essay in the accompanying booklet—a great improvement on the European edition, incidentally, which contrived to present all the prefatory material in four languages but the libretto only in the original German. In the American edition the libretto appears with a literal, and literate, English translation by Gustl Breuer. J.N.

**WYNER:** *Intermedio*. \* **SOLLBERGER:** *Riding the Wind I*. \* Susan Davenny Wyner, soprano; string orchestra, Yehudi Wyner, cond. \* Patricia Spencer, flute; Da Capo Chamber Players, Harvey Sollberger, cond. \* [Carter Harman, prod.] COMPOSERS RECORDINGS SD 352, \$6.95.

Harvey Sollberger's *Riding the Wind I* and Yehudi Wyner's *Intermedio* are two unusually provocative American compositions of recent date. Although to my mind neither work is without problems, these arise mainly from the complex compositional task each composer has set himself. And the fact that both Sollberger and Wyner have, for the most part, succeeded so well in overcoming their self-imposed hurdles



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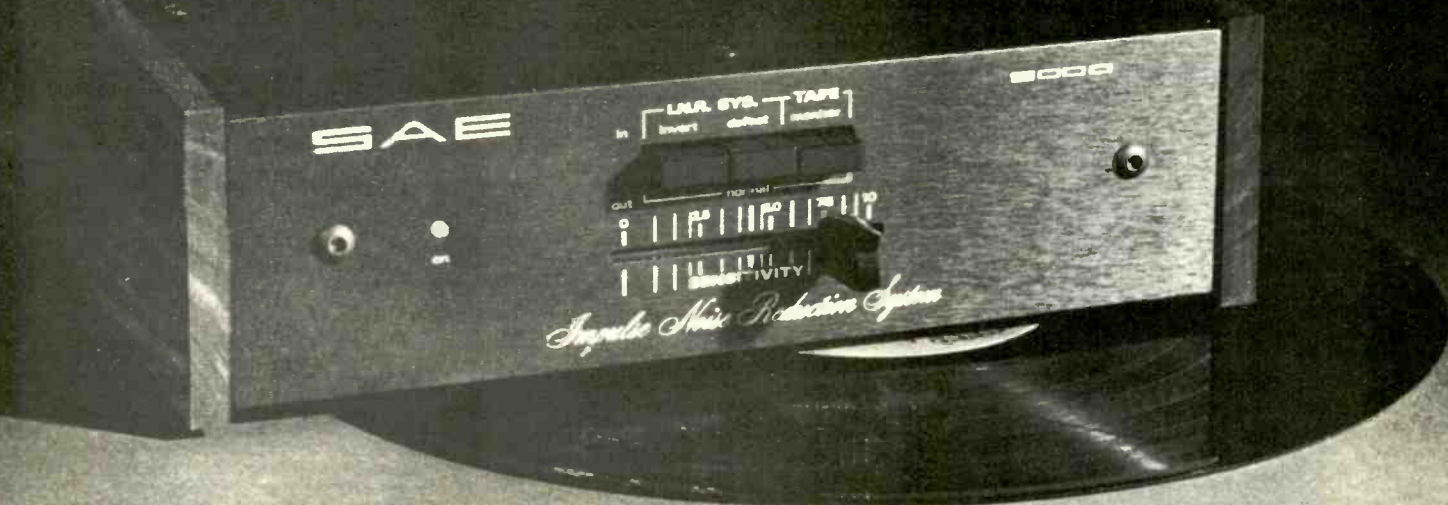
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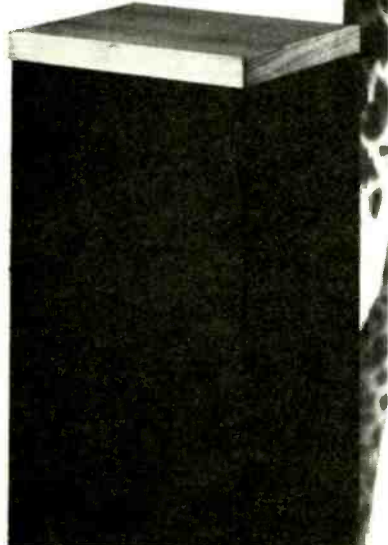
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accounts in large measure for their music's striking expressivity.

The more arresting of the two is Wyner's *Intermedio*, a three-movement work for soprano and string orchestra that was originally conceived as a ballet score. Although there is no explicit literary idea associated with the music and the voice part is textless throughout, Wyner feels that the titles of the outer movements ("Torch Song" and "Elegy") suggest something of the general meaning and character of the piece. He also notes that his compositional materials were chosen to evoke something of the quality of "vernacular" (i.e., popular and jazz) music of the 1930s.

Such evocations have become rather standard fare in "serious" music of the past few years, but what sets Wyner's piece apart is the natural way in which these are made to arise from the over-all musical conception. Thus, despite the fact that musical associations completely pervade the score (especially in the outer movements), one never feels that "foreign material" has been forced upon an otherwise unexceptional musical surface. Indeed, they are so beautifully integrated as to become virtually unnoticeable (except, no doubt, subliminally) after the first few hearings.

What Wyner has done is to take a very limited number of harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic ideas, any one of which by itself could be taken as "representative" of the popular music of a bygone era, and work them together in a way that is entirely personal. One hears such "cliches" as added-note chords (those of the dominant-seventh variety are particularly prominent), parallel harmonic motions, and walking bass lines, but the way these are used is always novel and produces relationships that are consistently unexpected. I can think of works that deal with similar problems (for example, sections of Berg's *Lulu*), but the results here are quite unlike anything I have heard before.

The voice, heard only in the outer movements, is not only textless but confined to a single speech sound—that of an open vowel. And it is here, I feel, that Wyner has miscalculated. The voice line is sustained and lyrical in quality throughout, and the consistency with which it is treated, in conjunction with the extremely limited range of timbre resulting from the use of a single mouth position, produces an ultimately monotonous character that detracts from the larger growth of the work. The extent to which different words (or phonemes) produce different vocal timbres—thus providing variety over even very extended stretches of singing—is considerable; and when such changes are absent, the voice loses a crucial expressive dimension. Thus, although the composer states that "the emotional shadows of the work deepen as the piece goes on," this is, at least to my ear, largely canceled by the close sonic proximity of the outer movements. Despite the fact that the first is considerably more "up-beat" and rhythmically active in character, the two really seem very much alike.

The middle movement, on the other hand, is an extraordinarily effective "scherzo," a propulsive statement featuring abrupt contrasts and great rhythmic complexity. It makes an effective foil for the two others and makes me wish all the more

for a greater sense of transformation at the end. But despite such reservations, *Intermedio* is a work I will want to return to often. It is a fascinating conception by an unusually gifted and original composer.

The Sollberger work could hardly be more different. *Riding the Wind I* is a virtuoso vehicle for solo flute with chamber ensemble, in which an attempt is made to integrate in the solo part "extended" performance techniques (buzz tones, singing while playing, breathing into the instrument, multiphonics, etc.) with traditional ones. Indeed, the shape of the entire piece is controlled by relationships between the two types of playing: It begins with flute music in which innovative techniques predominate, works gradually toward a middle section played in the normal fashion, and finally returns to the type of writing heard at the beginning. The transitions both to and from the middle section are beautifully realized, so that one is scarcely conscious of the dichotomy between the two methods of playing. Sollberger is himself a first-rate flutist who specializes in new music, and one is always conscious here of his complete command of the possibilities and limitations of the instrument.

The other players (violin, clarinet, cello, and piano) have essentially accompanimental roles. With the exception of the middle section and a short segment near the end, they are confined to brief, fragmentary comments on what the flute is doing; and they are completely silent during extended segments. Thus the flute dominates from beginning to end: It is constantly present and carries the continuity to such an extent that the other parts seem almost unnecessary. (In fact the flute part can be played alone as another version of *Riding the Wind*.) This uneven balance strikes me as awkward, particularly on a formal level; I keep wishing that the other instruments would break away on their own at some point and establish some sort of real opposition to the soloist. Nevertheless, the writing for all of the instruments is idiomatic, and the work as a whole creates an impressive sense of sustained excitement.

The Sollberger is brilliantly performed by flutist Patricia Spencer and members of the Da Capo Chamber Players under the composer's direction. Wyner's piece does not come off so well in performance. Although the vocal part is handsomely rendered by Susan Davenny Wyner, the string orchestra is at times uncertain. Fortunately this is not fatally distracting; one only wishes now and then for a bit more polish and interpretive subtlety. R.P.M.

## Recitals and Miscellany

**ASTON MAGNA.** Aston Magna, Albert Fuller, dir. CAMBRIDGE CRS 2827, \$6.98.

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anoforte and harpsichord\*. [Wesley K. Morgan, prod.] PLEIADES P 104 and P 105, \$7.95 each (available from Southern Illinois University Press, Box 3695, Carbondale, Ill. 62901).  
P 104\*: MOZART: Sonatas for Violin and Piano: in F, K. 376; in E minor, K. 304; in E flat, K. 380.  
P 105\*: GIUSTINI: Sonata for Piano, No. 8, in A. C. P. E. BACH: Sonata for Flute, in A minor, WQ 132; Poco adagio only. Solos for Flute and Continuo: in G, WQ 134; in E minor, WQ 124; Sonata for Clavier, in A ("Prussian" No. 6), WQ 48.

It's heartening to find ever-growing evidence that the desire and skill to record old music in performances featuring the instruments of its own period is no longer confined to Europe's DG Archiv, Telefunken *Das alte Werk*, Seon, etc. series.

The Aston Magna Foundation for the better understanding of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music (particularly in relationship with the other arts of that era) has been active since 1972 despite the lack of wholehearted support on the part of some of its Great Barrington, Massachusetts, neighbors [HIGH FIDELITY excepted, of course—Ed.]. It's now represented for the first time on records, appropriately with an all-star ensemble (featuring such notables as Bernard Krainis on recorder, John Solum on flute, Jaap Schröder as one of four violinists, and artistic director Albert Fuller as harpsichordist). As either a quartet or a truly chamber-sized orchestra, they are recorded quite closely but with consistently gimmick-free sonic purity.

I have some reservations about the aptness of two of the three selections, for neither the first of Mozart's flute quartets (composed in 1777) nor the last of the *Concerti armonici* (pub. 1730) long attributed to Pergolesi particularly needs or benefits by period-instruments performance. The tonal qualities here are interestingly "different" to some degree, but that interest is scarcely enough (for nonpurists at least) to make these cheerful versions competitive with more polished, virtuosic ones—the Bennett/Philips Mozart, say, or the Münchinger/London Treasury "Pergolesi." The Telemann concerto has less competition (the only other versions I know about are on Musical Heritage MHS 1601 and 1560). In any case, alto recorder/gamba soloists Krainis and Hsu give distinction, especially in dusky shaded timbre contrasts and combinations, to an otherwise so-so performance.

The two Pleiades discs feature instruments from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's celebrated collection, captured honestly and appealingly, with handsome illustrations and informative annotations. Yet, far more significantly for nonspecialized listeners, the historical attractions don't overshadow the delectable music and music-making themselves.

The first of the two discs forces me to backtrack from my recent argument that the exact kind of violin Mozart practiced on as a child isn't necessarily aesthetically "right" for the current enjoyment of his violin works. Where Jaap Schröder couldn't dissuade me (in his two concertos for ABC/Seon last March), Sonya Monosoff's playing of three violin sonatas does, even though they were composed from three to six years later. The thin but exquisite tone of the Met's restored Strad of 1692 combines and contrasts to perfection with the



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somewhat dull-toned (to present-day pianists' ears) but eventually magical period pianoforte (played by Malcolm Bilson) the Met ascribes to the Mozart family friend Johann Schmidt. And this ideally matched instrumental pair has the incalculable advantage of being heard not only in two perhaps run-of-the-mill (for Mozart!) sonatas, but also in an irresistible Mozartean charmer, the K. 380 Sonata in E flat.

Nevertheless, it's the second disc (P 105) that I must commend even more warmly and to a wider public. It's documentarily unique in that it presents one of the earliest works specifically composed for the piano (a Ludovico Giustini sonata published in 1732) played on the oldest extant piano.

Cristofori's *gravicembalo con piano e forte* of 1720. Moreover, the combination is both musically and tonally sheer joy. Valuable too, if less extraordinary, are one of C. P. E. Bach's "Prussian" sonatas played on the Schmidt pianoforte and a batch of his flute solos (one unaccompanied, the others with harpsichord continuo) played on the Met's rococo porcelain flute of c. 1760. And here again the provocative unfaded tonal spell of the historical instruments enhances, rather than overshadows, the rhapsodic fancy of Carl Philipp Emanuel and the infectious relish with which Hart and Bonn play—as much at informal ease as if they were in our living rooms for a musical evening in person. R.D.D.

**BRITISH ORGANS.** For an essay review, see page 95.

**CAMBRIDGE BRASS QUINTET.** Works by Bernstein, Bozza, Huggler, Rieti, and Speer. [John Newton, prod.] CRYSTAL S 204, \$6.98.

**IOWA BRASS QUINTET:** Sounding Brass. Works by Anon., Bach, Bozza, Finck, Husa, Leclerc, Mouret, Senfl, Smoker, and Wilbye. UNIVERSITY OF IOWA PRESS 29001, \$6.98 (University of Iowa Press, 17 W. College St., Iowa City, Iowa 52242).

Two more additions to the already large brass-quintet discography—a genre about which I've been developing increasingly serious reservations in recent years. Although the number of brass players anxious to pursue concert and recording careers has increased tremendously, the repertory remains scanty. Most of the modern original works are of more technical than artistic merit, while the many transcriptions of old music are distorted in character by the substitution of trumpets for cornetti and by the grotesquely anachronistic introduction of a tuba.

At best, these materials are more fun to play than to listen to. Witness the 1951 Bozza work common to both discs: the Cantabrigians' works by John Huggler (1955), Vittorio Rieti (1967), and Bernstein (the brief *Fanfare for Bima*, his dog); the Iowans' works by Karel Husa (1968), Paul Smoker (the ensemble's second trumpet), and Michel Leclerc. Both groups play with considerable skill and zest but with scant, if any, sense of stylistic authenticity in the works by Bach, Mouret, Speer, Wilbye, and the sixteenth-century *Carmina* by Anon., Finck, and Senfl.

The Cambridge/Crystal sonics are brilliant but hard, quite close, and a bit oddly balanced at times. The Iowan sonics are bright, clean, and somewhat less close. But the prime appeal of each program is specialized and parochial. R.D.D.

**CHANTS FOR THE FEASTS OF MARY.** Schola Cantorum Francesco Coradini, Fosco Corti, cond. [Heinz Wildhagen and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 310, \$7.98.

**A GUIDE TO GREGORIAN CHANT.** Schola Antiqua, R. John Blackley, cond.; various other performers. [Anthony Stevens, prod.] VANGUARD VSD 71217, \$6.98.

Two new recordings of Gregorian chant, both beautiful and highly recommended, represent two different approaches to the performance of this rich yet unfamiliar repertoire. The Schola Cantorum Francesco Coradini, a secular ensemble from Arezzo under the direction of Fosco Corti, takes a classic route, singing the chants for the major Marian holidays in a smooth, even elegant manner. If it all tends to pour forth like an endless stream of melted ice cream, it is still delicious. The music itself, reflecting the tender, human side of Christian worship associated with the invocation of Christ's mother, is especially beautiful. The four melodious Marian antiphons complement the chants proper to the celebration of major events in Mary's history, Conception, Annunciation, and Assumption. Even

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the new listener is likely to be dazzled by the soaring arches of the "Alleluia Tota pulchra es" or the ornate melodic tendrils of "Diffusa est gratia," which twine about the text like the illuminated borders of a medieval prayer book.

If the conception of the Arezzo choir is classic, I suppose one should describe the contrasting performance of John Blackley's Schola Antiqua as romantic. Yet the ensemble certainly does not indulge in the wailing rubato or dynamic extremes one associates with that word in relation to chant. Nevertheless, the quick tempos, the thin, clear tone, and above all the responsiveness to the inner pulse of the music give Blackley's choir a more individual sound than its Italian counterpart.

"A Guide to Gregorian Chant" is a fascinating collection, a wonderful sampler of the enormous variety that comprises the literature of chant. A patchwork Mass with elements drawn from such diverse sources as the Ambrosian rite, a fourteenth-century Gradual from Bach's Thomaskirche in Leipzig, and a collection of ninth-century melodies from northeastern Gaul is followed by examples from other services. These range from the elaborately intricate chants of the monastic Nocturns to the sturdy, metrically accented hymns with their obvious popular appeal. Blackley also offers the listener a variety of performance practice, singing in different styles from the even measure of the Solemn school to the subtle differentiations of proportional rhythm and the strong beat of the rhythmic hymns.

Four pages of notes are in the form of a dictionary explaining and commenting on the different terms found in the contents. A fine recording for the intellectually curious who would like to explore the many various sources and approaches to Gregorian chant. S.T.S.

**ILEANA COTRUBAS:** Operatic Recital. Ileana Cotrubas, soprano; New Philharmonia Orchestra, John Pritchard, cond. [Paul Myers, prod.] COLUMBIA M 34519, \$6.98.

**DONIZETTI:** Don Pasquale: Quel guardo il cavaliere. . . So anch'io la virtù magica. **MOZART:** Die Entführung aus dem Serail: Ach, ich liebte. Le Nozze di Figaro: Giunse all'in il momento. . . Deh vieni, non tardar. Die Zauberflöte: Ach, ich fühl's. **PUCCINI:** La Bohème: Sì, mi chiamano Mimi. La Rondine: Chi il bel sogno di Doretta. Turandot: Tu che di gel sei cinta. **VERDI:** Rigoletto: Caro nome. La Forza del destino: Pace, pace, mio Dio.

Few European singers in recent years have been preceded to this country by as much praise as the Romanian soprano Ileana Cotrubas, on behalf of whose gifts a number of estimable European critics have made extravagant claims. To judge from her first solo disc (or, for that matter, from her debut performances at the Met this past season), their claims are excessive.

What one hears on this recital—and what one heard in the opera house—is a pleasing, talented performer, but hardly a memorable one. Cotrubas, it seems to me, is neither particularly individual nor particularly illuminating. She is diligent, musical, and often charming, but there is a lot more in these arias than she is currently able to reveal. For one thing, her vocal means are by no stretch of the imagination first-class. The all-important middle register is veiled and often breathy, and the lower register is

inclined to huskiness, and these drawbacks limit seriously her ability to shade and color the voice for expressive ends. Only at the top, especially *in alt*, does the vocal sound become brilliant, free, and clear.

In general Cotrubas seems to be well trained, though I would say that her technique still needs attention: Her trill (e.g., in the *Don Pasquale* aria) is not especially clean and the *fioriture* in "Caro nome" are rather clumsy. Worse yet, a slight but disturbing tonal unsteadiness sometimes finds its way into slow and sustained music, as it unfortunately does here in the *Figaro* and *Bohème* selections. Cotrubas, it's true, brings off some pleasant small effects, especially in pointing up the text (there is a delicious lift to the word *Riccardo* in the first part of the *Pasquale* aria and the quasi-par-

lando phrases that conclude Mimi's aria are touchingly done), but the total effect remains rather pallid.

John Pritchard's conducting is on the whole satisfactory enough, though he tends to doggedness in music that ought to sparkle and lethargy in music that requires dramatic drive. Close sound. Texts (not always in accord with what Cotrubas actually sings) and translations. D.S.H.

**LOUISE DiTULLIO:** Works for Flute and Orchestra. Louise DiTullio, flute; English Chamber Orchestra, Elgar Howarth, cond. [Raymond Few, prod.] CRYSTAL S 503, \$6.98.


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ness and banter, Jacques Ibert can come up with some of the gauchest sounds I know of. The last movement of the 1934 flute concerto, for instance, is punctuated by some truly awkward and obtrusive outbursts from the brass, and ponderous textures seem to weigh down even the most jivey syncopations. The first movement as well, in spite of its almost Roussel-esque scurrying, has none of the latter composer's acidity to justify its instrumental primitivism. I think one of Ibert's problems is that he was a terrible orchestrator. Consequently, he is at his best when he manages to thin out his instrumental arsenal, as in the *Tropismes pour des amours imaginaires* (Angel S 37194, November 1976) or the almost elegiac second movement of the flute concerto.

Although compared in the liner notes to Ibert, Pierre-Max Dubois has, in all of his works I have heard, consistently avoided his predecessor's penchant for the ponderous. With subtler harmonies and much more compact elaboration of his basic material, Dubois, in his short four-movement flute concerto (he composes almost uniquely for some kind of wind instrument), tries about half as hard and goes about twice as far as Ibert. It will probably attain no more permanence than a thousand or so other Gallic compositions of its kind, but it is nice to have on disc.

Ah, but the Frank Martin *Ballade*! Orchestrated in 1941 from a 1939 piece for flute and piano, this ballade, one of several he wrote for diverse instruments, immediately pulls the listener into its considerable expressive depths. Granted, the hues are much darker than those of the Ibert and Dubois concertos, which already makes one more disposed to take the work seriously. Yet Martin's textures are quite light and his rhythms extremely lively, even if the harmonic language has a sharp cutting edge. What is important, however, is that Martin never seems to be indulging in idle doodling, and everything he does, whether on the technical level of the orchestration or the more abstract level of expressivity, has a meaning in the piece's fabric. The short (seven-and-one-half-minute) *Ballade*, otherwise available domestically only in its flute-piano version, is worth the price of the Crystal release.

Louise DiTullio gives impressive performances. The tone is rich and well controlled; the flute line flows with particular ease. There is a tendency toward what might be called "oversensitivity"—too big a tone to highlight lyrical climaxes, a bit too much swell and fall—but this does not really intrude upon the excellence of the interpretations. The English Chamber Orchestra under Elgar Howarth backs her up quite well for the most part, although some of the Dubois transparencies reveal flaws. Crystal's clean, bright sound achieves a suitable balance between soloist and orchestra. R.S.B.

**THOMAS HARMON:** American Organ Music of Three Centuries. Thomas Harmon, organs of Schoenberg Hall and Royce Hall, UCLA. [Marjori Cornfield, prod.] ORION ORS 76255, \$7.98.

This recording does not really live up to its ambitious title, but it does contain several

works of more than ordinary interest to both organists and Americanists. Organists who are not familiar with the Gregor Hradetzky organ installed in Schoenberg Hall at UCLA in the fall of 1968 will be charmed by the lovely delicacy of this instrument. The Royce Hall organ has long been considered one of Ernest Skinner's finest achievements, and it stands as a monument to the legendary Lynnwood Farnam (1885-1930), whose premature death robbed the country of one of its greatest masters of the king of instruments.

Thomas Harmon uses the Hradetzky for works by Selby, Moller, Barber, and Kay to excellent effect, and Barber's Op. 34 variations on "Wondrous Love" have rarely sounded more beautiful. Ulysses Kay's unpublished Organ Suite No. 1, dating from 1959, is a real find.

The Skinner is (understandably) most impressive in such big "machines" as the Sowerby *Prelude* on "The King's Majesty" and the posthumously published Farnam *Toccata* on "O Filii et Filiae." In both, it awes with its power. At the same time, it does very little for the unpretentious D flat major *Prelude* of John Knowles Paine or the C minor *Fugue* of Horatio Parker.

However, the engineering is excellent and the repertory unhackneyed. I.L.

**DAVID MUNROW:** Music of the Gothic Era. Early Music Consort of London, David Munrow, cond. [Gerd Ploebusch and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2710 019, \$23.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

**LÉONIN:** Viderunt omnes; Alleluia pascha nostrum; Gaude Maria virgo; Locust iste. **PÉROTIN:** Viderunt omnes; Sederunt principes. **ANON:** Alle psallite; Amor potest; S'on me regards; In mari miserie; On parole de batre; En mai quant rosier; Dominator Domine; El mois de mai; O mittisima; Hoquetus In saeculum I-VII. **PETRUS DE CRUCE:** Aucun ont troue. **LA HALLE:** De ma dame vient; J'os bien a m'ame parler. **ANON:** La mesnie fauveine; Quant je le voi; Zelus familie; Quasi non ministerium. **VITRY:** Impudenter; Cum statua. **BERNARD DE CLUNY:** Pantheon abluiter. **HENRI GILLES DE PUSIEX:** Ida capillorum; Rachel plorat filios. **ANON:** Clap, clap par un matin; Les l'ormel a la turrelle; O Philippe Franc; Febus mundo oriens. **MACHAUT:** Lasse comment oubliera; Qui es promesses; Hoquetus David; Christe qui lux es. **ANON:** Degentis vita; Inter densas deserti medians. **ROYLLART:** Rex Karole.

The late David Munrow's three-disc exploration of the rich and varied musical repertoire of the Gothic era is a brilliant achievement. A fascinating selection of thirty-nine marvelous pieces, many recorded for the first time, in vivid performances by skilled singers and instrumentalists makes this Archiv release a rewarding musical experience and affords a provocative glimpse into the multifaceted world of Chartres, St. Thomas Aquinas, the *Roman de la Rose*, and the Hundred Years War.

Musically, Munrow's tour begins with a full disc devoted to the towering organa of Léonin and Pérotin. These astonishing works set the stage for the development of polyphonic music in the West, first by decorating sustained notes of chant with fantastic virtuoso garlands of sound, and then by developing shorter sections in which both voices move at relatively the same speed in preset rhythmic patterns. Léonin's twelfth-century *Magnus Liber*, a big book of organa for the whole church year, was brought up to date by his Notre Dame successor, Pérotin, in a denser musical style featuring three and even four simultaneous voices. It is interesting that the six recorded organa



works, four by Léonin and Pérotin's two celebrated four-voice pieces. "Viderunt" and "Sederunt," are the longest selections on these discs. Léonin's setting of the Christmas chant "Viderunt" lasts more than nine minutes, for example, while Pérotin's version is almost three minutes longer, a respectable size for the nineteenth century.

The motets of the thirteenth century by contrast sound almost trivial after the monumental compositions preceding them. Three voices, composed successively, may sing different texts, which often reflect on one another. One version of "Quant voi revenir"/"Virgo virginum"/"Hec dies" combines an appeal to the Virgin Mary with a pastoral evocation of the secular maid Marion, while all three parts of "On parole de batre"/"A Paris soir"/"Frese nouvele" extol the joys of medieval Paris. Secular spirit predominated in this century, as witness the rousing drinking song "Quant je le voi" from the *Roman de Fauvel* or the delightful pornography of "Clap, clap par un matin," where the sounds of the mill wheel's strokes clearly echo another activity enjoyed by rustic Robin.

At the same time that these popular songs were entertaining fourteenth-century listeners, a more sophisticated form of the motet, based on subtle repetitions of attenuated rhythmic patterns and featuring obscure poetic allusions in their texts, appealed to a more elite audience. Philippe de Vitry's brilliant Marian motet, "Impudenter circumivi," makes exciting use of the rhythmic crescendo, while his "Cum statua"/"Hugo, Hugo" is a viciously barbed retort aimed at his political enemies by this multitalented man.

Several motets taken from the c.1360 Ivrea Codex include elaborate rhetorical examples of aristocratic flattery. But the greatest figure of the century is surely the acknowledged master poet/composer of his time, Guillaume de Machaut. Four motets recorded here include the unique instrumental *Hoquetus David* and the unusual "Lasse comment oublieray," a woman's comment on marriage and love in three separate texts. Three large-scale works from the Chantilly Codex conclude the collection.

The performances are superb. Virtuoso wind player Munrow shows admirable restraint in his use of instruments in this essentially vocal repertoire. Bells and organ occasionally underline the organal works, plucked and bowed sounds may delicately shade the voices of the thirteenth-century motets, and the bolder shawm carry the tenor in the later works, but, with the exception of the two acknowledged instrumental hockets, singing voices dominate the performances. Fortunately, England is blessed just now with exceptional talent along these lines. The combination of beautiful and appropriate tone quality, masterly technique, and a thorough familiarity with the style should make the performances of singers like James Bowman, Charles Brett, Paul Elliott, and Martyn Hill classics in this field for years to come.

Many details of performance practice in this early period are controversial, and a definitive version of any one work may even be unattainable. Experts may quarrel with Munrow's application of accidentals

or his use of notational devices—the ligure and the plica, for example—as guidelines for phrasing and tone color. Even I, with no claim to special knowledge in this field, have my doubts about the propriety of a five-voice version of Bernard de Cluny's "Pantheon abluter" when two parts appear to have been simply tacked on from a separate source. But these questions only make the album more valuable as a springboard for discussion and thought.

The fine notes and texts, in addition to the coherent plan and intellectual integration of the whole (the repertoire is French only and concentrates on works built around a pre-existing tenor), make this practically a do-it-yourself graduate seminar for the intellectually ambitious. At the same time, the immediacy of musical response by Munrow and his ensemble should make this music readily available to many whose previous contact with the beauties of Gothic art has been only with the visual and literary side of this fascinating era. S.T.S.

**SYLVIA SASS: Puccini and Verdi Arias.** Sylvia Sass, soprano; London Symphony Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli, cond. [Christopher Raeburn, prod.] LONDON OS 26524, \$7.98. Tape: ●● OS5 26524, \$7.95.

**Puccini:** Manon Lescaut: In quelle trine morbide; Sola, perduta, abbandonata. **Tosca:** Vissi d'arte. **Madama Butterfly:** Un bel di. **Turandot:** In questa reggia. **Verdi:** I Lombardi: O madre, dal cielo... Se vano è il pregare... Not noi giusta causa. **Macbeth:** Sleepwalking Scene. **Aida:** Ritorna vincitor.

This recital made the trip from London recording studio to U.S. stores in the extraordinary interval of one month, in time for Sylvia Sass's March Met debut as Tosca. And while it doesn't alter one's impression of the technical crudity of her upper voice, it does provide exciting confirmation of the vocal potential.

Voices of this size and beauty just don't come along very often, and it is thrilling to hear an instrument of genuine Turandot weight that also has such tonal sensuousness. Something like the full potential of the voice can be heard in its middle range, where Sass can make a considerable impact singing softly (e.g., the *Lombardi* prayer and the "Numi, pietà" section of the *Aida* aria) or at full voice (e.g., much of the *Macbeth* Sleepwalking Scene). Alas, it is her chest register doing most of the reliable work; her head register is simply not under control, and where it must take over completely (say at high F or G) she is reduced to wobble. (At the Met, her heaving into the top of the voice recalled the sad late years of Zinka Milanov.) As a result, the Puccini arias, which generally begin quietly in mid-voice and build to upper-range climaxes, tend to start well and fall apart at the moment of truth.

Interpretively all these arias are surprisingly specific for a singer of twenty-six, and I might be even more impressed by her absorption of the obvious Callas model if that didn't include an all-too-lifelike impression of the latter's dangerous use of the chest register (there are even several applications of the famous hoot). The last thing Sass needs now is to settle into that kind of abusive and almost surely debilitating chest-

Continued on page 124

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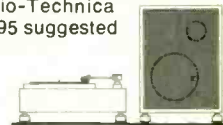
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bass and Redman's tenor saxophone; then another trumpet plays a querulous, poky line that builds into a series of wild, swooping runs; finally, Coleman arrives with an aggressive, but unexpectedly lighthearted improvisation that, in his typically quixotic fashion, plays against the feeling of the theme. The piece is a virtual jazz classic. (But why the unnecessary fade-out at the end of the track?)

*School Work*, performed with a quartet (Redman, Bradford, Haden, and Blackwell), uses an unusual metric device in the melody. After each six bars of 4/4 phrasing, a faster, out-of-sync phrase is inserted. Yet, confirming Coleman's desire to keep all options open for the improvised sections, this unusual phrasing does not occur in the solo passages. No one seems to particularly benefit from the openness of the environment. Redman, in fact, resorts to running diminished chords and a whole-tone scale or two. The total impression is one of a performance that is too head-centered.

They say that going out with an old lover only reminds you of why you left in the first place, but hearing the original Coleman quartet (with Cherry, Higgins, and Haden) revived on *Country Town Blues* should rekindle anyone's affections. Quite simply, they sound as good as they did a decade earlier—maybe better. Among the high points on this downhome Texas chiller is the way Coleman enlivens his diatonically-oriented lines with bent notes, blues calls, and gospel-styled declamation. And it's nice to hear Haden playing figures that minimize the open-string pedal phrases so prevalent in his more recent work.

*Rubber Gloves* unites the leader with Redman, Haden, and Blackwell. The combination produces sheer musical electricity. The melody is pure Coleman—a flowing, post-bebop uptempo line that really does sound like the next logical step after Charlie Parker. The competition between Coleman and Redman benefits both players. Playing like true alter egos, they match, challenge, and sometimes surpass each other. It's a shame that they have not had the opportunity to build a more extended creative partnership. Is it too late to try it again?

The final two tracks, *Good Girl Blues* and *Is It Forever*, are sung by Webster Armstrong and represent Coleman's reach toward commercialism. Easy targets though they may be, it would be wrong to minimize their craft. Coleman clearly could produce effective commercial material if he chose to do so, but I think he has bigger fish to fry.

One final footnote. Since CBS neglected to send me a review copy of "Broken Shadows," I picked one up from my local record dealer. The clerk, uncertain about the album's price, checked a long list of figures and then, looking at me uncertainly, inquired, "Is this jazz?" **HF**

a grand lesson. *Ophelia* suffers from a similarly false sense of significance and creaks under the dramatic baggage.

Aside from Waldman, who cowrote half of the tunes, Young worked with Danny O'Keefe, Tom Snow, and Michael McDonald. *Fire on the Water*, the McDonald collaboration, is a slight piece of jazzy pop that sounds like it was composed while the steaks were on the grill. While undeniably pleasant, it flounders in the kitchen-sink production that characterizes much of the album. There is some spark to O'Keefe's *On the Edge* and an airy attractiveness to Snow's *Jamie*, but these are transient pleasures. Recorded with a wide range of top-notch talent, "The Perfect Stranger" offers precious little character beneath its musical precision and high-gloss luster. **JOHN MILWARD**

#### Neil Young: *Trans*

Neil Young, producer  
Geffen GHS 2018

As five of the nine song titles on Neil Young's new album indicate, the veteran songwriter and guitarist has made his own analog-to-digital conversion. Computer technology looms large in both the sound and the content of "Trans," toppling Young's rustic image in a startling reinvention of the artist as a rock technocrat.

Not that he has jettisoned his raw but righteous command of melodic rock altogether. *Little Thing Called Love*, the album's opener, is one of his more lighthearted uptempo electric works, its slightly fuller ensemble sound comes from the addition of Joe Lala's congas and Nils Lofgren's lead guitar. But older fans in search of Young's early pop accessibility are likely to be distracted, if not dismayed, by the electronic focus that sharpens midway through the first side and prevails through all but two of the remaining songs.

Young's guitars retain their characteristic rough edges and dramatic chords, but his vocals and keyboards make it clear that his recently avowed affection for Kraftwerk is no joke: Using vocoders and digital keyboards, he builds choirs of perfectly-pitched, pointedly synthetic voices against ethereal polyphonic synthesizer backdrops. That combination's initial appearance, on *Computer Age*, might be written off as a sonic joke were it not for the single-mindedness with which it is applied to other taglines like *We Are in Control*, *Transformer Man*, *Computer Cowboy*, and *Sample and Hold*.

Transforming computer technology into romantic metaphor does bring some humor ("I need a unit to sample and hold," he bleeps at one point). But Young's apparently mixed feelings about the digital age tend to muddy the waters, rather than create any sense of dramatic tension. His reedy tenor has always been his weakest, if also one of his most distinguishing traits; per-

haps the opportunity to inject pitch control and rounded timbre explains the vocoders. But whether the inherent loss of identity those devices create is intended as a statement in itself is immaterial, for their soft-focus consonants repeatedly blur the lyric content.

There are moments of eerie beauty here that would work handsomely in a sci-fi B movie. But this is a new Neil Young album; with the star himself hiding behind the circuitry, only his unmistakable melodic logic remains to tell us who is at the controls. **SAM SUTHERLAND**

## Jazz

#### Jaki Byard: *To Them—to Us*

Giovanai Bonandri, producer  
Soul Note SN 1025 (Polygram Special Imports, 137 W. 55 St., New York, N.Y. 10019)

The fascination in Jaki Byard's playing is his range of interest, feeling, and understanding for the whole history of jazz piano. Although he tends toward self-indulgence on his own compositions, "To Them—to Us" has enough of Byard the eclectic to compensate.

He can refresh even the most well-worn classic simply by bringing it his own point of view. He plays *Tin Roof Blues* with insight, humor, and imagination while still keeping the theme very much at hand. To *Land of Make Believe* he first brings a sense of brooding involvement (which its composer, Chuck Mangione, misses completely), and then moves on to capture its effusive joyousness.

Byard is as close to the Ellington mode as any contemporary pianist: *Solitude* is full of appreciative insights; *Caravan* mixes some stark, swirling flurries of Art Tatum into the Ellington mood. Given his diverse interests, it is not strange to find Stevie Wonder's *Send One Your Love* here. *Ode to Billy Joe*, that folksy, bluesy hit of the Sixties, doesn't work as well; its gawky, chicken-legged walk eventually becomes a rhythmic strut. For a pianist who is so imaginative with other composers' works, his three originals are surprisingly uninventive. Suffice it to say that Byard needs a more solid creative foundation than he himself can provide. **JOHN S. WILSON**

#### Judy Carmichael: *Two-Handed Stride*

Judy Carmichael, producer  
Progressive PRO 7065 (P.O. Box 500, Lifton, Ga. 31794)

Pianist Judy Carmichael has an unusually impressive list of supporters. Sarah

## Direct-to-Disc: Recordings of Real Performances by Harold A. Rodgers

That the vast majority of phonograph records are nothing more or less than copies of tape recordings will probably come as a surprise to no one. Nor will it shock anyone to learn that the "performances" represented in many of these recordings never took place—or that some of the musicians heard playing together in the final result may have never met. Such are the miracles of tape splicing and of modern multitrack tape recording in which instruments are assigned different channels and recorded on different tracks, not necessarily at the same time or even in the same place. Central to this recording concept is, of course, the "mixdown," a session in which the 16, 24, or more tracks of the original master tape are combined (after various stages of equalization, the addition of reverberation, and other signal processing) to make a 2-track (or 4-track) tape that is later transferred to disc.

What's wrong with this? Not much, as the generally fine quality of available discs attests, but the convenience of using tape does extract its price: the loss of a certain sparkle and clarity in tape transfers, especially through several generations. The physical limitations responsible for this loss are understood to a degree and can be minimized—but not eliminated. A solution: Why not skip tape entirely and record directly onto a master disc?

Recording directly onto the disc obviously is not a new idea. As Lorin Maazel points out in his conversation with Leonard Marcus elsewhere in this issue, direct cutting goes back to the earliest recordings. But the current process really dates from the mid-1920s, when electrical recording was introduced. (See R. D. Darrell's article, also in this issue.) Many a collector will testify to the excellent clarity that some early electrical recordings (and many acoustics, for that matter) deliver despite their omnipresent surface noise. It is not surprising, therefore, that with modern microphones, amplifying devices, and recording lathes, direct discs yield extremely sharp transients and an excellent sense of presence. And the total dynamic range, from peak recorded levels to the noise floor, approaches 80 dB in a very carefully manufactured disc.

Another special quality of the direct disc is that the program must be recorded in real time. There is no way to splice sections of different takes together—in fact, the cutting lathe cannot be stopped, even between selections, without ruining the recording. This should not disturb professional musicians unduly; they are, after all, accustomed to doing live performances. If anything, the pressure that results from the need to do everything right the first time seems to give the recording a special excitement, even if the final result is not as perfect in every detail as it might be with retakes spliced in. The major additional responsibilities that fall to the musicians are extremely careful control of dynamics (a brass chord 1 or 2 dB too loud could result



Nexus direct-to-disc recording session

in overcutting and ruin a take, for example) and the need to limit pauses between selections to about 10 seconds.

For the recording engineer, who is not customarily called upon to mix in real time, the system is somewhat more challenging. But judging by the results, it is not asking too much that the engineer become a "performer" in this manner. In listening to the present recordings, I found few instances in which I was tempted to blame anything on the mix, and even there the subtlety of what I heard left some doubt about its etiology. That real-time mixing can work as well as it does is a tribute to the skill—and musicality—of the engineers involved.

The biggest problem associated with direct-cut discs, which will in all likelihood keep them in the status of limited-edition collectors' items for the foreseeable future, arises in manufacturing. The number of pressings that can be produced from a master is limited, particularly when the highest possible quality is required. With a tape master this problem is slight, as cutting a new master disc is fairly easy. In the direct process this would require an additional lathe (and operator) for each additional master, all working during the original recording session. Beyond two lathes (sometimes used to provide a backup, in any case), this system can easily become cumbersome.

Are direct-cut discs worth their premium prices of \$12 to \$15 or more? The answer will vary from release to release, but in broad terms I would say yes—if you can manage to find any. They are particularly good for showing off the transient response of a good audio system, and more important, for challenging the ability of the system to produce a lifelike sound. Indeed, if there is any quality that characterizes these discs more than any other, "liveness" would have to be it. The number of available releases is small, so it is not likely that a listener will find much of his favorite mu-

sic in direct cuts. But anything you can find, even reasonably close to your taste, is well worth hearing.

### Five Direct-Cut Discs

**Lorin Maazel/Cleveland Orchestra:** *Direct from Cleveland* (Telarc). This first direct-cut foray into the classical (more properly, romantic) repertoire contains works of Falla, Bizet, Tchaikovsky, and Berlioz that collectively resemble the classical component of a pops concert more than anything else. It is understandable that, in attempting what had not been done before, the conductor and producers saw caution as a virtue and chose selections that did not, presumably, stretch the concentration of the orchestra excessively. But the very success of the venture makes one crave more substantial music. As one would expect of this conductor and orchestra, precision of ensemble is on a high level. The effect is heightened by the fact that minor departures from the usual standard have not been edited out.

Dynamic range is excellent, and one is hard put to detect any background noise on the disc. Instruments and sections are well defined with respect to angular location, which gives you a head start in ferreting out details of the inner voices. Yet what is missing, to a large extent, is depth. Whether or not the multiple-microphone setup is responsible for this is a matter of conjecture, but there is little sense that some instruments are farther away than others. A slight amount of high-frequency distortion is audible, chiefly in the upper woodwinds and, curiously, not just in the loudest passages.

In its totality the recording has a fine sense of orchestral presence and very good performances. That the result is entertaining and interesting, rather than inspiring, is due principally to the lightweight character of the music. I hope that the "repertoire of



greater significance," projected by Maazel in this issue, will be seconded by Telarc.

**Harry James & His Big Band:** *The King James Version* (Sheffield). Sheffield is by now one of the "names" in direct-to-disc recording, and this release will show you why. The sound seems to be all there—clear, effortless, sparkling, and with very wide dynamic range—in a way that induces you to forget you are listening to a record. The playing is freewheeling and spirited and the arrangements witty. Most of all, Harry shows that, in addition to inspiring his sidemen, he can still take off and soar when a solo comes around.

This disc should be a real treat for a jazz buff, for the small, subtle sounds—wire-brushed cymbals, onset transients of softly played wind instruments—are preserved as well as their louder counterparts. Detail and recorded perspective are excellent as well.

**Nexus:** *Ragtime Concert* (Umbrella). Nexus, an all-percussion group, does a real tour de force with some cleverly arranged ragtime tunes. The tour de force being musical rather than technical, the dynamics are scaled to accuracy and delicacy rather than to showoff proportions. But the full range is there, as a few outbursts from the drums prove so elegantly. Transients are just superb—so much so that the relatively close-miked instruments (the xylophone in particular) may begin to fry your ears with high-frequency components. (A touch of the treble control will cure this.) The disc is quiet, and the transparency of the recording process lets the effervescence of the music come right through.

**Randy Sharp:** *The First in Line* (Nautilus). This is more of a studio production—string backgrounds, reverb, and the like—but it is recorded directly onto disc, which means that some very complex mixing had to be done in real time. The hand of the engineer at the console is not aurally undetectable (I wonder if it could be), but everything fits together smoothly. Enveloped in the studio "halo" is Randy Sharp, musician and poet, with a very personal sort of message that the recorded perspective is intimate enough to let through to you—if that's what you want. For me it came over as a bit too sentimental and virtuous in a "look-what-I've-learned-about-love" sort of way. On the other hand, there probably are others who will really like it.

In order to eliminate abrasion caused by sliding a disc into and out of a sleeve, Nautilus has designed a swing-open package of plastic foam from which the record can be lifted. The idea seems better in theory than in practice, as the plastic foam, though far better than most in this respect, sheds minute particles of material. In addition, it retains static charges tenaciously. Thus the small plastic particles are attracted to the disc surface along with any fine dust in the air. The result is that the Nautilus disc had the highest number of annoying (though minor) ticks and pops of any of the direct discs I auditioned.

**Laurindo Almeida:** *Virtuoso Guitar* (Crystal Clear). This is a most unusual record; it is pressed onto a piece of white vinyl of relatively heavy gauge and recorded at 45 rpm. The extra thickness is insurance against warpage; the white pigment is, as far as I can determine, cosmetic. Recording at 45 rpm (yes, it is a twelve-inch disc) expands the physical wavelengths of the signals impressed into the grooves and should reduce tracing distortion.

Unlike most performers billed as virtuosos, Almeida is somewhat cool and reserved, rather than flamboyant. He plays everything with complete ease and never seems to be engaging in mere pyrotechnics. The three selections on Side 1 (45-rpm cutting exacts a penalty in recording time) are pleasant and entertaining, but for me the high point is on Side 2. There Almeida is joined by Chuck Flores on percussion and Frederick Seykora on cello for the Sonata for Guitar and Cello (the percussionist gets short shrift) by Radamés Gnattali. The composer, who seems to write more fluently for the cello than for the guitar, lets the former steal the show. Seykora rises to the occasion with a tone that is adequate on the two lower strings, very good on the D string, and spectacular on the A string. The guitar part, though well played, is less flashy and commands less attention. The percussion amounts to splashes of color.

This disc, while it displays little in the way of brilliant fortissimos, has low background noise and extraordinary clarity. Whether the higher speed has anything to do with this is hard to say, but seldom have I been able to listen to music with so little audible encumbrance.

**LORIN MAAZEL/CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA:** Direct from Cleveland. Cleveland Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, cond. [Robert Woods, prod.] TELARC 5020, \$15 (add \$1.00 for postage and handling; Telarc Records, 4150 Mayfield Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44121).

**FALLA:** *The Three-Cornered Hat*; Jota. **BIZET:** *L'Arlésienne Suite No. 2*; *Farandole*. **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Eugene Onegin*; *Polonaise*. **BERLIOZ:** *Le Corsaire Overture*. *Damnation of Faust*; *Rákóczy March*.

**HARRY JAMES AND HIS BIG BAND:** *The King James Version*. [Lincoln Mayorga and Doug Sax, prod.] SHEFFIELD LAB 3, \$12 (available postpaid from Sheffield Lab, P.O. Box 5332, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93108).

**NEXUS:** *Ragtime Concert*. [Jack Richardson, prod.] UMBRELLA DD-2, \$12.95 (add \$1.00 for postage and handling; Audio-Technica U.S., Inc., 33 Shawassee Ave., Fairlawn, Ohio 44313).

**RANDY SHARP:** *The First in Line*. [Doug Gilmore, prod.] NAUTILUS, \$12.50 (available by mail only, postpaid from Nautilus Recordings, 761 Shell Beach Road, Shell Beach, Calif. 93449).

**LAURINDO ALMEIDA:** *Virtuoso Guitar*. Laurindo Almeida, guitar; assisting artists. [Ed Wodenjak, prod.] CRYSTAL CLEAR CCS 8001; price optional with dealer (Crystal Clear Records, 225 Kearny St., San Francisco, Calif. 94108).

(Except where noted, all the records are available through selected record retail stores and audio dealerships.)

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register overdependence, and her current confidantes could do her two large favors: 1) Get her to a teacher who can put her in real control of that extraordinary voice; 2) Take away her Callas records.

Lamberto Gardelli and the London Symphony provide admirable support, and London has included full texts. K.F.

## Theater and Film

**KING KONG.** Original film score by Max Steiner. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Fred Steiner, cond. [John Steven Lasher, prod.] ENTR'ACTE ERS 6504, \$7.95.

**KING KONG.** Original film soundtrack recording. Composed and conducted by John Barry. [Federico de Laurentiis and John Barry, prod.] REPRIS MS 2260, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M5 2260, \$7.97; ●● M8 2260, \$7.97.

Just as there are those who are upset when the original *King Kong* and the new production by Dino de Laurentiis are mentioned in the same breath, there are those who will be frightfully put off to see composers Max Steiner and John Barry sharing a review. Barry has become a scapegoat of sorts for certain film-music buffs who see him as a hack who has never freed himself from the bondage of the popular idioms.

Well, there is no question that Barry's new *Kong* score is nowhere near as ambitious as Steiner's old one. In fact, Steiner's ambitions were probably a bit bigger than they needed to be: Many instrumental and harmonic details of his score are buried under the sonic limitations of the 1933 film—a fate suffered by many early symphonic scores, including Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*. Warner Bros.' soundtrack recording of Barry's music closely approximates the sound you hear in a decent movie house.

The two scores represent two quite distinct approaches to film music. Much of the emotional impact of the Steiner *Kong* is cumulative, depending on the skillful manipulation and combination of motives—even the Weill-like march accompanying the giant ape's appearance in New York sneaks in one or two of the main musical ideas. Barry is a master of the instantaneous: He can immediately evoke tense mood with such devices as sustained unison strings, low, gloomy repeated brass chords, and subtle percussive doublings on the xylophone. Basically, one might say that Steiner develops motives, while Barry reuses themes (although at least one transformation appears, when the heroine's theme metamorphoses into a low-brass figure suggesting *Kong's* captivity).

The difference in the two films is of no small importance. The new *Kong* stresses action-adventure (there is also some crass pseudo-social commentary), a genre with which Barry has had huge success. (Ironically, while the new film preens its mod fa-

Continued on page 126



The first Philips Prestige Boxes launch a third series of cassette sets in oversize packages including notes, with texts where pertinent. Like the pioneering DG boxes, Philips' are tall and narrow rather than squarish (like London's), which at least doesn't further complicate existing storage problems. And those are a small price to pay for the convenience of immediately handy booklets. It's a nuisance to have to make special mail requests for disc-size booklets; it's a gyp when tape buyers are denied—as they so often are—any notes at all.

Several Philips boxes present notable recordings long familiar in disc editions, but the *Tosca* is brand new and arresting (7699 034, two Dolby cassettes, \$15.90). Mme. Caballé may not be the most dramatic *Tosca*, but she is vocally enchanting. And while the rest of the cast seems merely serviceable to me, Colin Davis' taut reading and exceptionally strong, lucid, auditorium-authentic recording combine to make this one of the most theatrically gripping *Toscas* on record.

Davis also is represented by his celebrated Berlioz Requiem (7699 008) and Handel *Messiah* (7699 009) once available in Ampex reel editions. The other current boxes include the highly praised 1976 Leppard set of the Bach *Brandenburgs* (7699 006), which hasn't yet reached me, and two that have: Marriner's 1976 set of the Bach *Art of Fugue* (7699 007, two Dolby cassettes, \$23.85) and Haitink's 1970-75 four Brahms symphonies (7699 011, three Dolby cassettes, \$23.85) previously available only separately on tape. Perhaps neither of these two sets can be commended unreservedly, but each has distinctive appeals.

Haitink's is the traditional, warm, expansive Brahmsian approach—here not as magisterially illuminating as in some of his other recent recordings, yet still far preferable to the only other complete Brahms-symphonies taping, the more spectacular but eccentrically mannered Karajan set for Deutsche Grammophon. For the Bach magnum opus, musicologists have proved that no transcription at all is necessary, even one as straightforward as used here for eight of the sixteen S. 1080 *contrapuncti*. But while the other eight organ or harpsichord(s) performances are indeed more truly Bachian, I must confess that I relish the enhanced expressiveness given the intricately woven lines by string and woodwind soloists. In any case, this is the only currently accessible taping of Bach's last, supreme masterpiece.

by R. D. Darrell

## The Tape Deck

**British Puritans and Savoyards.** Among London's new releases are three opera or operetta productions of considerable specialized interest. The 1975 Sutherland/Pavarotti/Bonyngé version of Bellini's *I Puritani* (OSA5 13111, three Dolby cassettes, \$23.95) easily eclipses the older (1964) Sutherland/Bonyngé version and provides strong competition for the acclaimed 1974 Sills/Rudel Audio Treasury set. If the individual stars don't determine your choice, you're likely to find Sills/Rudel the more dramatically exciting, Sutherland/Pavarotti/Bonyngé the more attractive vocally and as well if not even better recorded, with balances somewhat favoring the singers rather than the orchestra.

The other London boxes (two Dolby cassettes each, \$15.95 each) proffer two of the first Gilbert and Sullivan tapings by the present-day D'Oyly Carte Company under conductor Royston Nash: the 1973 *Mikado* (OSA5 12103) and 1976 *Utopia Limited* (OSA5 12105). (There are also *Iolanthe* and *Trial by Jury* boxes I haven't yet received.) Here I'm probably biased by memories of the more distinctive D'Oyly Carte stars of yesteryear, but for me the present ones lack comparable powers of personality projection (except for John Reed, who does the patter songs better than ever). However, the orchestral playing is first-rate, the *Mikado* recording ringingly brilliant, that of *Utopia* even more theatrically effective. But is that enough? Perhaps newcomers to G&S will find more magic here than I can.

**Telefunken/Das alte Werk cassettes** have been distributed by London for several years in this country, but it's only now that I can report firsthand on a couple of these imports, in Dolby processings at \$7.95 each. Telefunken 4.41925 is technically notable for its use of chromium-dioxide tape (the only example I know outside the Advent Corporation's series), which of course enhances the bright sparkle of the fine tonal qualities of the Bösendorfer piano in Mozart's Concertos Nos. 14 and 25 by Karl Engel with the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra under Leopold Hager. Engel is an admirable if perhaps overly sober pianist whose

No. 14 is no match in vivacity for Peter Serkin's RCA version. But his larger-scaled No. 25 is preferable to the only other available taping, by Bishop and Davis for Philips. And in any case, the prime merit of the present recordings is their exceptionally bright, vivid yet ungimmicked sonic distinction.

The other program goes back into the 1970 *Das alte Werk* catalog for one of the finest-ever anthologies of twelfth-century troubadour songs and instrumental music, delectably sung and played by Thomas Binkley's augmented Munich Early Music Quartet (4.41126). The songs represent not only historical notables like Peire Vidal, Guiraut de Bornelh, Bernart de Ventadorn, and Raimbaut de Vaqueiras (the celebrated *Kalenda maia*), but also a feminist troubadour, the Comtesse de Dia (a fascinatingly varied and rhapsodic *A chanter m'er de so qu'eu no volria*). And I relish even more the piquant period-instrumental interludes and accompaniment for most of the songs, and two instrumental-only anonymous saltarellos. While there are notes, no texts are included.

**Last of an outmoded breed.** Except for Levine's Mahler Third, which I wrote about last May, the first Dolby cassettes from RCA have scarcely begun to trickle in. But at least the delay gives me a chance to take note of the last non-Dolby RCA programs still on hand (\$7.95 each in either cassette or eight-track cartridge editions). Two are so valuable that any slight surface noise can be disregarded: the computerized Caruso revitalizations discussed at length by David Hamilton in the November 1976 issue (CRK/CRS 1-1749) and Julian Bream's first all-Dowland lute-music collection since 1968 (ARK/ARS 1-1491). Three others well may be "must" acquisitions (again regardless of Dolby considerations) for aficionados of the particular performers involved: Ormandy and the Philadelphians in a new Wagner album of *Meistersinger* and *Tannhäuser* excerpts (ARK/ARS 1-1868); Harrell and Levine in Schubert's Arpeggione Sonata and Mendelssohn's Second Cello Sonata (ARK/ARS 1-1568); Lagoya and the composer (with rhythm section) in Bolling's Concerto for Guitar and Jazz Piano (FRK/FRS 1-0149). And anyone interested in more amalgams of quasi-baroque and jazz idioms will also want Bolling's Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano for which Rampal joins the composer in the Columbia Dolby cassette MT 33233, \$7.98. ●

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cade, the one really horrendous cut on the Reprise disc is the slop-pop "Kong Hits the Big Apple.") The original Cooper-Schoedsack version was almost a film within a film (much of the script within the script is even rehearsed on the boat by the fictitious director and his starlet before Kong's island is ever reached), with the unreality of the whole giant-gorilla phenomenon reinforced both by the brilliant animation effects (the new version uses mostly a man in an ape suit) and by the murky, collective-unconscious primitivism of Steiner's score. It is noteworthy that the original version uses no music, once the title sequence is over, until close to the end of the interminable exposition, as the mysterious island is approached.

When all is said and done, it must be stressed that Steiner's Kong comes off infinitely better as pure music than Barry's. Therefore, precisely because of the non-fidelity of the original music track, it definitely merits the all-out efforts made for the Entr'acte recording, which was partially financed by the composer's widow, reconstructed by Christopher Palmer (although the original parts were discovered a week before the recording session), and conducted brilliantly by Fred Steiner (no relation), a film-music scholar and composer, some of whose efforts can be heard on the *Star Trek* television series. Spectacularly recorded, save for a slight lack of definition in a few tutti sections, the Entr'acte release brings out the depth of the entire score, from the frenetic sacrificial dance first heard in the overture to the eerie, subtly percussive "Forgotten Island" and "Sea at Night" sequences that transport the listener-viewer unsuspectingly from the real to the unreal.

Barry's "Sacrifice—Hail to the King" may have a somewhat more authentic ring, but it is precisely this refusal to take the fantasy as fantasy, on both the musical and the narrative levels, that makes the new film pale in comparison to the old one, in spite of a more heartrending finale. The old King lives on, and Entr'acte has certainly given him a new lease on life. R.S.B.

**Rocky.** Original film soundtrack recording. Composed and conducted by Bill Conti. [Bill Conti, prod.] UNITED ARTISTS LA 693G, \$6.98. Tape: EA 693H, \$7.98.

*Rocky* is the kind of film for which you would not expect a soundtrack album to be released. Essentially a beautifully acted study of interrelating characters, *Rocky* does not need a musical score all that much, as is borne out by the minimal use of music. None accompanies the title shots, usually one of the best places for a composer to practice his trade, and there are several points where brief snippets lasting no longer than ten or fifteen seconds fade quickly in and out.

Yet just about all the music on this disc is heard in one form or another in the film, usually at a fairly low volume level. There are several songs, including an a cappella number (rather ridiculously sung by a street gang) composed by Frank Stallone Jr., who I presume is the brother of scriptwriter/actor Sylvester Stallone. (Frank Sr. also has a bit part in the film.) Another song, "You

Take My Heart Away," used as source music and sung by DeEtta Little and Nelson Pigford, has some of the worst lyrics I've ever heard.

But the main part of Bill Conti's score proves quite listenable and varied. The title theme, "Gonna Fly Now," one of the few sequences to be heard full blast on the soundtrack (as Rocky's training begins to take off), is a fanfarish, heroic piece complete with chorus. Other moods and styles include a nicely subdued romanticism ("First Date," "Alone in the Ring"), a bit of strings-only baroque ("Rocky's Reward"), big-band pop (several cuts), and even some Ben Hur-ish pomp and circumstance ("Fanfare for Rocky").

Conclusion: a very decent score that should have its greatest impact on filmgoers—apparently legion—who have seen and enjoyed *Rocky*. The recorded sound is so-so. R.S.B.

**NOVE CENTO.** Original film soundtrack recording. Composed and conducted by Ennio Morricone. [Giulio Spelta, prod.] RCA (Italy) TBL 1-1221, \$7.98 (distributed by Peters International).

It looks as if a long battle is going to be waged over just how much of Bernardo Bertolucci's six-hour *Nove Cento* (1900) is going to be cut before it is released in this country. If the excellent Ennio Morricone score recorded on this Italian import is any indication, however, the film will be well worth waiting for. I have no way of knowing, of course, how much music has been left off this disc, but what it does contain makes it one of the most attractive soundtrack releases to come along this year.

*Nove Cento* is certainly one of the most symphonic of Morricone's scores, not only because of the fairly large orchestral forces involved, but also because of the very nature of the music, which frequently has a classical flow to it. One movement ("Ada's Theme"), for instance, is a kind of mini-piano concerto written in a style recalling Rachmaninoff but with a number of unexpected modulations in the long melodic line. One could also make a short concert suite of the "Summer 1908," "Autumn 1922," "Winter 1935," and "Spring 1945" sequences. ("Winter 1935" is an ingenious juxtaposition of a passacaglia with a fugue, played almost entirely in the strings.)

*Nove Cento* also features one of Morricone's characteristic choralelike inventions, often fortified with wordless chorus, as its warm main theme. Many of the other sequences stress harmonic (often minor-key) and instrumental color over theme, with haunting and somehow very European-sounding ostinatos making frequent appearances. What pervades all the selections is an intensity of expression that not only gives Morricone's music its depth and strength, but also makes it ideally suited to the cinematic medium. It is a quality that dominates every facet of the composer's style, from the lyricism of the main theme to the almost Shostakovian tension of "Autumn 1922."

As a conductor, Morricone gets superb playing from the studio orchestra, although the recorded sound does not do his efforts full justice. R.S.B.



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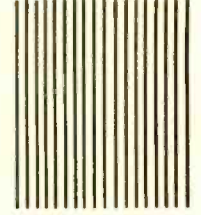
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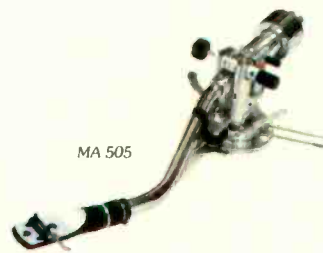
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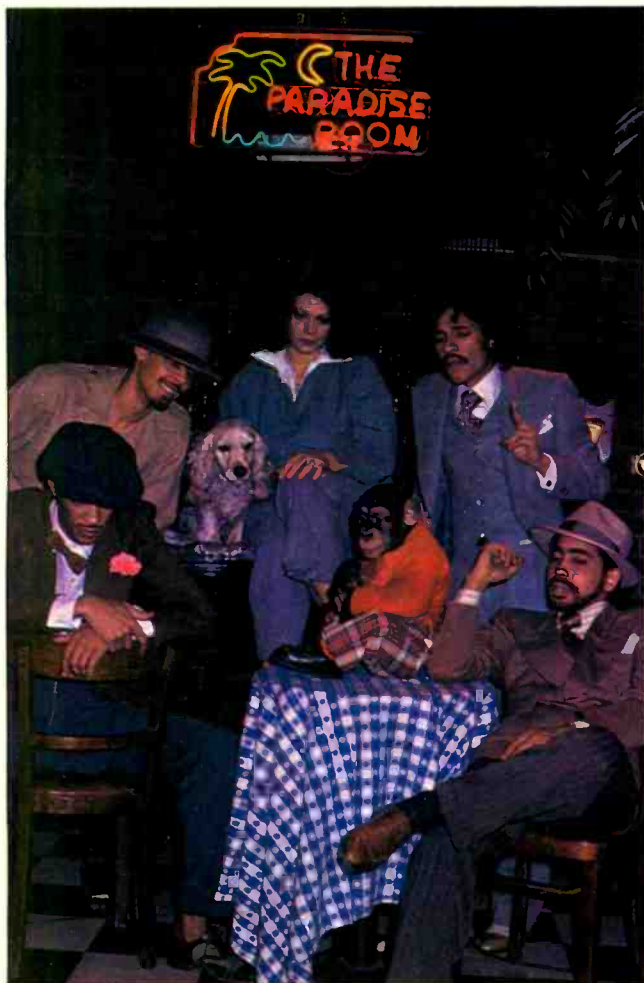
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# Back Beat

## Down at the Clubhouse with Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band

by Richard Cromelin



**I**ntellectual disco? Big-band bump and hotel hustle? Mulatto metaphysics? A panorama of American dance music? "Atomic Cole Porter?" Is it just a good gimmick, sweeping up nostalgia and disco in one wave of the baton, or a truly innovative direction for pop music? Are they zoot-suit image-mongers with their rap down pat, or do they have some substantial artistic merit bubbling in their musical brew?

Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band is indeed an elusive, multi-faceted entity. But the essential fact is that an unforeseen public hunger for the brand of entertainment provided by their debut album on RCA made them one of the most discussed and commercially successful new bands of 1976.

Actually, when you encounter the five rowdy, good-humored inhabitants of the Dr. Buzzard (accent on the second syllable) world, the term "band" seems inadequate. It functions more as a brotherhood or sect (they liken it to a clubhouse), with its own argot, philosophy, uniform, rules, mythology, and apocryphal history. The music is merely the most visible expression of the shared attitude that permeates every aspect of their style—from the dapper '40s threads to the jiving, rambunctious behavior they proudly call "bratty."

Sustaining the group is a common dedication to the concept formulated by founder and musical mastermind Stony Browder, Jr. He, lyricist/bassist August Darnell, percussionist Mickey Sevilla, vibes man Andy Hernandez, and vocalist Cory Daye are all mu-

*Richard Cromelin is a rock journalist who contributes regularly to the Los Angeles Times.*

Vaughan and onetime Basic drummer Harold Jones both urged her to make this debut record. (Carmichael was apparently afraid that, at age twenty-eight, she was not yet ready.) Benny Carter has been asking people to listen to the disc and name the pianist (they never can). Lyricist and onetime *Downbeat* editor Gene Lees wrote the liner notes. The accompanying group is equally impressive: Basic-ites Jones on drums, Marshall Royal on alto saxophone, and Freddie Greene on guitar; Red Callender on bass.

According to Lees's notes, Carmichael discovered jazz pianists chronologically. She started with stride, on which she focuses here, and then went on to Bud Powell, Oscar Peterson, Tommy Flanagan, and Hank Jones. Only two of the eight selections on "Two-Handed Stride" are solos. Fats Waller's *Viper's Drag* and *Handful of Keys*. She plays them both with a confident flair, no doubt causing Carter's auditioners to guess Waller himself was playing. (Lees discovered that, when he told listeners this ruggedly two-handed pianist was a woman, they reported hearing "feminine qualities" in the playing. In fact, Carmichael is no more identifiably feminine than Mary Lou Williams or Patti Brown.) Two more Waller tunes, *Honeysuckle Rose* and *Ain't Misbehavin'*, find her in the dual role of soloist and ensemble pianist, romping joyously behind Royal's saxophone.

Carmichael is even more interesting on several '20s tunes that Waller did not write but played. She lends Claude Hopkins' *Anything for You* such authenticity that it sounds like a vintage Waller small group (with Royal as Gene Sedic). Even in a showcase for Royal, *Ja-Da*, she makes her presence felt.

The charm of this collection is that there is nothing forced about it. Everyone appears to be him/herself and in the process, an era comes vividly to life. One interesting footnote: In identifying the author of the liner notes, Progressive Records president Gus Statiras writes, "I hardly [sic] recommend that all jazz fans subscribe to Gene Lees's *Jazzletter*." Come on, Gus, you must be able to find *something* nice to say about it.

JOHN S. WILSON

**Baikida Carroll:  
Shadows and Reflections**

Baikida Carroll, producer  
Soul Note SN 1023

We are all acquainted with the Hollywood scenario in which the starving artist is discovered playing his saxophone on a street corner and is rocketed to stardom overnight. The harsh truth is much less dramatic. Like trumpet player Baikida Carroll, an artist can be respected by his peers and even have a small following, yet *still* be struggling to get heard, to earn a living. This is hardly Baikida's first record; he may even be familiar to you as a sideman on alto sax-



Carmichael: two-fisted stride

RICHARD ADAMS

ophonist Julius Hemphill's "Dogon A.D." (Arista) or Oliver Lake's "Prophet" (Black Saint). But it is the first disc under his own name likely to get any promotion, largely because Polygram Special Imports is now distributing the Soul Note catalog.

Carroll and Hemphill were both members of the Black Artists Group of St. Louis, a focal meeting place for contemporary musicians. Like many B.A.G. graduates, Carroll's roots are firmly in the blues, having cut his chops with such acts as Little Milton and Albert King. One of an entire generation of post-Ornette jazzmen whose vision is essentially non-European, he helped develop the vocabulary of the avant-garde.

Carroll's melodic inventions are unpredictable yet appropriate to the musical moment, his tunes blocked out with draftsmanlike clarity; if a motif fades it is to make room for a countermotif. It's not surprising then that "Shadows and Reflections" has the kind of continuity one would expect from a through-composed suite. Despite odd-length phrasing (the lines are alternately three, four, and five bars) and displaced accents, the otherwise stable first selections provide a sturdy framework for a series of narratives that gradually build (like bebop that won't stay put) to outgrow their original outline. Side 2 is a continuation of this process, climaxing in the breezy, free-blowing *Pyramids*, a piece that will unquestionably knock your socks off.

Backing Carroll, along with Hemphill, are Dave Holland on bass, Anthony Davis on piano, and Pheeroan Ak Laff on drums. Hemphill, who once described playing on prescribed changes as "good exercise," provides harmonically well-located episodic solos. His impassioned style is a good foil for Carroll, who, unlike most modern trumpeters, prefers economy

to pyrotechnics. Both men have passed through periods of profligate introspection and abstraction; now free from doubt, they will pacify the most anxious listener.

JOE BLUM

**Jonah Jones—Hot Lips Page**

Milt Gabler, producer  
Commodore XFL 16569

Two fine jazz trumpeters of the '30s and '40s are brought into proper perspective on this reissue. Jonah Jones is probably more well-known than Hot Lips Page, having had some post-jazz success in the '50s and '60s playing shuffle rhythm treatments of pop tunes. Jones played in Cab Calloway's band, and all the numbers on his side of the disc were recorded in the mid-'40s with Calloway sidemen (except for clarinetist Buster Bailey). It is a rough, ready, and swinging group with a typically loose 52nd Street sound. Jones plays with a fervent driving attack that rises to a shout on *Rose of the Rio Grande* and shades down to a warm whisper on *Stompin' at the Savoy*. Tyree Glenn contributes some trombone solos that float somewhere between Jack Teagarden and Lawrence Brown, and Ike Quebec—one of the great undervalued tenor saxophonists of the time—swaggers through some Hawkins-styled solos.

Page's side reveals one of the most underappreciated major jazz personalities of the era. A great blues singer with a dark, grainy quality, he sometimes reflects Big Joe Turner's style, but, on *Frantic Blues* (which ends with a demonstration of his wild growl trumpet technique), one can also hear that he was a superb emotional interpreter. There is a raw rasp in his trumpet that recalls Roy Eldridge, though on this blues-dominated set he is generally more laidback than the agitated Eldridge. The side also offers some superb glimpses of Lucky Thompson's dark-toned tenor sax and Ace Harris' easy, flowing piano.

Both sides include one ballad showcase for a saxophonist: Don Byas' *These Foolish Things* (Page) and Hilton Jefferson's melting *You Brought a New Kind of Love to Me* (Jones). There's a lot of good blues and jazz on this record, but the best thing about it is the exposure it gives to Page.

JOHN S. WILSON

**Susan La Marche/Waldo's Gutbucket Syncopators: Vamp 'Til Ready**

Terry Waldo & Susan La Marche,  
producers. Stomp Off S.O.S. 1032  
(549 Fairview Terrace, York, Pa. 17403)

Pianist/singer/bandleader Terry Waldo has been exploring early jazz and pop music for a long time. "Vamp 'Til Ready" features vocalist Susan La Marche, backed by Waldo's Gutbucket Syncopators in a potpourri of ragtime, blues, '20s pop songs, black vaudeville, and jazz.

(Continued on page 92)



lattos, and their captivating mating of the silky '40s hotel-band sound with modern rock and r&b is intended as a musical manifestation of mulattodom.

Darnell, who put in several years as an English and drama student at Hofstra and Stony Brook, has been Browder's friend and co-conspirator since their childhood days in the Bronx. "Being a mulatto, Stony has moved through society always searching," he says, attempting to trace their eventual link with '40s music and fashion. "He didn't know what culture to identify with. When someone has no identity, no social structure to latch onto, he becomes a phantom. He was looking for something, and he found it through the cinema. Being mesmerized by the tube at night, he

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**"I don't understand the lyrics.  
I never do. I just sing them."**

---

saw the glorification of a group of people he related to—the Garfields, the Bogarts, the Gables, that slick kind of talking and that whole magical world."

"What we respected in them," Sevilla continues, "was that they were all rebels in their own way. They were all outsiders. We realized we could evolve that recklessness and carefreeness."

Their mongrel sound reflects the rootless quality of their screen idols. "We're not actually black or white," Browder explains, "and when you're fused together that way you don't think just one way or the other. You don't think r&b, nor do you think pop. If you stop any mulatto on the street and play them this music, they will identify with it. It's neither there nor here, and they can identify with that frame of mind."

So, apparently, can many non-mulattos. The first Dr. Buzzard album became the breakaway disco hit of last summer and soon went gold, and *Cherchez la Femme* hit the Top 20 on the singles charts. In addition, the band became one of the few disco-identified groups to find favor in the rock press, thanks to the vivacity and variety of the blend and the fact that Darnell's lyrics are more substantial than the usual litany of sexual grunts.

The group has mixed feelings about their disco popularity—they're happy that the outlet was there, but worried about being labeled a disco band. And yet despite the elaborate mulatto manifesto that underlies the music, the Savannah Band would like to be accepted on a purely dance/entertainment level. "We're not trying to heap this mulatto stuff upon the world," Darnell says. On the contrary. "A lot of people want to make a point today," Browder continues, "and I can't see the point of making a point, because nobody really cares. We just want people to listen to the music and enjoy themselves."

For its second album (now in production) the band moved from a cramped New York basement studio to the room in Burbank that gave birth to the soundtracks for *The Exorcist*, *Jaws*, and *King Kong*. They emerged from baptism as a recording unit (a contentious period that included conflicts with man-

agement, producer, and record company) with some valuable experience. The most important lesson, according to Sevilla, was to assume complete control of their product: "This time it was just five people doing the album instead of a producer getting five people to do the album. This way it's more direct and more polished. The less people tell us what to do the happier we are, the more we are ourselves, and the stronger our product is. Our freedom is what makes people like our music."

The group puts a lot of stock in instinctive, unhampered musical expression, emphasizing personality over expertise, freshness over meticulous execution. Most of the string and horn orchestrations grow from lines developed by the five members during studio jams on Browder's manuscripts. An arranger later transcribes the resulting unconventional notation into something that can be read by normal session players.

The tracks themselves are built through extensive overdubbing, a painstaking process designed to isolate and capture the desired feel. "We make no pretense about the studio," says Darnell. "We all realize that the album itself is an illusion, and to create that illusion you must do things that seem bizarre in retrospect."

As lyricist, Darnell is responsible for the verbal element: "I'll live with a tape of the song for a couple of days and see what images the tune evokes for me. Once I have a theme I usually try to incorporate a plot. That's my playwriting training. I try to take that plot and character development and put it all into one song. Then Stony and I will work out the rhythmic pacing of the lyrics, and then Cory comes in and puts her magic on."

Cory Daye's blind encounters with Darnell's words exemplify the naive approach the group strives to maintain. "I don't understand the lyrics," she says. "I never do. I just sing them. He doesn't explain them to me. That's what makes them beautiful. Everybody can have their own interpretation, and you don't know whether you're right or wrong."

Darnell picks *Cherchez la Femme*, his saga of a ruthless two-timer and her victim, to illustrate the validity of Cory's method. "If she had interpreted that song as it was written it would have been sung as a melancholy bleeding of the heart, an accusation against womankind, and I don't think it would have been a hit. But she sang it almost indifferently, so you went, 'Wow, this is woman singing about the downfall of man via woman, and she's singing it indifferently, almost jocosely!' It gave it a certain twist, a certain witty turn."

In their second album, they have expanded horizons from the strict Americana of their debut to an international scope that includes Austrian, French, Latin, Hawaiian, and Caribbean motifs. The music, of course, receives the distinctive, quirky Savannah Band treatment, and retains the combination of sophistication and simplicity, of past, present, and future that has become the group's signature.

"That's our hallmark. That'll always be there," the lanky Browder asserts. "Because it's soothing, and



Suzan Carson

*The brotherhood of Dr. Buzzard: Andy Hernandez, August Darnell, Cory Daye, Mr. Limeight, Stony Browder, Mickey Sevilla*

I consider myself to be a soothing person. Even our uptempo tunes are passive and relaxing. It will get as aggressive as the opening of *I'll Play the Fool*, but that's not aggressive compared to the Ohio Players. It's more bratty than aggressive. It's like little kids trying to play adult."

The confidence and security furnished by last year's success have yielded tangible results. The easing of time pressure and the increase in group control created a studio atmosphere conducive to their cherished natural expression. And Darnell, encouraged by the public acceptance of the metaphor and symbolism in his first set of lyrics, will now "take it all the way."

For the Dr. Buzzard fan dissatisfied with the band's lip-synced appearances on television variety shows, the major outcome of the success story is a turnaround in their attitude toward touring. Thinking it better to remain invisible than perform under the trying and unflattering conditions that are the lot of new acts, the group lived up to its maverick image last year by refusing to hit the road. But the show that they'll take to Europe this summer will eventually find its way back to America. It still falls short of their fantasies (which are generally on an all-but-unattainable,

Busby Berkeley level), but some backing from RCA has allowed them to get close enough to want to perform in front of a live audience.

Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band—spiritual descendants of Cab Calloway ("the apotheosis of the American mulatto"), futuristic nostalgists, practitioners of the new beige music—is no ordinary pop group, and its forecast of its own future is typically candid and unconventional. "The collective goal is to conceptualize something and bring it to a realization," Darnell explains. "But individually, we're all using the group as a vehicle to a higher plane." (He personally has aspirations to be a screen writer.) "I see the group going for about three more years."

Darnell maintains an admirably straight face as he conjectures the music's ultimate destiny: "I think it will regress into a primitive, primordial stage where there'll be no horns, no strings, just beat-up guitars, out of tune. Very primitive."

Surely, this prediction is one of the Savannah Band's tongue-in-cheek games, a bit of jivey, off-the-wall toying with reality. Then again, you can never be quite sure. "It really could go anywhere," Browder insists. "The imagination is a strange thing." ■



## Careers in Audio: Choosing a Course

by Stephen Traiman

The present decade's rapid expansion of interest in audio—from the professional and semi-professional to the hobbyist—has been accompanied by an equally rapid expansion in audio education opportunities. More students than ever will be taking course work of some description in the fall, many after a summer of "hands-on" workshops and seminars across the country. Instruction is varied, both in content and quality, and ranges from graduate degree programs in acoustics to two-week seminars in the rudiments of sound recording.

Although all of this would seem to presuppose that opportunities in audio engineering are increasing, there are no solid indications that this is so. Donald Plunkett, executive director of the 8,500-member Audio Engineering Society, emphasizes that career chances in engineering are limited. But there are more places to sit than behind a recording-studio console. The field of audio is a broad one, as can be quickly deduced from a glance through *Careers in Audio Engineering*, a booklet specifically designed by AES to provide an overview of what's available beyond the "glamorous" recording industry. AES president-elect Emil Torick, who also edited the book, feels that audio technology is one of the essential supports of our communications-intensive society.

### The Careers

Entertainment, communications and education, environmental control, aids to the person, and science and medicine all rely upon audio professionals, whether they be in operations, maintenance and service, research and development, product and system design and manufacturing, merchandising, or consulting.

**Entertainment.** This category includes commercial recording, radio, and television, all of which offer jobs at every level of management, research, and operations (and some at the console too). After all, every broadcast station is an audio operation. Also, the intensely competitive high fidelity industry is constantly in need of audio designers and marketing professionals. Production, design, and equipment operation

are all necessary functions in electronic music, which comprises a large part of today's pop and serious compositional activity, and a combination of technical and artistic skills might land you a job in concert hall and/or theater sound reinforcement.

**Communications and education.** Public address, for one, continues to create hundreds of audio careers (merchandising and installation among them), as does telephony, the oldest and largest single user of audio technology. And if you're up for underwater adventure, audio is used in sea depth readings and for locating natural oil deposits, to name but two of its applications. The audio/visual field continues to expand, its applications having become integral to education, business and industrial training, and the emerging consumer videotape and videodisc systems.

**Environmental control.** If mixing audio with politics sounds intriguing, here's one field to do it in. Noise survey, control, and legislation are vital functions in our efforts to fight noise pollution.

### The Sources

This wide range of applications has awakened many colleges, vocational schools, and professional organizations to the need for more extensive offerings in specialized audio education. The AES is currently compiling a directory of audio-related curricula, and the Acoustical Society of America's monthly journal periodically provides a *Directory of Graduate Education in Acoustics*. The Engineers' Council for Professional Development (ECPD), which comprises sixteen major engineering societies, periodically provides a list of accredited instruction that leads to degrees in engineering technology. Information includes associate, baccalaureate, and cooperative programs, as well as day and evening courses offered by technical institutes, junior and community colleges, polytechnic and technological colleges, and divisions of colleges and universities. Accreditation by ECPD is voluntary on the part of the institutions and is based on questionnaires and campus visits. The Council reviews accreditation periodically.

Last year the NARAS Institute, educational wing of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, surveyed schools with established programs

*The author is the tape/audio/video editor for Billboard, and a free-lance journalist.*

and courses in commercial music education (recording arts and sciences and the business of music). About eleven of the twenty-two respondents indicated audio recording applications, and the list is available to those interested.

### **Accreditation: For and Against**

According to president Charles Suber and director Jim Progris, the NARAS Institute is now eligible for accrediting-agency status from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, having fulfilled its two-year probation period. This means that once HEW gives its formal approval, the Institute can promulgate its standards for programs to interested schools: accreditation will be necessary for HEW grants.

The AES, on the other hand, stresses that it is not in the accreditation business and refuses to refer inquiries to any specific school or institute as an implied AES recommendation. Its eventual course listing will be a service, not an accreditation list. Education committee chairman Jeffrey Wilson feels that documentation on all degree/instruction levels should be stronger. Master's and doctoral programs are fairly extensively documented, as are four-year bachelor's-degree curricula. But the number of extracurricular or nonspecialty audio-oriented courses is expanding so rapidly that it is difficult to keep up with them. And the two-year (or shorter) programs and seminars of trade schools, community colleges, and institutes are not only hard to document, but difficult to judge as either on the level or ripoff.

### **Degrees, Courses, & Seminars**

The following is a sampling of some of the more innovative and/or extensive audio-engineering instruction currently available. It is by no means all-inclusive—the range of courses and their locations runs into the hundreds. But it should indicate the broad range of opportunities for study.

**The Pennsylvania State University's** extensive graduate program in acoustics started twelve years ago with a ten-week summer session. The initial eight students came from Navy-related jobs or private industry, and their studies consisted of the fundamentals of acoustics, vibration damping, sonar engineering, and underwater acoustics. Chairman Dr. Jiri Tichy says that last fall more than fifty students from a wide variety of backgrounds were enrolled in M.A., M.A. in Engineering, or Ph.D. programs in such areas as aeroacoustics, architectural acoustics, bioacoustics, industrial noise control, and acoustics of speech and hearing.

**Southern Illinois University's** innovative two-level program is geared to the growing interest in high fidelity. Three years back, Dr. Kenneth Johnson in the physics department decided to offer a general course in "The Science of Hi-Fi," focusing on how components work and how to buy them. He was able to secure reasonably good equipment through the Institute of High Fidelity for hands-on lab work, and the initial



*On an Institute of Audio Research field trip, engineer Dave Palmer explains the console at Electric Lady's Studio A*

registration number of 400 grew to 1,000 by the second semester. That number has since been maintained in order to keep things manageable.

The fifteen-week, three-credit course also serves as a prerequisite for SIU's minor in audio marketing, initiated two years ago. Designed to meet the industry's demand for marketing personnel with a background in music, sales, and equipment, the curriculum includes a lab, four business courses (accounting, economics, retailing management, and marketing management), the acoustics of music, and music appreciation. The school claims that all graduates have been placed in retail jobs, with 100 per year having gone through the program.

**The University of Miami School of Music** (Coral Gables) offers a Bachelor of Music in Music Engineering, and associate dean Ted Crager is also active on the AES education committee. The curriculum includes audio recording techniques, electrical engineering,

For specifics regarding any of the programs or sources mentioned in this article, write to:  
Backbeat Information Services  
High Fidelity Magazine  
130 East 59th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10022



calculus, psychology, music history and theory, business, communications, sound synthesis, acoustics, and a music-engineering internship.

**The Institute of Audio Research (IAR)** in New York City boasts the only school of multitrack recording technology licensed by the New York State Department of Education. Started in 1969 with one course in studio technology for twenty-five students, it has grown to a thirteen-course curriculum with more than



*Eastman's Ross Ritchie supervises a student at the board*

eighty students registered this past spring. Groundwork instruction includes audio-technology fundamentals and lab, studio technology, practical disc recording, and a control room/console lab, all of which can be covered in one four-month session. Studio synthesizer technique, recording studio workshop, digital logic design, and audio system design are all part of the advanced curriculum. The entire thirteen courses can be done in an accelerated ten-month program, with a compressed six-week summer session offering five-day-per-week courses. Cofounder Albert Grundy emphasizes that IAR is not job-oriented, adding that there is no structured path to success for either a mixing engineer or a rock star. He feels that self-motivation is on the rise as a result of the basement-studio boom and aims to provide interested students with a better understanding of the industry.

**The New School for Social Research**, also in New York, offers about fifteen music-related courses in twelve-week spring and fall sessions and an intensive six-week summer program. Study includes audio engineering (a learn-by-doing workshop), how to make a record, the recording industry in transition, and the business of music.

**The Berklee College of Music** in Boston has sixteen-week spring and fall sessions and a twelve-week summer session (full-time students only) in Elementary Audio I and II and Advanced Audio III and IV. The program began in 1971 out of director Joe Hostetter's mobile studio, and the school added its own studio facilities in 1974, built around an MCI-416 8-track console. Elementary Audio I is an equipment overview—what it is and what it does; Audio II covers more in-depth applications with evening mixdown labs in two

or three two-hour sessions a week; Audio III is an apprenticeship, with supervised mixing at the console and two or three live sessions each week; and Audio IV prepares for a chief engineer's role in mixdowns, again with several sessions a week.

**The Sherwood Oaks Experimental College** in Los Angeles started in 1971 with a music seminar at an experimental high school. Director Gary Shusett works on the assumption that the classroom is a place students want to be, rather than a place they have to be. The basic one-year program in recording engineering includes elementary training and workshop, advanced workshop and independent engineering/producing, sound recording for motion pictures, legal aspects of music, and a synthesizer workshop.

An ambitious summer session will include the Music and Stereo Conference (August 16–21) with evening seminars on engineering, songwriting, and record producing, and a weekend high fidelity exhibition and swap meet; a four-week engineering workshop for out-of-towners, July 11–August 5; and a three-day engineering weekend at a local recording studio, tentatively scheduled for August 12–14. Shusett also emphasizes that he's not running a placement center but adds that you can't get a job in the industry without practical experience.

**The Eastman School of Music** in Rochester, New York, has an extensive group of courses. The most recent addition to the curriculum is an introduction to magnetic sound: evaluation and equipment operation and application. The school has a sophisticated remote-control recording hookup that is used for year-round sessions in its four performance halls. And, as an outgrowth of this, it offers a summer seminar (June



*Al Grundy demonstrates the fundamentals of wave motion*

27–July 30 this summer) that focuses on intensive studio sessions. For more than ten years, the last six under recording-services director Ross Ritchie, this program (five weeks in basics, two in advanced) has attracted many leading industry figures as guest lecturers.

**Brigham Young University's** electronic media and continuing education departments are sponsoring their eleventh annual Audio/Recording Technology Program in June and July in Provo, Utah. Initiated in





# Input Output

## Instruments and Accessories

**Timewarp Model TW-1 Time-Delay Unit and Effects Generator.** This is a fascinating machine with a three-range analogue delay line (1.5 to 6, 6 to 25, or 25 to 100 milliseconds) and variable delay within any single range. RECYCLE feeds the delayed output back to the input to simulate reverberation, and MIX will blend the delayed and direct signal from 0 to 100%. So far, nothing too revolutionary among the analogue delay units currently available. It's at this point that the Timewarp takes on its own identity. The function generator, controlled by RATE and DEPTH, causes deviations in the delay-line clock. Its two control pots work in conjunction with the VIBRATO/POLY-TONE toggle switch. The generator provides a control signal to the basic delay line: with the switch on VIBRATO, a sine wave of from 0.5 to 10 Hz is applied to the clock signal—its specific frequency depends on the RATE setting. DEPTH determines the amplitude of that signal. In the POLYTONE position, the control signal changes into a square or pulse waveform. The sounds that those waveforms represent can be illustrated by comparing the American police siren (sine wave) with the European (square wave),

in recording, and any musician can use it as accessory equipment in live performance. It is fully remote-controllable via an eighteen-pin connector on the back panel. Front-panel controls also include preamp GAIN with an OFF position, and an LED overload indicator.

A word about the basic delay line. For recording purposes, the most useful delays are upward of 25 milliseconds, whether for vocal doubling, string thickening, or special effects such as slap echo. Although Timewarp's specs claim a frequency response from 20 Hz to 10 kHz, they do not mention that the longer the delay, the poorer the high-frequency response. Therefore, in the 25 to 100-millisecond range, the device sounds much "duller" than at 6 to 25 milliseconds. Although it is a characteristic of analogue delay lines to trade off delay time against frequency response (which is why recording studios like to have digital delay lines), the 25 to 100-millisecond response of the Timewarp was still disappointing. This factor isn't necessarily bad for *some* applications, such as live performance, but it should be considered when evaluating the instrument for recording purposes. Model

with a Fender Rhodes electric piano. Keyboard man Phil Clendennin loved the sound and commented that there wasn't the usual accessory-pedal signal loss. His final comment was, "Don't blame me if it's missing tomorrow." (I guess he liked it.)

The flanger is AC-powered, has four control knobs, and two ¼-inch phone jacks for input and output. MANUAL controls the range of the delay circuit, WIDTH determines the range of the internal oscillator of the delay spectrum, SPEED tells the oscillator how fast to



**MXR Flanger**

sweep over the delay spectrum, and REGEN feeds a part of the flanged signal back to the input, where it is reprocessed for a more intense flanging sound. The foot-activated bypass switch returns the signal to normal without changing the loudness. Inside construction of the MXR Flanger is a work of art. Solid connections, a clean, well-secured circuit board, and heavy metal housing should insure a long and healthy life for this instrument. Manufacturer's list price is \$199.95.

CIRCLE 123 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

**Sound Workshop Model 421 Broadcast/Disco Mixer.** This is a flexible mixing console for disco deejays, radio combo deejays, or the home specialist who puts together the four-hour dance tape for next Saturday night's party. The 421 features two stereo phonograph inputs with separate volume controls, two stereo tape inputs, a high- or low-impedance microphone input (complete with a three-position low-end BOOST/FLAT/CUT switch), a headphone jack, and controls



**Timewarp's Time-Delay Unit and Effects Generator**

But producing siren sounds is the least of the Timewarp's capabilities. By using the function generator to modify the time-delay circuitry, a wide variety of effects can be created. The owner's manual suggests settings with which the user can create phasing, flanging, tunneling, Doppler effect, double-tracking, vibrato, chorus, and extended tone memory. We tried all the suggested settings, and they did indeed yield the effects described.

The concept of applying a modifying or control voltage is nothing new to synthesizer players, but the advantage with the Timewarp is that engineers can use it

TW-1 will operate on 105 to 120 volts AC or 240 volts AC. List price is \$1,195.

CIRCLE 122 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

**MXR Flanger.** I first heard this flanger on a record date a few months back and was amazed at how quiet it was. As an engineer, I usually shudder when I see a guitarist plugging in his row of phasers, fuzzers, and distorters. So I checked the equipment rack to see if the studio's flanger was on and, when I discovered it wasn't, stood up to look through the glass and saw the MXR on the floor. Later, when my own sample arrived, I tried it

# Sometimes it just doesn't add up

What you want is better sound. But, the expense of replacing your whole system just isn't reasonable. MXR has a way to upgrade your sound significantly, without starting from scratch. MXR's Stereo Graphic Equalizer and Componder can give you the right sound at a cost that is much easier to take.

The MXR Componder can double the dynamic range of most open reel and cassette tape decks to allow professional results in home recording. The Componder increases the overall fidelity of your system while reducing noise. The softest sounds can be heard, while musical peaks can be reproduced without distortion.

The Componder compresses the dynamic range of the signal going onto the tape and expands it upon playback at a two to one ratio. The resulting increase in dynamic range allows your present system to produce the depth of sound that you want to have when you record.

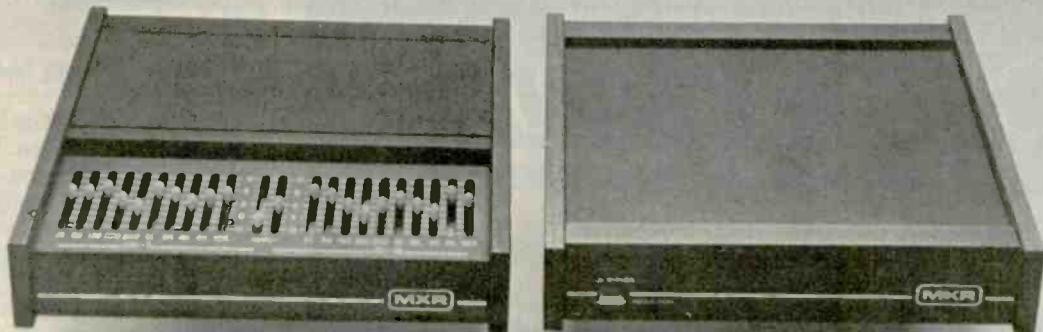
A natural companion, the MXR Stereo Graphic Equalizer is designed to provide precise

compensation for aural discrepancy that may be caused by room acoustics, speaker inadequacies or program source. The Stereo Graphic Equalizer allows you to tailor your sound to your own tastes. At the touch of a slide control, you can customize your playback to suit any number of variables. It can provide you with enough control over your present system to give you the sound that you want to hear.

The Componder, at \$129.95, and the Stereo Graphic Equalizer at \$199.95, with the equipment you already have, can add up to the sound that you want, at a reasonable price.

For more information see your nearest MXR dealer or direct inquiries to MXR Innovations, Inc. 277 N. Goodman St., Rochester, New York 14607 (716) 442-5320.

**MXR** Consumer Products Group

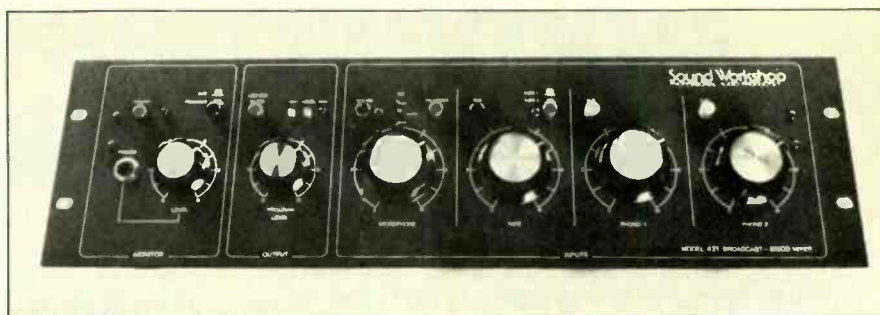


CIRCLE 33 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



for output and monitor levels. MICROPHONE ON enables you to speak over the broadcast program, which may also be lowered by up to 20 dB by depressing TALKOVER.

Separate potentiometers control program and headphone (cue) monitor output levels. A simple and versatile switching system permits the operator to cue-monitor any combination of inputs without affecting the output program, whose level is indicated by a three-LED read-out system. The built-in booster amp is said to provide up to +20 dBm into



Sound Workshop's Broadcast/Disco Mixer

## About damping, bi-amping and the Crown DC-300A

Because of inertia, speaker transducers over-react to amplifier signals. This can be minimized by speaker design, but it can't be eliminated entirely. In the process, the transducers feed spurious signals back into the signal processing units.

A good amplifier is designed to control excessive transducer excursions by reducing — and absorbing — the unwanted signals generated by such excursions. It's part of a process audio engineers call damping. The Crown DC-300A power amplifier, in addition to its other well-known specifications, has a damping factor of 700, which means it should easily control speaker excursions. (A rating of 400 is considered good.)

But in a standard hi-fi stereo system, the DC-300A can't do all the damping it was designed for. The sound is a little muddier than it should be.

Why? Because the speaker crossovers — with their own impedance — get in the way. The amp is not directly

hooked up to the transducers.

Solution? Move the crossovers back between amp and pre-amp. Add another DC-300A and bi-amp the speakers.

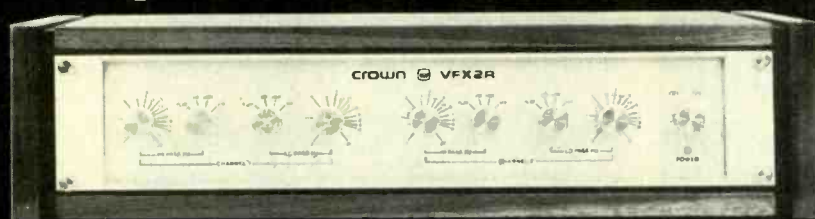
The DC-300A now damps excessive transducer excursions efficiently. Which can mean crisper, cleaner sound.

Each transducer now has 155 watts of power available to drive it, and is limited only by its own characteristics. Which can mean more sound pressure.

There can also be less distortion, since harmonics of low-frequency distortion cannot feed to high-frequency transducers through the crossover.

Are you interested in how to use all the power and performance of a Crown DC-300A amplifier? Write. We'll send you information about the Crown VFX-2A, a two-channel variable-frequency crossover that makes bi-amping easy. Plus reprints of some articles that may help you decide if bi-amping is for you.

## Crown VFX-2A



**crown**

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CIRCLE 9 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

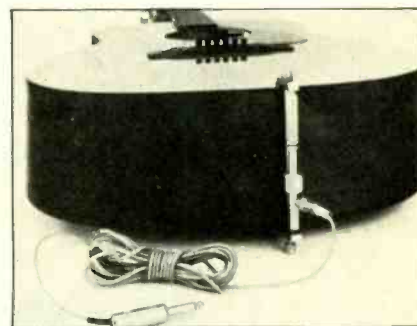
loads of 600 ohms or more. A switchable low-cut filter of 12 dB per octave is included to attenuate turntable rumble and other low-frequency noise. Back-panel patch points permit the use of system equalization and other signal-processing devices. The Model 421 carries a two-year parts and labor warranty and sells for \$500.

CIRCLE 124 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

### Polytone Acoustic Guitar Pickup.

Polytone should market its new pickup with a free pair of garters, because it may just blow your socks off. No more adhesive tape, gums, or holes to drill—it clamps onto the body of the instrument so as not to get in the player's way. The pickup comes with three adjusters to fit any guitar size; it is easily installed and, according to the manufacturer, will not mar the instrument's surface.

The sound, however, is the best part of the story. If you're concerned with true fidelity in amplification, this pickup is a breakthrough. It is totally colorless and



Polytone Acoustic Guitar Pickup

doesn't sound electrified at all. We field-tested the Polytone on Yamaha steel-string and Guild nylon-string models. The former's sound was particularly excellent, with none of the tinniness, loss of highs, or coloration heard with most acoustic pickups. Some guitarists have never been satisfied with acoustic pickups, preferring to contend with microphones and their inherent feedback problem in the quest for a natural guitar sound. The Polytone should simply be the end of that story. List price is \$59.95.

CIRCLE 121 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

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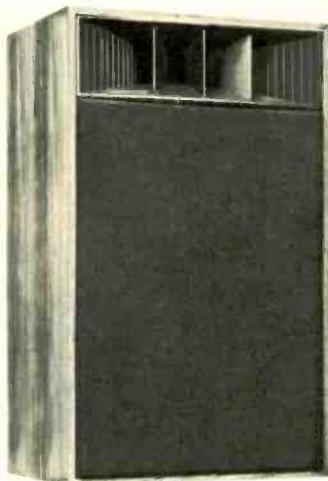
#### Oiled walnut veneer

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#### Massive 15" woofer

The acoustic suspension, large-excursion cone has an effective radiating area of over 100 square inches—the equivalent of a huge air-pump — for bass you can feel all the way down to 20 Hz. The four-layer voice coil is wound on a brass form for heavy power handling capacity—over 100 watts peak program material.



#### Removable grille

The sturdy grille frame snaps on and off for easy access to the response controls.

A great loudspeaker doesn't just please your ears. It reproduces deep bass with a power and punch your entire body feels . . . it recreates the live ambience so accurately that when you close your eyes, you're "on location" in that auditorium, concert hall or night spot . . . and it delivers top performance with both moderate and high-powered amplifiers. If you think we're talking about a \$400 speaker, you haven't experienced the Mach One. For under \$200 each\*, you get incredible "live theatre" sound from a name you can depend on: Realistic. Backed by 56 years in audio design, manufacture, sales and service. So bring in your favorite record for a Mach One audition, and discover the feel of music.

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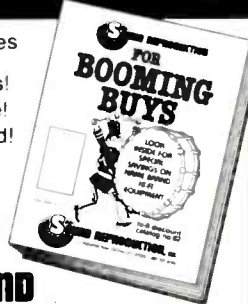
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## The A-Team West: L.A.'s Most Valuable Players

by Don Heckman

**T**he first authentic studio musician I ever knew showed up for a film-music recording date I produced about fifteen years ago. It was a rush job and I wasn't quite sure what combination of woodwinds I would use until the very last minute. "That's okay," he told me over the phone. "I'll just bring along my usual kit. I've got a jingle date earlier in the day that I have to play clarinet, oboe, and flute on anyhow."

He came ambling in the next day, looking like a bizarre cross between Santa Claus and Fred Sanford. He had instrument cases hanging from both shoulders, tucked under his arms, and in his hands. "George," I said, "my God, what have you got there?" He laughed and started to unpack. There was a clarinet, flute, and oboe, to be sure. But he also had an English horn, a bass clarinet, a tenor saxophone, and a complete set of tuned ocarinas. "You composers are weird, man," he said. "I never know what you're going to come up with next, so I always come prepared. Besides, this isn't so far out. I left my recorders and the baritone sax at home!"



Glen Campbell with MVP drummer Hal Blaine

George Marge is one of a remarkable breed of performers who are, in my opinion, the real stars of today's popular music. Like their compatriots, the Broadway chorus dancers (the "gypsies" now immortalized in *A Chorus Line*), studio musicians do all the tough work for the stars: framing the action, filling in the colors,

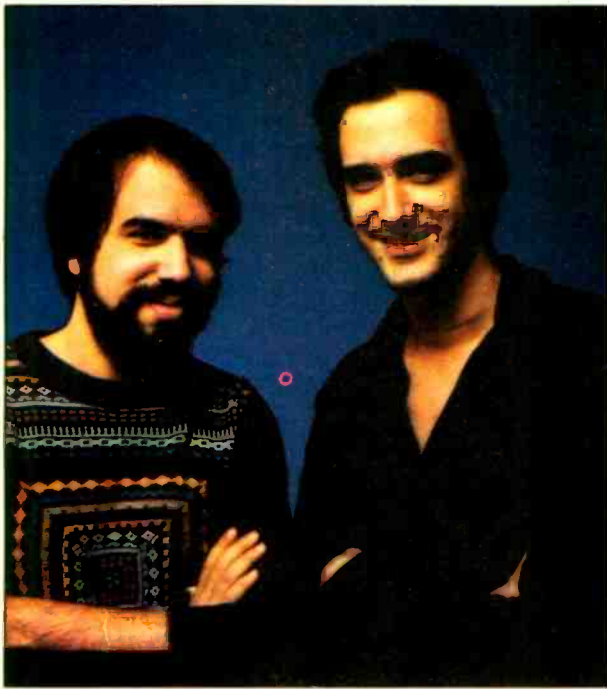
**"Glen Campbell  
was a studio musician  
earning a five-figure income  
well before he had his own  
television show or golf tournament."**

sometimes serving as "ghost" instrumental voices for performers whose skills are more oriented toward theatrics than musical craftsmanship.

There are plenty of illustrious pop music figures who got their start toiling in the recording-studio vineyards. Leon Russell is one of the best known (check out his work on the Righteous Brothers' *You've Lost that Lovin' Feelin'* or the Byrds's *Mr. Tambourine Man*), and Glen Campbell was a studio musician earning a five-figure income well before he had his own television show or golf tournament.

Others include guitarist Lee Ritenour, still active in the L.A. studios but embarked on a burgeoning solo career as well; the brothers Brecker (Randy and Mike), leaders of their own group and performers with everyone from Horace Silver to James Taylor to Ralph MacDonald; drummer Harvey Mason, like Ritenour an ace studio rhythm man with higher aspirations; drummer John Guerin, Joni Mitchell's former consort and a prime element in the success of L.A. Express; multi-instrumentalist, composer, and arranger Tom Scott, who can do everything from playing a classical clarinet piece to providing a well-crafted, last minute film score. And the list goes on and on—pianist Larry Knechtel, drummer Jim Gordon, saxophonist Bobby





*The Brecker Brothers got their start in the studio*

Keyes, drummer Norman Simmons, percussionist Airtio Moreira, jazzmen Bud Shank, Bob Cooper, Emil Richards, Ray Brown, Mike Lang. . .

#### **Awards & rewards**

In 1973, the Los Angeles chapter of the National Association of Recording Arts & Sciences (NARAS is the organization that presents the annual Grammy Awards) decided to acknowledge these musicians—at least those who live and work in the Los Angeles area—with Most Valuable Player awards. For the last four years (the next ceremony takes place in November) the recipients have included names familiar and unfamiliar to the average record buyer. But it's a

“One way to think of studio musicians is as a group of scientists . . . maybe like NASA. It's highly demanding, highly exacting work, and each part has to be done precisely right.”

pretty safe bet that there is no name on the list that has not appeared over and over again on record after record, covered film music and television backgrounds, and even provided the wall-to-wall Muzak that blankets us in everything from elevators to motel bathrooms.

Most studio musicians, however, are probably better known to their bankers than they are to the American public. They make a healthy income (“You either make \$35,000 a year or you don't make anything,” one told me) and keep a low profile. Yet their contributions are absolutely vital to the contemporary

music market. Very few rock groups, for example, continue to record as isolated entities. The Jefferson Starship, once a bastion of self-reliance (so much so that they occasionally would take all night to overdub eight bars of percussion effects), now record with strings sawing away in the background. What that means, of course, is that a group of studio musicians enter the realm of the Starship, lay down a little “sweetening,” and go away.

Middle-of-the-road, disco, and—especially—rhythm & blues have always relied heavily upon studio players. In many cases, rhythm men like drummer Harvey Mason, bassist Chuck Domanico, and guitarist Dennis Budimir literally improvise a rhythm track that becomes the hard-core foundation of the entire record. After the singer—whether it be a Janis Ian or a Mary MacGregor—performs upfront solo work, the players add some sweetening, perhaps in the form of some tasty flugelhorn fills from Marv Stamm, or maybe a forty-piece string orchestra cushion arranged and conducted by Claus Ogerman. It may be an overdubbed drum fill that makes the right connection between a verse and a chorus (as in Carly Simon's *You're So Vain*), or a rock-styled guitar solo that contemporizes a Tom Jones recording. And it will all be done by efficient, sober, on-time studio musicians who put in their time, take the money, and run.

#### **Areas of specialization**

There are four principal areas of income for the studio player: phonograph recordings, television, motion pictures, and commercials. Interestingly, each has its own special contracts and payment scales, and musicians frequently tend to specialize in one or the other. LP/single recording generally results in the most public visibility, but commercial sessions—called jingle dates—usually pay best because of the residuals earned with each subsequent broadcast.

Motion-picture work is paid for on a one-time basis, although there is a stipulation for a further payment if the film is sold to television. Despite the single payment, many prefer film because the basic scale is so high. Also, each contract specifies that first-chair men receive additional payment and, of course, the usual doubling payments can also inflate the fee. (Those who play more than one instrument—a saxophonist who also plays flute and oboe, for example—receive additional payment for each one.) Live television (film television pays at the film rate) is favored by some, again because of a repayment factor. But the basic scale is not as high as it is for film.

Playing for phonograph records is probably the heaviest grind, but many musicians—especially younger ones—love the opportunity to stay on top of the pop and jazz scene. Payment is simply scale, although the musicians' union does provide a cumulative yearly royalty payment based on the total number of recording dates made during the year. The bad news linked to this good news is that the payment is dependent only upon the number of dates played and not on the number of hit records. Being associated with twenty turkeys brings in just as much in royalties as performing on twenty gold albums.

### The power of the contractor

Clearly, the range and variety of this work is enormously complex. How, one might ask, is it held together? After all, assembling an eighty-piece orchestra for a motion-picture score is a major problem in logistics and travel, not to mention finding the right people and putting together the appropriate contracts. The answer is a person called—often with considerable deference—the contractor. Very simply, he puts the musicians together for the date, handles the mountain of complex paperwork, and, in some cases, plays on the session himself. Union contracts generally are quite specific about the presence of a contractor—ostensibly to protect the rights of the players and the union, even though the contractor frequently is working either for a studio or a conductor.

What all this means is that a substantial amount of power rests in the hands of contractors. Some film companies have them on staff, making it difficult for

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### “A remarkable breed of performers who are . . . the real stars of today’s popular music.”

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musicians and composers to work at those companies unless they are on the best of terms with the contractor. Also, a great many of the jobs around Los Angeles are controlled by independents—contractors who serve mainly as a liaison between conductors and musicians. The importance of that liaison has led some disgruntled musicians to suggest that recording jobs are frequently obtained on the golf course. Contractors are quick to disagree.

Marty Berman, active since the late Fifties, is one of the principal independents in L.A. He is bright, gregarious, well liked by the musicians who work for him, and perhaps a bit too modest about the significance of his role.

“Look,” he told me, “maybe eighty-five percent of the time the conductors I work with tell me exactly who they want on the date. Sure, some of the guys I work with regularly give me a certain amount of leeway in the choices I make. Dave Grusin, for example, sits down with me and we go over a list of the instrumentation he needs. We discuss each possible name, and he tells me who he wants. If I can’t get any of those players—if they have another date or are unavailable—I don’t go into business for myself. I call Dave back and we try to agree on alternates. That applies to everything except strings, which—except for the first-chair players—usually is left up to my discretion. Other people work differently. I do the Academy Award shows with Hank Mancini. Hank gives me a list with every name on it—every violin player. He knows exactly who he wants to work with.”

But what about the rest of the time? What about the choices that are made *without* the conductor’s guidance?

“No matter who I use,” says Berman, “they have to know what they’re doing. I have to have guys who

know the mechanics of music and the mechanics of recording. The sound you want in the studio is the sound of blending, of musicians coming together. When I put together a saxophone section, for example, I want guys who can play well together, who can blend, no matter what the style is. I’ve got a date tomorrow. Well, I could have used Bud Shank to play lead or I could have gotten Ronnie Lang—two very different players. But whichever one I use, I still expect the *other* four guys to fit in with the lead player’s style, no matter what it is. And the same principle always applies, whether it’s a rhythm section or forty strings.

“I suppose one way to think of studio musicians is as a group of scientists working on some complicated project—maybe like a NASA space shot. It’s highly demanding, highly exacting work, and each part has to be done precisely right. So don’t kid yourself, the pressure is enormous and I can’t be frivolous about the guys I put in the studio. You can be a successful studio musician for twenty-seven years, and every time you take your instrument out of your case, you’re auditioning. One bad day and it can be goodbye Charlie. When you’re a professional studio musician it’s not like trying to be a .350 hitter in baseball: the musician has to be great ten times out of ten. And since I’m the guy who recommends and provides those musicians, my head’s just as much on the block as theirs are. So don’t talk to me about deals that are made on the golf course.”

A musicians’-union survey made several years ago reported that the bulk of the Los Angeles recording activity was being handled by approximately two thousand musicians, possibly a tenth of the total membership. Most participants in the current scene would place the figure considerably lower. “I don’t think,” one musician told me, “that there are two thousand people in the union who even make a full-time living at music, much less do the recording dates.” A more accurate figure for studio musicians, especially considering the unique skills required, is probably around five hundred. At least fifteen or twenty of that group—according to the estimates I heard—are in the \$100,000-a-year-and-up class. The *average* active player can expect to make between \$40,000 and \$60,000 a year, and the bottom level is around \$20,000. In addition, of course, there are the various special payment funds, pensions, residuals, and recording royalties.

### A typical day . . .

Bernie Fleischer, an all-purpose woodwind player and the president of L.A.’s NARAS chapter, is a fairly typical studio player. One week this spring he dragged himself out of his San Fernando Valley home at the unheard-of hour of 6:00 a.m. for a 6:30 call at the Disney Studios in Burbank.

“Oh man, it was awful,” he told me. “I’m just not used to getting it together at that hour. After I got myself over to the studios, we had to get on buses for a 45-minute ride down to Disneyland and then start playing at 8:30. I didn’t get back to the house until 7:00 at night.”

Fleischer had spent the previous weeks comfort-





**Bernie Fleischer—***from Mickey Mouse to Mame to disco*

ably settled into a Hollywood television studio playing for the *Captain & Tennille Show*. There may have been certain Mickey-Mouse aspects to the stars of both gigs, but there was little comparison musically. "At Disneyland we were playing live in front of Frontierland for the Mouseketeer Awards. Well, you know what Dis-

neyland music is like. But with the Captain & Tennille, most of the charts were written by the best arrangers in town, and the orchestra was a literal collection of all-stars."

While Fleischer's playing, despite the diverse contexts, was limited only to television, he might just as easily have spent the week working on a pop recording, a commercial date, or a film score. "If you can believe it," he said, "I once worked for fourteen months on the recording of the movie *Mame*. But you never really can tell—after I did *Mame* I spent most of the next year recording disco music. Then I seemed to get a succession of television shows—one after another."

#### **Hal Blaine: 150 gold records**

If there are such things as "star" studio players, drummer Hal Blaine has to be pretty close to the center of the constellation. A professional since age fifteen, Blaine has had an extraordinary recording career that dates back to a late-Fifties association with singers Tommy Sands, Patti Page, and Elvis Presley. By the early Sixties he was part of L.A.'s pioneering rock studio musicians.

"They used to call us the Wrecking Crew in those days," says Blaine. "Leon Russell, Glen Campbell, Tommy Tedesco, Carol Kaye—there were a bunch of us and we were all new to the scene. You know, recording used to be a really formal thing before we came along; guys showed up in jackets and ties and you never said a word in the studio. We came along at the beginning of the rock days and we had—to say the least—a pretty casual attitude. We wore Levis, long hair, hair on our faces, stuff like that. The older guys didn't understand it, let alone understand the music."

Blaine was the right person in the right place at the right time. In the twenty years or so since he started working with Sands he has acquired the mind-



**Assorted MVPs, 1976:** *Reinie Press, Ray Brown, James Getzoff, Dominic Fera, Dennis Budimir, Michael Lang, Gene Cipriano, Sally Stevens, Allan Harshman, Louise DiTullio, Tommy Morgan, and Chuck Domanico*

boggling total of 150 gold records with a list of artists that reads, quite literally, like a history of contemporary American pop music—from Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin to Phil Spector and the Captain & Tennille.

“Simon and Garfunkel were terrific,” he recalls. “They let me do anything I wanted to, I think because they were really into sound. One of the first things I did was on *The Boxer*; it was just a little tom-tom sound, but they loved it, and it was featured throughout. On *Mrs. Robinson* I did the little conga drum slides—that was kind of a new sound at the time.

“With Phil Spector in the early days, my particular trademark was a quarter-note triplet at the end of records. I always tried to get that in. Stuff like that is totally impromptu; nobody ever writes it down ahead of time or plans it. It just happens in the enthusiasm of the moment.”

There were so many other recordings that Blaine sometimes has trouble recalling them himself: Neil Diamond (“We used to pick the music apart, just do little bits, here and there”), the Monkees (“We worked the same way with them—we *had* to!”), Johnny Rivers, the Beach Boys, the Ronettes, the Carpenters (“I had nine or ten gold records right off the bat with them—it seemed as though everything we did went gold”), the Mamas & the Papas (“I did every record they made”), Jan & Dean, Jay & the Americans, Bobby Vee, Gary Lewis & the Playboys, Martha & the Vandellas, the Partridge Family, David Cassidy, Wayne Newton, Barry McGuire (“That big hit of his, *Eve of Destruction*), *Half Breed* with Cher (“That was interesting, because they just let me find some Indian-type stuff to do”) *MacArthur Park* with Richard Harris, *Bridge over Troubled Water* with Simon & Garfunkel (“I guess that was the biggest one).” And, remarkably, Blaine has played on seven of the last eleven Records

of the Year awarded by NARAS—from Sinatra’s *Strangers in the Night* to the Captain & Tennille’s *Love Will Keep Us Together*.

When one considers that the active playing life of some studio musicians, especially rhythm players, can be as short as the winds of changing fashion, Blaine’s achievement is all the more remarkable. “I think,” he says, “that it’s all part of loving your work, being reliable, being sober, and having a complete understanding of all styles. I was born at the end of the Dixieland era, heard a lot of Swing stuff when I was growing up, and picked up on rock very early.”

And he is well paid for his expertise: \$8,000 or \$9,000 a month in basic recording income, coupled with \$25,000 in annual recording royalties and nearly that much in commercial date residuals adds up to a very comfortable six-figure income. Living quietly in a lovely old estate-style house in the Hollywood hills, Blaine says, not surprisingly, “I feel very fulfilled—very happy.”

But there *are* problems for studio players, and they are evident to Blaine as well as to the large numbers who are not in his stratospheric income category. “I keep thinking,” one told me, “about that old economic bromide which says that nobody ever got rich on salary. When you stop to think about it and consider the amount of training we all have, the investment we make in instruments, the hours we put in—not just in the studio, but dashing around on the freeways from one date to another—the income isn’t all that remarkable.”

#### Credit where it’s due

Which raises one of the key points that has bothered studio players for a long time: They receive no part of the action, no taste of the juice that comes from the many hit recordings in which their contributions

Hal Blaine in his natural environment







Chuck Domanico and Tommy Tedesco  
at the '76 MVP Awards Dinner

have been vital. Sure, they receive the basic recording royalty payments mentioned earlier, but the potentially enormous percentages associated with hit records accrue only to the singer or the group and the record company for whom the studio musicians have provided such important support.

"It's nutty," one said. "It's as though the Cincinnati Reds gave out World Series shares only to Pete Rose and George Foster and everybody else worked for straight salary." Nutty, perhaps, but it doesn't change the fact that musicians, or, for that matter, noncomposing performers, don't receive performance royalties for the music they record. It's no wonder that performers *and* musicians have been complaining about the inequity for years (and still are—current copyright law revisions may not affect them at all).

"Sure, it's a drag," says Blaine. "I can remember many, many occasions on which somebody gave us an arrangement to play and I personally said no, let's try it another way—let's see how this works. And it *did* work, and the records became hits. But there was never a word of thanks for me—never even an arranging credit on the record, never a taste of the royalties. Now I wasn't *looking* for that—that's not why I do dates—but the point is that it was never even offered."

Of course there's another side to the coin. The kid who buys the latest hit single may not realize how important a drum break from Blaine or a guitar lick from Lee Ritenour is to his enjoyment of the record, but professionals in the industry *do* know. "I can remember a lot of stuff I did," says guitarist Tommy Tedesco, "that would immediately get picked up on by other recording acts. Like one time I did a little thing on banjo—not much, just a little lick—and after the record

came out I kept getting call after call from leaders who wanted me to do the same thing. So I guess it balances out."

Another factor is that even though studio musicians don't get a piece of the gold-record take, they do have a reasonable amount of career stability. Rock groups that *consistently* produce gold albums—or even produce year-in, year-out income—are few and far between. (The continuing success of organizations like the Beach Boys or the Rolling Stones is more a tribute to geriatric-rock vitality than it is a testimony to the

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“Every time you take  
your instrument out of your case,  
you're auditioning. One bad day  
and it can be goodbye Charlie.”

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potential for widespread moneymaking in the music business.) Even the studio musician who has passed Most-Valuable-Player prime can still pick up enough miscellaneous gigs here and there to make a quite respectable living. Tedesco, for example, was *the* rock guitar player for recordings in the Sixties; today he has shifted his emphasis to motion pictures and television and continues to be one of L.A.'s busiest players. Where, one wonders, is the equivalent refuge for a rhythm guitar player in a band whose first album went gold, second album broke even, and third album dropped to zip?

The simple truth is that most studio musicians love what they're doing, regardless of the problems. "It's like the thing that ballplayers always say," one told me, "it's incredible to be getting paid all this money to do something that I'd probably be happy to do for nothing."

And—despite back-to-back sessions, the quick shifting from country to rock to soul, the continuous demand for creativity from aesthetically impoverished producers—most studio musicians still manage to overlook the more mundane moments and to hold on to the joy of making music.

"You have to accept the fact that a good portion of your work isn't going to be aesthetically satisfying," Bernie Fleischer says. "But some of it will be—beyond your wildest dreams. I did an album with Michel Legrand and Sarah Vaughan once. After we finished one of the sessions, Michel told me that he had looked up in the middle of a take at guitarist Tommy Tedesco and thought for a moment that Tommy was ill, because he looked so bad. But when he went over to him, he saw that Tommy had tears streaming down his face. Here's a guy who does four or five sessions a day, and yet he was so profoundly moved by what was happening around him musically that he was in tears!"

Well, I don't recall that my friend George Marge ever cried—at least not in joy—over any of the music he played for me. But I do remember him telling me that I had written one of the best ocarina parts he'd ever seen. Coming from a studio musician, that was good enough praise for me. ●

# Records

LES BAINES  
KEN EMERSON  
TODD EVERETT  
TOBY GOLDSTEIN  
DON HECKMAN

JIM MELANSON  
JOHN STORM ROBERTS  
SAM SUTHERLAND  
NICK TOSCHES  
JOHN S. WILSON

## Joe Venuti's Still in Full Swing

**Joe Venuti-George Barnes: Live at the Concord Summer Festival.** Carl E. Jefferson, producer. *Concord Jazz 30*. \$6.98.

Joe Venuti was somewhere in his seventies (he has managed to keep his exact age flexibly fuzzy) when he played this set at the Concord Summer Festival last July. But the fire and the flair have not diminished one whit since the small-group recordings this unquenchable violinist made almost fifty years earlier with guitarist Eddie Lang.

If anything, his work now is even more compelling. It's one thing for him to slash his way through *Sweet Georgia Brown*, which he has been playing for most of those fifty years and which, by now, he has explored from every possible angle. But it's another to hear him work out on a more recent piece like *What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?* This starts as a slow, romantic ballad, picks up tempo, and shifts into

heavy funk—drawing a strong, chorded solo from pianist Ross Tompkins—and finally double-times to go out at a furiously swinging pace. Through every phase, Venuti relishes each ripe, rich nuance, seemingly chuckling and eventually laughing uproariously (in musical terms) as he bows away.

One side of the disc is a medley of five Ellington pieces. And although they are the most obvious and overplayed—*Satin Doll*, *'A' Train*, *Sophisticated Lady*, etc.—Venuti manages to put them in a remarkably fresh perspective. His swaggering, jaunty, eruptive treatment of *'A' Train* is a virtual rediscovery of a work the Duke had played into the ground.

George Barnes is not quite the equivalent of Venuti's old guitar partner Lang. There is a tension in his uptempo playing that goes against the grain of Venuti's exuberant confidence. But Ray Brown on bass, Jake Hanna on drums, and Tompkins on piano make a



Venuti—pulling out all the stops

sensitive, swinging rhythm trio, providing Venuti the support he needs to pull out all his inventive stops. J.S.W.

**The Eddie Barbee Tapes.** Susan Hallman, producer. *Pine Breeze PBK 903*, \$5.00. (By mail: Ron Williams, *Pine Breeze Center*, Hamilton Avenue, Chattanooga, Tenn. 37405.)

I hate folk music. Pale young things strumming on acoustic six-strings, sing-



Eddie Barbee—the real thing

ing about Emmitt Till and the brotherhood of man, their eyes glazed with terminal sensitivity.

But there are some old guys in the mountains who make music the way it was made a hundred years ago. No six-strings, no Emmitt Till, no brotherhood jive. Just wild fiddles and ancient melodies. It's the real thing, but to call it folk music is wrong, because most of these guys would rather get drunk than engage in meaningful dialogue.

This album, the product of eastern



Tennessee's Pine Breeze Center, the Tennessee Arts Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts, is also the real thing. Eldie Barbee, age sixty-six, had never recorded before, nor does he seem too impressed with the idea, which—along with his brilliant fiddling—supplies much of the magic.

There are fifteen old-timey songs here, songs still found in the Southern hills where they arrived centuries ago: *Cripple Creek*, *Sugar in the Gourd*, *Soldier's Joy*, *Give the Fiddler a Dram*, *Cracklin' Hen*, and others. A few are obscure, such as *Old Citico*. Between songs there's a lot of coughing, spitting, tuning up, and talking going on.

Big record companies stopped recording this sort of stuff in the early '30s, and it won't be around to record too much longer. It's the music everything came from: Whites changed it into country, blacks changed it into the blues, and, in the end and all together, into rock & roll. Good stuff. N.T.

**Alice Cooper: *Lace and Whiskey*.** Bob Ezrin, producer. Warner Bros. BSK 3027, \$7.98. Tape: ●● M5 3027, ● M8 3027, \$7.97.

**Billion Dollar Babies: *Battle Axe*.** Lee DeCarlo & Billion Dollar Babies, producers. Polydor PD 1-6100, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CTPD 1-6100, ● 8TPD 1-6100, \$7.98.

Alice Cooper's last album was called "Alice Cooper Goes to Hell." This one



*Alice Cooper repents*

might have been better titled, "Alice Cooper Reaches Toward Heaven." The one-time infamous rabble-rouser has certainly changed his evil ways, switching from nightmarish fantasies to camp ditties about his Hollywood existence, including a deadly serious ode to a personal savior, appropriately called *My God*.

"Lace and Whiskey" is the first Cooper release to abandon the concept format, replacing a consistency of horror and persecution with a miscellany devoted to remorse, regret, and the hope of a brighter tomorrow. Unfortunately, followers expecting even a modicum of hard-core guitar frenzy will be disappointed. Cooper's accommodation to the slick demands of his now-mainstream life style manifests itself in an LP of balladry, self-ridicule, and even disco rhythms.

His co-writers Dick Wagner and Bob Ezrin (Ezrin has produced Cooper through many incarnations) mold their own heavy rock preferences into this seemingly incompatible direction. One wonders how much longer the superb hot-wire guitarist Wagner can stay content with only one lead per album (in this case, *Road Rats*). Ezrin appears to have made the better of the situation, turning to the use of a Phil Spectorish wall of sound that suits pleading epics.

Surprisingly, Alice's worst critics might not be his disappointed fans, but rather his old band, which was dropped in 1974. Three out of the four original members have resurfaced, under the name of Billion Dollar Babies, and as their LP title implies, they're ready to lay claim to the raunchy pedestal abandoned by their former leader. Right from the outset on *Too Young*, lead vocalist Michael Bruce shrieks, "I can't wait to be 18," digging at the Cooper hit of 1972. The next cut, *Shine Your Love*, is a pointed commentary that states "some of us have been used."

But "Battle Axe" is not a sour grapes effort. It is an exciting introduction to a band that took Cooper's style of rock as a departure point and added the strength of five musicians ready to apply themselves to one purpose—getting an audience up and moving. Billion Dollar Babies should grow neatly into the arena of quick, power-punchy song stylists that will knock 'em out with volume on live shows and energetically inspire the listener at home. T.G.

**Emerson, Lake & Palmer: *Works*.** Emerson, Lake & Palmer & Peter Sinfield, producers. Atlantic SD 2-7000, \$13.98. Tape: ●● TC 2-7000, ● TP 2-7000, \$13.98.

Both bouquets and brickbats are nothing new to Emerson, Lake & Palmer. They've been praised for their cathedral-rock sound, and equally knocked for "bastardizing" classical music to pop taste. Expect more of both on "Works," a two-record set thematically based on individualized musical exploration.

The idea of having members of a supergroup momentarily part ways on the same release is precedent setting in itself.

Structured so that each player is given a full side (the remaining fourth is devoted to a reunion of sorts), the LP goes a long way to help the listener figure out just what makes ELP tick. We first hear Keith Emerson playing his *Piano Concerto No. 1* with the London Philharmonic. It's good, but let's not call it *serious* music. A potential soundtrack would be closer to the point. Next in line is Greg Lake, and his is probably the strongest side of all. The material is solid (lyrics by Peter Sinfield), and Lake's guitar work and vocalizing make it a natural for the FM airwaves. Drummer Carl Palmer follows with adaptations from Bach (*Two Part Invention in D Minor*) and Prokofieff (*The Enemy God Dances with the Black Spirits*) and a mixture of progressive rock numbers. It's an interesting exercise, but can become boring fast if you're not a percussion freak.

ELP reunites on the fourth side to work out on Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*, again with the London Philharmonic. This is followed by a sixteen-minute Emerson, Lake, and Sinfield piece called *Pirates*, showing ELP at their best. Copland motifs are reshaped and incorporated, but the trio's vaulted image of how rock should sound shines throughout.

The concept of "Works" is superb, and tastefully executed. Only thing is, though, a lot of listeners would probably be glad to trade in the first three sides for another one side of ELP together. J.M.

**Gladys Knight & the Pips: *Still Together*.** Various producers. Buddah, BDS 5689, \$6.98. Tape: ●● BDC 5689, ● BDT 5689, \$7.95.

What can you say about an album by any top-of-pop performer? That the unpredictable doesn't get you where you've already been got, and the predictable doesn't leave much to write about?

That, certainly. But also that in her own league, nobody touches Gladys Knight either for the quality of her voice or for the if-you-really-got-it-you-don't-need-to-flaunt-it uses to which she puts it. Her control—including her control of any tendency to show off—is simply immaculate.

Something further. That even in the mostly formulaic world of the dizzy heights, taste is taste and banality banality, and a banal production can undercut the finest performance. The best track on "Still Together," by far, is the opening *Love Is Always on Your Mind*. It is produced by Jerry Peters, who gives Gladys'

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Gladys Knight & the Pips—Van McCoy gets in the way

tight lead a tight backing of tossing, overlapping phrases and constant tasty little touches that transcend the Big-Hit accouterments.

Then there's the workman-like approach of Tony Camillo in *I Love to Feel the Feeling* and *You Put New Life in My Body*. His contributions aren't very original, but he does provide an unobtrusive frame for the singer at the center, and the well-advised cuts zip along quite neatly.

But Van McCoy is surely the most tasteless producer on the job today. At best, his work is the musical equivalent of plastic sunflowers, at worst he's a positive genius at turning banality to vulgarity by remorseless overstatement. For God—or more probably Mammon—knows what reason, they let him loose on a full five tracks, where one would have been more than sufficient. *Walk Softly* opens with a maudlin spoken intro. When Gladys does get going with a vocal that rises from the bog by her sheer quality, McCoy sabotages her at every turn. She only has to sing "Don't wake it up," for the chorus to answer, "shhh. . ."

Everything McCoy does is like one of those pieces of modular furniture with precut bits and doodads—ooh-ooh chorus, "bright" strings, irritating rhythm section—to be slotted in any old place. At times Gladys' singing cuts through; but for the most part, McCoy contrives the amazing feat of making her sound like just another vocalist. J.S.R.

**Little Feat: Time Loves a Hero.** Ted Templeman, producer. Warner Bros. BS 3015, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M5 3015, ● M8 3015, \$7.97.

Admittedly, there is more than enough inspired playing and arranging on Little Feat's sixth album to carry a handful of

records by lesser artists. But it's a measure of the iconoclastic L.A. band's past impact that such a judgment has to be qualified as faint praise. "Time Loves a Hero" is an exuberant album, expertly performed; yet its real assets are the band's cat-like assurance in handling supple, intricate rhythm arrangements, and producer Templeman's generally immaculate recording style—not the singers or the songs.

A focal shift toward a more jazz-flavored, instrumental base began for Little



Little Feat: Gradney, Payne, Clayton, George, Barrere, Hayward

Feat when the current line-up was assembled in 1973 and baptized in the studio with the brilliant "Dixie Chicken" LP. That album was the culmination of songwriter, guitarist, and singer Lowell George's ascendance as the band's chief architect, inviting critics to single him out as a rock & roll auteur for his command of production. But George himself would later admit that his domination rubbed the democratic spirit so common to late '60s groups toward a flash point: Each album since then has marked his

retreat, and on "Time Loves" he serves as a virtual guest, turning in only three vocals and a few bits of the burnished slide guitar style that was once the band's lead melodic element.

Perhaps more crucial is George's equally reduced profile as a songwriter. *Rocket in My Pocket*, his only song, is little more than a fragment—though still an irresistible one. *Keepin' Up with the Joneses* is a collaboration with guitarist Paul Barrere that fits comfortably within Barrere's own r&b-based writing style.

Barrere himself emerges as the most prolific writer now, followed closely by keyboard master Bill Payne, and both take an equally broader share of the singing duties. They are clearly developing writers of real promise, but neither has achieved George's stylistic clarity. His gonzo imagery and sharp, vivid language had at least as crucial a role in defining Little Feat's personality: Salted with an anti-heroic, anti-romantic humor, it removed the band from the more callow, self-important base of much West-Coast rock. By contrast, Payne and Barrere are still numblers, their lyric ideas at times verging on hip cant and often too cumbersome to scan easily over the nimble syncopations that are Little Feat's instrumental forte.

But "Time Loves" is hardly a disaster. Templeman last worked with the band on "Sailin' Shoes," and while the personnel have changed since, he understands the basic Feat playing style. To their al-

ready tight, imaginative musical approach Templeman adds a clean production finish, along with some supercharged horn choruses from the Tower of Power horns, and Nick DeCaro's elegantly restrained strings. Payne's broadened keyboard setup includes an Oberheim polyphonic synthesizer, and that instrument's spacious harmonic backdrops and fat rhythm chords blend effectively with his other keyboard lines to offset the fluid, jazz-based guitar work

Continued on page 153



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## Foreigner: Sixties Rock Yields Seventies Success

The opening song on Foreigner's debut album, *Feels Like the First Time*, neatly summarizes the strengths of this Anglo-American sextet while belying the innocence implied in the song's title. Also the group's first single, it is studded with guitar and choral hooks, spiked with bone-shaking drumming, and glorified by soaring organ and synthesizer lines. The track achieves a prototypical English rock ambience like that which has enabled Boston to vault into the platinum sales bracket. Just as the singer proclaims his wonder at a new love while making it clear that he's been around, Foreigner makes its initial bid for attention with a series of canny rock moves that verify that the band's principal founder, guitarist Mick Jones, has been around.

Jones's notoriety in this country has been small, confined to his work with Gary Wright's Wonderwheel and the subsequent reformation of Spooky

Tooth with Wright and Mike Harrison. Yet his credentials are those of a journeyman musician, his tenure with those progressive English stylists accounting for only a brief period in his career. Prior to that, he served as guitarist, arranger, and writer for French rocker Johnny Halliday, a post that found Jones adapting the American and English styles dominant in the Sixties to a Continental sensibility.

He is again an arranger and assimilator with Foreigner, rather than front man and resident star, but his role is clearly central and his control over the band's recorded personality pervasive. Although there are collaborations with cofounder and fellow Sixties-survivor Ian McDonald, vocalist Lou Gamm, and keyboard player Al Greenwood, it is Jones's work that dominates the overall collection. Credited as musical director and chief writer, he flaunts his ease with different hybrids of melodic yet hard-

edged rock, adapting Foreigner's basic keyboard/guitar voicings to the styles of Queen (*Cold as Ice*), Yes (*Starrider*), Bad Company (*Headknocker*), and even Wings (*Woman Oh Woman*).

That flexibility is a major risk, as well as a high card in Foreigner's hand, and the debut set often veers dangerously toward literal impersonation of those groups. Gamm's voice, a comparatively wide-ranging and muscular yet controlled tenor, gradually achieves its own stamp, but not without first running through the requisite Paul Rodgers and Freddie Mercury mannerisms. Jones's own lead vocals, which are featured on only a few tracks, are delivered with a gentler, somewhat undistinguished attack, but his guitarwork, like Gamm's singing, undercuts its own personality by echoing other guitarists, among them Brian May and Mick Ralphs.

In Jones's case, however, it's probably unfair to charge direct plagiarism, simply because his own development coincides with or predates those players. His three American partners in the group (Gamm, Greenwood, and bassist Ed Gagliardi) are younger, representing a generation of players influenced by Jones and his peers. And while their seeming reverence for that style has enabled them to master the dynamics and textural detail of gothic English rock, it restrains them from moving beyond an already familiar lexicon of instrumental effects.

If Foreigner is playing within the boundaries of '60s rock, their goal is clearly conservative rather than progressive. Jones as arranger and writer easily solves the primary commercial problems the style encountered at its unveiling a decade ago: Rambling excess is avoided, the songs are tightly structured and often edited to singles length, lyric bombast is maintained at tolerable levels (the only heavy-handed moments come with *Starrider's* tired sci-fi mysticism and the awkward rebellion of *War with the World*), and the themes are generally slanted to safe and universal—if innocuous—romantic pieces. As this is written, that first single has been released and is already shaping up as a probable hit. The wisdom of a production approach that focuses solely on the band itself, and Jones's insistence on arranging and rehearsing the material for live presentation prior to recording (rather than the other way around) all point to Foreigner's promising commercial prospects, since we're likely to hear faithful reproductions of these songs onstage. *Feels Like the First Time* clearly won't be Foreigner's last. s.s.



Lou Gamm, Al Greenwood, Mick Jones, Ian McDonald, Dennis Elliot, Ed Gagliardi

**Foreigner.** John Sinclair & Gary Lyons, producers. Atlantic SD 18215, \$6.98.  
Tape: ●● CS 18215, ● TP 18215, \$7.97.

Continued from page 150

of Barrere. As for the band's formidable rhythm section (bassist Ken Gradney, drummer Ritchie Hayward, and percussionist/basso perverso Sam Clayton), they consistently cook.

Like a lot of Little Feat fans, I'll probably listen to this album more than most of the year's rock releases, despite my reservations. Their resilience as players has already proven influential, surfacing in the work of a growing legion of American and English performers; that strength makes Little Feat's evolution from a song band into a more instrumental outfit a bit less jarring than might have been expected. S.S.

**Loretta Lynn: I Remember Patsy.** Owen Bradley, producer. MCA. MCA 2265, \$6.98. Tape: ●● MCAC 2265, ● MCAT 2265, \$7.98.

When Loretta Lynn came to Nashville in the early Sixties, Patsy Cline, the most famous country girl singer of the day, befriended her. In 1963, as Loretta's career began to shine, Patsy Cline was killed in a plane crash.

Right now, Loretta is more famous than her friend ever was, and she's almost as good. Although there is a rawer country edge to her voice (Patsy's wasn't at all rustic), she learned well from the older singer. This album is a tribute to her teacher and friend, and to one of country's best female singers.

The Cline hits are here: *Walking After Midnight*, *I Fall to Pieces*, *Crazy* (still one of Willie Nelson's best pieces of writing), *She's Got You*, *Sweet Dreams*, *Faded Love*, and *He Called Me Baby*. There are a couple of lesser-known songs and a seven-minute spoken remembrance.

A lot of singers have paid homage to



Loretta Lynn—her best in a decade

Patsy, and she has become a cult figure among the Ronstadt-Harris set; but no one has sung Patsy as Loretta does here. *Walking After Midnight* is one of the finest performances of the year, and *She's Got You*, Loretta's recent single, is the killer hit of the season. This is Loretta's most forceful and effective album in over a decade and a good introduction to both her and Patsy's powers. N.T.

**Lou Rawls: Unmistakably Lou.** Various producers. Philadelphia International. PZ 34488, \$6.98. Tape: ●● PZT 34488, ● PZA 34488, \$7.98.

Here we have a case of discbiz schizophrenia. Lou Rawls is a beautiful singer



Rawls—a return to pop classicism?

in the ballad-flecked-with-big-band-jazz vein whose parameters are, say, Joe Williams and Frank Sinatra. But this isn't exactly "whatsappin'." as they regrettably say. So some bright spark decided to get him together last time around with Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff: the result here is a mixed bag of Philly Sound arrangements and some more conventional settings of what Rawls does best.

The latter style wins out, all the way down the line. Even Gamble and Huff's best arrangement is the jazz-oriented *Someday You'll Be Old*, which is swinging and elegant and urbane. By comparison, their whatsappin'-probable-hit-singles. *See You When I Get There* and *Some Folks Never Learn*, have an intrusive funk/pump rhythm and one of those string sections that are presumably hung up behind the studio door between sessions. Both box Rawls in so he can't develop his full potential vocally.

Fortunately, he gets his chances often enough on the rest of the album. *Early Morning Love* has a long, lazy unfolding that suits both singer and subject very



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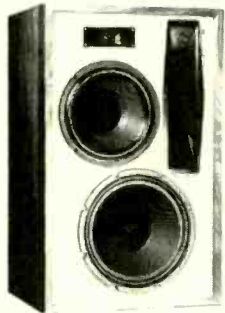


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nicely. *All the Way*, another jazz-tinged piece of classic pop, backs a strong vocal with a walking bass and big-band riffs. And Dexter Wansel's *It's Our Anniversary Today*, one for the divorce-generation heartthrob market, is almost more Bing than Frank in feel.

Could this be heralded as a return to pop classicism, or is it just a sneaky way of letting a fellow do what he does best and pay the rent at the same time? J.S.R.

**Return To Forever: Musicmagic.** Chick Corea, Stanley Clarke, producers. *Columbia PC 34682, \$6.98. Tape: PCT 34682, PCA 34682, \$7.98.*

"Musicmagic" seems to mark Return To Forever's move into the category of studio group. Very little of what is done here could be duplicated in live performance; the textures and sounds that are the essence of studio technology dominate the album.

But that's not necessarily all bad. Chick Corea, Stanley Clarke, and Gayle Moran—the principal composers—are all gifted enough to find plenty of creative ways in which to use the electronic goodies available to them. Corea and Clarke in particular have chosen to use overdubbing, multiple synthesizers, filtering, flanging, etc. as basic building blocks for unexpectedly grandiose compositional structures.

Among the more interesting elements are the impressive vocal overdubs on Corea's title track, the full-blown (in some respects even overblown) scoring on Clarke's *So Long Mickey Mouse*, and the quasi-Renaissance brass figures on Corea's *The Endless Night*. Clarke's *Hello Again*, in contrast, sounds pleasantly old-fashioned, even though his and Moran's unison vocals occasionally sound uncomfortably similar to those of Jackie Cain and Roy Kral.

The playing, in the rare instances when it breaks through the surface, is uniformly excellent. Corea is superb as always and Clarke continues to prove that he is one of the finest bassists in the world—on the electric and acoustic instruments as well as on the newly popular piccolo bass. Woodwind player Joe Farrell simply doesn't get enough space. His exchanges with Corea's synthesizer in *The Musician* are some of the few moments in which he can be heard clearly, and bring valuable brightness to the proceedings; there should have been more.

The problem, quite obviously, is that Corea and Clarke are too infatuated with the massive sound possibilities now at their disposal. Corea uses his synthesizers excessively, viewing them too much as self-contained orchestras and not enough as simply instruments to

Continued on page 156



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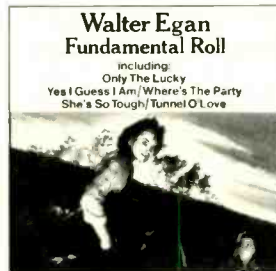
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# New Acts

BY JIM MELANSON

**Walter Egan: Fundamental Roll.** Various producers. *Columbia PC 34679, \$6.98. Tape: PCT 34679, PCA 34679, \$7.98.*

With Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham providing valuable backup, it's no wonder that Egan's debut comes off sounding like a bubblegum version of Fleetwood Mac. His material is popsy and generally laid back, but his punch as a performer is doubtful. Without Nicks and Buckingham that bubble might just burst.



**Flame: Queen of the Neighborhood.** Jimmy Iovine, producer. *RCA APL 1-2160, \$6.98. Tape: APK 1-2160, APS 1-2160, \$7.98.*

Watch out for this group; more to the point, listen up to lead singer Marge Raymond—a gutsy rocker who has the tools to go all the way. The band is good enough not to detract,

and the material is solid rock & roll Seventies style. The title cut and *Beg Me* are the best.

**Steve Hunter: Swept Away.** Bob Ezrin, producer. *Atco SD 36-148, \$6.98. Tape: CS 36-148, TP 36-148, \$7.97.*

Guitarist Hunter, well known for his studio backup work with such heavies as Lou Reed and Alice Cooper, does it all here with virtuosity. One hopes the inspiration will follow.

**Phyllis Hyman.** Larry Alexander & Sandy Torano, producers. *Buddah BDS 5681, \$6.98. Tape: BDC 5681, BDT 5681, \$7.95.*

Get through the first cut's lengthy, boring intro, and you'll be treated to some classy vocalizing. The lady has the range and feel to catch more than a handful of m.o.r. and soul fans. Overall, the arrangements work well and fit Hyman's style perfectly. Definitely worth a listen.

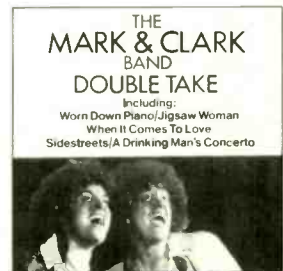
**Johnny's Dance Band.** Don Murray, producer. *Windsong BHL 1-2216, \$6.98. Tape: BHK 1-2216, BHS 1-2216, \$7.98.*

Pop/rock that goes nowhere in a bland way. Pass it by.

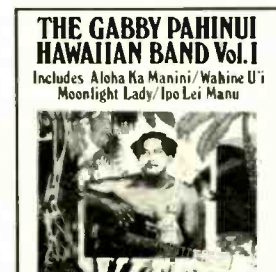
**Marty Lebus: The Lady Wants to Be a Star.** Charlie Callello, producer. *Image/Audiofidelity IM 301, \$6.98. Tape: H 301, \$7.98.*

Singer/songwriter Lebus has the makings of a female Barry Manilow. Both she and her material perk throughout, and a bit too much vibrato in her voice at times is easily overlooked. The title cut and *Prelude/Nothing but Love* stand out.

**The Mark & Clark Band: Double Take.** Ron Dante, producer. *Columbia PC 34498, \$6.98. Tape: PCT 34498, PCA 34498, \$7.98.*



Pop/rock's answer to Ferrante & Teicher at last! The twin Seymour brothers sing and work the ivories (twin grands, of course) under an umbrella of strong orchestration, and the end product comes off fairly well. Arrangements can get cluttered, but quasi Billy Joel keyboard runs manage to anchor down the pop feel.



**Gabby Pahinui Hawaiian Band.** Panini, producer. *Warner Bros. BS 3023, \$6.98. Tape: M5 3023, M8 3023, \$7.97.*

Mostly traditional Hawaiian music that would go over well with arriving tourists. Sounds like a goof for the label, even though the guitar-picking would be the envy of an instructional class.

**Nytro.** Norman Whitfield, producer. *Whitfield WH 3019, \$6.98. Tape: M5 3019, M8 3019, \$7.97.*

This eight-piece group delivers funk by formula, but the cut *Atomic Funk* might give them some notoriety, especially on the disco level.

**Scorpions: Virgin Killer.** Dieters Dierks, producer. *RCA APL 1-4225, \$6.98. Tape: APK 1-4225, APS 1-4225, \$7.98.*



The hard-rock sting isn't fatal, nor is it much of a turn-on. Those addicted to an Aerosmith-type sound, though, might like this German group's bite.

**Tornader: Hit It Again.** Jack Richardson, producer. *Polydor PD 1-6098, \$6.98. Tape: CTPD 1-6098, 8TPD 1-6098, \$7.98.*

More white boys (Larry Alexander and Sandy Torano) going funky in the AWB/Wild Cherry fashion. Studio players (an impressive lineup) cook throughout, and the cuts *Back Up (Hit It Again)* and *Reggae Rock & Roll* are grabbers. Wonder if the boys talk that way at home.



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Continued from page 154  
blend with other instruments. Clarke's  
fascination with brass is predictable for a  
composer who plays a string instrument;  
perhaps he will use it with more discre-  
tion when the novelty wears off.

Ironically, considering all the fire-  
power that RTF brings to bear, one of  
the most interesting pieces is a fairly  
simple song called *Do You Ever*, com-  
posed and sung by Gayle Moran. The  
vocal overdubs in the chorus sections get  
a trifle overbearing at times, but Moran's  
lovely voice and the simple acoustic pi-  
ano and bass that accompany most of the  
tune make for some of the best musical  
moments on the album. Alas, the lyrics  
leave a lot to be desired, as do the lyrics  
on the other tracks. Since Moran is re-  
sponsible for many of them, she must  
bear the blame for the ineptness of lines  
like, "When you play the way you do/I  
always helps me get on through/I just  
love the way you phrase/Helps me take  
away the haze..."\*

What all the studio manipulations in  
"Musicmagic" imply about future di-  
rections for RTF is hard to say. Certainly  
the departure of Al DiMeola has af-  
fected the group's identity. In addition,  
Clarke, Corea, and Farrell all have car-  
ers as independent performers as well;  
only they can say whether their talent is  
rich enough to be spread around so liber-  
ally. But I suspect that the huge creative  
potential of Return To Forever would  
benefit from a more concentrated, more  
carefully thought-out application of  
those skills. D.H.

\*Musicmagic, © 1977 by Litha Music.

**Joe Tex: Bumps & Bruises.** Buddy  
Killen, producer. *Epic PE 34666, \$6.98.*  
*Tape: ●● PET 34666, ●● PEA 34666,*  
*\$7.98.*

This album should serve to remind ev-  
erybody that disco didn't always equal  
depersonalization and that dancing till  
you drop isn't necessarily a bad thing.  
Just when I was thinking it had been  
walled away behind Van McCoy's hus-  
tler polkas and Donna Summer's frigid  
charts, Joe Tex returned with "Bumps &

Bruises" to remind us that long before  
disco there was a grand American  
artform called soul music. Disco has be-  
come the antithesis of soul; even its in-  
sistence on "fun" is strained and me-  
chanical. Tex's music is nothing but joy,  
his singing the orgasmic release that the  
closed system of disco coldly denies.

Reminding us more firmly than ever  
of his Otis Redding roots, he divides  
"Bumps & Bruises" equally between  
gospel-reverent love ballads in his men-  
tor's mould and his own, more familiar  
comedy dance numbers. On these, he  
whoops, howls, croons, chants, and occa-  
sionally even gibbers in a range of vocal  
characterizations broad enough to qual-  
ify the cuts as aural cartoons. Best and  
funniest are *Be Cool (Willie Is Dancing*  
*with a Sissy)*, and *Jump Bud*, wherein a  
would-be purse snatcher gets his own as-  
sets thrashed by an old lady, who tells  
onlookers not to waste a dime calling the  
police ("I'll handle this young punk my  
own self").

Tex's three-year respite from the mu-  
sic biz has served him well—"Bumps &  
Bruises" has all the earmarks of a major  
comeback. It might even help enliven  
soul radio. L.B.

**Weather Report: Heavy Weather.** Joe  
Zawinul, producer. *Columbia PC 34418,*  
*\$6.98. Tape: ●● PCT 34418, ●● PCA*  
*34418, \$7.98.*

Weather Report always has been a par-  
ticular reflection of pianist Joe Zawinul's  
musical thinking. This is not to discount  
the significance of saxophonist Wayne  
Shorter's contributions. But Zawinul's  
exploration of ideas that can be gener-  
ated from a setting in which textural  
densities are as important as improvisa-  
tion continues to dominate the group's  
sound. The addition of the brilliant  
young bassist Jaco Pastorius has ex-  
panded the colors on their palette, but  
they remain Zawinul's masterpiece.

"Heavy Weather" is a fine entry in the  
*oeuvre* of this enormously significant  
contemporary jazz ensemble, and is par-  
ticularly demonstrative of Zawinul's in-



Weather Report: Zawinul, Pastorius, Acuna, Badrena, Shorter

fluence. The two most fascinating pieces, both his, are *Birdland* and *The Juggler*. They are nearly perfect specimens of the marvelously expressive esthetic experience that contemporary jazz has become. *Birdland* bubbles over with a brewful of sounds that touch everything from Dixieland to rock, with whimsically humorous passages contrasting brisk, swinging improvisations. The aptly titled *The Juggler* is dominated by a lovely, strangely ethereal theme, and Zawinul builds his densities and tensions with musical justification throughout. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he understands the link between logic and passion, between the gut expressiveness of jazz and the structural thoughtfulness of composition.

Zawinul's other piece, *A Remark You Made*, is a fine ballad but its prime interest stems from Shorter's tenor saxophone playing. Of the other pieces, *Harlequin* and *Palladium* (both from Shorter) are typical of the harmonically accented lick-tunes that characterize Shorter's work—interesting and provocative, but a bit at odds with the current style and direction of Weather Report.

Pastorius' contributions, *Havona* and *Teen Town*, lie at the other end of the spectrum. Lighter and more accessible than either Zawinul's or Shorter's work, they are deeply dependent upon his own virtuoso bass playing—excepting that, they might have been performed by any contemporary jazz/rock group. Pastorius is a genuine talent, but he has not yet learned how to fit his skills into the intricate jigsaw puzzle of tight, clean ensemble playing.

In another sense, however, Pastorius' inclination to move outside the stylistic area of the ensemble is understandable. The one criticism that can be leveled at Weather Report, as it is now constituted, is that there simply isn't enough real soloing to allow the improvisers time to collect their thoughts. So much energy and interest has been focused on the composition and development of ensemble passages (many of which are unquestionably remarkable) that the essence of jazz—improvisation—sometimes seems to have been overlooked. When solo passages do emerge (and I mean intended solo passages—not simply improvised textural sounds) they seem to serve as frills and ornamentation rather than as the center of attention.

But this is a minor carp. In the next Weather Report album, Zawinul may very well take the group into the arena of extended improvisations. It is that very unpredictability that makes both him and the ensemble such a pleasure to hear and such a valuable presence in the music of the Seventies. There is no better group around.

D. H.

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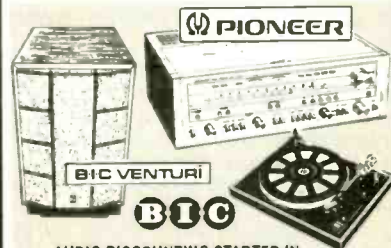
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**Keith Carradine: I'm Easy.** *WBP, 10 songs, \$5.95.*

"Easy" is the word for this funk-free package from songsmith Carradine. The artist and his arranger maintain a low, innocuous profile throughout, the lyrics are predigested, the piano parts won't tax arthritic fingers, and—so that we can all be with it—the currently fashionable song about songwriting, *I'll Be There*, is included. (Has anyone ever written a song about the problems of practicing dentistry?)

Even the previously published sheet music of the Academy Award-winning title song has been scuttled for the folio's more relaxed approach to piano-vocal notation. The only things missing here are a senior-citizen bus pass and a large-type edition. But, like much of today's m.o.r. fare, it won't kill you either.

**Judy Collins: Bread and Roses.** *WBP, 12 songs, \$5.95.*

I really want to get closer to Judy Collins. She is the Earth Mother of us all, and I love her way with a song. Her recital material is selected with meticulous care, as witnessed by this stunning combination of songs whose writers range from Elton John, to Leonard Cohen, to an obscure, martyred Chilean freedom fighter named Victor Jara. Had Ms. Collins been an undergraduate in the politically restless late '30s, I am sure she would have sworn the Oxford oath, forsworn silk stockings in favor of lisle, and been the first woman to enlist in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

However, her arranger has seen fit to make his transcriptions literal duplications of the very specialized Collins back-phrasing. Which means that unless one has the time to dissect each bar of music in order to locate the true downbeats, one is obligated to play and sing these songs exactly as she has recorded them.

Ms. Collins' way with a song is not everyone's; one performer's appoggiaturas are not another's cup of mordent. May we hope for less pedantry in the future?

**The Charlie Daniels Band.** *WBP, 16 songs, \$5.95.*

These boys are great fun to listen to. Theirs is the definitive, pre-Ziploc world of truck stops, gambling, home and mother, red-eye whisky, and jukin'. The

Southern small-town images evoked by their heavy-beat, barrelhouse blues are inherent in the songs themselves, but the folio—the material from "High Lonesome" and "Saddle Tramp"—can never substitute for the high-energy listening experience. One additional caution: The transcriber's idea of "moderately fast" is a breakneck presto. Fasten your seat belt before playing.

**Neil Diamond: Love at the Greek.** *WBP, 20 songs, \$7.95.*

Although "Love at the Greek" contains all those Neil Diamond blockbusters you've ever heard before and were afraid to say you've tired of (*Sweet Caroline, Holly Holy, Doctor Love*), the folio merits your attention on several counts.

The complete tablature of each song is headlined right under its title, enabling the beginning guitarist to practice individual chords in slow motion before tackling them in tempo. The piano transcriptions are tailored for total efficiency in re-creating the Diamond "feel" with a minimum of fingering flak, and the spiral binding insures that the pages will lie flat without constant attention.

The price for this familiar music is a bit inflationary, but I applaud the folio's clarity and cohesiveness.

**Eagles Complete.** *WBP, 40 songs, \$9.95.*

Sometimes what you hear is not what you get: Stripped of the plaintive vocal harmonies that have become the group's trademark, "Eagles Complete" is a folio without sound, fury, or significance.

The forty songs, though composed by a dozen writers, are strikingly similar. With a few exceptions (*I Wish You Peace* and *After the Thrill Is Gone* are two) the lyrics are merely expedient, and a working knowledge of primary chords in one, two, or three sharp keys will cover all the musical action. The bass line notation is frenetic and unpredictable throughout, requiring much left-hand ESP from the home pianist.

Eagles fans may cherish this printed collection, but the same \$9.95 will more than pay for an LP and a guaranteed closer rapport with the artists.

**George Harrison: Thirty-Three & 1/3.** *WBP, 10 songs, \$6.95.*

As George Harrison has wrestled with the devil in order to achieve a purer rela-

tionship with God, so I have wrestled with bathetic composition, banality, and overnotation in his new folio. His sincerity cannot be faulted, but "Thirty-Three & 1/3" misses the mark on musicality. The material is boring, and the updated version of Cole Porter's *True Love* should have been exorcised.

The transcriber has attempted to demonstrate his own pianistic virtuosity by spelling out every hemidemisemiquaver of Harrison's backup instrumentation in addition to capturing every tremor of the singer's vibrato. None of this fussiness is essential to the proceedings; even the Almighty rested on the Sabbath.

I'm thoroughly convinced—Mr. Harrison hears music of other spheres. But I wish he'd forget about messages and return to rock.

**Kiss: The Originals.** *WBP, 29 songs, \$7.95.*  
**Elton John: Super Deluxe.** *WBP, 95 songs, \$9.95.*

"Baby": noun—a girl or young woman, especially a pretty one. "Baby": adjective—infantile or childish. "Baby": contemporary slang—an insipid two-syllable word frequently used as a space-filler by rock musicians in creative extremis. The score: Kiss—49 "Baby's" in 108 pages; Elton John/Bernie Taupin—32 "Baby's" in 400 pages. My money is on literacy.

**The Very Best of the Super-Stars.** *Big 3, 80 songs, \$7.95.*

This is a solid new collection of contemporary dislicks. Most of the songs are m.o.r.; the vocal lines follow the recorded versions closely, and the piano transcriptions are easily notated for the benefit of the home pianist.

There are, of course, the inevitable May-December packaging dilemmas. In order to get Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*, you'll have to repurchase *By the Time I Get to Phoenix*, and the freshness of *Weekend in New England* is offset by the venerability of *Hound Dog*. On the other hand, any folio that includes *Whose Garden Was This*, Frampton's *Baby, I Love Your Way*, as well as the archetypal big-band theme, *Moonlight Serenade*, has a good deal in its favor: something for everyone. ELISE BRETTON

*WBP*—Warner Bros. Publications;  
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## COMPACT DISC

(Continued from page 55)



tions, and claims for the new system's superiority to the LP. One seemingly incidental yet entirely practical claim was that the CD is virtually indestructible. Yet a report in a recent issue of the British *Gramophone* noted that CDs may require careful handling after all. Since nonaudiophiles are sometimes careless with their LPs—leaving them out of their sleeves to collect dust and cat hairs, or handling them carelessly, with fingers on the grooves—we thought some sort of endurance test should be performed.

We had, in fact, had one example of a CD mistracking, apparently because of dirt, during the pop session, but a quick pass with a handkerchief over the smooth, plastic surface (the clear bottom surface, which protects the aluminized layer holding the digital information in a series of microscopic pits; the top surface simply contains label information) put things right. According to the literature, dirt and scratches on the CD's surface are read as out-of-focus by the laser, which scans past it; also, the coded music contains redundant information for

error correction. What, we wondered, would it take to make the player mistrack?

By critical consensus, we targeted *The Planets* for demolition and subjected it to treatment that would have destroyed an LP. First we smudged fingerprints all over it. It played perfectly. Then, testing it between each attempt, we wrote on it with pencil and with pencil eraser: we scratched it with a key; we even smeared powdered coffee creamer on it, all to no avail. Bending or melting it would probably have done the trick, but we had to conclude that under normal—well, even under severe-bordering-on-hostile—conditions, the CD is indeed indestructible. Even had we been able to block the laser enough to cause mistracking, the discs are easily cleaned.

**Conclusions?** Most everyone found the display of the CD's and CDP-101's capabilities impressive—but exactly *how* impressive varied among the critics. In the pop session, there was a general admission that the CDs sounded clearer and boasted a better bass response than the LPs, and that the sounds of vocals and mid- to low-range and percussive instruments sounded more natural. But there was also the feeling that upper-range instruments sounded "wrong" or "uncomfortable," and that the older material sounded better in its original form. Of course, if Moore's analysis is correct, and if companies do remaster their tapes before issuing them on CD, that objection may evaporate.

On the classical side, where we had the advantage of digitally mastered recordings, the tests saw a certain amount of cynicism about digital sound disappear as the critics were confronted with the CD's seemingly limitless ability to accurately reproduce pure orchestral sound in all ranges. As Oestreich observed after the sessions, "the problems we had with the high strings in the pop recordings were exactly what I expected to hear, but didn't, in the classical samples." Here too, it was suggested that producers are going to have to listen more closely to their master tapes for CD releases than they have for LP productions; and the prospect that CD might lead to an extensive cleansing of the catalog was perceived as a potential benefit in itself.

Yet even among the classical critics, who generally found the LP/CD comparisons more striking, there remained a feeling that the advent of CD would be less than earth-shaking. "I can't say that I wasn't impressed," Peter Davis reflected a day after the session. "but I don't think that, in purely sonic terms, this is anywhere near as dramatic an advance as I found when we went from mono to stereo. This is just a further refinement, and as far as I'm concerned, its most important aspects are the physical ones—the convenience of the player, the longevity of the discs, the elimination of clicks, pops, and wow, and the fact that you can't really harm them. All that seems much more significant to me than the marginal improvement in sound reproduction." **HF**



## MESSIAH

(Continued from page 62)

edged master unabashedly working in the style of his own age, their validity and propriety have been debated. The negative view was perhaps best expressed by Moritz Hauptmann, who complained that Mozart's arrangement "resembles elegant stucco-work upon an old marble temple, which easily might be chipped off again by the weather." Perhaps: but to extend the architectural analogy, I, for one, find Mozart's work as congruent with and as complementary to Handel's as Sir Christopher Wren's late-seventeenth-century additions are with the original Tudor portions of the palace at Hampton Court.

The arrangement was published by Breitkopf and Härtel in 1803, with editorial assistance from Thomascantor Johann Adam Hiller, who had done much to promote *Messiah* in Germany. Influenced no doubt by reports of the 1784 London com-

memoration, he had presented the oratorio, with additional accompaniments of his own, using enormous forces; at the first performance he directed, in Berlin in 1785, 302 vocalists and instrumentalists participated.

Editing Mozart's arrangement must have been a bittersweet task for Hiller, who surely would have preferred to have seen his own performing edition published (the score and parts, alas, appear to have been lost), but his alterations were not as extensive as Prout and others believed. (The autograph Mozart score and the original performing materials turned up only some twenty-five years ago, and the arrangement was not published in Urtext form until 1961.) Hiller's only crucial change was to substitute his own arrangement—with bassoon obbligato!—of Handel's "If God be for us" for the accompanied recitative Mozart had written.

There have been two recordings of the Mozart *Messiah*. The first, recorded live in Salzburg in 1953 under the direction of Josef Messner, is based on Mozart-Hiller. Crippling cuts (can you imagine a *Messiah* without "All we like sheep"?), lugubrious tempos, dry and wan singing, and cramped sound make this out-of-print recording expendable for all but the archivist. By con-

trast, the second, glorious in almost every way, is essential to the library of anyone seriously interested in *Messiah* or Mozart. Conducted by Charles Mackerras (his second *Messiah*) and produced by Andreas Holschneider, who prepared the Urtext edition for the New Mozart Edition, the recording accurately represents the original production in all important respects save two: Firstly, the chorus consists of fifty-two singers rather than twelve, and the solo passages Mozart indicated in some choruses are sung by a *Favoritchor* rather than by the soloists. Secondly, the second soprano's part is divided between soprano Edith Mathis and alto Birgit Finnilä, who, with tenor Peter Schreier and bass Theo Adam, make up one of the finest groups of soloists to grace any account. Overall, the performance is indescribably charismatic and atmospheric and, despite use of modern instruments and other minor inauthenticities, succeeds admirably in conjuring up images of the Palffy Palace premiere in Vienna on March 6, 1789.

Although it met with resistance initially—especially in Great Britain—the Mozart-Hiller version quickly became the performing edition most frequently encountered during the nineteenth century—though not for lack of numerous others. As

the century progressed, Handel, revered like a demigod, fell victim to the notion that bigger is better. The most notorious and elephantine performances of his music, without question, were those given at the triennial Handel festivals held in the Crystal Palace, Victorian London's prototype of the Houston Astrodome. At the 1859 commemoration of the centenary of Handel's death, before an audience of some 20,000 people, Sir Michael Costa led 2,765 vocalists and 460 instrumentalists in *Messiah*; he added parts for a full Romantic orchestra that included contrabassoons and ophicleides. Emma Albani, Adelina Patti, Nellie Melba, and Clara Butt were among the galaxy of opera stars who appeared as soloists in the Crystal Palace festivals, which continued until the mammoth edifice was destroyed by fire in the 1930s. This facet of *Messiah*'s history has not been documented on record, and I hope that the next time one of the giant choruses like the Mormon Tabernacle Choir or the Huddersfield Choral Society is tapped to record the work, the record company will have the guts to ignore the purists' howls of horror, resurrect Costa's score, engage topflight opera stars, and re-create a full-blown Romantic Crystal Palace production, right down to the string portamentos, thereby not only performing an invaluable musicological service, but also avoiding the use of the lackluster Prout scoring or a misguided attempt at a pseudo-authentic *Messiah* with anachronistically gargantuan forces.

In the 1870s and 1880s, German organist Robert Franz made quite a reputation by preparing editions of choral works by Bach and Handel with additional accompaniments for "modern orchestra." His edition of *Messiah*, published in 1885, was used for many years by the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, which had given the first complete American performance in 1818, and formed the basis of the score used by the late Thompson Stone for the society's 1955 Unicorn recording, now out of print. Although Stone made numerous cuts and alterations and was cajoled—or more accurately, shamed—into allowing a harpsichord in his orchestra, his recording gives a clear idea of Franz's approach, which, "though founded on Mozart[-Hiller], with the necessary completions," is both tasteful and inventive. Nonetheless, the society should one day resurrect Franz's performing edition and record it authentically and in its entirety, as a pendant to its recording of the "pure" score, conducted by Thomas Dunn—the best available budget version, which will be discussed next month.

*Messiah* as it was performed in nineteenth-century Britain is documented in the first comprehensive recorded representation of the oratorio, a remarkable series of twenty-five single-sided G&T 78s made in 1906. Although arranged for woodwinds and brass to accommodate the primitive

recording methods, the Mozart score was followed. Tempos are consistent with those considered the norm today. The soloists, however, provide surprises. Theirs are not large, vibrato-ridden operatic voices; the tone is light, pure, well focused, and free of vibrato. Vestiges of the performance practice of earlier times can also be detected in the treatment of cadential points; the soloists actually dare, albeit conservatively, to interpolate high notes and other embellishments. Tenor John Harrison's interpolations at the end of "Thou shalt break them" bear a close enough resemblance to Paul Elliott's in the Hogwood recording to drive the point home: These soloists could have walked into Hogwood's recording sessions, and with only a modicum of coaching in baroque embellishment, recorded *Messiah* in an impeccably stylish manner. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!* **HF**

## CLASSICAL REVIEWS

(Continued from page 76)

# Theater and Film

### E.T. Original motion-picture soundtrack recording.

Composed, conducted, and produced by John Williams. MCA 6109, \$8.98. Tape: 6109, \$8.98 (cassette).

### POLTERGEIST. Original motion-picture soundtrack recording.

Composed, conducted, and produced by Jerry Goldsmith. MGM MG 1-5408, \$8.98. Tape: CT 1-5408, \$8.98 (cassette).

### STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN. Original motion-picture soundtrack recording.

Composed, conducted, and produced by James Horner. ATLANTIC SD 19363, \$8.98. Tape: SD 19363, \$8.98 (cassette).

Interestingly enough, the major efforts of 1982 by Hollywood's two busiest and most celebrated film composers are both tied to films closely identified with *Wonderkind* director Steven Spielberg.

For the space-age Peter Pan fantasy *E.T.*, John Williams has woven a sweeping but tasteful sound-tapestry, with an altogether suitable stress on childlike wonder and tender enchantment. This is perhaps Williams' most intimate and gracious score, insistently sounding notes of wistful fancy, innocent yearning, and rhapsodic nonsensual rapture.

Music accompanies much of the film's parablelike action and thus serves as a very conspicuous factor in its touching and compelling suspension of disbelief. Williams makes the most of several opportunities to create extended, symphonic passages, orchestrated with almost crystalline buoyancy and delicacy by veteran Herbert Spencer.

Some may discern strong residues

from the more airborne moments of *Superman* and *Close Encounters*, but the overtones of grandiosity and awe are kept to a merciful minimum. MCA's sonics, somewhat superior to the general run of its recent product, afford a reasonable facsimile of the Dolby theater soundtrack.

For the suburban horror tale *Poltergeist*—which also centers around children—Jerry Goldsmith has pulled out all the stops. But instead of settling for a kind of *Omen III*, he has dropped the chorus (except for a couple of brief segments) and attempted to meld his characteristic strengths—asymmetric ostinatos, dissonant harmonies in contrary motion, and the like—with more conventionally expressive modes. A deceptively innocuous lullaby theme—complete with ghostly children's choir—laces the whole score; it is heard at the start of Side 1 in a rather maudlin arrangement that in the theater merely backs up the closing credits. There are passages of almost Ravelian opulence, and the "redemption" theme heard during the exorcistic struggle for a little girl's soul is comparable in its ecstatic chromaticism to Williams' "Ark" theme in *Raiders*.

But the larger part of Side 2 presents fairly lengthy symphonic elaborations of typical Goldsmith cellular motifs, which reach truly numbing peaks of frenzy and terror. MGM provides a clean, balanced digital acoustic for orchestrator Arthur Morton's dense yet always intelligible textures.

James Horner, a comparatively little-known composer who has heretofore specialized in low-budget horror and science-fiction films, graduates with *Star Trek II* into the cinematic big time. His score, resplendently outfitted by orchestrator Jack Hayes, is an appealing, but not terribly individualistic, farrago of elements now (since *Star Wars*) mandatory for the genre: ceremonial fanfares, heroic themes, eerie "outer space" tremolos, and pulsing tension music, with only one unusual device—a recurring series of overlapping trills in the brass. All of this handsome clangor is superbly rendered in a very warm and full-bodied digital ambience.

All three of these tracks belong in any self-respecting film-music buff's collection. Yet one cannot completely banish a perhaps subversive reflection on the tremendous discrepancy between all the sophisticated paraphernalia of subsidiary film artistry in special effects, production design, photography, and—most pertinent here—music, and screen stories whose psychological content and adult interest are nil and whose imaginative range is restricted to the wish-fulfillment banalities and manipulative terror-tactics of a comic-book vision of the world. When will composers of the caliber of Williams and Goldsmith get another chance to score films with at least a marginal concern with real people in a real world?

P.A.S.



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Gene Mayl's Dixieland Rhythm Kings: their best in thirty-five years

BACKBEAT REVIEWS

(Continued from page 86)

La Marche's singing is consistently soft and intimate, even on the brassy old Clarence Williams tune *I Got What It Takes*—which includes such couplets as "You can look at my bank book/But I'll never let you feel my purse"—and *That's What I Call Sweet Music*, a song introduced by the lusty-voiced Sophie Tucker. La Marche is at her best on *Minnie the Moocher's Wedding Day*, on which she re-creates all three voices of the Boswell Sisters through overdubs. She not only captures the vocal texture, but the soft accents and phrasing of this popular trio of the '30s. Her reading of *Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me* is also effective, her gentility lending a sense of coy allure.

Waldo has given La Marche more exposure than usual on "Vamp 'Til Ready," somewhat at the expense of his band. Roy Tate's bristling trumpet, Frank Powers' soaring clarinet, and Jim Snyder's bushy-voiced trombone are largely relegated to supporting roles, although all three growl and moan effectively behind La Marche. Just how much more the group could have contributed is made clear through the exuberant reading of the old King Oliver piece *Wa Wa Wa*, the only number devoted solely to the band.

JOHN S. WILSON

Gene Mayl's Dixieland Rhythm Kings: Jazz Concert

Jerry Grady, producer  
Red Onion 5 (P.O. Box 366,  
Dayton, Ohio 45401)

Gene Mayl's Dixieland Rhythm Kings have been recording since 1948 with bassist/tuba

player Mayl as their continuing link and leader. Over the past thirty-five years, the sound, personnel, and capabilities of the band have varied: There have been times when it has been heavy-footed and clumpy, sometimes drawing on the West Coast Turk-Murphy sound, sometimes aiming at the old-time New Orleans groups. This version, recorded in Burlington, Iowa, in 1979, comes out of the '50s Eddie Condon group sound and is one of the best Mayl ensembles on record.

Its key and spark is cornetist Ernie Carson, who plays with the exuberant abandon of Wild Bill Davison. Carson comes charging on with a piercing, abrasive attack, decorated with lifts and lights. John Ulrich contributes crisp solos that have the texture, but not the typically dead sound, of a tack hammer piano. Kim Cusack's clarinet is an interesting combination of New Orleans smoothness and Pee Wee Russell's rasp. Unfortunately, Cusack also sings with that empty, colorless sound so characteristic of semiprofessional Dixieland band singers.

As befits a band with Condon instincts, the repertory is more Chicago than anything else: *Nobody's Sweetheart*, *Everybody Loves My Baby*, *I Never Knew*, and *I've Found a New Baby*. Even the one New Orleans tune, *Just a Little While to Stay Here*, is transformed to the Condon style by Carson's Wild Bill brassiness, and the Whiteman Rhythm Boys's *From Monday On* is as much Wild Bill as it is Bing Crosby.

The consistent star of the set is Carson. Both open and muted, he lends the kind of energy, enthusiasm, and dedication that keeps traditional jazz styles going forever.

JOHN S. WILSON

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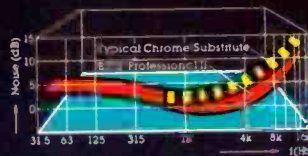
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