

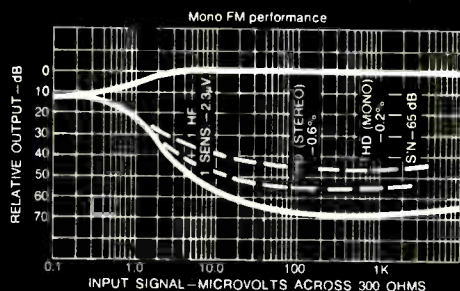
# Stereo Review

APRIL 1974 • 75 CENTS

## THE ART OF THE AMERICAN POPULAR SINGER



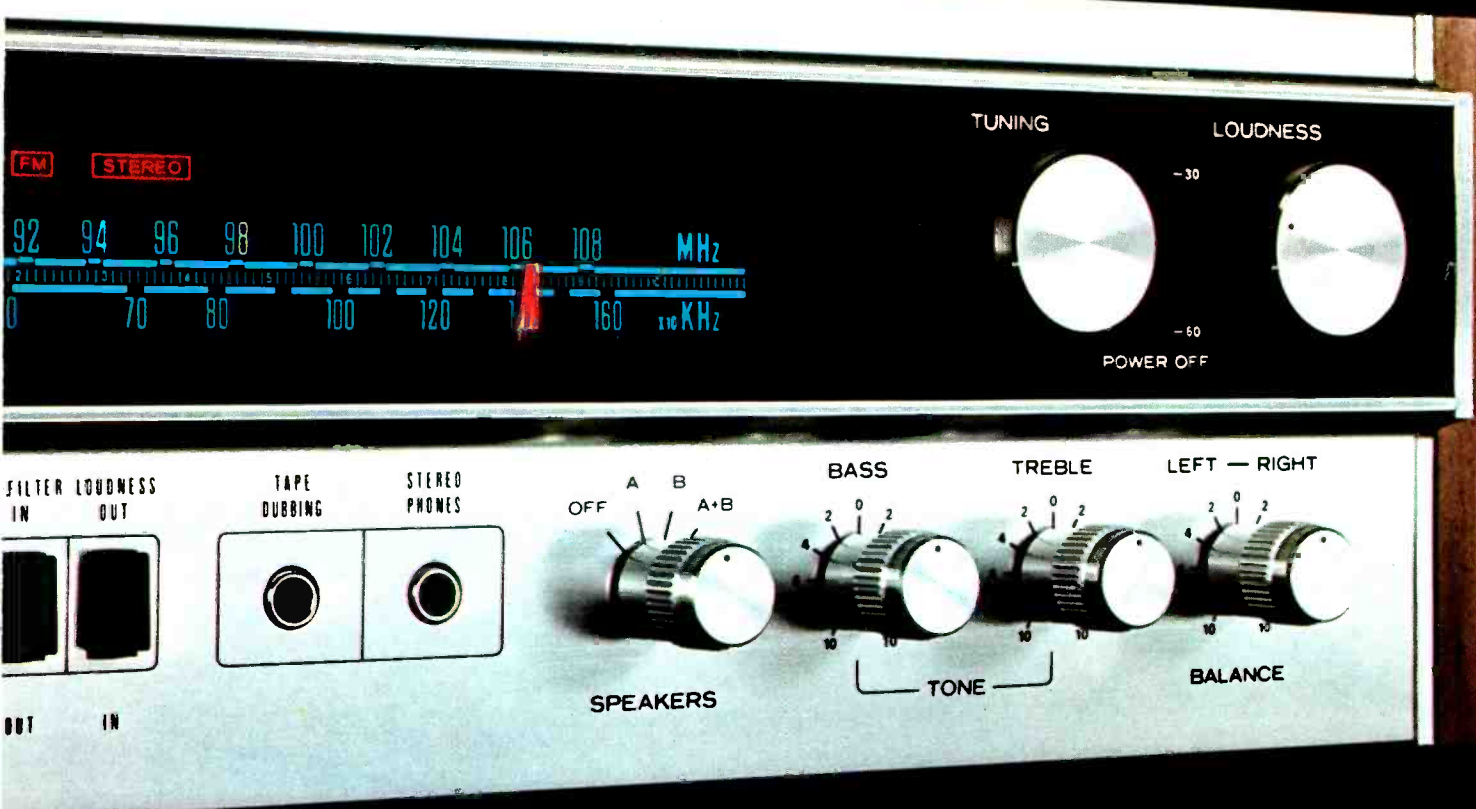
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"Our power amplifier tests were confined to 8-ohm loads, but at that, the Sherwood S-7200 exceeded its claims and pumped

nearly 43 watts into each load, with both channels driven."

"Based upon a 40-watt rated output per channel, power bandwidth extended from 10 Hz to 40 kHz, quite a bit better than claimed. At the audio limits of 20 Hz and 20 kHz, 1% THD was reached at 36 watts per channel and 40.5 watts respectively, while



"The loudness-volume control of the S-7200 deserves special mention. The tracking of the two sections of this control was excellent—with no more than 1 dB variation all the way down to 60 dB from the full clockwise position—which means that high quality potentiometers are used in this all important control."

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"Using low efficiency speaker systems in our main listening area, we just could not overdrive the amplifier portion at any desired listening level—and we mean all the way up to over 100 dB sound-pressure levels."

Which perhaps brings us to this

point. If there is one impressive factor about Sherwood receivers, it is that they often not only out-perform their specs: they almost always out-spec competition.

Sherwood Electronics Laboratories, Inc.  
4300 North California Avenue,  
Chicago, Illinois, 60618

**Sherwood**  
The word is getting around.



Not that the reviewers found it to be such a powerful set. But that they found it so surprising.

The fact is, most people who are into Hi-Fidelity components, are discovering that Sherwood delivers on its claims. And then some.

Or, to quote further from the review:  
 "The 40 dB mid-band separation figure is exceeded by 3 dB."

"With a signal as little as 5 uv, quieting had already reached an impressive 52 dB."

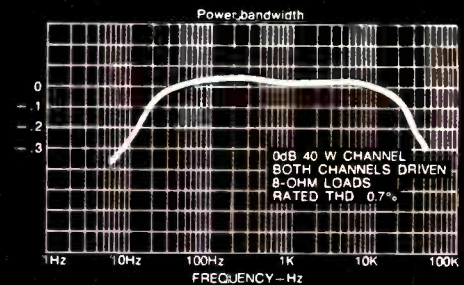
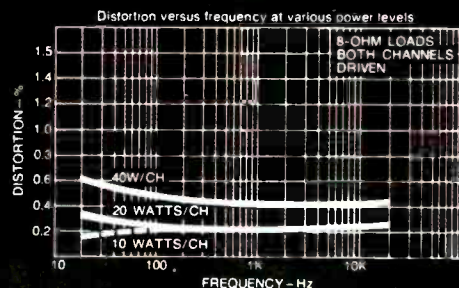
"THD in mono exceeded published claims, reaching a low figure of just 0.2% at mid-audio frequencies."

**"It was in the area of audio amplification, however, that we got our biggest surprise. The S-7200 is one powerful set."**

This quote from Audio Magazine, May 1973, evaluating the Sherwood S-7200 AM/FM stereo receiver, surprised us.



at all power levels below 40 watts, THD remained well under 0.5% for all audible frequencies."



**This is "one**



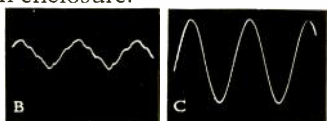
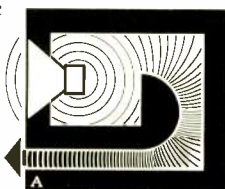
**powerful set!”**

# Now BIC VENTURI™ puts to rest some of the fables, fairytales, folklore, hearsay and humbug about speakers.

## Fable

*Extended bass with low distortion requires a big cabinet.*

Some conventional designs are relatively efficient, but are large. Others are small, capable of good bass response, but extremely inefficient. The principle of the BIC VENTURI systems (pat. pend.) transforms air motion velocity within the enclosure to realize amplified magnitudes of bass energy at the BIC VENTURI coupled duct as much as 140 times that normally derived from a woofer (Fig. A). And the filtering action achieves phenomenally pure signal (Scope photos B & C). Result: pure extended bass from a small enclosure.

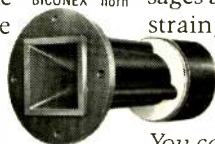


B—Shows output of low frequency driver when driven at a freq. of 22 Hz. Sound pressure reading, 90 dB. Note poor waveform.  
C—Output of venturi coupled duct, (under the same conditions as Fig B.) Sound pressure reading 111.5 dB, (140 times more output than Fig. B.) Note sinusoidal (nondistorted) appearance.

## Fairytale

*It's okay for midrange speakers to cross over to a tweeter at any frequency.*

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FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

# Stereo Review

APRIL 1974 • VOLUME 32 • NUMBER 4

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# “AN IMPRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENT.”

— Stereo Review, August, 1973.

Excerpts from the equipment report in Stereo Review, from technical data supplied by Hirsch-Houck Laboratories.

“... the versatility of the Fisher 504 is exceptional, as a review of its features will show. Our test results speak for themselves.”

“FM distortion was 0.17% in mono and was actually lower in stereo, measuring 0.13%. Stereo separation exceeded 40 dB from 30 to 2,600 Hz (reaching 50 dB in the 100- to 200-Hz range), and was better than 25 dB at all frequencies up to our measurement limit of 15,000 Hz.”

“... it was entirely ‘bug-free,’ everything operated in its intended manner, controls were clearly marked, tuning was smooth and noncritical, muting action was excellent, etc. In other words, it is a superior product which does everything Fisher claims for it and then some. All in all, the Fisher 504 is a first-rate receiver and an impressive achievement.”

“... the best value we’ve yet encountered in a quadraphonic receiver.”  
— *High Fidelity*, January, 1973, from technical data supplied by CBS Laboratories.

“The Fisher 504 is so loaded with features and so competent in its performance that we can confidently say it represents the best value we’ve yet

encountered in a quadraphonic receiver.”

“When the unit is switched from quadraphonics to the stereo mode, an odd thing happens. Into 8-ohm loads the total rated power increases from 128 watts (32 x 4) to 180 watts (90 x 2), into 4-ohm loads it *drops* from 160 watts (40 x 4) to 100 watts (50 x 2). This behavior... is a concomitant of the unusual 4/2-channel switching configuration plus the amplifier’s feedback circuits... Suffice it to say that for quadraphonic use, the 504 delivers plenty of power for each of the four loudspeakers—including extremely inefficient ones—of conventional design in any normal room, and even enough power for two sets (eight loudspeakers) in many situations.

“And being conservatively rated by Fisher (as the lab data show), it is also an unusually clean amplifier at rated output... This is... over-all the best amplifier performance we’ve yet encountered in a quadraphonic receiver.

“The tuner is also exceptionally fine. The stereo quieting curve is so good that it resembles the *mono* curve in many an inexpensive receiver; the 504’s mono curve is superb. The ultimate quieting in both (better than 50 dB in stereo, 60 dB in mono) suggests the finest of separate tuners.”

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that offers more, over-all, to the music listener.”

“... a well-thought-out unit with exceptional performance.” — *Electron* (Canada), June 1973.

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“The first thing that strikes you about the 504... is its bulk. It measures 21" x 7" x 17" and weighs 43 pounds. But, considering what this unit has inside it, the size is not excessive.”

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For free test report reprints, write to Fisher Radio, Dept. SR-4, 11-40 45th Road, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

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*Studio - Standard*

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## EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

### 'WAY DOWN UPON THE YELLOW RIVER

WHEN the long communications hiatus between East and West came to an end late last year with, shall we say, the visit of Ormandy and the Philadelphians to China, just about the first cultural artifact to slip out the front gates of the Inner Kingdom (right after the ping-pongers and the acrobats) was—surprise!—a thoroughly Western piano concerto. Perhaps we should chalk it up as just one more proof of the inscrutability of the East and let it go at that, but curiosity is not so easily satisfied. Does it mean that having borrowed a political ideology from the West, China intends to try on the rest of its culture as well? Has the Maoist revolution so completely destroyed all traces of the country's indigenous musical culture that it is necessary to start all over again? Or is that native music still held to be of so reactionary a nature that its very sound would wither the resolve of the Red Guard? And if *that* is true, wouldn't Western music—particularly Western classical music—be even more tainted and dangerous?

Perhaps we shall never know; certainly the *Yellow River Concerto* will never tell. As Richard Freed notes in this month's review section, it is an odd sort of aural pastiche put together by a committee of contemporary Chinese composers using the materials of a twenty-year-old cantata. It is also, I'm afraid, an open invitation to ridicule. Everyone knows the story about the camel being a horse designed by a committee; this concerto is the music that camel would write. Those who have heard it almost invariably dismiss it after ticking off the various composer "influences," much as a gourmet would the contents of an unknown sauce. (I hear Dvořák and Foster principally—not surprising, under the circumstances, since both have a strong, ideologically "correct" folk strain.) Bad as it is, however, it does teach a couple of lessons we might attend to. One is the folly of trying to create anything, and especially music, in a language that is not our own. If it can be said that the first thing we pick up in any foreign language is profanity, surely the second is cliché. Unfortunately, the obvious, exposed, attractively available, and temptingly simple cliché is among the subtlest parts of any language, and foreign speakers almost always give themselves away when they employ one. The committee that is a limb of the Central Philharmonic Society of the People's Republic of China has done just that, with innocent vengeance, here.

The other lesson to be learned is that trying to create a serious work of art in this collectivist fashion is simple, punishable blasphemy, for not only are the separate contributors bound to betray the enterprise because of their varying aims and skills (there is considerable evidence of both in the Concerto), but a true artist is already a "collective" in himself, a microcosm of humanity's macrocosmic whole, at once the vessel of his art's history and the carrier of his race's aspirations. To try pridefully to "improve" upon this fundamental psychological given is to invite the punishment of Babel: confusion and ridicule. And so, justly, the *Yellow River Concerto* is funny, the more for being unintentionally so. It is not the usual run of arcane and rarified musical humor available only to initiates, but pure slapstick, a kind of high-class movie music that depends for its effects on the surprising conjunction of unlikely elements, an hilarious bumping together of musical ideas on the electrified floor of a sonic fun-house.

High-minded Malvolios, virtuous and uncompromising, may take RCA to task for serving up this chop suey at all, and for desecrating Red (!) Seal in the bargain, but I would commend them for seeing their responsibility in an unconventional perspective, for serving present informational and future historical needs by "publishing" this news rather than withholding it in a pique of aesthetic comstockery. We need the relief of cakes and ale more than ever these days; Mao protect us from the commissars of culture, wherever they may be, who would keep such delicacies from us.



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Stereo Review.

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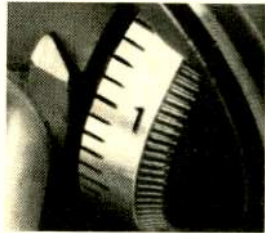
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Bei Mir Bist Du Shame

● It is hard to understand how an individual such as your "reviewer" Peter Reilly can hold a job with a magazine of reputation. I never read a more degrading, narrow-minded, and insulting review than the piece of tripe Reilly spewed out about the Andrews Sisters (February). He is not only insulting one of the most successful vocal groups of our times, but also millions of people, here and abroad, who loved to hear and see the Andrews Sisters and bought their records. Reilly is not at all reviewing this particular recording as would be expected of a critic: rather, he is taking a vicious cut at the performers, lacking any objectiveness, tact, and obviously a great deal of knowledge in the field of popular music.

HELMUT W. KRANZ  
Philadelphia, Pa.

*Reader Kranz obviously has a great deal to learn about criticism.*

● Although I agree with Peter Reilly's review of the Andrews Sisters' "Boogie Woogie Bugle Girls" in the February issue, he errs in stating that these are the "original versions" of their hits. Actually, this album is a repackaging of recordings made by the sisters for the Dot label in the mid-1960's, when they were attempting a comeback. For the real "original versions," one must go back to the earlier Decca recordings, many of which are still available and others of which are now being reissued.

WARREN G. HARRIS  
New York, N.Y.

● Peter Reilly shouldn't feel so bad about those sixty million records the Andrews Sisters sold. You see, what actually happened, three people bought twenty million each.

CLIFF WILLIAMS  
Alamosa, Colo.

### The Wrong Beckmesser

● The name of the Town Clerk in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* is Sixtus Beckmesser, not Frederick Beckmesser, as Irving Kolodin would have his readers believe in his February column, "Choosing Sides." That's quite an error for the author of the monumental history of the Metropolitan Opera. Otherwise, I couldn't agree more with

Mr. Kolodin's brilliant article about "nut/genius" or "genius/nut" pianist Glenn Gould.

HOWARD J. HIRSCH  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

*The Music Editor replies: Mr. Hirsch is correct about the error but wrong in attributing it to Mr. Kolodin. The "Frederick" was, in fact, an editorial insertion brought about by confusing Sixtus Beckmesser, who lived (theoretically) in the sixteenth century, with his spiritual descendent Frederick Beckmesser, who lives (theoretically) in the twentieth century, and who was the author of a stumbling block to music called "Gradus ad Parnassum" that appeared in the August 1973 issue of STEREO REVIEW.*

### Wronged Wright

● David Hall's review of the Harold Wright/Harris Goldsmith performances of the Brahms clarinet sonatas (February) contains a remarkable statement: "Mr. Wright has become first-chair clarinet of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington." I find myself wondering whom I've been watching at so many concerts by the Boston Symphony Orchestra over the past years: surely it sounds like Mr. Wright. Then, too, who is the charming man teaching in my school each week and with whom I have so many interesting conversations? Surely it looks like Mr. Wright: is it possible that it is Mr. Wright?

ROBERT LEE TIPPS  
Boston, Mass.

*We have now received an even dozen letters on this subject, and are persuaded of two things: (1) Harold Wright is indeed first clarinet with the Boston Symphony, and (2) he has a lot of responsive friends.*

### Middle-Age Slump

● Debunking time, gentlemen! We've been congratulating ourselves a great deal lately about advances in recorded sound, now haven't we? Well, I submit the following: sound reproduction's most shamefully neglected problem is also one of the oldest—end-of-side treble distortion. At realistic treble levels the best cartridges and the best tone arms seem to provide small solace. One waits for that last inch of record while gritting his

teeth as the recording engineer seems to declare war on the *Pines of Rome*. And yet record critics and editorialists remain strangely silent. Why? I think I know. Most audio industry writers are male, middle-aged, and probably veterans of military service. This means, simply, that they don't hear very well. Also, many audiophiles keep their tone controls superstitiously vertical despite the average room's vast treble slump. Less distortion that way, but they must wear earplugs in Carnegie Hall or have an awful lot of hair if they think that is realistic sound.

Therefore, please stop asking record companies to put filler selections first on the disc. I'd rather lose an overture or a minor tone poem than have a major symphony lose its first and last movements to a haze of end-of-side distortion. The only record I have ever heard that does pretty well by the ends of its sides is the Delius Piano Concerto on London CS 6657. Until there are more, I curse my good hearing. I only pity women; they hear even better than we do!

STEVEN W. KRUGER  
New York, N.Y.

*How's that again, Kruger?*

### Opera Plotters

● I am starting to doubt that the high-salaried people who make the decisions on what operas are to be recorded will ever show any justice or imagination. London recorded *Les Huguenots* and Angel recorded *Guillaume Tell*, but all the credit must go to the influence of Joan Sutherland and Nicolai Gedda. The decision makers of the recording industry are content with giving the public every year at least one new version of *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Carmen*, and *Don Giovanni*. There is nothing wrong with these operas, but don't the record companies realize that everyone already owns a copy (or two or three) of *Bohème*, but nobody owns a copy of *Le Prophète*?

Why can't we hear Cabellé in *La Donna del Lago*, *Caterina Cornaro*, and *La Straniera*? Why doesn't someone record Domingo and Verrett in *L'Africaine*? Instead, we are getting Caballé and Domingo in *Bohème* and Verrett in *Carmen*. Why are Sutherland, Caballé, Pavarotti, and Ghiaurov wasted in *Turandot* rather than being used in an opera worthy of them: *Robert le Diable*? In the Seventies singers want to sing Meyerbeer, and audiences (in the opera house and at home) want to hear them, but the record companies give us the same old thing.


FRED POSNER  
Bronx, N.Y.

*The Editor replies: It is tempting, because it is so easy, to embrace the general paranoia being communicated more virulently than ever by the Calamity Janes amongst us and to blame absolutely everything that happens on some "them" (in this case, "high-salaried people," "decision makers," and "record companies"), some venal gang of mean-minded conspirators whose only purpose and pleasure is to discomfit the public. Unfortunately, the "they" of "them" is "us," fallible human beings like any others, differing from each other principally in the nature of our problems.*

*If Mr. Posner is going to give "all the credit" for *Les Huguenots* and *Guillaume Tell* to Joan Sutherland and Nicolai Gedda (he shouldn't, incidentally), perhaps he can see*  
(Continued on page 12)

# The new Micro-Acoustics QDC-1 Stereo Phono Cartridge:

## It will make any well recorded LP sound exactly like its master tape.



Recently at a trade show in Chicago, we invited audiophiles to compare a master tape with a stereo disc cut from the tape. The tape and the disc were played through the same electronics and the same loudspeakers. The only difference was that a tape deck was used to play the 15 IPS master and a turntable with our QDC-1 Stereo Cartridge was used to play the commercial pressing. Without fail, listeners *could not* hear a difference between the disc and the master.

Actually it's not as incredible as it sounds.

People in the record business have known for a long time that a well recorded stereo disc is potentially every bit as good as its master tape. We make the Series 300 Micro-Point Recording Stylus — an ultra precision cutting tool used in record mastering. (Over two-hundred million records a year are manufactured from masters cut with our Micro-Point Styli.) And it has been our experience that there's no problem in getting the music onto the record; the problem is in retrieving it.

### The cartridge is the culprit

Until the advent of the QDC-1, there really wasn't a cartridge on the market that could make a stereo record sound as good as its master tape. So cartridge manufacturers didn't have to deal with an absolute standard of measurement for their product. They sold their cartridges very much like loudspeakers, using subjective criteria. In the end, the customer had to choose between the "sound"

of one cartridge or another. The fact is that a cartridge shouldn't have any *sound* of its own. Ideally it should just be a direct link between the record groove and the preamp input. And that's precisely what the new QDC-1 is — an ultra precision component that will radically change the way all cartridges are judged. Now a cartridge's performance can be measured against a completely reliable *objective* standard.

Stated simply: Does a cartridge make a well recorded disc sound identical to its master tape? Or doesn't it?

Ours does.

### Hearing is believing

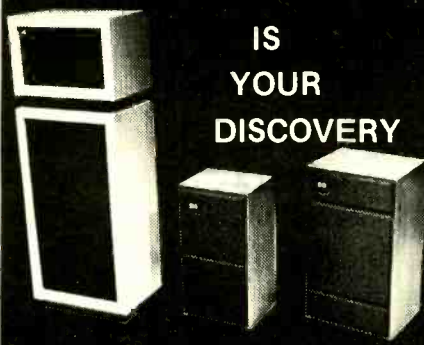
The new Micro-Acoustics QDC-1 (Pat. Pend.) is available in spherical, elliptical and Quadra-Point™/CD-4 configurations. Prices range from \$100 to \$120. Frankly, we're not selling to every dealer and not every dealer we sell is doing our master tape/disc demonstration. But if it's been a long time since you were really excited by something new in stereo, we urge you to look for local ads announcing demonstrations in your area. In the meantime, why not take a stereo LP of your own to your Micro-Acoustics dealer and let him show you what our cartridge can do for your records. We think you'll be startled by the difference.

For technical information and a dealer list, write to Micro-Acoustics Corp., 8 Westchester Plaza, Elmsford, New York, 10523.

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is currently available on London 25271. This Canterbury performance seems to emphasize the ethereal qualities of the music, to the neglect of its livelier elements. It is a beautiful but restrained performance. Happily, the King's College disc does full justice to both aspects of this fascinating work.

JOHN W. P. STORCK  
Kent, Ohio

#### Well-Placed Faith

● Your magazine has shown me many new things. But my most treasured new knowledge is knowing there are people my age who listen to both rock and classical (Letters, February) with equal devotion. This gives me new faith in my generation. Delighted and twenty.

THOMAS ZIMMERMANN  
Barnegat Light, N.J.

● As a recent subscriber to STEREO REVIEW I would like to say that I enjoy your magazine, especially the articles you have presented for "classical rookies" ("Expert Advice for Classical Rookies," January). Although it is impossible to buy all the records suggested, the articles are still helpful guides and interesting reading. Please keep these as a monthly feature.

MICHAEL ELLIS  
Carrollton, Ga.

The monthly feature is called "The Basic Repertoire."

● Eureka! Our generation has "discovered" the classics. No small wonder considering the amount of trash (in general) we had to wade through to find them. It's good to hear that some people are actually graduating from the school of hard rock. Let's hope this discovery won't fade like so many others of the age.

KEVIN F. MANSON  
Vermillion, S.D.

#### Sullivan Without Gilbert

● May I offer an emendation and some supplementary information to Paul Kresh's review of Arthur Sullivan's incidental music to *The Tempest* and *The Merchant of Venice*, and the overture *In Memoriam* (January)? With regard to the last-named piece, Mr. Kresh states, "Sullivan wrote it with Tennyson in mind—they were friends in 1866 when the piece was written. . . ." While it is possible that the title of the overture refers to Tennyson's famous poem, it is known that the inspiration for it came from the sudden death of Sullivan's father at a time the composer was unable to choose a subject for an orchestral piece commissioned for the Norwich Festival in October 1866.

Sullivan did undertake a collaboration with Tennyson—a song cycle patterned after the well-known cycles of Schubert and Schumann. Tennyson wrote a series of poems called *The Window, or the Songs of the Wrens*, which Sullivan duly set to music in a style that blatantly apes the characteristic devices of his two German models (it is, in fact, almost possible to identify a precise Schubert or Schumann original for each of the songs in Sullivan's cycle). But it is the texts that make the work unperformable today: the poet himself had second thoughts about it—to the extent of offering Sullivan five hundred pounds to suppress the work. A sample lyric (appropriate in this winter of fuel shortages) may suggest why: "The frost is here./And fuel is dear./And woods are serene./And fires burn

clear./And frost is here/And has bitten the heel of the going year." All in all, Sullivan is extremely lucky to have met Gilbert.

With regard to the *Tempest* music, Mr. Kresh did not mention that the new recording includes only about half of the score that Sullivan composed. Since the missing parts consist almost entirely of songs, it seems clear that the performers wanted an all-instrumental disc. This is a pity, because Sullivan was a fine songwriter, and we miss an important example of his early work (with lyrics by Shakespeare, at that) because of this decision.

STEVEN LEDBETTER  
Norwich, Vt.

#### Operatic Feminism

● In my own opera collection (which I love passionately) I have sixty-three different operas written by twenty-three different composers—all of whom are male.

Alas, alas! My feminist spirit is plagued by a painful twinge of guilt, as I am unaware of any opera written by a female composer. Is there such an opera?

CHRISTINA RYKER  
Champaign, Ill.

Music Editor James Goodfriend replies: Why, certainly—Dame Ethel Smyth's *The Wreckers* (1906), the overture of which is available on an imported record, Odeon ASD 2400. It's good, and there are also five other operas by Dame Ethel.

#### Still Waiting for Lefty

● For years I've been telling people how well Lefty Frizzell interpreted the songs of Jimmie Rodgers. After reading the short review by Noel Coppage (January) I carefully unwrapped my twenty-one-year-old Columbia album of 78's. It was decorated with a pink cover featuring Lefty's photo in the center. It had been a long time. (I've often wondered who played that fantastic bar-room piano and those unique fiddle runs—only "String Band Acc." was credited.) Listening once more to *Blue Yodel Number 2* and *Travelin' Blues* invited comparison to the Capitol album by Merle Haggard—a real accomplishment and a pleasure to hear, yet some of those arrangements and Haggard's phrasing sure do sound familiar! Somehow it's always too late for Lefty. Maybe this reissue will attract some listeners.

LOUIS J. KOCH  
Fresno, Calif.

#### Music Is Music

● I would like to express my thanks for Stanley Dance's well-written article on Earl "Fatha" Hines (January) and for the excellent photos that accompanied it. Music is music, be it jazz, rock, classical, or whatever. I am pleased to see that STEREO REVIEW has the catholicity to present the many sides of this great art.

VERNON O. SMITH  
Waynesville, N.C.

#### Thomas Mann Recordings

● Owners of non-commercial recordings of Thomas Mann are kindly requested to write to: Deutsches Rundfunk-Archiv, 6 Frankfurt (Main), Bertramstrasse 8, West Germany, c/o Mr. Loevy, or to S. Fischer Verlag, 6 Frankfurt (Main) 70, Geleitsstrasse 25, West Germany, c/o Mr. Freund.

LIONEL VON DEM KNESEBECK  
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speaker selector permitting simultaneous or independent use of two stereo pairs or both pairs off for headphone listening. Two stereo-headphone jacks are provided. The controls of the Mark 27 equalizer include equalizer-defeat switches for both channels and a range selector that sets the sliding frequency controls to span  $\pm 8$  or  $\pm 16$  dB.

The two units have similar distortion

specifications—typically 0.01 per cent harmonic or intermodulation distortion. The preamplifier has a signal-to-noise ratio of 80 dB for the phono inputs, 100 dB for high-level inputs. Maximum output is 14 volts into 100,000 ohms; frequency response is 10 to 100,000 Hz  $\pm 0.25$  dB. The equalizer, which uses toroidal-inductor filters, has a frequency response of 20 to 20,000 Hz  $\pm 0.25$  dB

with the slider controls centered. Its noise level is 90 dB below the rated output of 7 volts into high impedance. Insertion loss is less than 1 dB with controls centered. Dimensions for the Mark 1M and Mark 27 are 17 x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches and 17 x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 7 inches, respectively. Prices: \$600 and \$550. A walnut cabinet for the Mark 1M is optional at \$39.

*Circle 117 on reader service card*

## Technics SA-8000X AM/FM Four-Channel Receiver



● THE most fully equipped four-channel receiver made by Technics is the Model SA-8000X, with a built-in CD-4 demodulator as well as matrix circuitry that can be switched or otherwise adjusted to decode any present matrixed program sources. The main operating controls of the receiver are bass, treble, master volume, and individual level controls for each of the four channels. The mode selector has positions for mono, stereo, four-channel discrete, and two matrix positions, labeled PHASE 0 de-

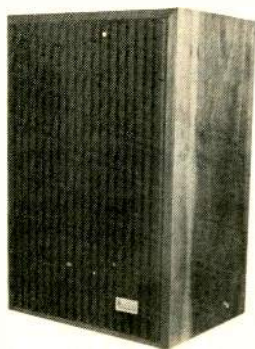
grees and PHASE 90 degrees. The input selector chooses between AM, FM auto, "normal" phono, CD-4, aux, and microphone (via a front-panel jack). On the upper half of the front panel are the tuning dial, a relative-signal-strength meter for AM and FM, and four output-level meters, the sensitivity of which can be changed via a pushbutton switch.

A unique feature of the SA-8000X is the Acoustic Field Dimension ("AFD") control system—two slider adjustments that vary the separation characteristics of the matrix circuits to alter the shape and extent of the four-channel sound field to some degree. The separation and carrier-level adjustments for the CD-4 circuits are also located on the front panel. As many as two four-channel tape recorders can be accommodated, with tape-monitor switching for each. The remaining front-panel facilities are switchable loudness compensation and FM interstation-noise muting, and stereo headphone jacks for all channels.

Rated output for the amplifier section, all four channels driven simultaneously into 8 ohms, is 13 watts per channel continuous over the full audio band (20 to 20,000 Hz). The outputs can also be strapped to operate as two channels, in which case the continuous output is 36 watts per channel under the same conditions. Total harmonic distortion is 0.5 per cent at rated output, and signal-to-noise ratios are 90 dB (high-level inputs) and 70 dB (phono inputs). IHF FM sensitivity is 1.9 microvolts. Other FM specifications include: capture ratio, 1.8 dB; alternate-channel selectivity, 65 dB; AM suppression, 50 dB; i.f. and spurious-response rejection, 60 dB; image rejection, 55 dB; stereo separation, 40 dB at 1,000 Hz. FM frequency response is 20 to 13,000 Hz  $\pm 1$  dB. Dimensions of the SA-8000X are approximately 19 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 15 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches, including its wood cabinet. Price: \$499.95.

*Circle 118 on reader service card*

## Norman Laboratories Model Seven Speaker System



● NORMAN LABORATORIES' new Model Seven ("Triton") speaker system is a two-way design of the conventional front-firing configuration. It employs a 12-inch woofer and two 1-inch dome-type tweeters with polycarbonate diaphragms. The crossover network divides the audio band at 1,500 Hz; a three-position switch adjusts high-frequency levels to taste or acoustical conditions. A  $\frac{1}{3}$ -octave-band measurement made anechoically with a pink noise input and five microphone positions shows a power response within  $\pm 1$  dB from 50 to above 2,000 Hz, with a gradual rolloff to  $-6$  dB at 15,000 Hz.

The nominal impedance of the system is 8 ohms. Power-handling capability is not specified although the manufacturer indicates that the Model Seven can be used safely with any amplifier designed for "reasonable home use." Minimum power required will depend on room size and acoustics as well as personal preference; it is recommended that the dealer be consulted. The system is 23 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 15 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and it has an oiled walnut cabinet with sculpted foam grille. Price: \$159.95 (slightly higher in the far West).

*Circle 119 on reader service card*

## Sams Book Catalog

● HOWARD W. SAMS & CO. has announced the availability of the Sams Book Catalog for 1974. The ninety-page paperbound volume lists, with brief descriptions, over four hundred titles on technical, mechanical, and hobby subjects, including nineteen books specifically on audio and high fidelity. These

include basic guides to stereo and four-channel high-fidelity systems, handbooks on tape recorders and record players, instructions for building speaker enclosures, and others. Related subjects covered by other books include electronic musical instruments, servicing of audio equipment, the theory of stereo FM, and acoustical and electrical measurements. The catalog also describes

the Sams Photofact index, which lists the model numbers of more than 92,000 home-entertainment products for which Sams can supply schematic diagrams and other servicing information. The 1974 Sams Book Catalog is available free from: Robert W. Soel, Advertising Coordinator, Howard W. Sams & Co., Dept. SR, 4300 W. 62nd Street, Indianapolis, Ind. 46206.





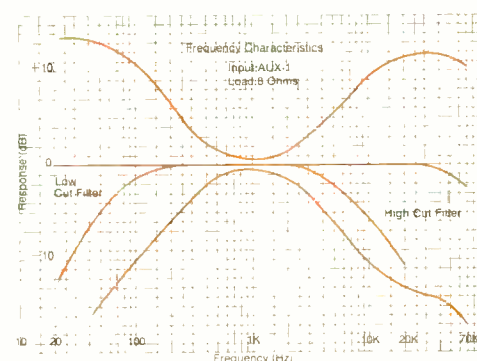
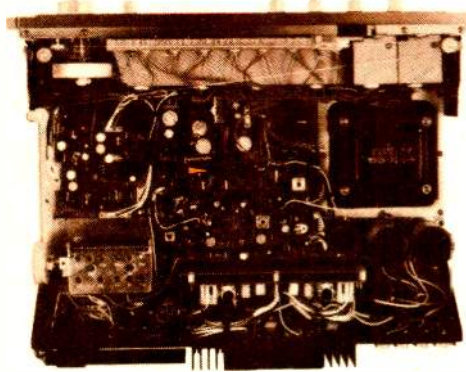
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The experts more than praise the TX-666. Hirsch-Houck (Stereo Review, March '73) calls it "A high performance receiver". High Fidelity (May '73) says it "Behaves well above average". Radio Electronics (Feb. '73) is "Highly impressed". And FM Guide (Jan. '73) calls it a "Winner"!

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Photo: Beth Bergman

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Angel

Hubert Saal in Newsweek reviewing the 1969 New York City Opera premiere.

# AUDIO NEWS

VIEWS AND COMMENT

By LARRY KLEIN

Technical Editor

● If you, as an audiophile, are somewhat confused as to which direction four-channel is ultimately going, you may (or may not) be reassured by the fact that the equipment manufacturers are also searching for answers. The only companies that haven't quizzed me on what I think the four-channel future holds are those that have their own proprietary systems (CBS-SQ, Sansui-QS, and Panasonic/JVC-CD-4). I expect that all three quadraphonic systems will be with us for at least five years, with a good chance of there being some compatibility compromise in terms of the software (records) amongst them. At the moment it appears that any attempt to produce a combination matrix and CD-4 disc will cut severely into the playing time, but that difficulty may yet be resolved. For the long-term view, I suspect that the same technology that may in the next year or so present us with video discs can easily be applied to the problem of multi-channel sound reproduction. Obviously, if they can get a 4-megahertz color-TV signal on a disc, they should be able to lay down a lot of 20- to 20,000-Hz audio channels.

Therefore I envision a single, not-too-expensive dual-purpose player that can be hooked up to your TV set and/or your audio system. This will provide color pictures with stereo sound or multi-channel sound, depending on the "record" you put on its turntable.

● I've added a gadget to my four-channel system that has (pardon the cliché) enhanced my listening pleasure enormously. Quite a while ago I noticed that JVC, among others, had a remote-control joy-stick accessory made to be plugged into some of their four-channel receivers. I asked JVC to send me one to see how adaptable it would be to my system, whose electronics at that time consisted of a stereo preamp, a four-channel matrix adapter, and two stereo power amplifiers. Truth to tell, I wasn't too optimistic about being able to achieve a bug-free hookup without some modifications of the other equipment. The first thing I did was cut off the special plug at the end of the cable and try to work out a system of connecting it directly at the

output of my four-channel adapter. I bravely wired up the eight leads in the adapter cable to some home-made dual phono input/output jacks, plugged everything together . . . and, wonder of wonders, everything worked perfectly first try—no audible noise, hum, or loss of high frequencies.

Unless you have had a chance to try critically balancing your four channels (and they do need *critical* balancing) from your *listening* position, you don't realize how much of a difference in quadraphonic listening pleasure such a remote controller can make. In addition, the JVC control has a built-in four-channel master volume control that will reduce the level of all four channels smoothly, silently, and simultaneously. That's a feature that's also nice to have when your equipment is not within easy arm's reach of your listening area. The only problem I encountered with the adapter resulted from my tendency to leave its volume control set to less than full. When I then raised the level at my preamp to compensate, the four-channel adapter was sometimes overdriven.

JVC is considering making the adapter assembly available, but in the meantime if you want to roll your own, I'll mail a how-to-do-it diagram to anyone sending a long, stamped self-addressed envelope to me at STEREO REVIEW, Dept. JS, One Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

The remote controller should work fine on any system using a separate four-channel adapter. But if you aren't confident of your electronic know-how, I would suggest you don't get involved in trying to hook it up to any other kind of setup. Neither JVC nor STEREO REVIEW is in a position to work out the possible permutations and combinations for every case.

● A couple of years ago, it occurred to me that it would be a good idea if cassettes were manufactured with "notches" that would program cassette machines in much the same way Instamatic cameras are set for proper exposure by the Instamatic film cassettes. Shortly thereafter I attended a press conference given by BASF, and I noted that they had two extra notches on the back edges of their chromium-dioxide cassettes, adjacent to the knock-out record-interlock tab. As it turned out, the notch was designed to switch a cassette machine to CrO<sub>2</sub> equalization (provided the cassette machine has the proper mechanism built in and could be triggered by the notch). For some reason, Japanese manufacturers never picked up the idea. However, I was recently given a private demonstration of what looks like a super-high-quality machine that will shortly be coming over from Europe, and it had the CrO<sub>2</sub> triggering mechanism. Now how about a notch for Dolby equalization (and some machines to respond to it)?



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**AUDIO BASICS**  
By RALPH HODGES

**DEALING WITH DIRTY DISCS**

**A**LTHOUGH the principles of record care are pretty well agreed upon, the practices are not, and there are many serious disc fanciers who have tried and discarded more brushes, ointments, and cleaning appliances than the average audiophile knows exist. Here are some simple approaches you may find useful.

● **Rule one.** As much as possible, keep the playing surfaces of discs from contacting other surfaces or objects—particularly the fingertips, which leave behind an oily residue that traps dust particles. A good disc-handling habit to acquire is the simple one-hand carry, which is straightforward enough that it becomes automatic with a little practice. Starting with the jacketed disc, buckle the cardboard sides slightly apart by pressing the jacket's edge against your body and withdraw the inner sleeve. Then, avoiding contact with the disc's flat surfaces, slide your open hand into the sleeve until the disc's edge nestles in the "V" between thumb and forefinger. Your fingertips should then fall naturally on the label area at the center of the disc, supporting it without touching any of the grooved portions.

The one-hand carry is used primarily to maneuver the disc in and out of its packaging. To place it on the platter, or flip it over, support it at the edges with the fingertips of both hands.

Incidentally, discs should be jacketed immediately after play. If left in the open, their statically charged surfaces will attract dust. Also, keep the turntable clean by using the dust cover.

● **Rule two.** Eliminate surface dust. Accumulative record noise is caused by hard particles—various kinds of dust and fine grit—that are present in the air and, ultimately, on any surface exposed to the air. Every disc surface carries its own quota of this visible and invisible debris, and removing it is difficult because the static electricity generated by playing the disc—or even sliding it from its sleeve—tends to hold the particles fast. However, the use of a barely damp—or

even dry—record-wiping pad with a pile of soft fiber bristles (velvet or plush coverings provide this) does a fair-to-good job of coping with the situation. Evidently the groove-penetrating action of the bristles nudges the dust up out of the stylus' path, even though much of it usually defies complete removal from the disc surface.

Such cleaners are sold by Discwasher (909 University, Columbia, Mo. 65201) as part of their excellent treatment kit, by C. E. Watts (Elpa Marketing, New Hyde Park, N. Y. 10040), and by Robins (15-28 127th St., College Point, N.Y. 11356). Or you can improvise your own with a velvet pad and cotton stuffing. Watts and Bib (Revox Corp., 155 Michael Drive, Syosset, N.Y. 11791) offer devices working on the same principle, except that they clean the record as it is being played. I recommend that these be used *in addition to*—not instead of—the larger hand-held units.

● **Rule three.** Do what you can to combat static electricity. Of the several treatments in use—artificially produced humidity, radioactive ion-emitting devices, and anti-static fluids (see below)—some of them please some people, but no one of them seems to satisfy everybody. At one time you could buy conductive turntable mats that helped to cancel static charges when the disc was actually on the platter (simplifying dust removal), but these have become hard to find.

● **Rule four.** Approach fluids and other chemical treatments with utmost caution. Most of them claim one or more of three "benefits": detergent action (to remove filmy smoke deposits and other substances that clog groove detail and function as dust adhesives), anti-static properties, and lubrication. Many of the substances sold by the aforementioned and other responsible manufacturers are probably worth trying (use sparingly as directed), but there are a host of others—soap-based liquids and silicon "lubricant" cloths and sprays in particular—that you should scrupulously avoid.



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# TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **EVALUATING SPEAKERS—MIDDLE AND HIGH FREQUENCIES:** Last month I discussed some of the reasons why the measured performance of a speaker often fails to correlate with its sound at the lower frequencies, thus posing certain data-interpretation problems in testing. And, as we go up in frequency, moreover, the evaluation/testing problems become even worse!

Most speaker frequency-response measurements are made in an anechoic chamber—one whose surfaces absorb almost all the sound *above* some frequency (rarely below 150 Hz except for large and costly chambers) and reflect little or nothing to the test microphone. Anechoic chambers are used to avoid the measurement confusions produced by multiple reflections. The microphone measures the acoustic pressure response of the speaker along the line between the microphone and the center of the radiating surface. If more than one radiator is operating at any frequency, there is a high probability that their outputs will interfere and cause an irregularity in the measured response. For this reason, anechoic measurements are most useful for determining the performance of a single driver rather than of a complete system.

Since the acoustic-pressure response depends on the angle—in the vertical and horizontal planes—between the microphone and the central axis of the speaker, no single measurement made in an anechoic chamber can describe the audible character of its sound (unless the speaker is going to be *listened* to anechoically). The on-axis response is often presented in specification sheets as the speaker's "frequency response," but it is nothing of the sort. Although it usually does provide the "best-looking" curve, at least insofar as the high frequencies are concerned, it tells almost nothing about the sound quality of the speaker.

In a normal listening room, at distances beyond a few feet from the speak-

er, most of the sound that reaches us has been reflected from one or more room surfaces. The direct radiation from the speaker dominates in close listening, but rapidly diminishes with distance. What we actually hear is something related to the total energy put out by the speaker in all directions, as modified through absorption by the room surfaces and furnishings. This can easily be demonstrated by driving a speaker with random noise (an FM tuner's interstation hiss is a good source) and walking around the room with a sound-level meter. Starting close to the front of the speaker, the sound-pressure level drops rapidly as the

## TESTED THIS MONTH

Thorens TD-160C Record Player  
Kenwood KR-8340 Receiver  
Dynaco AF-6 AM/FM Tuner Kit  
Avid Model 103 Speaker System

meter is moved away from the speaker, but beyond a distance of perhaps eight feet the measured sound-pressure level is relatively constant throughout the entire listening area.

Since there is no such thing as a "standard" listening room, a reverberant chamber is frequently used to measure the *total* output of a speaker. Unlike those of an anechoic chamber, its hard-surface, non-parallel walls are designed to reflect and homogenize the sound as much as possible. And, like most anechoic chambers, a reverberant chamber's usefulness is generally limited to the lower mid-range frequencies and above.

Using speakers whose output had been measured under reverberant condi-

tions, we have calibrated our own listening/test room and determined that its response is within 2 dB of a reverberant-chamber measurement from 500 to about 10,000 Hz, and—with a slight correction—up to 20,000 Hz. This is not only convenient for our speaker-measurement procedures, but also seems to confirm the validity of reverberant-energy measurements as a basis for judging loudspeaker performance in normal home environments.

Since we have a relatively simple method for measuring the total output of a speaker system in a real listening environment, can we use this information to describe its sound? Unfortunately, no. If all speaker systems had identical directional properties, our total-energy output curves might at least provide a means of comparison—that is, knowing the sound of one speaker, we might judge another by a comparison of the response curves of each. Sad to say, the polar characteristics of different speakers vary even more than their frequency-response curves. If all the audible sound came from the reverberant field, this factor would be of less importance, but we *do* hear some of the direct radiation from a speaker, and this will usually affect its sonic balance, depending on one's distance and direction from the speaker.

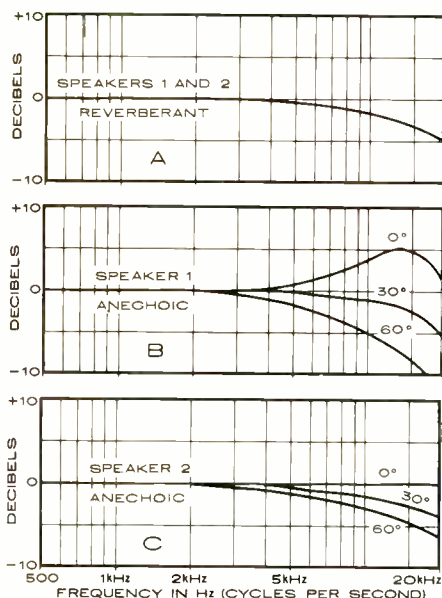
This can be illustrated with the idealized response curves shown in the accompanying graph. Assume that two speakers have identical reverberant response curves, as shown in A. However, speaker 1, as shown in B, has a peaked high end in its anechoic on-axis response, plus a strong beaming that causes the high frequencies to drop rapidly off axis. Speaker 2, on the other hand, has a smoother high end, and it varies little between on- and off-axis listening positions (C).

In most rooms, these speakers would be audibly different. But the larger the room, and the greater the listening distance, the more nearly alike they will

sound. Up close, speaker 1 will sound brighter on axis and duller off axis than speaker 2. On the other hand, if the program has little content above 5,000 Hz, the two may sound very similar under any conditions.

This is the explanation for one of the acknowledged weaknesses of a "live-vs.-recorded" comparison. Unless the speaker and the "live" source (in our case, another speaker) have similar directional characteristics, an exact simulation of the original sound is very difficult to achieve. We have learned to make allowances for these differences, but this flaw prevents the test from providing unambiguous "yes or no" answers to anyone looking for precise evaluation.

We are convinced that no measurement method, or any finite combination of methods presently available, can analyze the *sound quality* of a speaker as well as a practiced ear can. A relative assessment of two speakers is always possible, but no one can tell how any given speaker will sound in a given room solely from hearing it in different surroundings.



Even though speakers 1 and 2 have identical measured responses under reverberant conditions (A), their directional properties cause significantly different test results in an anechoic environment (B and C).

Some readers feel that we should be more descriptive and subjective in our comments on speaker sound, but my feeling is that this tends to inject too much of the reviewer's personal bias into the picture. We all have our personal views on how a speaker should sound—or *not* sound—but we try to minimize their effect on a test report. Therefore, after applying all the measurements and listening-test procedures at our disposal, we limit our comments largely to a description of general trends. As with all other hi-fi components, if we feel that a speaker falls well short of meeting what we feel are acceptable hi-fi standards, it is not likely to be given review space in these pages. If we feel that it does a decent or better than decent job, we will try to give you some idea of its overall character and leave the finer points to your own judgment. We therefore refrain from absolute "this-is-the-best" judgments, but instead, *when appropriate*, use phrases like "one of the best" "among the best," and so forth to leave some room for individual preferences.

## EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

### Thorens TD-160C Record Player



● **THE** Thorens TD-160C integrated two-speed manual record player includes the model TP-16 tone arm, which was developed for the de luxe Thorens TD-125 Mk II turntable. The arm has low-friction gimbal pivots and a length of slightly over 9 inches that achieves very low tracking error. Anti-skating correction is applied by magnetic repulsion, with four scales calibrated for conical and elliptical styli on dry or fluid-lubricated records.

The turntable has a two-piece, 12-inch nonferrous platter that weighs 7 pounds. It is belt-driven by a 16-pole, 450-rpm

synchronous motor whose low speed minimizes rumble in the audible range. A knob on the motorboard shifts the belt mechanically to change speed, and in its center position switches off the motor. Another knob operates the damped cueing arm lift. The platter bearing and tone arm are mounted on a rigid substructure isolated from the motorboard by springs. This protects the record player from outside shock and vibration and also reduces rumble (since any motor vibration tends to act simultaneously on the arm and turntable platter). The ribbed rubber record mat supports the

disc on double rows of raised segments, with air spaces between them, and the center spindle can be inverted for playing 45-rpm records. The TD-160C is supplied on a walnut base with a removable, hinged clear-plastic dust cover. It is 17 inches wide, 13½ inches deep, and 7¾ inches high; it weighs 16½ pounds. Price: \$215.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Our unit was supplied for test with a Stanton 681 EE cartridge installed, and this was used throughout our tests. Tracking error was very low, never exceeding 0.33 degree per inch of disc radius, and it was near zero over much of the record surface. When the arm was balanced according to the instructions, the measured tracking force was about 0.35 gram higher than the scale calibrations. When we adjusted the arm's counterweight for correct calibration at a 1-gram force, the indicated tracking force was then correct within 0.1 gram from 0.5 to 2 grams. The low-frequency tone-arm resonance (with the 681EE cartridge) occurred between 6 and 7 Hz, with an amplitude of about 5 dB. The capacitance of the integral signal cables was 260 picofarads, a typical value for stereo arms, but too high for  
(Continued on page 32)





# “Professionally speaking, these are professionals.”

“When I gave the engineers at Pioneer my ideas about a studio quality tape deck the average guy could use,” said Bobby Colomby of Blood, Sweat & Tears, “I realized it was a tall order. But they did it, and more. They came up with the fantastic 2-track RT-1050.

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“I love old records and the RT-1050 brings out their highs better than ever with its equalizer. And

here’s something you’ll appreciate as I did. It’s a new logic override circuit built into the pause control. It lets you switch from Fast Forward or Rewind to Playback without the usual time lag.

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Visit your Pioneer dealer and have him put the RT-1050 through its paces. Also check out two other great Pioneer tape decks — the RT-1020L (7½, 3¾ ips) and RT-1020H (15, 7½ ips). They incorporate most of the RT-1050’s outstanding features, as well as 4-channel playback. Slightly less at \$649.95 for either. Absolutely professional, and absolutely the best values ever for top quality decks.

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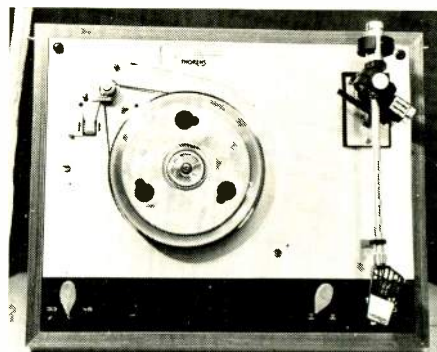
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most CD-4 cartridges. The required setting for optimum anti-skating compensation was higher than indicated—a characteristic the Thorens TP-16 arm shares with most tone arms we have tested. With the vertical force set to 2 grams (to allow for the effect of the integral brush on the Stanton cartridge and to provide an actual tracking force of 1 gram) the anti-skating control had to be set to its maximum of 3 grams to give equal tracking force on the two groove walls. The cueing control worked very smoothly, raising the arm almost instantly and lowering it in about 3 seconds, with negligible outward drift.

The turntable performance was outstanding, ranking with the best non-electronic drive systems we have tested. Unweighted rumble (lateral plus vertical) was about -41 dB, and with RLLL audibility weighting it measured a very low -60.5 dB. Wow and flutter were

respectively 0.05 and 0.04 per cent at both operating speeds. The speeds were exact and did not vary detectably with a change in a.c. line voltage from 90 to 140 volts.

● *Comment.* The tone-arm balancing procedure was quite touchy and eventually we resorted to trimming the balance with a screw-in plug at the end of the arm. This plug, incidentally, is not mentioned in the tri-lingual instruction manual, although it appears in photographs of the arm. (Elpa tells us that the manuals are undergoing clarifying revisions.) As may be inferred from our experience, an accurate external stylus-force gauge is recommended for the initial adjustment of the TP-16 arm. However, once set up, the TD-160C certainly must rank with the best record players on the market. Only a few very expensive electronic-drive turntables have lower rum-



The speed-change mechanism of the Thorens TD-160C is a mechanical device that shifts the belt on the motor pulley (top left).

ble (and not much lower), and no pivoted arm of comparable size has a lower tracking error. In addition, the TD-160C displayed no "bugs" or idiosyncrasies whatever in operation.

Circle 105 on reader service card

## Kenwood KR-8340 AM/FM Four-Channel Receiver



● THE Kenwood KR-8340 is a four-channel AM/FM receiver with RM and SQ matrix decoders, plus provision for an optional plug-in CD-4 demodulator. Its direct-coupled power amplifiers, which are rated at 25 watts per channel into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz at less than 0.8 per cent total harmonic distortion, can be "strapped" by a switch in the rear of the receiver for use as two channels rated at 60 watts each. The FM tuner section has an FET r.f. amplifier, an i.f. amplifier with ceramic filters, an IC limiter stage, and Kenwood's "DSD" (double-switching) multiplex demodulator. The rated IHF sensitivity is 1.9  $\mu$ V (microvolts) with 0.5 per cent total harmonic distortion in mono and 0.8 per cent in stereo.

The tuning dial occupies the left center portion of the receiver's front panel. Illuminated words above the dial scales identify the operating mode: 2 CH, RM, SQ, DISCRETE, CD-4, FM STEREO, and a RADAR indicator that comes on when a CD-4 record is played. Below the dial scales are the relative-signal-strength tuning meter and four meters that indicate the output levels of the audio channels. To the right of the dial area are the

large tuning, input-selector, and volume knobs. The selector has positions for AM, FM, PHONO 1, PHONO 2, CD-4, and the four-channel AUX inputs. Below them are three smaller knobs for operating mode (MONO, 2 CH, RM, SQ, DISCRETE) and separate balance controls for front-rear and left-right channel balance. The latter is a concentric control, permitting separate left-right adjustment of the front and rear channels. Both balance controls have detented centers.

Along the bottom of the panel are a number of pushbutton switches as well as separate front and rear headphone jacks. The switches control the a.c. power, individual activation of two sets of speaker systems, a 20-dB attenuator for the four audio meters, tape monitoring for two tape recorders, FM muting, loudness compensation, and the low- and high-cut filters. Four small knobs, with center detents, provide separate bass and treble tone adjustment for the front and rear channels. At the rear of the receiver are the various input and output jacks, plus two DIN sockets for connection to a four-channel tape recorder's front and rear inputs and outputs. An FM DET output is present for

use with a possible future discrete FM decoder. A MIC jack (used with the PHONO 1 input-selector position) substitutes a microphone for the phono cartridge when a plug is inserted, and drives all four channels monophonically.

There are insulated spring-clip connectors for two four-channel speaker arrays (eight speakers in all). The rear opening for the KCD-2 plug-in CD-4 demodulator is normally covered by a removable plate. The KCD-2 has separate carrier-level and channel-separation controls for the left and right channels, and is supplied with a special CD-4 test/adjustment record. The Kenwood KR-8340 is a large receiver, measuring 21 inches wide, 14 $\frac{5}{32}$  inches deep, and 6 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches high; it weighs 43 pounds. The KCD-2 demodulator does not add to its overall depth when installed. Price of the receiver: \$620. The KCD-2 demodulator is \$80 additional.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* With all four channels driven with a 1,000-Hz test signal, the output waveform of the KR-8340 clipped at 31.4 watts per channel into 8 ohms. Driving only two channels in the 4 CH mode increased the maximum output to 36.2 watts per channel, and in the 2 CH mode it was 78 watts per channel. With two channels driven (4 CH), the maximum output into 4-ohm loads was 45.5 watts per channel, and into 16 ohms it was 22.5 watts per channel. Most of the remaining tests were performed with 8-ohm loads in the four-channel mode, with two channels driven.

(Continued on page 38)



# See son... there really is a 4-channel 8-track record/playback deck!

Perhaps that surprises you, son. But it's true. You see, there's been a lot of excitement lately about 4-channel stereo. And, like most people, you probably thought that all 4-channel recorders are open-reel.

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You'll discover a whole new world of 4-channel recording when you see—and hear—AKAI's exciting new CR-80D-SS... a remarkably engineered 8-track 4-channel/2-channel compatible record/playback deck.

The CR-80D-SS is compact... easy to operate. And conveniently placed front-panel controls make professional 4-channel discrete recording a breeze.

Which means that you'll be able to make your own 4-channel tapes. And also enjoy the increasing availability of pre-recorded 8-track 4-channel music.

What's more, the CR-80D-SS is equipped with professional features such as Automatic Stop/Continuous Play... Fast Forward... Automatic 4/2-channel Stereo Selector... Illuminated Program Selector... 4 VU Meters... front panel 4-channel headphone outputs... and much more.

So don't assume that all 4-channel recorders are alike. They're not, my son.

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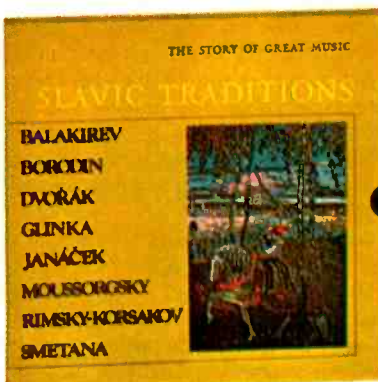
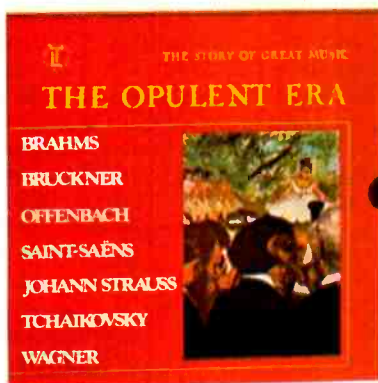




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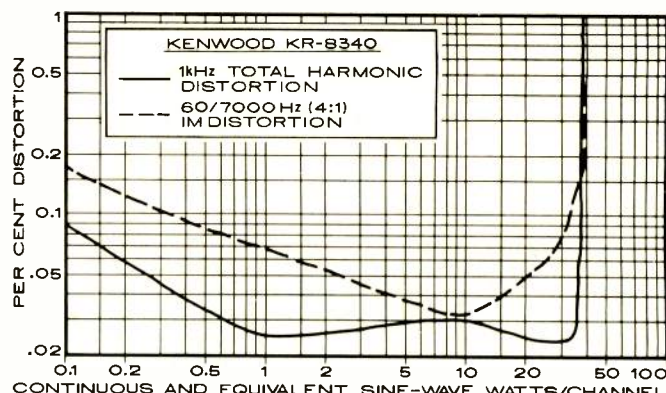
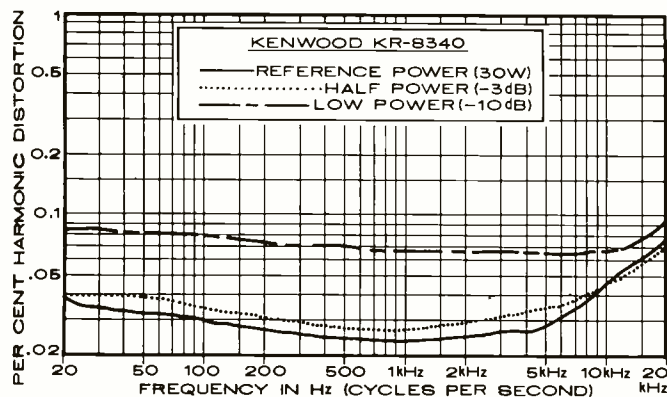
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Note: curves were made with the amplifier in the four-channel mode, with two channels driven (one measured) to equal power outputs.

At 1,000 Hz, the harmonic distortion decreased from 0.09 per cent at 0.1 watt to less than 0.03 per cent between 1 and 36 watts output. The IM (intermodulation) distortion dropped from 0.18 per cent at 0.1 watt to 0.03 per cent at 10 watts, increasing to 0.1 per cent at 34 watts. Even at a minute 1-milliwatt level, the IM was an insignificant 0.8 per cent. In the two-channel mode, the distortion was slightly higher, though still very low. It fell from 0.2 per cent at 0.1 watt to less than 0.06 per cent in the range of 2 to 40 watts, and was 0.2 per cent at 80 watts.

As the considerable weight of the receiver suggests, the husky power supply sustains its full performance at the lowest audio frequencies. We chose 30 watts per channel as a reference full-power level. The total harmonic distortion was 0.024 to 0.078 per cent at full power from 20 to 20,000 Hz. At reduced outputs it was between 0.028 and 0.095 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The power amplifiers are thoroughly protected against overload or short-circuited outputs by a combination of electronic circuits and a relay. We tripped these circuits innumerable times, both deliberately and inadvertently, and never damaged the receiver in any way. The amplifiers could be driven to a 10-watt output by 66 millivolts (AUX), 0.64 millivolt (PHONO), or 0.76 millivolt (MIC). The

corresponding noise levels were very low, respectively -79 dB, -74 dB, and -65 dB referred to a 10-watt output. Despite its very high phono gain, the KR-8340 would take an impressively high phono input (100 millivolts) before overload. The microphone inputs' frequency response was down 6 dB at 40 and 3,500 Hz, and the input does not appear at the tape recording outputs. Apparently it is intended only for public-address use.

The bass tone-control inflection point moved from below 200 Hz to about 600 Hz as the knob was moved from its center, and the treble controls became effective above 2,000 Hz. The filters had 6-dB-per-octave slopes and -3-dB points of 250 and 2,000 Hz. Unfortunately, the filters had as much effect on the program material as on the noise. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies moderately. RIAA phono equalization was extraordinarily accurate, with a variation smaller than the  $\pm 0.25$  dB tolerance of our General Radio test equipment over the full 20- to 20,000-Hz range (beyond the standard RIAA limits of 30 to 15,000 Hz). In addition, the KR-8340 was one of the few units we have tested whose phono equalization was virtually unaffected by cartridge inductance, with less than a 1-dB response change up to 20,000 Hz using any of our test cartridges.

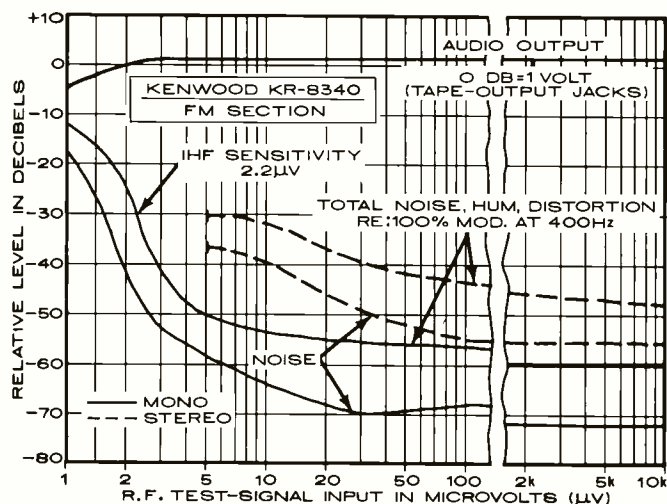
The FM tuner had an IHF sensitivity of 2.2 microvolts ( $\mu$ V), reaching 50 dB of mono quieting at 2.6  $\mu$ V, with 1.25 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD). The 1,000- $\mu$ V S/N was 71 dB, with only 0.1 per cent THD—essentially the residual level of our test equipment. In stereo, the 50-dB quieting input was 37  $\mu$ V, with 1 per cent THD. At 1,000  $\mu$ V, the stereo S/N was 56 dB, and the distortion was 0.6 per cent. The stereo FM frequency response was  $\pm 1$  dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. Channel separation was excellent—better than 35 dB from 30 to 10,000 Hz, reaching a maximum of 51 dB at about 100 Hz and a minimum of 33.5 dB at 15,000 Hz. The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage was -54 dB (rated -45 dB).

Other FM tuner measurements included: capture ratio 1 dB (very good), AM rejection 48.3 dB (satisfactory), image rejection 56.5 dB, and alternate-channel selectivity 56.5 dB above and 61 dB below the signal frequency. The muting threshold was between 4 and 5  $\mu$ V, and automatic stereo/mono switching took place smoothly as the input dropped from 8 to 4  $\mu$ V. The muting action was positive, with a slight noise burst. The AM sound was okay, with the frequency response down 6 dB at 60 and 4,500 Hz.

We were able to evaluate the CD-4 performance of the KR-8340 only subjectively. With the aid of the record supplied with the KCD-2 demodulator, there were no problems in optimizing the system with a couple of different CD-4 cartridges, including the relatively low-output Grado FTR+1. Although we can only guess at the actual separation achieved by the system (and this, of course, depends on the cartridge as well as the demodulator), our CD-4 records sounded as "discrete" and clean as they have with the best available separate demodulators.

As with all the four-channel receivers we have seen with built-in CD-4 demodulators, the matrix decoder of the KR-8340 is rudimentary—a simple SQ or RM matrix with no logic assistance. The results, with matrixed records, were no

In the graph of FM performance, the levels of both random noise and noise plus distortion are compared with the audio output level as signal strength increases. Both mono and stereo are shown.



(Continued on page 40)





# way out!

Tape cassettes and cassette recorders were once regarded pretty much as novelties. Sure, they were great for voice recordings, but they weren't taken seriously by hi-fi buffs. Then along came TDK's Super Dynamic, the tape that started a revolution in the industry. It gave the cassette true high-fidelity capability for the first time, thereby stimulating the development of improved cassette recorders.

As a result, manufacturers of both tape cassettes and cassette recorders started turning out better and better products. So today the question is "how well do they match each other in performance capability?" And with the devel-

opment of TDK's great new Dynamic-series of cassettes, the whole world of sound reproduction has changed.

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new hi-fi cassette offering excellent quality at moderate prices, with characteristics superior to most "premium" cassette tapes.

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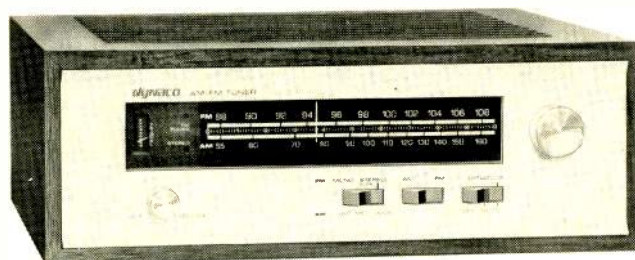
better or worse than with any such systems, but they come off second in comparison to CD-4 performance. The best performance from matrixed discs is secured with the help of logic circuits.

● **Comment.** As the test data show, the Kenwood KR-8340 is a very fine receiver, meeting or exceeding (often by a wide margin) most of its published ratings. As we have come to expect from Kenwood

products, this receiver handled smoothly and sounded as good as the available FM and recorded program material permitted.

Circle 106 on reader service card

## Dynaco AF-6 AM/Stereo FM Tuner Kit



● **WHEN** we reviewed the Dynaco FM-5 FM tuner in the August 1972 issue, we commented on its unusual features, including a highly sophisticated interstation-noise muting circuit (still among the best of its type we have seen), a very accurately calibrated FM dial scale, and an amplified automatic-frequency-control system ("DYNATUNE") that eliminated any possibility of incorrect tuning. The performance of the FM-5 was noteworthy, and its construction well suited to assembly by a kit builder.

The new AF-6 Dynatuner, available in kit or factory-wired form, is essentially an FM-5 with a built-in AM tuner added. All circuit boards are factory-wired and aligned, reducing the kit assembly process to a simple mechanical mounting of parts and installing of interconnecting wiring between boards and to the controls and connectors. Following the Dynaco tradition of functional simplicity, the AF-6 front panel displays only the tuning knob and an on-off/volume control, plus rocker switches for selecting AM or FM and the DYNATUNE and muting functions.

A third switch with three positions operates on both AM and FM. On FM it selects mono or stereo reception, or stereo with multiplex filter. On AM it functions as a bandwidth selector (WIDE, MEDIUM, NARROW). The AM tuner is designed to deliver the highest usable quality level from AM broadcasts. For example, its distortion is rated at less than 2 per cent for inputs from 50 to 100,000 microvolts ( $\mu\text{V}$ ), which is unusual for an AM tuner.

The AM i.f. amplifier features a twelve-section permanently tuned LC filter which provides the maximum usable bandwidth (and frequency response) on AM while retaining a high selectivity of 55 dB at 20,000 Hz. A separate notch filter attenuates the 10,000-Hz response by 40 dB to reduce

AM interchannel interference. The bandwidth switch permits an extension of high-frequency response on stations broadcasting a high-quality signal that does not suffer from interference. The bandwidth increase is achieved at the expense of some AM selectivity. In the wide, medium (normal), and narrow positions of this switch, the 5,000-Hz response is rated at being down -5, -15, or -22 dB, respectively. The FM section of the AF-6 is essentially identical to the FM-5, and carries the same excellent specifications. Physically, the Dynaco AF-6 also resembles the FM-5, with a gold satin-finish panel measuring 13½ inches wide, 4¼ inches high, and 12 inches deep. Its relative-signal-strength meter is principally useful for orienting a directional FM antenna for best signal strength, since the blue TUNED light on the dial face is a highly accurate indication of correct tuning. A similar light indicates stereo FM reception. Price: \$325 (wired): \$225 (kit). The optional walnut-finish cabinet costs \$17.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Two AF-6 tuners were tested: one was factory wired, the other assembled from a kit. Our kit builder reports that the kit went together in the usual easy Dynaco fashion, and construction time (taking it very slow and easy) was about 20 hours. The average experienced kit builder should be able to do the job in half the time. In general, the performance of both tuners was similar, most of the differences being of the sort that might occur within any manufacturer's production run. The IHF FM sensitivity was 2.2  $\mu\text{V}$  (wired) and 2.8  $\mu\text{V}$  (kit). The 50-dB quieting sensitivity was 3.2  $\mu\text{V}$  (wired) and 3  $\mu\text{V}$  (kit), with respective distortion levels of 0.7 and 1.8 per cent. At a 1,000- $\mu\text{V}$  input, the wired unit had 0.27 per cent total harmonic distortion in mono and 0.53 per cent in stereo, while the kit measured

0.25 and 0.5 per cent. The signal-to-noise ratios at 1,000  $\mu\text{V}$  were 72 dB (mono) and 64.5 dB (stereo) for the kit, 71 and 67.2 dB for the factory-wired model.

The audio frequency response on FM was flat from 30 to 1,000 Hz, rising to +2 dB at 10,000 Hz and returning to +0.7 dB at 15,000 Hz. The 19-kHz pilot carrier leakage was -62 dB in both tuners. Stereo channel separation was excellent in both units; the kit had a typical separation of about 40 dB over most of the audible range, better than 31 dB from 30 to 10,000 Hz, and 22.5 dB at 15,000 Hz. The wired unit had slightly more uniform separation, approximately 40 dB from 30 Hz to more than 10,000 Hz, falling to 28 dB at 15,000 Hz.

The capture ratio was a very good 1.1 dB for both tuners. The AM rejection was 53.5 dB (wired) and 57 dB (kit). Image rejection was excellent, 95.5 dB for the wired tuner and 89.5 dB for the kit. The muting threshold was 3.8  $\mu\text{V}$  for the wired unit and 4.7  $\mu\text{V}$  for the kit (automatic stereo switching occurred at the same signal level). The major difference between the two tuners was in their alternate-channel selectivity. The factory-wired unit measured 72 and 68 dB, respectively, above and below the tuned frequency. The kit measurements were respectively 32.5 dB and greater than 95 dB. A slight re-tuning would have produced more equal measurements on both sides of the desired channel, but we used the indicated correct tuning point for all our tests. However, we verified that the kit-built tuner could easily receive a weak station (less than 5  $\mu\text{V}$ ) only 400 kHz removed from a very strong local signal, on *either* side of it, with not a trace of interference. This confirmed our suspicion that the apparent asymmetry probably resulted from a slight misadjustment of the tuning-indicator circuit in the kit.

The AM tuner had excellent bandwidth. In the wide position of the switch, the frequency response was down 6 dB below 20 Hz and at 5,700 Hz. In the medium position, the upper -6-dB frequency was 2,750 Hz (comparable to the AM response we have measured in typical AM/FM receivers), and in the narrow position the response was down 6 dB at 1,850 Hz.

(Continued on page 42)



# ESS captures the "sound as clear as light" quality of the live performance.

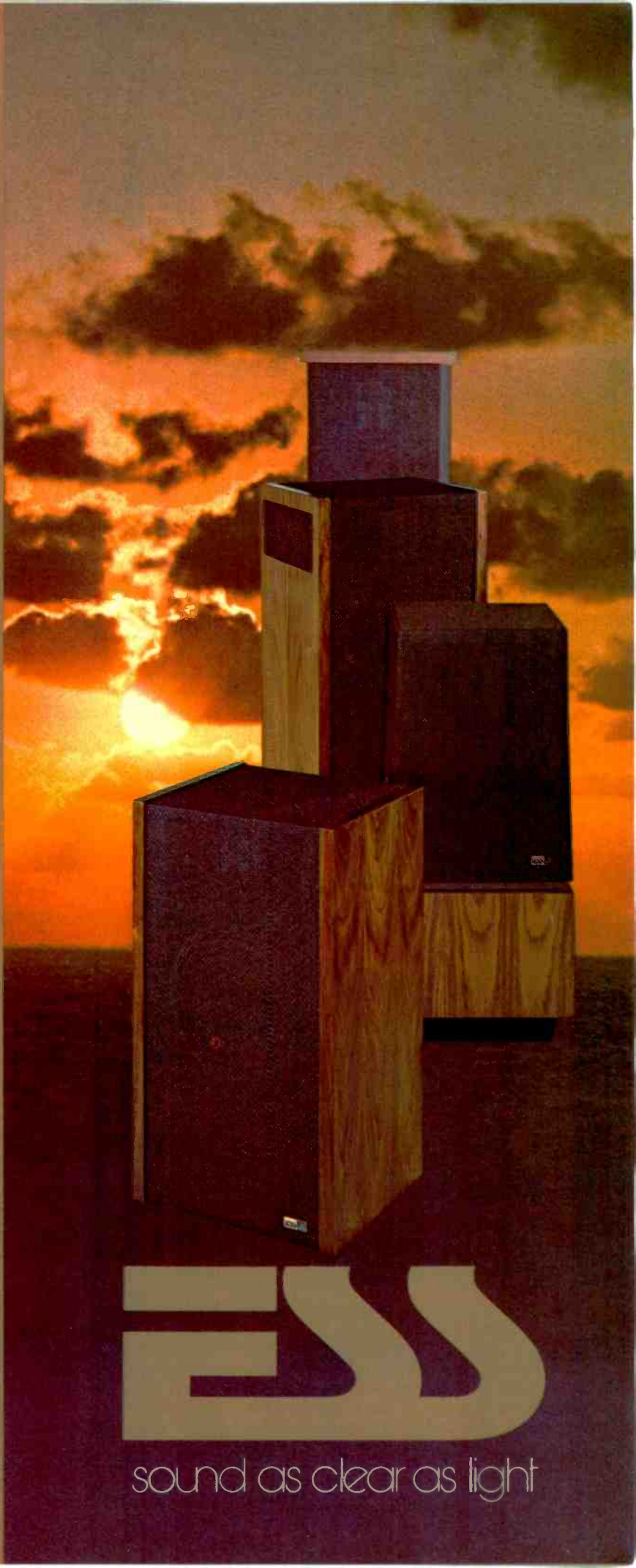
By scrapping stale, tired, worn and obsolete conceptions of sound reproduction and courageously pursuing a fresh investigation rooted not in past technology but in the laws of physics, ESS is breaking loose of archaic standards and shaping the future of high fidelity. This attempt to create something new, to upgrade the critical standards of high fidelity in the face of prejudice and vested interest, is not a haphazard endeavor but the result of ESS imagination wed to the genius of Dr. Oskar Heil, a musician as well as a molecular physicist. The present Heil air-motion transformer is no one-shot creative accident, but the product of an amazing insight into the laws of physics. The man who invented the field-effect transistor — the FET (patent, 1934) — and the high convergence electron gun used in color TV transmission (patent, 1947) must have something more going for him than good luck. He does — a thorough knowledge of the physical properties of air, sound waves and magnetism. The result: a small, efficient, simple and virtually indestructible speaker of an entirely new design.

Most speaker diaphragms when compared to the light air that they push are very heavy. It's rather like using a bulldozer to move a pebble. Since you need a solid substance to move air, however, the solid speaker diaphragm must be heavier than air. We need, therefore, a means which converts or transforms the energy spent moving the heavy diaphragm directly into rapid air movement — sort of an air motion overdrive.

Essentially we need a device that serves the function of a transmission in an automobile. Normal speakers operate like an automobile without a transmission — imagine trying to drive 60 MPH in low gear. Most of the energy would be used to move the pistons instead of the car. Similarly, only about 5% of the energy going into a normal loudspeaker goes into moving the air. Over 90% goes into simply pushing and pulling the heavy cone diaphragm.

The Heil air-motion transformer has obsoleted this wasteful process. Operating like an overdrive gear, the Heil diaphragm propels the air five times faster than its own motion. This ingenious principle is as superior in simplicity and performance to the normal loudspeaker as the rotary engine is to the piston engine. The audible result of this innovation in loudspeaker technology — even to the untrained ear — is astonishing clarity and definition, instantaneous transient response, extreme purity of sound and incredible stereo breadth and imaging.

Now there are four speakers from ESS that give you the exciting accuracy of the Heil air-motion transformer at system prices suitable to opulent halls or spartan rooms. Illustrated (back to front) are the ESS amt 1 tower, amt 3 "rock monitor", the classic amt 1 and the new apartment sized amt 4. See and hear these lasting value systems at your authorized ESS dealer soon. Yesterday's fidelity is not today's. Therefore, hear high fidelity as it now exists at any ESS franchised dealer.



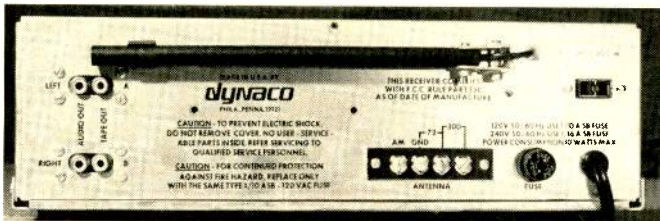
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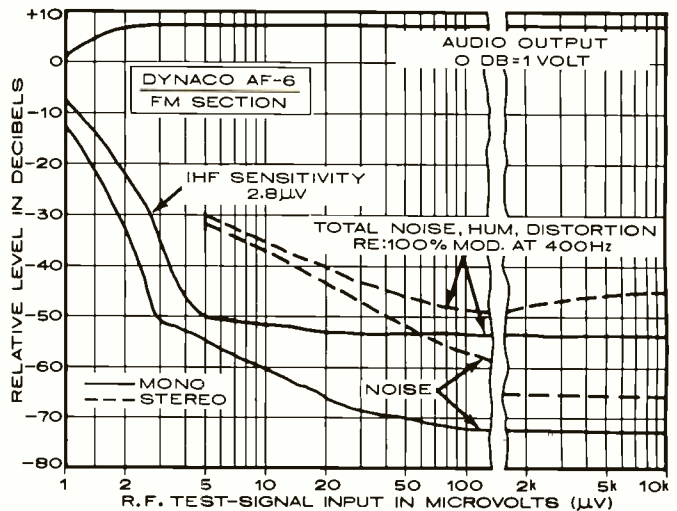
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The rear panel of the Dynaco AF-6 is equipped with two sets of outputs. One feeds the amplifier with a signal governed by the front-panel volume control. The other provides a fixed level for taping.

In the graph of FM performance, the levels of both random noise and noise plus distortion are compared with the audio-output level as signal strength increases. Both mono and stereo are shown.



● **Comment.** The measurements show—and our use of the tuner confirms—that the Dynaco AF-6 is a first-rate FM tuner with better than average frequency response, distortion, channel separation, and image rejection. The muting system (similar to that of the Dynaco FM-5) is still one of the very best we have encountered. Signals are heard or not heard, with no intermediate distorted or noisy condition or audible transition from “off” to “on.” When the TUNED light comes on, the tuning is correct for minimum distortion and noise, with no tendency to drift.

The third (DYNATUNE) function of the

MUTING switch is essentially an amplified automatic-frequency-control system which functions only when the tuner is within about 50 kHz of the channel center. In most cases it is possible to select a desired weak station in a crowded portion of the FM band even when DYNATUNE is in use. However, Dyna recommends that tuning be done with it off, and that the system be activated after a station is tuned in. Once locked in, the DYNATUNE system holds onto the signal over a range of several hundred kilohertz.

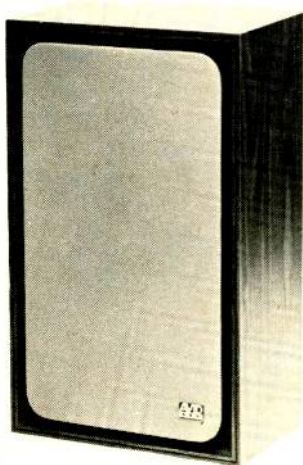
For those who regularly listen to AM broadcasts, the Dynaco AF-6 offers an

exceptionally fine audio quality, one matched by few AM tuners we have seen. Though not quite of “FM quality,” it certainly is far superior to the muffled AM sound emitted by most AM/FM receivers. Note that the superior AM circuits of the AF-6 add \$50 to the cost of the kit. If AM is of no concern, a substantial saving (and fine value) is provided by the FM-5 FM-only kit.

Even a novice kit builder should have no trouble assembling the AF-6. All the active circuits are pre-wired and tested, leaving only the mechanical assembly and interconnections for the builder.

Circle 107 on reader service card

## Avid Model 103 Speaker System



● THE Avid Corporation, a new name on the hi-fi scene (although they have been manufacturers of commercial audio equipment for over twenty years) has introduced a line of compact speaker systems. The top of the Avid line, the Model 103, is a three-way system with a 10-inch woofer that crosses over at 500 Hz to a 4½-inch cone mid-range driver.

The second crossover, at 3,500-Hz, is to a 1-inch dome tweeter. A five-position switch adjusts both the mid- and high-frequency levels over a moderate range. The Model 103 is an acoustic-suspension system, in a fully sealed cabinet, with a nominal 8-ohm impedance. Amplifier power of at least 20 watts per channel is recommended, and the speaker will handle up to 150 watts of program material. The mid- and high-frequency drivers are protected by a 2-ampere fast-acting fuse. The cloth grille is available in eight solid colors (burnt orange is standard), and the grille is easily removed for access to the five-position tweeter/mid-range control and the fuse.

The walnut-grain cabinet of the Avid Model 103 is 25 inches high, 15 inches wide, and 9⅞ inches deep, and the system weighs 38 pounds. Connections are made to insulated spring clips in the rear of the cabinet. A matching walnut base, which raises the cabinet 1¾ inches from the floor, is included. Price: \$139.50.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The com-

posite frequency response of the Avid Model 103, corrected for room and microphone characteristics, was very smooth and flat over almost the entire audible frequency range. It was within ±3 dB from 47 to 13,500 Hz, rising to a maximum of +6 dB at 15,000 Hz and then falling to only 3 dB below mid-range level at our upper test limit of 20,000 Hz. This response was measured with the high-frequency level switch set at its center (nominally “flat”) position. The output at frequencies above approximately 1,000 Hz could be raised or lowered by about 2 to 3 dB at the various settings of this switch, with the adjacent settings affecting the high frequencies (above about 2,500 Hz), and the outermost positions raising or lowering the mid-range as well.

The bass distortion was unusually low, reaching 3 per cent at 30 Hz and 8.5 per cent at 20 Hz with a 1-watt drive level. Increasing the power to 10 watts did not overdrive the woofer or produce excessive distortion; even at this consid-

(Continued on page 46)



# Many speakers trap deep, rich sound inside.

## Zenith Allegro™ gives it a way out.

Have you ever listened to stereo and felt that you weren't hearing all the sound of the original performance? That's because a lot of systems, including many with air-suspension speakers and sealed cabinets, do an incomplete job of projecting bass sound.

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reproduction. Such efficiency, in fact, that a 60-watt Allegro system equals the sound performance of a 120-watt system with comparable size air-suspension speakers.

Besides the exciting blue-white Bon Vivant, shown here, you can choose from a whole line of wood-toned Allegro sound systems with such features as 8-track tape and 4-channel adaptability.

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THE BON VIVANT  
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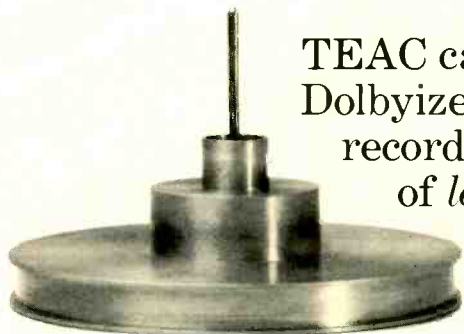
**has produced  
the first cassette deck with  
record and playback  
wow and flutter  
of less than 0.07%!**

**Measurably better than  
any other cassette deck  
in the world.**



# THE TEAC 450

**No other cassette deck can touch it.**



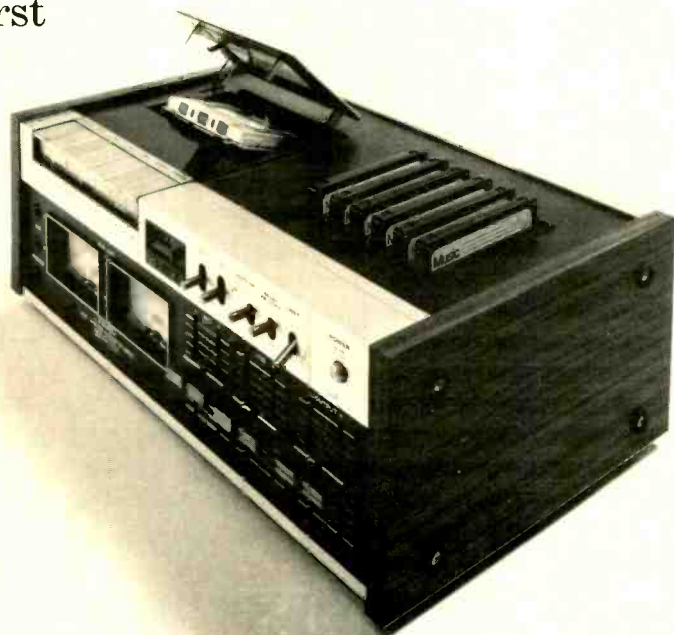
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Thus, the TEAC 450 gives you reel-to-reel quality with cassette deck convenience.

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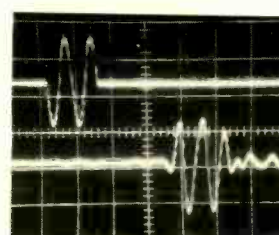
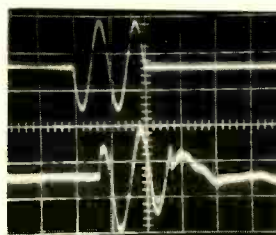
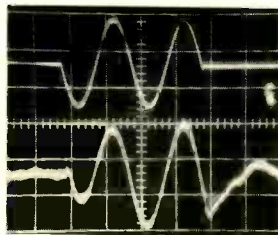
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CIRCLE NO. 5 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Two-cycle tone bursts at (left to right) 100, 1,000, and 7,000 Hz exhibit excellent rise-time characteristics and negligible ringing at the completion of the bursts. In all the photos the input signal appears above the Model 103's output on the oscilloscope screen.

## Avid Model 103 Speaker System . . .

(Continued from page 42)

erable power input the distortion was about 3 per cent down to 45 Hz and only 7 per cent at 30 Hz.

The Avid Model 103 had moderately low efficiency, comparable to that of most other high-quality acoustic-suspension systems. An input of slightly over 1 watt produced a mid-range sound-pressure level of 90 dB measured at a distance of 1 meter from the speaker. The system impedance was exceptionally uniform, measuring between 8 and 12 ohms from 200 to 20,000 Hz. There was a dip to 7 ohms at 120 Hz, a well-damped rise to 10 ohms at the 45-Hz system resonance, and a minimum impedance of 6 ohms at 20 Hz. The tone-burst response was excellent throughout the audible frequency range. The full burst amplitude was reached in less than one cycle at all frequencies, with no overshoot, ringing, or irregularities.

• *Comment.* Our initial impression of the sound of the Avid Model 103 was one of utter smoothness and freedom from undue emphasis or coloration of any portion of the frequency spectrum. It was as "easy" sounding a speaker as we have heard in some time. All the tests completely confirmed our subjective response to the system.

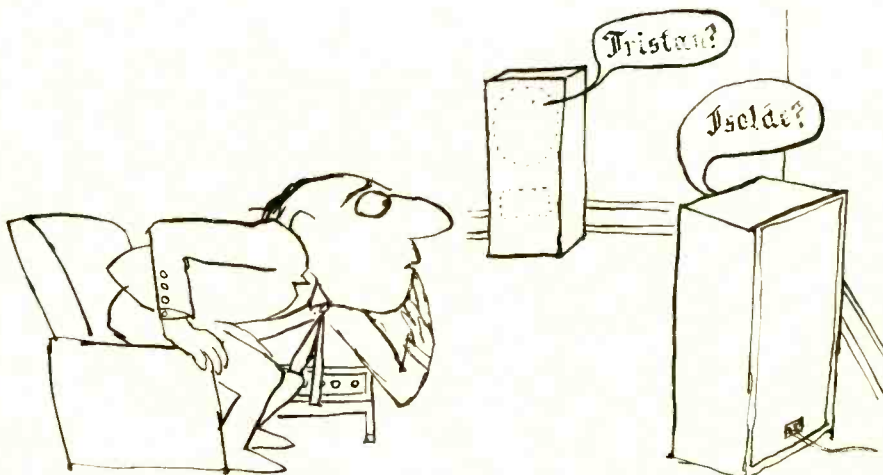
In the simulated live-vs.-recorded test,

the extreme highs were slightly over-prominent, but lowering the setting of the level switch by one position produced near-perfect results. We could still hear a very slight mid-range coloration, but only in a direct A-B comparison against the "live" source. We used an equalizer and found that a boost of only about 2 dB in the 1,200- to 5,000-Hz range reduced this considerably. Listening off-axis revealed that the Avid Model 103 had very good high-frequency dispersion—about as wide as can be achieved with a single dome radiator.

Avid's power ratings, as well as our low-frequency distortion measurements, encouraged us to try the Model 103 with a high-power amplifier. With the amplifier driven to 200-watt peaks, the Avid still sounded clean and free of strain. Few speakers in its price class can absorb the full power of a 200-watt amplifier without suffering damage or generating objectionable distortion.

Clearly, the engineers at Avid not only know how to *design* a loudspeaker system, but also know what a good speaker should *sound* like. These are two distinctly different considerations, and they are not always applied with equal effectiveness. If the Model 103 is any indication of Avid's potential, it should soon be a name to reckon with in the speaker market. As it is, the Model 103 is a considerably better-than-average speaker in its price class, and it outperforms many far larger and more expensive speaker systems we have heard.

Circle 108 on reader service card





# Is it live or is it Memorex?



Ella sings



Memorex sings



Count listens



Count can't tell!

If anybody knows what Ella Fitzgerald sounds like, it's her old friend Count Basie.

So we set up a test. First, we put Ella in a soundproof booth and recorded her singing on Memorex with **MRX<sub>2</sub> Oxide**. Then we invited the Count into the studio.

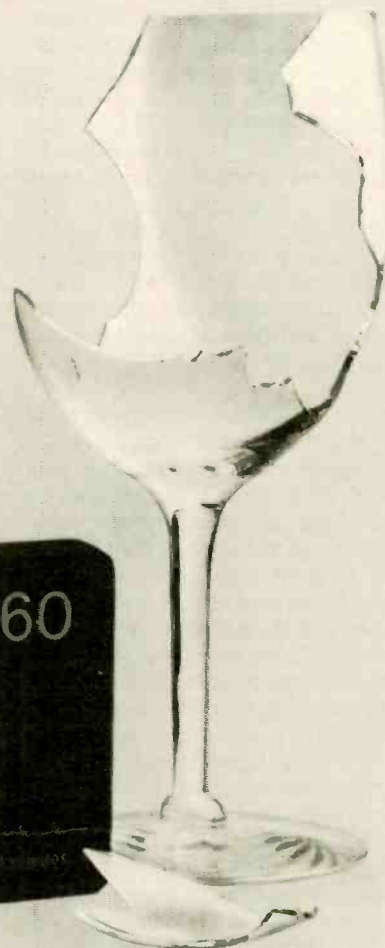
He listened, but didn't look, as we alternated between Ella singing live and Ella recorded on Memorex with **MRX<sub>2</sub> Oxide**.

After switching back and forth a number of times, we asked the Count which was Ella live and which was Ella on Memorex.

His answer: "You gotta be kidding, I can't tell."

Now it just stands to reason that if an expert like Count Basie can't tell the difference between "live" and Memorex, you probably can't either.

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# GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND

Music Editor



## GETTING INTO MUSIC

A GREAT deal of attention has recently been paid in this magazine—by both readers and editorial staff—to the particular repertoire best calculated to bring an uninitiated listener into the orbit of classical music. The variety of music recommended has shown that there is no general agreement on the subject, and this is to be expected, for each man chooses what first captivated him, or what he thinks would have captivated him had he not previously fallen in love with another.

Interest in such door-opening repertoire is hardly confined to those associated with STEREO REVIEW, nor can the interest itself, on the part of any of us, be considered wholly altruistic. Those of us classical enthusiasts furthest removed from any direct benefit that might result from a more widespread interest in classical music still know that the maintenance of a public demand for it means its continued availability to us in the form of concerts and records, and that an increase in public demand means more of these, and therefore a greater selection for us.

Those in a position to benefit more directly, such as record companies and performing artists, are aware that their livelihood, or a portion thereof, can be sustained or improved by the successful initiation of new members into the classical club. Popular artists who use classical music for their own purposes are less concerned with such long-range benefits; they are merely looking for a viable musical idea—public domain, of course—on which to build whatever it is they build.

Though performing artists and record companies give a certain amount of thought to what might be seductive repertoire, their proselytizing efforts are not in that direction alone. Certain artists attempt to modify the music they play (though not to the extent of disguising it) in the hope of making it less (or more) exotic to their inexperienced audiences. Others play the music straight,

but modify themselves—through circumstances of performance, stage manner, and dress—in a sort of “one-of-the-bunch” attempt to demonstrate that one does not need to treat classical music, or hear it, in any way different from rock. The record companies, of course, have run the gamut of approaches from the straight goods (though frequently cut in pieces) packed in psychedelic art and with liner notes by one of the anointed of rock, to old-style music-appreciation records of the six or eight or ten pieces everybody loves best. We have, in addition, Bach on the Moog, on the koto, on the harmonica, Wagner without words, and Tony and His Friends presented in such a way as to put off anyone over the age of twenty-five—and thus, presumably, attract everyone under that age.

With all the effort, with all the thought about it, nobody ever seems to have gotten to the root of what attracts someone to classical music. Or maybe it's just that nobody wants to talk about it, for the knowledge gives no secure foundation upon which to build a structure that will teach *everybody* to like the music. The truth is simply that what attracts some people to classical music is exactly the same thing that repels other people: the sound of it.

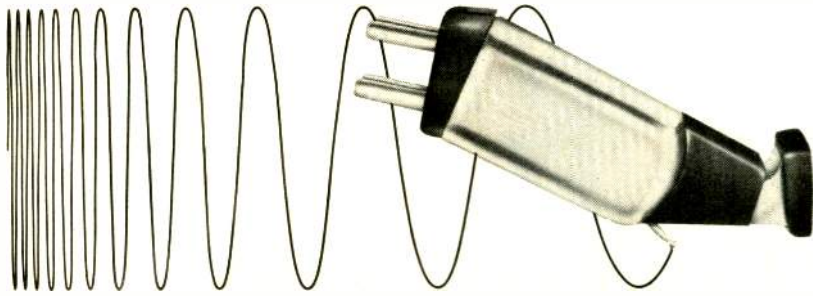
All classical music exists within certain parameters of sound. Over the last fifty years those parameters have been stretched probably farther than over the last thousand, but, except for isolated instances, there is no overlap with the sound parameters of popular music. It is not at all a question of repertoire. Long ago, Carmen Cavallaro played the Chopin A-flat Polonaise and made a popular hit of it. Not so long ago, Judy Collins sang a ballad of Francesco Landini (1325-1397), and though the repertoire is classical the record was not. I won't bore you with hundreds of examples, though they exist. But I will emphasize that Cavallaro's record led to no great interest in Chopin-performed-straight on

the part of the multitudes, and Collins' did no more for Landini. The only popular adaptations that have brought about any interest in classical music per se are those in which the sound of the music played was classical and only its surroundings were popular. I cite, particularly, the slow movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21 (a classical performance, but repeated like a pop tune throughout the film *Elvira Madigan*), and the opening to Strauss' *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (likewise, in the film *2001*).

PRECISELY what the difference is between popular and classical performance (for performance is what we really are talking about) is hard to pin down. Obviously, as Henry Pleasants has been insisting for years, it has a good deal to do with rhythm, though simply saying that the rhythm of one is explicit and the other implicit does not, for me, make the case. More likely, there is an underlying rhythmic assumption on the part of popular performers that modifies *any* written rhythm, and which they find as difficult to dispense with as classical performers find to assume. There are a few musicians who can move from one style to the other, but to ask them to explain what they do is like asking the centipede which foot he moves first. There are also the specific vocal and instrumental sounds of classical and popular music which differ from one another not only in the different instruments used but in the way they are used. Again, it is hard to pin down, but there is unquestionably a higher noise component (instrument noise, breath, gutturals) in the popular than in the classical, which aims at tonal purity. The quantity of difference in each case may seem tiny, but its effect is like that of a relatively small difference in the amount of salt added to food—depending upon our tastes, the dish is either flat, perfectly seasoned, or inedible. Our sensitivity both to salt and to certain kinds of musical sounds is just that great.

Since what we are dealing with, then, is a sound, there are only two ways anyone can begin to like it: he may like it immediately, or he may like it after he has gotten used to it. Knowledge of what the music is about is a matter of *increasing* appreciation: no one ever found himself attracted to the Beethoven Fifth because he knew it was in sonata form. The way for anyone to become a member of the classical coterie, then, is not to search for the key piece, but simply to listen to classical music—a lot of it—perhaps even to hear only *one* piece, but to hear it fifty or a hundred times. As with the infant who one day discovers that the chaotic sounds of language about him have meaning that applies to him, the music will eventually break through. Or it will not, and one can then, at least with a certain justification of proof, go on being a happy barbarian.





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CIRCLE NO. 21 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# THE SIMELS REPORT

By STEVE SIMELS



## I'D RATHER BE IN PHILADELPHIA

IT seems to be Comeback Season. By the time this is printed, the Bob Dylan tour (not to mention his new album and the attendant critical yammering) will be history, and, if the good Lord is willing and the scalpers' prices don't rise, I'll have been lucky enough to have caught it first hand. Further, the Rolling Stones have recently completed their first English performances since 1971, and, even on a less exalted level, artists like Lou Reed, Mott the Hoople, and the Stooges have staged what can only be described as "comebacks" from long periods of relative commercial obscurity.

But, successful as these ventures have been, the \$64 question is whether or not these Icons of the Sixties are still in a position to be leaders. Or perhaps "influences" is a better word; anyway, it's a complicated business. As far as the Stones go, I wouldn't venture to guess. (For what it's worth, a rock musician friend of mine who's been supporting himself by substitute teaching at a Northern New Jersey high school informs me that the consensus among his students is that Mick and Co. have sold out by trying to imitate David Bowie!) As for Dylan—well, clearly he has little or nothing to say to teenagers anymore, but there are still vast numbers of people in their twenties and early thirties who continue to regard him as the source of all wisdom, and early reports of his concerts have been nothing short of extraordinary, so who knows? However, on the basis of what I witnessed in Philadelphia recently, at least one of the major groups of the past decade that had been counted out (because of a two-and-a-half-year absence from both recording and live performing) is not only in a position to remain a trend setter, but quite possibly to be more important and influential than ever. I'm referring, of course, to the Who.

For want of a better word, their performance at the Spectrum (Philly's answer to Madison Square Garden) was

... thrilling. As a matter of fact, it was one of the four or five all-time great rock concerts I've ever attended, right up there with the Beach Boys at Asbury Park in '65, the original Byrds at the Village Gate in '66, Procol Harum and Moby Grape (who, hype or no, may have been the greatest American band ever) at the Anderson in '68, or the Stones at the Garden in '69. In other words, goose-bump time—not to mention being a powerful reminder of just what is *good* about rock-and-roll in the first place.

At any rate, since (because of scheduling problems) the band was not hitting New York this time around (an oversight my spies tell me will have been corrected by the time you read this), MCA kindly bussed me and a hefty segment of the New York rock press into Philly. The Spectrum was jammed when we arrived, and the usual almost interminable delay gave me the chance to make some sociological judgments about the audience (young, very little glitter, a lot of couples). First on were Lynyrd Skynyrd, Al Kooper's discovery from down South, whom I had seen previously at the Blues Project's Halloween reunion. They're okay, at times even better than that (when they're concentrating on *songs* rather than mechanical guitar solos), but for the first time I was actually made uncomfortable by a band's volume level. (And this from a man who's lived through a whole evening of a third-row seat at a Grand Funk concert!) The crowd was polite nonetheless.

Finally, the stage was set, the lights were dimmed, the Fallout Shelter sign that was the tour logo lit up, and . . . by God, there they were. They opened with what Roger Daltrey termed "a few of our favorites," and they were mine too—*Can't Explain*, *My Generation* (the song Peter Dinklage says they play at Who football games), *Summertime Blues*, and John Entwistle's *My Wife*—all driven home with incredible energy and sound-

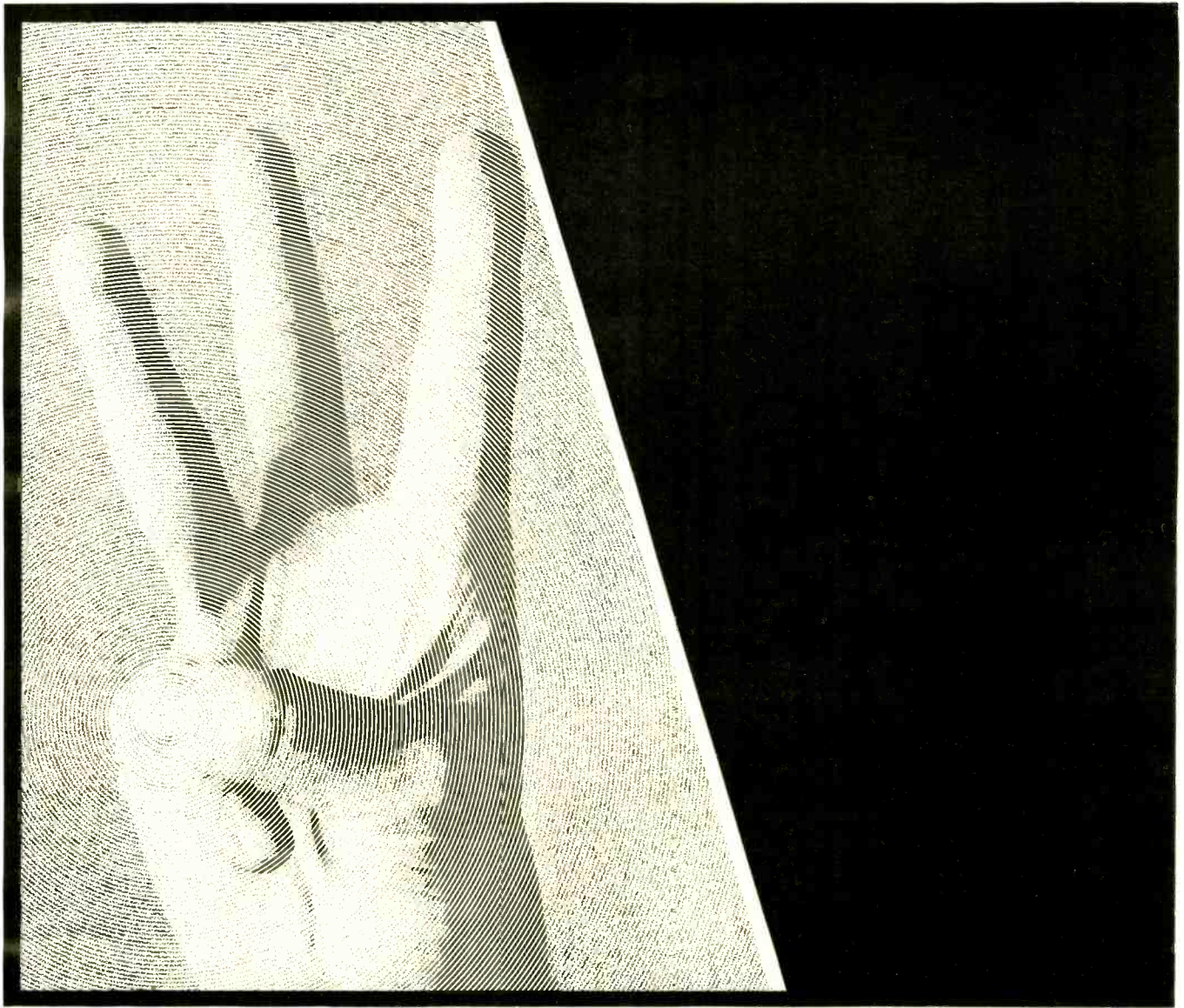
ing as fresh and timeless as ever. Then Pete explained the story of the new album, "Quadrophenia," in an engagingly self-deprecatory way, and boom . . . we were treated to forty-five minutes of highlights. Much as I like the record, seeing "Quad" done live was a revelation—the pruning, I suspect, had something to do with it—Keith Moon bashing away at his drums like a maniac, Daltrey (who, and I know this is a cliché already, has really turned into a first-rate singer) twirling the microphone like a yo-yo, and Townshend leaping and windmilling his guitar while making the most majestic noises imaginable. There were some great comic bits too; I'd forgotten how funny they are. I especially liked Keith's umbrella during *Sea and Sand* and an unobtrusive little lyric change they made, referring to their Canadian hotel misadventures of a few days earlier. Musically, they were several leagues beyond impeccable; all the synthesizer and brass stuff was on tape, and they had it synched perfectly with the symphonic sounds they were producing live.

EVENTUALLY, with the new stuff out of the way, they finished with *Won't Get Fooled Again* (which Roger dedicated to "everybody who says this is going to be our last tour") and the finale from "Tommy," during which they brought the house lights up and revealed twenty thousand kids standing on their chairs and singing along at the top of their lungs. Then a group bow, arms around each other exhausted and happy (they *knew* they'd been good), and off they went. The audience responded with a seven-minute standing ovation, and the Who returned for what I'm told was only the second encore of the tour (this was the next to last show, by the way). I didn't recognize the tune, but Townshend smashed his guitar at the end, a beautiful gesture made even more so because no one really expected it.

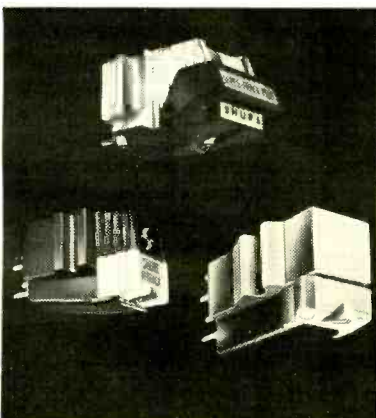
On the way out, I found myself behind two fifteen-year-old fans.

"What did I tell you?" said the first. "Aren't they better than Zeppelin?" His friend, apparently too stunned to speak, could only nod in agreement. Of course, I personally find that an almost meaningless comparison, given that the Who operate in any number of areas of wit and subtlety undreamed of by Jimmy Page and Robert Plant; still, the fact that they can continue to compete with groups like Led Zeppelin on what John Mendelsohn has termed "a gross aural level" is strong evidence that their prospects are healthy indeed. Add to this the reports from England of Roger's being mobbed by teenage girls again, and the overwhelming excellence of their current music, and it becomes quite clear that the Who are going to remain a force to be reckoned with. I don't even remember the ride home.





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Julian Ruthven

LONDON LETTER

## JOSHUA RIFKIN, RAGTIME AMBASSADOR

They're not quite ready to take it all seriously in London

By Henry Pleasants

FOR an evening of ragtime piano, the hall, the stage setup, and the format seemed all wrong. In fact, it was all absolutely right.

The hall was the Queen Elizabeth, normally dedicated to classical recitals and chamber music. The setting was a bare stage, holding nothing but a Steinway grand piano. It was as if Artur Schnabel, ritually attired in white tie and tails, were about to emerge from the wings to play a program of Chopin. Indeed, the piano was the one Rubinstein plays in London, and it was certainly without any thumbtacks stuck into the hammer felts to make it sound like a beat-up old upright.

Instead, the man who emerged from the wings was a twenty-nine-year-old American, Joshua Rifkin, also attired in white tie and tails. He strode resolutely to the piano, bowed deeply to a sold-out house, and then, without a word, played *Maple Leaf Rag* and some twenty more rags by Scott Joplin, a black American composer who was born in 1868 and died in 1917.

What was so right about all this was that Joplin, when he composed those rags, mostly around the turn of the century, had just this sort of setting and performance in mind. His objective was to distill a classical form from the *fin de*

*siècle* ragtime idiom of vaudeville and minstrel show. As a knowledgeable critic wrote the next day in the *Manchester Guardian*, one could "imagine the composer nodding self-righteously in his grave."

It would be incorrect to credit Joshua Rifkin with *sole* responsibility for the rediscovery and growing public awareness of Scott Joplin, and he would be the last to seek it. Max Morath, the late Willie "The Lion" Smith, and, more recently, the nonagenarian Eubie Blake have kept the idiom, if not exclusively the Joplin form, alive in public performance. Joplin's folk opera *Treemonisha* (1911) has been performed in recent years in Atlanta and Washington. Vera Brodsky Lawrence, a highly regarded classical pianist, was at work on her definitive sheet-music edition, *The Collected Works of Scott Joplin*, well before Rifkin cut the record, "Piano Rags by Scott Joplin," for the Nonesuch label three years ago and made the American classical-music world sit up and take notice. That record and a sequel together sold more than a quarter of a million copies and have stood high on the *Billboard* listing of *classical* LP best-sellers since their release. And a new book, *The Art of Ragtime*, by William J. Schafer and Johannes Riedel, has just been pub-

lished by the Louisiana State University Press.

"The whole thing has been a bit fluky," Rifkin told me a couple of days after his Queen Elizabeth Hall outing. "To begin with, I don't think of myself primarily as a pianist. I am a composer [Princeton, Göttingen, and Darmstadt], musicologist [Princeton], and teacher [Assistant Professor of Music at Brandeis University]."

"When I made that first record I hadn't played piano seriously for about ten years. We didn't expect anything from it. I had been lucky enough to be in on the founding of the Nonesuch label, and as musical director I had a say in what was produced.

"I had played a lot of jazz piano as a kid, and loved it, although as a jazz enthusiast I'm something of a moldy fig. I knock off at about 1940, which is four years before I was born. Among pianists, Art Tatum is about as far as I go. My taste goes back to early Fatha Hines, James P. Johnson, and Jelly Roll Morton. That's probably why, when my friend Bill Bolcom [another composer-musicologist who combines the avant-garde with early jazz and ragtime] put me on to Scott Joplin, I was hooked. That record was a labor of love, a means of working out an obsession."

Rifkin still regards the Joplin venture as an avocation. Composition and musicology come first. He is preparing for a doctorate in musicology with a dissertation on the musical manuscripts of the Medici popes (1513-1534). He is also doing some articles for the forthcoming new edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, among them those on Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672) and Bach's librettists.

WHY had his Scott Joplin made so much greater an impact than the Joplin of other laborers in the vineyard? "I suppose," he says, "it's because I play Joplin straight, which is pretty hard for a jazz pianist to do. Joplin wanted to create a ragtime art form, and he wanted his rags to be played exactly as written, free of any vaudeville taint or show-biz flourish. And that's the way I try to play him. Every note is his, and it's right where he put it."

Hence the formal recital format at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, soup-and-fish and all. The only thing missing was the "serious" music critics. The reviews in the national press were raves, but they were by jazz or entertainment critics. This was a disappointment to Rifkin, who is now accustomed to being reviewed by "serious" critics in the States.

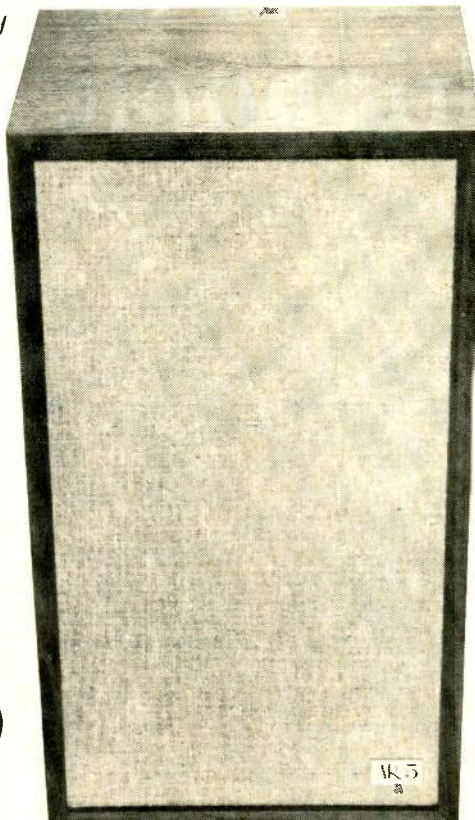
But he will be back in the spring for another go, and by that time, he hopes, the word about Scott Joplin will have trickled down to those who review Rubinstein's Chopin. Knowing them as I do, I wouldn't put any money on it.



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LARRY ZIDE  
IN AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE



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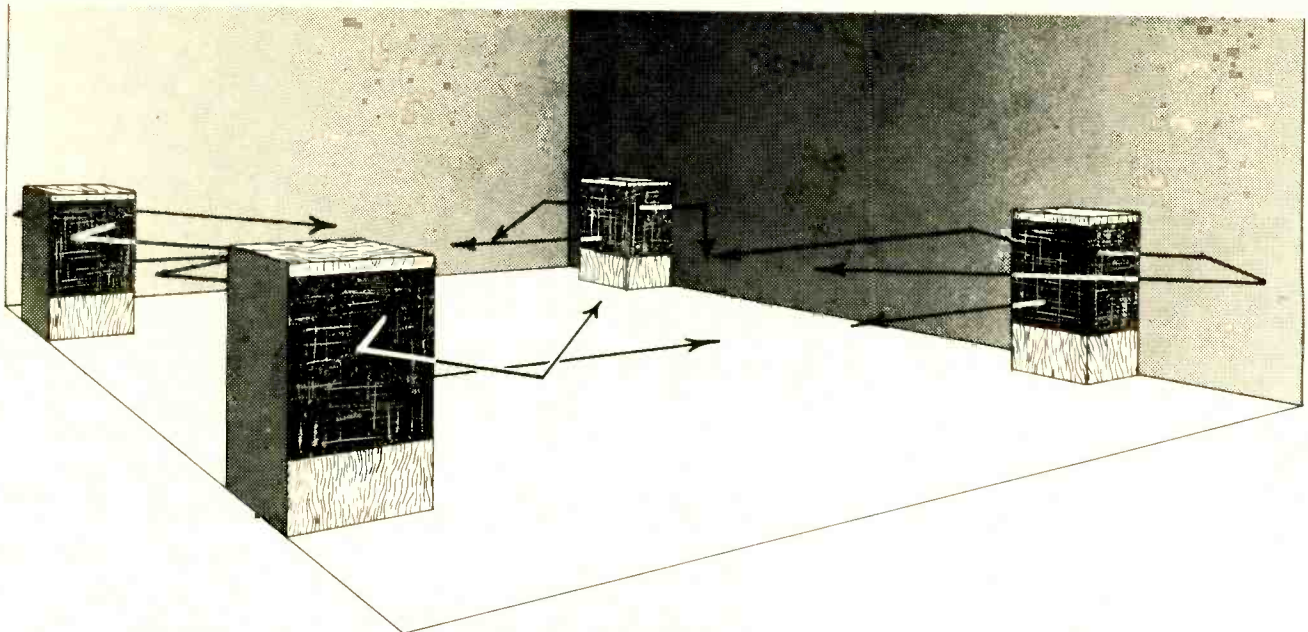
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# THE BASIC REPERTOIRE

No. 168

By MARTIN BOOKSPAN

## BEETHOVEN'S LEONORE OVERTURE NO. 3

EMANUEL SCHIKANEDER (1751-1812) was one of the most remarkable musico-dramatic personalities of his day. It was he who wrote the libretto for Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and sang the part of Papageno in the opera's first performances. Twelve years later, in 1803, Schikaneder was the manager of Vienna's Theater an der Wien, and he suggested to opera neophyte Ludwig van Beethoven that he write an opera for performance there. Beethoven's condition for accepting the commission was that the subject be "something I can take up with sincerity and love," and he found just such a subject in a libretto by Joseph von Sonnleithner, an adaptation and translation of *Leonore, ou l'Amour Conjugal*, which had been written in 1798 for the French composer Pierre Favéaux by Jean-Nicolas Bouilly. Its story of feminine constancy and selflessness appealed strongly to the emotions of the bachelor Beethoven.

Through the next ten years Beethoven struggled intermittently with what was to be his only opera. There was a production of the first version, entitled *Leonore*, at the Theater an der Wien in November 1805. It was a failure both with the public and in Beethoven's own estimation. The overture performed for this production was the work that has come to be known as the *Leonore Overture No. 2*.

Four months later Beethoven had rewritten both opera and overture, which in its first version had proved to be more than some of the wind players in the theater orchestra could handle. The new overture is the work we now know as the *Leonore Overture No. 3*. But the composer, absorbed in his subject, totally forgot to make the new overture simpler for either the players or the listeners. Instead, he retained the structural outlines of the earlier overture, giving it different stress and a more fully realized symphonic development.

In 1814, for yet another Vienna production of the opera (the title of which he

had changed to *Fidelio*), Beethoven composed still another new overture, the one we now know as the *Fidelio Overture*. This one is a terse, typical theater overture that in no way threatens to overwhelm the music that follows in the way that *Leonore No. 3* would have. There is one more overture composed for the opera, the one we call the *Leonore Overture No. 1*. It was discovered and first performed a year after Beethoven's death, but its origins remain uncertain to this day. One theory has it that it was composed originally for the very first production of the opera in 1805 but rejected by Beethoven as too simple. Another group of scholars holds that *Leonore No. 1* was composed for an intended Prague production that never took place.

In any case, there are no fewer than four overtures Beethoven brought into being through the composition of his single opera. And the decade of his anguish over the score was a period of herculean accomplishments, including the Fourth and Fifth Piano Concertos, five symphonies (Nos. 4 through 8), the Violin Concerto, the "Rasumovsky" Quartets, the *Coriolan Overture*, and the *Egmont* music.

THE introduction to the *Leonore Overture No. 3*, grave and brooding, is based on Florestan's aria in the opera, "*In des Lebens Frühlingstagen*," in which the despairing hero laments his imprisonment and fantasizes about the fair world outside. The main body of the overture begins with a hushed theme of rhythmic accents that rises to a powerful and dramatic fulfillment. Incorporated bodily from the opera are the repeated trumpet calls that herald the approach of the Governor who will free the unjustly imprisoned Florestan. There is a full symphonic reprise, which is followed by a jubilant conclusion.

There are currently more than a dozen different recordings of the *Leonore Overture No. 3* available, some in

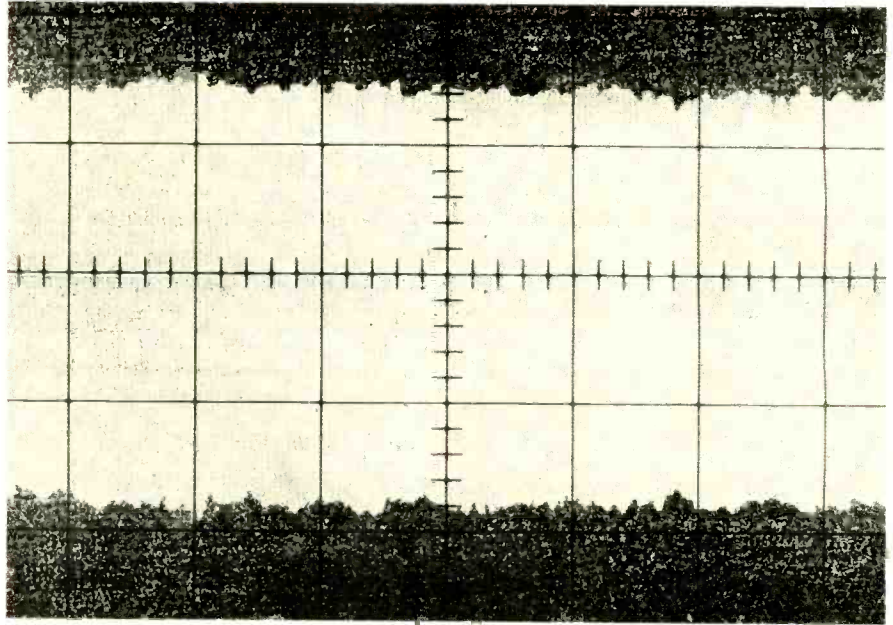
miscellaneous collections of short orchestral favorites, some as part of Beethoven overture anthologies, others in integral collections of the four overtures composed for *Fidelio*, and still others as fillers in recordings of Beethoven symphonies. My own favorite among them all is the white-hot, propulsive, and impetuous performance conducted by Leonard Bernstein (Columbia M 30079, part of a collection of Beethoven overtures that also includes *The Consecration of the House*, *King Stephen*, *Fidelio*, and *Egmont*). The drama of the overture is paramount in Bernstein's approach, and the performance fairly crackles with excitement and tension. The members of the New York Philharmonic play brilliantly for Bernstein, and the whole is captured in vivid recorded sound.

A performance that resembles Bernstein's in its dynamism is Lorin Maazel's with the Israel Philharmonic (London CS 6328, one of the several available discs that brings together all four of the overtures to *Fidelio*). The orchestral performance is a little less polished than that of the New York Philharmonic, but there is a compelling urgency to it all.

None of the other available recorded performances challenge the excellence of the Bernstein and Maazel versions—and among them there are some rather surprising disappointments, particularly the rather prim approach adopted by both Georg Solti (London CS 6800) and George Szell (Columbia MS 7068). Angel has unaccountably (and regrettably) withdrawn from the catalog the excellent performance conducted by the late Otto Klemperer (formerly available on Angel S 36203, devoted to all four overtures written for *Fidelio*), whose reading differs sharply from those of Bernstein and Maazel. Klemperer, as was his wont, opts for monolithic and monumental grandeur. The broad architectural span of the score emerges most impressively in his hands, and the playing and the sound are first-rate. Let us hope this outstanding recording will soon be reissued.

Unfortunately, neither of the disc versions I prefer is available in either reel-to-reel or cassette tape configurations. In the former category the performance I favor is Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt's (London L 80226, along with his performance of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony). Klemperer-like in its solidity but lacking something of the nobility of Klemperer's reading. Also solid but not as impressive as Klemperer's is the performance that I would choose from among the cassette versions—Eugen Jochum's (Philips 18160CAA, a collection of Beethoven overtures).

\* Mr. Bookspan's 1973-1974 UPDATING OF THE BASIC REPERTOIRE is now available in convenient pamphlet form. Send 25¢ and self-addressed #10 envelope to Susan Larabee, Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 for your copy. \*

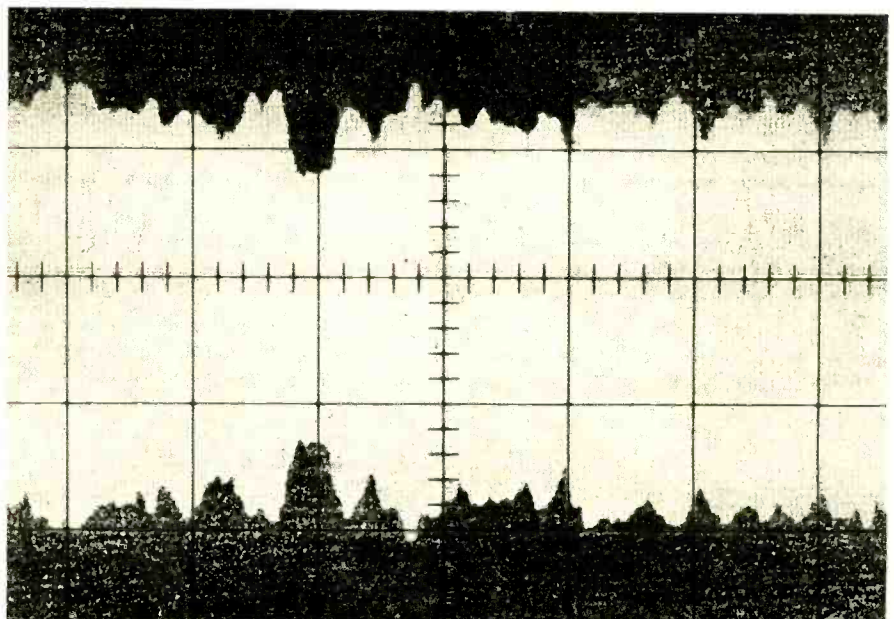


# TAPE PERFORMANCE AND TAPE RECORDER BIASING

Getting the best performance out of any given recording tape depends on a delicately balanced compromise between a number of factors that are affected by the recorder's bias setting

By Michael B. Martin

*The oscilloscope photos on this page illustrate the magnitude of the problem presented by improperly biased tape. The upper photo shows the playback of a high-frequency signal from a tape recorded with proper bias. The lower photo shows the same tape, recorded with improper bias. Here the tape-to-head contact variations, which had little effect on the properly biased tape, cause momentary but audible signal losses.*





**B**Y now, most owners of high-quality tape equipment are aware that for optimum results—or sometimes even acceptable results—the machine and the tape that is used with it must be matched to each other. Or, to put it another way, there is no single, universal “best” tape type for all machines. And considering the wide variety of tapes and recorders available today, choosing a satisfactory tape for use in one’s recorder appears at times to be a task as difficult as selecting the right wine for a gourmet dinner guest. A survey of the various tests and reviews of tape types frequently only adds to the confusion, and in many instances even the recommendations of the manufacturer of the recording equipment are not entirely helpful.

The nature of magnetic recording is such that potential improvements in performance usually can be realized only if the recording equipment is specially set up for any new tape to be used. The most obvious example of this is provided by the introduction of chromium-dioxide cassette tape a few years ago. It is now well known that, for optimum use of chromium dioxide tape, the recorder requires special bias and equalization. What is *not* so well known is the fact that to achieve the optimum performance from *any* magnetic tape, a recorder should be adjusted for that tape. It is fortunate that, within types of ferric oxides, the deviations in frequency response, dynamic range, and signal-to-noise ratio caused by the use of a different brand may have no greater effect than the error caused by manufacturing variations *within* a brand. However, not all iron-oxide tapes use the same type of oxide particles. The particles used in iron-oxide tapes today can be broken down into four categories, all of which are wholly or mostly gamma ferric oxide, for which the chemical designation is  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$ .

1. The “low-noise/high-output” particle . . . . . pure  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$
2. Very small particles . . . . . pure  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$
3. Chemically modified particles . . .  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$  with a small percentage of cobalt or magnetite ( $\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$ )
4. Improved-shape particles . . . . . pure  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$

Generally speaking, the low-noise/high-output particles are those used by the majority of manufacturers for cassettes up to the end of 1972, and they are still used for second-line cassette products, high-quality reel-to-reel tapes, and cartridge tapes. Subsequently, tapes using the very small unmodified iron oxides and the so-called “cobalt-doped” and “magnetite-doped” oxides became available. Early in 1973, the first tapes using pure ferric-oxide particles of perfected shape (Memorex MRX<sub>2</sub>, for example) reached the market, and for the first time

the performance of an iron-oxide cassette tape approached that of chromium dioxide.

Proprietary arguments aside, it is clear that all of the above oxides can be made into a tape capable of high-fidelity performance. However, the problem from the *user's* viewpoint is that the potential of such tapes can be realized completely only when the recorder is adjusted accurately for the specific tape being used. This involves complications, because the playback characteristics of the tape machine must conform to internationally agreed-on standards that enable a tape made on any standard machine anywhere in the world to be played back with reasonable accuracy on any other machine. So (usually), only the recording characteristics of the machine can be adjusted, and these must be adjusted to complement both the performance capabilities of the tape used *and* the playback characteristics through which the tape will be heard. (Some cassette decks have switches that also modify their playback characteristics for optimum results.)

**T**HERE are two aspects to a tape machine’s adjustable recording characteristics: the recording equalization and the recording bias. The *equalization*, in effect, adjusts the frequency response of the signal going on the tape. The recording *bias* is a steady signal of very high frequency (usually 50,000 Hz or above) that is generated within the tape machine and applied to the tape along with the signal to be recorded.

It is beyond the intent of this article to discuss the *theory* of magnetic-tape biasing. It is a very complex subject, and there are still some technical disagreements about the exact way in which a.c. bias works. However, it can be readily demonstrated that incorrect biasing (that is, employing a bias signal that is too strong or too weak for the tape being used) can change the performance of an excellent tape to no better than average. Incorrect bias adjustment will cause poor frequency response as well as high harmonic and intermodulation distortion, and it can even aggravate the effects of dropouts and errors in head-to-tape contact. Incorrect equalization, on the other hand, will not always seriously impair the performance of a tape, since it can often be at least approximately corrected for by using the tone controls of a high-fidelity system.

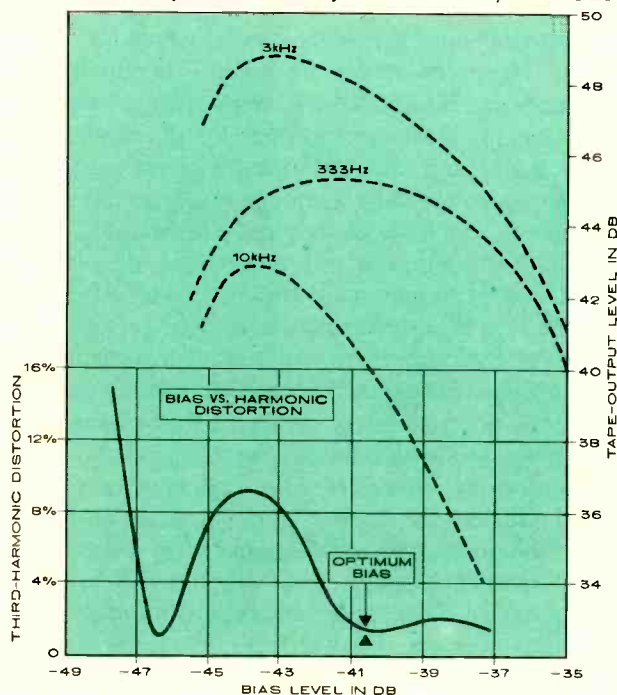
The specific *effects* of bias and how they are coped with are the subject of this article. To illustrate each, measurements were made on a sampling of high-quality cassette tapes. Although the cassette is only one of three tape formats in general use today, the principles involved are the same for all forms of magnetic recording tape. *(overleaf)*

## Frequency Response and Distortion

Figure 1 illustrates some of the relationships between the applied bias, recorded signal strength, and distortion. The upper three curves show the output levels for three frequencies—333, 3,000, and 10,000 Hz—that have been recorded on a high-quality iron-oxide tape at a constant input-signal strength, but with changing bias-signal strength. The bottom curve shows the amount of third-harmonic distortion in the output for one of the test frequencies—333 Hz. Note that, for the upper curves, as the bias is increased the signal output level of the tape rises to a maximum and then begins to decrease. The distortion level also changes with changing bias, declining steeply at first, then rising to a broad peak, and finally dropping back down to a relatively moderate 2 per cent or so.

Obviously, maximum output-signal strength and minimum distortion are both desirable characteristics for any tape-recording system. But, unfortunately, in the case of this tape or any other, these characteristics do not occur at the same bias-signal strength. For example, maximum output at 3,000 and 10,000 Hz is achieved at about a  $-44$ -dB bias, while the lowest distortion is at just below  $40$  dB. It therefore quickly becomes clear that any fixed bias setting is going to have to be a compromise between several conflicting goods and evils. For this particu-

Fig. 1. The effect of bias strength on the output (at three frequencies) and distortion of a high-quality iron-oxide tape. These and other factors ultimately determine the optimum bias.



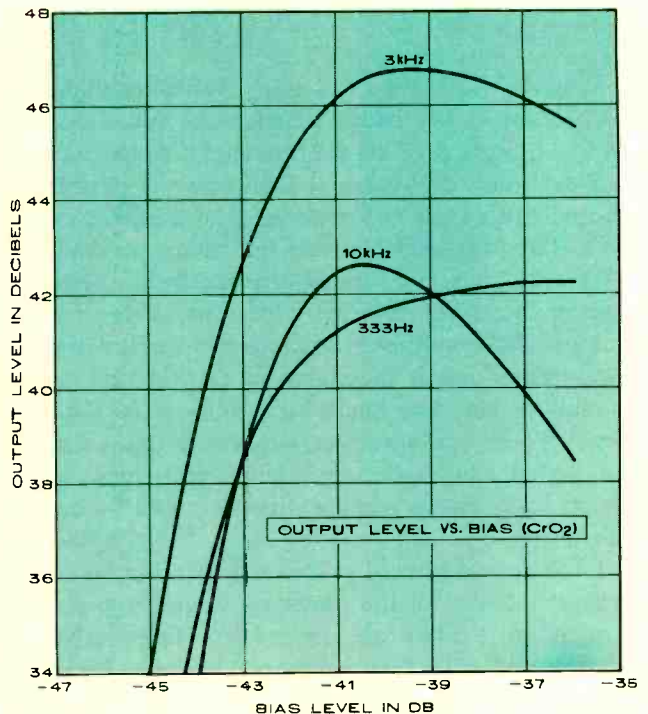
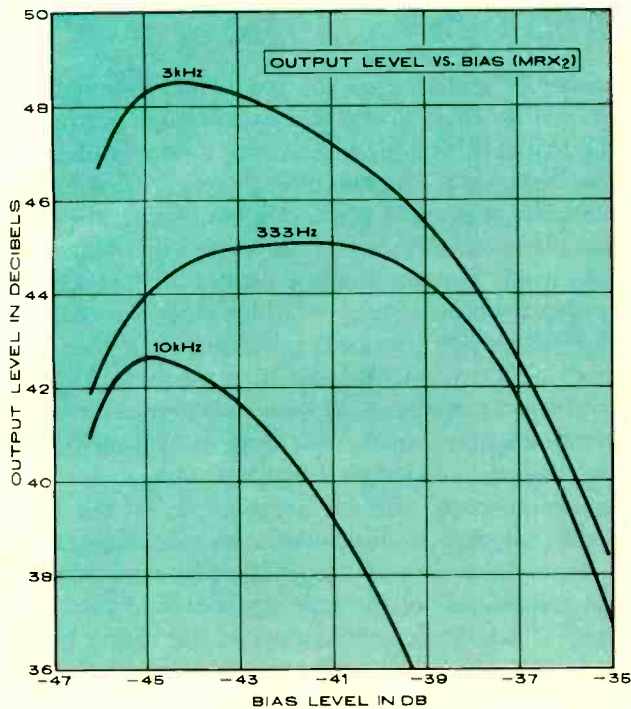
lar tape, the above factors and a number of other considerations (some of a very practical nature) dictate that the optimum bias point is just below  $-40.5$  dB. This happens to correspond rather closely with the bias settings for minimum distortion and maximum output at 333 Hz, but it doesn't always work out this way.

Different tapes can require significantly different bias settings for best performance. Considering just output level for the moment, let us look at Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 shows the bias/output curves at three frequencies for a high-quality iron-oxide tape—Memorex MRX<sub>2</sub>. Figure 3 graphs similar data for chromium-dioxide (CrO<sub>2</sub>) tape. Comparing the two sets of curves shows that the maximum CrO<sub>2</sub> output at both 333 and 10,000 Hz occurs at (at least) a 4-dB higher bias than for the iron-oxide tape. If the bias of a cassette recorder were adjusted to optimum for the iron-oxide tape (about  $-41$  dB), it can be seen that the signal output at 333 Hz would be very close to maximum, while the 10,000-Hz output would be approximately 3 dB below maximum. This would result in the best performance of which the tape is capable. However, if the CrO<sub>2</sub> tape were recorded with the same bias setting, its output at 333 Hz would be considerably below maximum, while at 10,000 Hz it would be almost at its peak. The final recording would therefore have a greatly exaggerated high-frequency response—and, incidentally, too much distortion at 333 Hz because of underbiasing effects. Reversing the situation (recording the iron-oxide cassette with a bias optimized for CrO<sub>2</sub>, about  $-37$  dB) would so overbias the tape that its output would be reduced by at least 10 dB at 10,000 Hz and by about 3 dB at lower frequencies.

WHILE chromium-dioxide and iron-oxide cassettes require drastically different bias adjustments for best performance, there are lesser (but still significant) differences between various iron-oxide tapes. The four types of iron-oxide tapes listed above have optimum bias points that differ over a range of 20 per cent. Recording them all with a bias adjusted for one (the "improved-shape particles" of MRX<sub>2</sub>) would result in the frequency-response differences illustrated in Figure 4.

Distortion is at least as important as frequency sensitivity in determining a tape's optimum bias point, and it should be taken into careful account by tape-recorder designers. Unless there is some flaw in the recording equipment, the distortion generated by the tape-recording process consists exclusively





Figs. 2 and 3. The effect of bias-strength variations on the output of Memorex iron-oxide tape (left) and chromium-dioxide tape (right) at three frequencies. In terms of output, chromium dioxide requires a markedly higher bias than iron oxide, which is why so many cassette recorders have tape-type switches. Bias requirements for different iron oxides also vary, though not so drastically.

of odd-order harmonics—that is, the third, fifth, and seventh harmonics, etc. (The maximum usable output of a tape is normally defined in terms of a reference level of odd-harmonic distortion.) Distortion at lower frequencies is significantly more audible than at the higher frequencies. As the distortion curve of Figure 1 shows, the application of a relatively small amount of bias has a rapid distortion-reducing effect on the tape *at first*. Then there is a tendency for distortion to increase again as the bias approaches its optimum. This is caused by phase effects acting throughout the thickness of the tape's oxide coating.

When a tape recorder is rated at such-and-such a distortion percentage for a 0-VU recording level (usually 1, 2, or 3 per cent, depending on the practice of the individual manufacturer or sometimes on the recorder's country of origin), this specification is very much a function of the tape used in adjusting

the machine. It follows, therefore, that the purchaser is not likely to be able to duplicate it exactly with any other type of tape. On the other hand, when the tape for which the machine was adjusted *is* used, the figure should be precisely duplicable. If the distortion measures more—or even less—at the level and test frequency specified, it indicates that the bias is not optimum; this might well result in higher-than-normal distortion levels at other frequencies, and it could also produce frequency-response errors.

Sometimes a tape machine's bias adjustment will be resorted to when it is desired to alter the frequency response of a tape. While this is often effective (a slight reduction of bias will, for example, cause an increase in high-frequency output), it is not recommended practice, since the bias reduction will also have its effects on distortion and on the tape's output capabilities at lower frequencies. (*overleaf*)

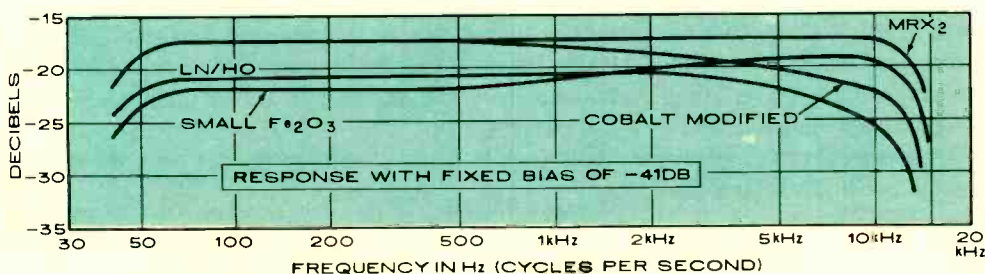


Fig. 4. Typical record-playback frequency-response variations when different tape types are used on a machine with fixed bias. Bias is correctly adjusted for the MRX<sub>2</sub> tape-oxide formulation.

## Noise and Drop-outs

When bias is applied to a tape, even when there is no accompanying audio signal to be recorded, it creates a noise level on the tape that is appropriately known as "bias noise." Bias noise is normally about 3 dB above the noise level of a bulk-erased tape. The frequencies at which it occurs, as well as its overall character, are determined by the dispersion of the oxide particles within the binder material and the smoothness of the oxide surface of the tape. Bias noise is inevitable; it can be kept to a minimum, but, like death and taxes, it is always there. There are, however, other tape noises that can actually be made worse by an incorrectly adjusted bias. These include drop-outs and modulation noise.

Drop-outs are heard as momentary reductions or complete losses of the playback signal from a recorded tape. They are caused by comparatively large irregularities (in other words, lumps or bumps) on the surface of the tape that push the tape surface away from the head as they pass over it. Because the strength of magnetic fields diminishes rapidly with distance, even a small space between tape and head will often result in an audible loss of signal.

One solution to drop-outs is smoother tape surfaces. But even good tapes can give rise to audible drop-outs introduced during recording if the re-

recorder is underbiased for the oxide formulation. Shown on page 56 are two oscilloscope photos of the playback of a high-frequency tone recorded on the same CrO<sub>2</sub> cassette tape. The recording in the first case was made with optimum bias; in the second, bias strength appropriate for an iron-oxide tape was used. The amplitude envelope of the second reveals drop-outs, many of which would be audible. The reason for this poor performance is that the tape has been underbiased to a point on its output/bias curve (Figure 3) where very small changes in bias cause comparatively large variations in output. The spacing losses during recording caused by the microscopic surface irregularities of the tape were enough to produce such small bias changes.

Modulation noise is also caused by variations in the smoothness of the tape surface; it results in a kind of amplitude modulation of the signal being recorded. The audible effect of modulation noise is a general roughness of the sound, particularly noticeable on transients. In bad cases, an instrument such as a piano can sound as though each note is accompanied by a "fizzing" sound. In general, surface irregularities smaller than those producing drop-outs are responsible for modulation noise, but the basic mechanism is the same, and the noise is similarly aggravated by underbiasing of the tape.

## Summary

It is frequently impossible to state a single "optimum" bias value for a given tape, simply because the particular tape recorder used introduces additional variables. For example, a good three-head recorder will have a recording-head gap with a width that may be twice the thickness of the tape's oxide coating. Such a head will generate a well-shaped bias field that will penetrate the coating thickness fully at low frequencies. While this is desirable, it does mean that the correct bias setting will depend on the thickness of the tape coating—and on any variations in that thickness. On the other hand, most cassette recorders use a dual-purpose record/play head that will tend to have a narrow gap in order to ensure good high-frequency playback response. Since the narrow gap may not produce a bias field that penetrates the coating thickness entirely, the bias setting for such a head is relatively independent of oxide thickness. However, it is also true that the head will not utilize the full potential of the tape efficiently.

It cannot be emphasized enough that the opti-

imum bias for any tape is a *compromise* setting that tries to strike a happy balance between a number of variables without necessarily being ideal for any one. While there are several procedures used by manufacturers of tape and recorders to determine correct bias adjustments, a procedure that takes *all* the variables into account will almost always produce better results than one that considers only a few of them.

Improper bias can degrade the performance of even the best tape shockingly. However, the most painstaking bias adjustment cannot improve the performance of a mediocre tape beyond a certain point. The only way to achieve top-quality recordings is to buy the best open-reel, cassette, or cartridge tapes from reputable manufacturers, and then make sure your recorder is set up to exploit their full potential.

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**Michael B. Martin**, Technical Director of the Audio/Video group of Memorex Corporation, has an extensive background in the use of magnetic recording media in audio, video, and data storage.





# LEO KOTTKIE

“I love gimmicks. I think they’re the heart and soul of music.”

By Joel Vance

To me—make a little room there, boys—the twelve-string guitar is the only instrument capable of rivaling the pipe organ in majesty of sound and depth of expression. There are very few, if any, concert pieces written for it, however, and there is no classical tradition in twelve-string playing because it is almost never used in and of itself—it is considered an alternate instrument, something to be used for occasional tonal changes in folk music, blues, and pop. The big, booming, beefy sound of the twelve-string can also be tamed to tenderness, as Pete Seeger used to do years ago in his version of the teary old ballad *Juanita*, or it can be made to skip like a stone across a lake, as (again) Seeger did with his piece *Living in the Country*. And, of course, there was Leadbelly.

But Leo Kottke does with the twelve-string what Walt Whitman did with blank verse, Louis Armstrong did with the jazz horn, and Little Richard did with rock singing. Almost singlehandedly Kottke has given the twelve-string guitar an identity that makes it equal to the piano or organ as an instrument capable of *anything*. All six-string guitarists of whatever persuasion, from Julian Bream to Django Reinhardt to Eric Clapton, have to be judged separately from Kottke (who, incidentally, is also an excellent six-string man).

In many ways Kottke has invented his instrument, and he *can* play just about anything on it. Some of his tunes are just that—*tunes*, mixtures of high-stepping country folk runs and superior “Hawaiian-style” slide blues. Others are pastiches of light, airy jazz with whatever kicky rhythmic variations Kottke feels like throwing in. Still others, like the delicate *Easter* on his recent album “My Feet are Smiling,” are what will perhaps be considered some years hence as the first “classical” pieces written for the twelve-string. (*Easter* also shows his uncanny ability to exploit harmonics.) Add to all this his sense of humor, a full and pleasant singing voice, easy ways, a deliberate renunciation of driving ambition, and his age (twenty-eight), and we have something rare: a master musician who hasn’t yet reached his peak and can confidently go on “inventing” his instrument for the next twenty years.

Kottke was born in Athens, Georgia, and grew up in Muskogee, Oklahoma. He listened to Seeger, Leadbelly, the Kingston Trio, Jimmie Rodgers, jazz guitarist Kenny Burrell, Aaron Copland, and operatic arias. He played trombone for eight years, violin for three, and flute for a month. In 1969 he was playing guitar at a coffeehouse in Minneapolis and was recorded live for Oblivion Records. One thousand copies were pressed. A few years later he re-recorded the material for another small—but more felicitously named—label, Symposium. He next recorded for Takoma, a mail-order label established by master guitarist John Fahey.

Kottke had established himself in Minneapolis, playing clubs and small concerts, and shuttled between that city and Chicago. Randy Morrison, a Chicago disc jockey, played Kottke’s albums, and Richard Harding, owner of the Quiet Knight, booked him into that club, which has been home to some of the best Midwestern talent (John Prine, Steve Goodman) and is the required stop for tour-

ing national talent—such artists as Kris Kristofferson and Joan Baez—when they play Chicago. Kottke soon became a power in that part of the Middle West and was noticed by Capitol Records. He has since cut four albums for them: “Mudlark,” “Greenhouse,” “My Feet Are Smiling,” and the current “Icewater,” which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

He now plays concerts from the Pacific Northwest to the “liberal arts colleges in the Northeast,” and (gratifyingly) he has been “asked back to Texas.” Last fall he completed a European tour. From the record-company point of view he is an ideal performer. His albums are not expensive to produce since he often records completely alone or with only bass and drums behind him. He is also a true artist whose records are steady sellers, which makes him, in industry nomenclature, a “catalog” artist—one who may not sell tons of albums each time out (he may never even have a big hit), but will sell steadily for years and years to an audience that is faithful and growing. Record labels pray for talent like that. So do audiences.

**K**OTTKE was in New York recently to appear as the opening act for Frank Zappa. We met in the afternoon, along with his producer-manager Denny Bruce and a young lady from Kottke’s press office. His hotel had an adjacent restaurant, and as we picked our way through the Friday lunch crowd to find a table, Kottke said, “I got drunk here last night.” We sat down, and a large Germanic waitress took our orders. Kottke asked, “What’s good for a hangover?” The three of us answered, “Another drink.” Kottke ordered brandy.

As we went through the drinks, we talked about Bob and Ray and soundchecks for Kottke’s appearance on Long Island that evening. After lunch I asked Kottke how he got some of his terrific harmonic effects, such as those on *Easter*.

“You strike a harmonic and then you bend the strings behind the nut. [The nut is the top of the neck of the guitar, where the strings are wound, immediately above the fretboard.] If your calluses are in good shape you can also form a chord *behind* the nut and slide it up the neck so you get a kind of overdrive on the harmonic. It’s a gimmick. I love gimmicks. I think they’re the heart and soul of music. I haven’t been able to write that ‘overdrive’ into anything yet. Furry Lewis has a few gimmicks—he’s got a pickup that falls out of his guitar.”

We fell into a discussion of various instruments, and I remarked that I hadn’t recognized the brand-name on his guitar. I asked him where he had gotten it. “It’s a Bozo [pronounced *beau-zhow*],” he answered. “It’s made by Bozo Pogunavac, a Yugoslavian refugee. He has a shop in Chicago and makes strange guitars. They have big bodies, and if you drape your arm over them in the usual way to get to the strings, your arm slides either one way or the other. It takes a little getting used to. He builds to order. I once bought an old six-string of his from someone, and when he saw it, he thought it had been stolen. As it turned out, it *was* stolen, but I had a bill of sale with about ten names on it, so he knew *I* was legitimate, at least. I ordered the twelve-string from him, and he’s so busy it took about a year to make. Some of his guitars have real gaudy gypsy inlay decorations—they look as though they came right out of the Slavic woods. He makes a few electrics—he built two for Harvey Mandel. Bozo says he wants to move out of Chicago because he

doesn’t like the air—it’s probably sitting around with all that varnish. He also wants to go into mass production. Somebody said to him, ‘Well, if you open a factory, everything will be machine-made,’ and Bozo said that what he’d do is bring over some of his Yugoslavian buddies. I’ve seen guys working with him in his shop—apprentices, kind of—but they don’t last too long. Bozo got his training in Belgrade, and I guess he doesn’t trust anybody but a fellow Yugoslavian in making guitars.”

Denny Bruce left to make some last-minute preparations for their departure for Long Island, and Kottke continued to talk about instruments. “I was playing one night, and one of the guys from the Firesign Theater came running over and said, ‘You’re playing a Bozo. I knew you were a Bozo! We’re all Bozos on this bus!’” I asked Kottke how many guitars he has. “Fourteen. And twelve of them don’t work. I’m brutal with my guitars. I don’t really take care of them except for one thing. You know how you lean a guitar up against the wall or in a corner? Most people leave them with the strings facing out. I always turn mine around. That way, if somebody falls over your guitar or kicks it, you’re not so bad off.”

Though Kottke’s musical background is unusually catholic, one might still wonder just how he found himself with a twelve-string guitar in his hands, so I asked him how it all started. “With banjo mostly. I wasn’t that interested in the guitar. I heard Orby Ramsey, Don Reno, Hap Smith. I listened to Leadbelly, and at the time I thought he didn’t make much of an impression on me. But I found later that he stuck in my head, like the hook in a TV commercial. He gave me a feeling for the bottom [bass strings] of the guitar. There wasn’t a lot of twelve-string being played then—Leadbelly, Pete Seeger, Fred Gerlac. *Living in the Country* was the first instrumental I learned on the guitar. I liked it because it was a *composition*. I wasn’t much interested in flat-picking or learning how to take solos or play rhythm because I seldom played with other people.”

I asked how long it takes him to record an album. “The Takoma album took three hours: ‘Greenhouse’ took three days. ‘My Feet Are Smiling’—the live album—took two nights. Most of what is on the album is from the second night. The tune called *Blue Dot* was written about three days before the concert. *Eggtooth* was written by me and Mike Johnson. It was originally for two guitars. I think we’re going to play it backwards from now on—rearrange it, make the top the bottom and so on. I think it can be a really satisfying, thick, weighty piece of music.”

**A**s far as plans for the future go, Kottke doesn’t want to get any busier than he is now. “I have two kids—one’s two years old and the other is two months. It used to be that if I was on the road, I could always stop off for two or three days with the family, but lately it’s been getting a little cluttered. For a long time Roy Buchanan just played in a little club outside Baltimore on weekends. That’s what I’d like to do—confine it to weekends as much as possible, work two or three days and no more.”

The intercom announced a phone call for Mr. Kottke. It was Bruce, saying that they’d better leave for Long Island. We shook hands and parted. I went home, got out my battered Gibson B-25 six-string acoustic guitar, struck a harmonic, and bent the strings behind the nut. It worked, but my calluses were way out of shape. So I played the new Kottke album for the next three days instead. Marvelous.





# THE GREAT AMERICAN POPULAR SINGERS

In his latest book, *STEREO REVIEW's* London Editor Henry Pleasants pays some of America's greatest and best-loved entertainers a somewhat overdue compliment: he takes them seriously. In twenty-two chapters, two introductions, a coda, and a glossary, he couples a searching personal appraisal with a comprehensive survey of the critical literature on the five singers (Bessie, Louis, Elvis, Ethel, and Barbra) who grace our cover this month plus seventeen others whose likenesses appear within this article, an adaptation of the second of the two introductions. The book itself will be published this month by Simon and Schuster.—Editor

**I**F "The Art of the American Popular Singer," as a concept, appears to many as a contradiction in terms, the reason may be that the best of the American popular singers have exemplified so happily the old adage: "Art is that which disguises art." They have made what they do appear too inevitable, too easy.

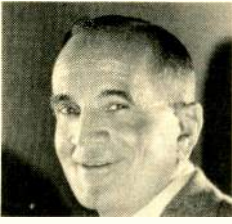
With classical singers the art is often all too obvious. Even with the greatest, the effect of their apparently easy surmounting of difficulties tends to be vitiated by the familiarity of the difficulties, thanks to the revealing inadequacies of less accomplished singers.

But nothing I say in appreciation of the art of the American popular singer should be construed as a disparagement of classical singers. They do things, vocally and musically, that popular singers cannot do. They sing music that even the best of the popular singers cannot sing, or, to put it in better

perspective, they work in a musical idiom, essentially European, whose criteria and conventions nowadays are in certain respects incompatible with the objectives of American popular song. Conversely, the popular singer does things, primarily in matters of phrasing, shading, rhythm, enunciation, accentuation, and even vocal production, that lie beyond the capabilities and predilections of most classical singers. It is not a question of superiority or inferiority. It is a question of musical idiom.

This question of idiom introduces the first of many paradoxes implicit in the common view of the popular singer as entertainer rather than as artist. For it is precisely in idiomatic terms that the popular singer is often closer than the classical singer to the *older*, the *original* objectives and conventions of European singing. His enunciation is superior. His embellishments are richer in invention and variety, and they are more imaginatively, more expressively employed. His rhythmic perceptions are keener and more subtle, especially his exploitation of the tensions inherent in *tempo rubato* (in the original, literal sense of "time stolen"). He is more resourceful, and stylistically more secure, in melodic deviation, elaboration, and variation.

These are all matters upon which great stress was laid in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in which the classical singer, as recently as a century or a century and a half ago, was as expert as the popular singer is today. That was before his individual creative impulses, privileges, and responsibilities were curbed by the increasing primacy of composer and orchestra, obliging him to stick to



**AL JOLSON:** "He could never bear to see an audience escape his fervent embrace."

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the written notes and the prescribed rhythms, usually under conductorial (and always under critical) supervision and scrutiny.

The art of the American popular singer is closer, in some ways, than that of the contemporary classical singer, even in Italian opera, to the art of those who established the aesthetic objectives, the techniques, the terminology, and the appropriate criteria of Western singing in Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These are the objectives, techniques, and criteria commonly and conventionally represented by the term *bel canto*, or beautiful song (or singing).

In one of my books, *The Great Singers*, I defined the term as referring to "a mellifluous kind of singing aimed at an agreeable, well-rounded tone, an even scale from bottom to top, an unbroken legato, a nicety of intonation and an eloquence of phrase and cadence, a purity of vowels and a disciplined avoidance of shouting, nasality, harsh or open sounds, disjointed registers, undue vehemence and any other evidence of vulgarity, or bad or negligent schooling." These general criteria are acknowledged, if not always adhered to, by both classical and popular singers. All have to do, essentially, with *sound and line*.

Where the popular singer comes closer than the classical singer to the *earliest* Italian models, those that precede even the *bel canto* ideal, is in his acceptance of song as a lyrical extension of speech. He is more concerned than is the classical singer with text, both with its meaning and with the melodic and rhythmical manner in which it might be spoken. One popular singer praising another is likely to refer to his "reading of the text, or lyric." It is not a formulation I have ever heard, or would expect to hear, from the mouth of a classical singer today.

Italian opera was a reaction against the complexities of sixteenth-century polyphony, in which the dynamics of prosody and the sheer clarity of the words had been sacrificed to the blandishments of multiple-voiced euphony. It was an attempt to redirect vocal music, monodically rather than polyphonically, toward the melodic, rhythmic, and dramatic properties of the Italian language.

What is so astonishing about the evocation of a bygone era in the art of the American popular singer

is not that the objectives, the devices, and the criteria are similar—but that they are virtually identical. It is astonishing because, as used by the popular singer, they neither represent, nor are they derived from, any historical continuity. The devices, both those of the early dramatic monody and those of the later *bel canto*, all but disappeared from European vocalism in the course of the nineteenth century, victims of misuse, abuse, overindulgence, prejudice, and the whims of musical fashion. Some of them have, to be sure, been rediscovered and trotted out in recent years in the revival of old *bel canto* operas. But those who use them do so without the immediacy, the invention, and the stylistic security of the original singers.

The American popular singer, in his use of them, has certainly not been guided by the work of classical vocalists, or by consultation with musicologists.



**ETHEL WATERS:** "...a richness of imagination, a wealth of invention, and a model of taste hardly matched by any other singer of her time."

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Most popular singers are anything but historians. They do not, as a rule, even know the traditional Italian terms for the devices they use. But there the devices all are, especially the *appoggiatura*, the mordent, the turn, the slur, the *portamento*, and the *rubato*, exactly as they existed in early seventeenth- and eighteenth-century practice, employed in the same way and for the same purpose: to heighten and elaborate the expression of oral, vocal, linguistic communication.



**JIMMIE RODGERS:** "...one would be hard pressed to find a performer...who has exerted a more profound and recognizable influence on later generations of singers."

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There is also a similarity to earlier times in the popular singer's role as the primary musician. His place in the hierarchy of his own musical society is certainly closer to that of the seventeenth- or eighteenth-century vocal virtuoso than is that of the latter's twentieth-century counterpart. The popular singer is the center of attention. The song, the arrangement, the recording, the setting, the lighting, are built around him. He has interpretive privileges



denied the classical singer, who is inhibited by the priorities accorded the composer and the conductor, and by the vigilance of critics safeguarding those priorities. He also bears commensurate responsibilities.

When Andy Williams appeared at the Royal Albert Hall in London in May of 1968, with a studio orchestra of forty, I attended each of the rehearsals, and was stunned by the contrast with conventional



**BING CROSBY:** "*Bing's most original contribution was the lowering of the voice, not so much in pitch as in intensity, to a conversational level.*"

classical-music rehearsal procedure. Jack Elliott, a conductor and arranger long associated with Andy in Hollywood, was preparing the orchestra in arrangements of some twenty songs, the arrangements all made expressly and expensively for Andy Williams. But Elliott wasn't running the show. Andy was running it. He ran it quietly, purposefully, and effectively.

He sang very little. He knew the songs. Elliott knew how he would sing them. Andy wanted to be sure that the orchestra knew the arrangements and could play them at the tempos he wanted, in the



**MILDRED BAILEY:** "*She was a great and lonely artist, born just a few years too soon.*"

style he wanted, and with accents and colors where and as he wanted them. So he listened, mostly. When he had something to say, he said it, sometimes to the conductor, sometimes to an individual musician. It could have been, I reflected, the great Pacchierotti, with Bertoni as his house composer-conductor, rehearsing a production for the King's Theater in London in 1778!

All this runs counter to contemporary concepts in classical music of a proper apportioning of privilege and responsibility as between composer and performer, and as between conductor, as composer-surrogate, and soloist. Even those who concede the legitimacy of the parallels will argue that Western music in Europe, in the nineteenth century, *outgrew* this predominance of the solo performer.

That is the fashionable view, a reflection of what I am tempted to call the Cult of the Composer. "The progress of musical art," says Joseph Machlis in his *The Enjoyment of Music*, "demanded the victory over improvisation. The composer ultimately established his right to choose the notes, the performer being limited to playing, or, at most, interpreting them."

This was a weighty argument in an epoch that produced the great European composers from Mozart to Mahler and the great European conductors from Mendelssohn to Furtwängler and Toscanini, but their like have not been around for a while, and we are left, in classical music, with performers crippled creatively by the discipline of composer theology and the dictation of conductor autocracy. The popular singer, while he may suffer from prejudicial categorization, is at least blessedly free of traditional and institutional inhibition.

In classical music today, all singers sing all music in essentially the same way. They differ one from another only in the extent to which they approach or surpass a norm, or ideal, of performance, commonly accepted and commonly understood. No two



**BILLIE HOLIDAY:** "*Her way with a song was to take it apart and put it together again in her own image.*"

performances of the same song or aria by different singers are *exactly* alike. But when compared with the variants of a popular song as sung by, say, Louis Armstrong, Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, and Frank Sinatra, the distinctions are slight, if not necessarily superficial.

The popular singer is not only allowed to take liberties denied the classical singer; he is expected, even required, to do so, just as the opera singer was expected to do so in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The song, even the best song—and American popular music has been rich in fine songs—is not looked upon as an imperishable or immutable masterpiece, nor the composer's written or printed symbols as holy writ. To the popular singer it is raw material, a point of departure. He may drop notes or add them, introduce *appoggiature*, slurs, slides, riffs, codas, and cadenzas, change note values to accord with his rhythmic reading of the text, and so on, just as singers did in the heyday of Italian opera.

The popular singer's identification with a contem-

porary rather than with a traditional, inherited repertoire has been an important factor in preserving his privilege of doing with songs as he sees fit, of shaping or reshaping them in his own image. But it has also been a factor in blinding the classical-music public to the artistic validity of his musical and vocal procedures and accomplishments. A popular singer may be able to bring to bear upon a song by Harold Arlen, Irving Berlin, or Cole Porter all the devices prized in Monteverdi's time, but this will not achieve for him equal status as an artist with the classical singer who brings none, or very few, of these to bear upon a song by Schubert, Schumann, or Brahms, or upon an aria by Bellini or Verdi, although many might concede that the popular singer's was the more creative performance.

Another equally troublesome factor contributing to the popular singer's inferior status vis-à-vis the classical singer is the popular singer's uncontested inferiority in terms of forceful vocal utterance. This brings us inevitably and importantly to the microphone. Among those persons identified with classical music, and with opera in particular, the most persistent and pervasive prejudice against the popular singer has been his apparent dependence upon the mike, a dependence thought of as a demonstration of vocal infirmity, inadequacy, or impotence.

It is nothing of the sort. The mike does not *make* the popular singer's voice. It can add nothing but volume to what is already there in his throat and head. It is a listener, an electronically activated ear,



**FRANK SINATRA:** "Whatever else has been said about me personally is unimportant. When I sing, I believe, I'm honest."

and nothing more than that. As such, however, because it "hears" so well, it is merciless in its exposure of blemishes, particularly when one works as close to it as the popular singer does. But it can also detect and amplify virtues, delicate refinements of melodic line and vocal inflection, minute shadings and subtleties of enunciation and phrase, that would be inaudible without its electronic assistance. The mike amplifies both good habits and bad, which is why the best of the popular singers sing so well, and *talk* so well when they sing. Working with so candid an ally, they must.

The classical singer confronted with a mike does not change his style or his technique. He sings as loudly, as forcefully, and as high as ever, as indeed

he must. He knows no other way to sing. All his training and routine have been directed toward developing these capacities, and the music he sings requires it, opera particularly. The sound engineer makes the adjustment. It is not the singer who ex-



**MAHALIA JACKSON:** "When you sing gospel you have a feeling there's a cure for what's wrong."

ploits the mike, as the popular singer does. It is the mike, as regulated by a sound engineer, that exploits the classical singer.

The popular singer's accomplishment has been not only the mastery of the microphone's fiendish exactions, but also his appreciation of its potential as a vocal and musical auxiliary, as a kind of supplemental larynx. With the help of the mike the popular singer has restored to singing some of the charm and intimacy, and much of the virtuosity, too, that was lost in Western music when the emphasis swung from the rhetorical to the lyrical, and then to the melodramatic and the transcendental, in the nineteenth century.

**S**OMETHING is lost, to be sure, and I, opera-bred as I am, must be the first to acknowledge it. Missing are the suspense of assaults upon the upper and lower extremes of the vocal range, the ringing triumph and exultant defiance of the high note courageously challenged, superbly attacked, and demonstratively sustained. To an opera buff, the popular singer seems a weakling, doing lazily and physically cheaply what comes all too easily.

The popular singer's voice has not been schooled to produce the big sound, the dramatic outbursts, the plangent, full-throated top notes of the opera singer. Since projection, in terms of volume, is taken care of by the microphone, the popular singer may take things more casually, applying less weight of breath upon the vocal cords. The microphone has made such schooling superfluous, even self-defeating. It can make *any* voice sound big, and when any voice can sound big, there is no competitive advantage in singing loud and high—a fact that some recent soul singers have yet to learn.

There are shortcomings, however, in the traditional European approach, too. The vogue of the high note has encouraged attitudes and achievements suggestive of athleticism rather than aesthetics. It has produced singers, past and present, more



matador than troubadour. What such singers did, and still do, can be accomplished artistically, and serve an artistic purpose. But in opera, particularly, the border between singing and shouting, between art and vulgarity, can be thin, and it is frequently



**NAT KING COLE:** "... a delightful singer, a delightful pianist, and according to those who knew him, a delightful man."

violated. An ever more assertive orchestra and a rising standard pitch have compounded the opera singer's vocal problems. He has to sing louder and higher than is comfortable, convenient, or healthy, in order to be heard.

He has to sing higher, too, because he is stuck — granting rare exceptions — with the original key, now, in older music, a full semi-tone higher than it was at the time of composition. (The so-called classical pitch of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was  $A = 422$  vibrations per second, and is assumed to have varied between  $A = 415$  and  $A = 430$ . The internationally established standard pitch today, responsive to a general preference for more brilliant instrumental tone, is  $A = 440$ , and in orchestral practice it tends to be slightly higher. The difference from the older pitch is roughly a semi-tone.) There may be, and sometimes are, sound musical reasons for ruling out transposition, but the commonest reason, if not always acknowledged, is that transposition in opera is felt to be an admission



**HANK WILLIAMS:** "If you're gonna sing a song, sing 'em somethin' they can understand."

of vocal inadequacy, with an inference of loss of face. The popular singer has no such inhibitions. One asks about an opera singer: "How's his top?" All the composer or arranger wants to know about a popular singer is: "Where's his top — or bottom?"

The popular singer wants an arrangement pitched where his work with melody and text will not be compromised by unseemly exertion. He wants to talk, to phrase conversationally, easily, and intimately. He wants to tell you what is on his mind or in his heart, not to show you what a great voice he

has, or what tremendous things he can do with it. He chooses keys, or tonalities, accordingly.

It seems pertinent to note in this connection that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, too, opera arias were pitched to suit the individual singer's convenience, and transposition was common when the same arias were sung by other singers, or even by the same singer as he or she grew older. "Time," wrote G. B. Shaw of Adelina Patti, "has transposed Patti a minor third down." The mean vocal range covered by the written notes, moreover, was usually modest, rarely exceeding an octave and a half. Singers added to it, above or below, at their own discretion and at their own risk.

These two facts, namely that the popular singer need not cultivate a big, powerful tone nor school it to survive taxingly high *tessitura*, and that he is free to choose congenial tonalities, have profoundly affected the way he sings, as compared with the way the classical singer sings. Both the release from the requirement of a big tone and concern for distinct, musical enunciation have encouraged him to cultivate a lighter, more "forward" vocal production.



**RAY CHARLES:** "... he has accomplished miracles of vocalism, feats that leave the traditionally trained singer shaking his head in disbelief."

They have also encouraged a different attitude toward the articulation of consonants. Classical singers tend to slight them, finding them disruptive to the flow of tone and to a fluent legato. This is characteristic of the classical singer's policy of favoring tone over text. It probably also reflects the fact that the Italian language, the mother tongue of *bel canto*, has so few words ending with consonants. Popular singers sing on and through the consonants, especially *m*'s, *n*'s, *ng*'s, and *l*'s, without any interruption of melodic line or inhibition of legato. They also employ the *coup de glotte*, or glottis stroke, to set off words beginning with vowels, especially the vowel *e* as in *ever* and *ending*.

The popular singer's concern for text and for lyrical enunciation has also affected his rhythmic procedures. He calculates his rhythmic progress in terms of four- or eight-measure episodes rather than in terms of so many beats to the measure, subdivided arithmetically, as in classical music. Within these four- or eight-measure episodes he distributes syllables at his own oratorical and rhetorical discretion, taking a bit of time from one, giving it to another.

Caccini, the principal innovative figure in the reform that led to the birth of Italian opera, must certainly have had something of this kind in mind when he wrote of "the noble manner of singing which is used without tying the man's self to the ordinary measure of time, making often the value of the note less by half, and sometimes more, according to the conceit of the words." Domenico Corri, a pupil of Porpora, the greatest vocal teacher of the eighteenth century, put it more bluntly, a century later, when he wrote that "hours [that is, a rigid observance of time] are for slaves."

Paradoxical as it may seem, the popular singer, in order to benefit from his rhythmic freedom, requires, as does the jazz instrumentalist, firm, although not rigid, rhythmic support. With whatever type of instrumental backing he may work, a congenial rhythm section is indispensable. When such singers as Ella Fitzgerald, Tony Bennett, and Frank Sinatra appear with symphony orchestras, as they do from time to time, they have their own rhythm section behind them, usually piano, drums, double bass, and sometimes rhythm guitar. Even when



**ELLA FITZGERALD:** *"There is simply nothing in her performance to which one would want to take exception."*

they work with the big jazz bands, they may prefer their own rhythm section.

When a nightclub, television, or recording program is being prepared, rehearsal usually begins with rhythm section alone. In modern recording, the singer may tape a song with nothing but the rhythm section, the instrumental backing being dubbed in afterward and subsequently "mixed." None of this, it should be emphasized, is to help the singer to "keep time." Quite the contrary. It supports the singer's own rhythmic procedure, liberating him from servitude to keeping time.

Vocal production, with the best popular singers, proceeds naturally, almost imperceptibly, from speech, and the pitch of speech is normally lower than the pitch of song. The term "to raise the voice in song," or in anger, for that matter, refers not only to volume, but also to pitch. The opera-oriented ear experiences many surprises in the investigation of the ranges of popular singers. Bing Crosby, for example, sings down to a low F or E, which is basso territory in opera, without sounding like a basso. The same is true of Frank Sinatra, whose range is

that of an opera bass-baritone, but who does not sound like one. Among the women, not only Ella Fitzgerald but also Pearl Bailey, Lena Horne, Peggy Lee, Dinah Shore, and Sarah Vaughan, among

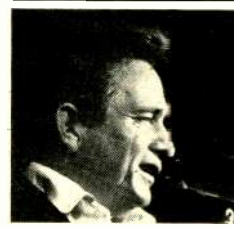


**JUDY GARLAND:** *"I'm nothing but a pair of lungs with a voice box."*

many others, sing lower than opera contraltos without sounding like baritones, as opera contraltos usually do when they carry a weighty tone down into the vocal cellar.

Many popular singers have as wide a range as the average opera singer, that is, about two octaves. Sometimes, as with Ella and Sarah, it is wider. But it begins lower, and it ends lower at the upper end of the range. An upward extension is often achieved, as in Ella's case, and Sarah's, too, by recourse to falsetto, a type of vocal production not usually associated with female voices. It was formerly much cultivated by male singers, especially tenors, in both operatic arias and songs, but it has gone out of fashion, in opera, at least, in the past fifty years, probably because of the apparent suggestion both of artifice and of effeminacy. There is less contrast between the normal and the "false" voice in females, which is why its employment by such singers as Ella and Sarah has passed largely unnoticed.

Falsetto is common among male singers in the



**JOHNNY CASH:** *"...he makes up for his basic cornfield twang by singing with his soul instead of his tonsils."*

country, gospel, and rhythm-and-blues categories. They sing habitually and confidently in the area between an opera tenor's high B-flat and high E-flat, as, indeed, flamenco tenors do. Rossini and Bellini wrote extensively for tenors in that range. The vocalism of country and, especially, of gospel and rhythm-and-blues and soul singers, moving fluently from head voice to falsetto and back, would seem to offer a clue as to how the tenors of that time coped with such requirements.

The general trend among popular singers has been not only toward a lower pitching of the voice,



excluding the upward extensions in falsetto, but also toward lower-pitched voices. I cannot think offhand of a prominent female popular singer whom I could categorize, in operatic or operetta terms, as a soprano. Tenors survive among the men, but not many. One thinks immediately of Tony Bennett and Andy Williams. Tony, particularly, who studied with an opera singer, works easily in an operatic



**B. B. KING:** *"I don't mind being called a blues singer, just so long as the tone of voice is right."*

tenor's range, including even a reliable high C. But the majority are high baritones (Vic Damone and Jack Jones), baritones (Dick Haymes and the young Frank Sinatra), and bass-baritones (Billy Eckstine is an outstanding example).

An area in which the popular singer is commonly reckoned inferior to the classical singer is that of virtuosity. It is true that popular singers do not dazzle their listeners with rapid scales, arpeggios, roulades, trills, and *staccati*, but they have their own virtuosic devices, notably the type of singing known as "scatting," that is, free improvisation on syllables, often nonsensical, raised to an extraordinary level of accomplishment and invention by such singers as Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Cleo Laine, Anita O'Day, and Sarah Vaughan. In melismatic ornamentation, too, the popular singers, especially in the rhythm-and-blues, gospel, and soul categories, tend to be both more virtuosic and more imaginative than their classical counterparts.



**ARETHA FRANKLIN:** *"Do you prefer to sing standing up or playing the piano?" "Being heard and understood."*

Quite aside from considerations of vocalism, it is, I believe, no insignificant coincidence that so many popular singers have made careers as actors. The conventions governing their deportment on the stage, whether in nightclubs or in concert, require a far more histrionic performance than is expected, or even permitted, of classical singers. The latter are accustomed to stand like wooden Indians in the bend of the piano and "let the composer speak for

himself." The popular singer is expected to lend the composer a hand and "sell the song."

But beyond the play of posture and gesture and facial expression and the ability to get on and off the stage without looking like an undertaker on duty, the popular singer's concern with the lyrical elucidation of text brings him, even as a singer, close to the actor's art. For a Bing Crosby, a Dean Martin, and a Frank Sinatra, or for a Doris Day and a Barbra Streisand, the gap between singing and acting is narrower than that which faces the classical singer moving from the studio to the opera house.

It works both ways. Many actors, suddenly required to sing, as Rex Harrison was in *My Fair Lady*, sing better than most singers, simply because they understand language, prosody, phrasing, pacing, and building. Fred Astaire is another example of an artist (primarily a dancer) who has sung more



**PEGGY LEE:** *"...quite simply the finest singer in the history of popular music."*

persuasively than most singers sing. The same may be said of Marlene Dietrich, Walter Huston, Gene Kelly, and Lee Marvin.

I should like, in conclusion, to remark one more, possibly significant, difference between the classical and the popular singer. Classical singers are as a rule, and especially nowadays, musically educated—more or less. They are likely to be university graduates. They read music. They count time. Many read well at sight. Of the popular singers who still loom largest in our minds when we speak of great artists of the past—Al Jolson, Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Hank Williams—most did not go beyond high school. Some never got even that far. Most had no formal musical education. And many could not at first, some still cannot, read music.

I would not go so far as to attribute their accomplishments as artists to lack of education. Their creativity has been natural and unique. But the absence of formal schooling and the requirement of developing their professional skills competitively before a paying public may have been to their advantage as innovators, securing and nourishing the blessings that were theirs by endowment. They learned from one another, from the instrumentalists and the composer-arrangers with whom they worked, and from the public. Who else, come to think of it, could have taught them?

# STEREO REVIEW THROWS A PARTY

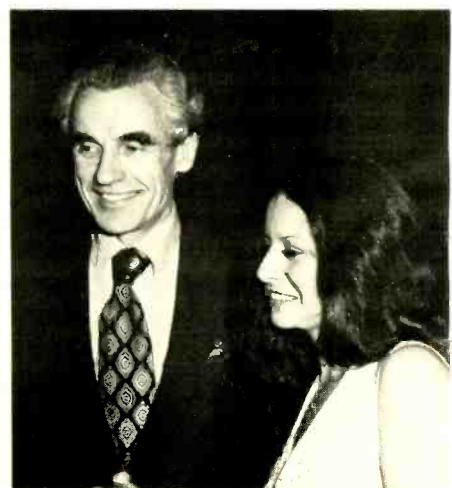
to celebrate its Record of the Year Awards for 1973



Left, the camera interrupts Editor William Anderson, about to make a point for Shelley Snow, assistant director of a-&-r for Polydor, and Lloyd Gelassen, Polydor's director of press and PR. Center, philanthropist of the year Avery Fisher chats with STEREO REVIEW Publisher Edgar Hopper (left) and Assistant Publisher Stanley Neufeld (right). At right, the Metropolitan Opera's assistant manager, Francis Robinson, with STEREO REVIEW's Managing Editor William Livingstone.



Left above, Speight Jenkins, classical editor of Record World, with Richard Rollefson, classical division of London Records, and Gustl Breuer, Red Seal promotion manager for RCA. Center, SR contributor Aram Bakshian (Schlagoper, February 1973) casts a spell over contributor Abigail Kuflik (Harry Nilsson, September 1973), music and dance reporter for Newsweek. Right, William Livingstone interrupts a colloquy with singer-songwriter Blossom Dearie to greet Candace Leeds, assistant director of Town Hall. Left below, conductor (and RCA Red Seal producer) Max Wilcox crowns over the award to the Cleveland Quartet (he produced). Center, ever-radiant Tamara Geva, actress, writer, and musical-comedy star, chats with Jane Allison, New York correspondent for the Indianapolis News. Right, Angel's director of artist relations John Coveney with Production Editor Paulette Weiss.







Left, Scott Mampe, director of Phonogram's classical division, and Ron Oberman, director of press and information for Columbia. Right, genial columnist ("Choosing Sides") Irving Kolodin with Frank Burton of Phonogram.



Left, actress-singer D. Jamin-Bartlett (of the cast of *A Little Night Music*) and Thomas Z. Shepard, director of Columbia's Masterworks. Right, Pierre Bourdain, Columbia's director of product management, and Peter (Prince of Packaging) Munves, RCA.



Above left, SR's Popular Music Editor Steve Simels and rock critic Jon Tiven. Center, Contributing Editor J Marks-Highwater with the Editor. Right, pianists/vocalists Ronny Whyte and Travis Hudson of the Monmouth-Evergreen hit "We Like a Gershwin Tune." Below left, William Loved, publicity director for Alfred A. Knopf, banters with publicist Don Smith. Right, Robert Offergeld, famed Gottschalk expert and former STEREO REVIEW music editor, caught in a typical pose with Angel's John Coveney and Margaret Carson, press representative for Leonard Bernstein and Michael Tilson Thomas.



Photos by Christian Steiner

# A Little Tambourine Music

By Jack Somer

AT three a.m. on this September day in 1964 most New Yorkers are asleep, but I'm in RCA's studio "A" sweating out a session that began at eight o'clock the evening before. It is not going well.

Odetta and her group—Les Grinage on bass and Bruce Langhorne on guitar—are weary and edgy, but they steadfastly refuse to abandon the session. For three hours we have been recording one song, Bob Dylan's introspective *Mr. Tambourine Man*. Odetta has sung the song ten times, each take exploring new territories of feeling, each reaching for elusive perfection, each running ten to twelve torturous minutes in length. I am nearly mesmerized by the seemingly endless repetition of Dylan's narcotic lyric, having listened with unflagging intensity to every note of Odetta's struggle. But I can do nothing to ease that struggle. Odetta is best left alone when a troublesome interpretation is gestating within her; she is deeply jealous of her music, even when it goes badly.

We have doused all the lights in the studio and control room and set up a single small lamp to isolate the three in their own private universe. Odetta,

in the long flowing dress, is outlined like a storm cloud at sunset, and as she rocks gently to her music the lamp is rhythmically exposed like a sailor's beacon, heightening the hypnotic pulse of her performance. Les and Bruce, positioned a few feet behind, form a backdrop beyond which the studio walls seem to disappear into an endless distance.

In the dim glow from gold meters and ruby pilot lights the engineers and I have silently followed the disembodied music coming from the dark loudspeakers. Unseen by the others, I have filled some twenty sheets of paper with fanciful drawings sparked by the imagery of Odetta's monodic utterance. (This will anger Odetta later. But when she sees that my sketches are involuntary responses to her music, she will claim them for her own.)

We are now in the eleventh take of *Mr. Tambourine Man*, and I am still traveling with Odetta into Dylan's fantasies:

*Take me on a trip upon your magic swirlin' ship  
My senses have been stripped,  
My hands can't feel to grip. . . .*

On and on it goes, through space and time. The performance becomes electrifying; the struggle is





being won. Odetta sings in a rhythmic whisper that pulses with life and mystery. I see more visions, but my pen is stilled by the magic:

*Take me disappearin' through the smoke rings of my mind*

*Down the foggy ruins of time*

*Far past the frozen leaves,*

*The haunted, frightened trees,*

*Out on the windy beach*

*Far from the twisted reach of crazy sorrow. . . .*

She paints image upon image, every beat and breath a stroke of beauty, and the song moves relentlessly to its quiet conclusion:

*Hey! Mr. Tambourine Man play a song for me,*

*I'm not sleepy and there is no place I'm goin' to.*

*Hey! Mr. Tambourine Man play a song for me*

*In the jingle-jangle mornin' I'll come followin' you.\**

An eternity goes by as the last shimmering guitar tones subside toward silence. My arms are outstretched dramatically, a signal for everyone to freeze until enough tape reels by for a clean ending. In the murky darkness, the engineer, his face

outlined by the console in blood-red highlights, turns to me for a sign, but with a violent shake of my hand I stop him from fading the sound away; I want all the natural decay of the instruments.

But my desire for natural perfection is shattered. There *is* a sound. It comes from the center loudspeaker, which is the phantom Odetta:

“Mmmmm. . . .”

It is a sigh of relief, a moan of pleasure, a groan of joy. And three heartbeats later a similar sound comes from the phantom Bruce Langhorne:

“Uh-uh, . . . mmmmm. . . .”

From both phantoms comes the soft strum of guitars, followed next by the gutty beat of the bass. And the sighs and groans pick up on the beat. It is an improvisation, a wordless conversation, a celebration of life that grows more vital with each beat. It's a Southern sound, a Black sound, a beautiful sound.

The joyful improvisation continues for several minutes and then, as spontaneously as it began, ends. The release is complete, the session over.

We all go out for steamed sea bass and boiled rice, and later we see the sun come up in the east.

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# ALEXIS WEISSENBERG

“Tahiti is very bad for pianos”

By Roy Hemming



AMONG pianists of today's so-called “middle generation,” few have won such world-wide acclaim and popularity as Alexis Weissenberg. His reviews from New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Paris, Berlin, London, Jerusalem, Capetown, Santiago, and Tokyo read like a press-agent's dream—and are of course regularly quoted in the ads the S. Hurok office prepares for his annual American concert tours: “Mr. Weissenberg is a powerhouse” (Harold C. Schonberg in the *New York Times*): “A Horowitz-like technique [and] a poet's heart” (*Time*): “A thunder-struck audience marvelled” (*San Francisco Chronicle*).

After all that, you might expect Alexis Weissenberg to come on like gangbusters. He doesn't. My first impression on meeting him for an interview was how slight he is physically—about five-feet-eight, with a trim and wiry build, and looking a good ten years younger than his forty-four years. Then came his handshake—so firm and solid I began to think that “powerhouse” might be an understatement. As he talked, in rapid-fire comments, I was struck by how unpretentious he is about his own achievements—unpretentious in an openly friendly, good-humored, sometimes disarmingly frank way.

“I've been very lucky in my career,” he said. “I know quite a few artists who haven't been as lucky as I and who really deserve a much better place. And I know a few who are having sensational careers that they really don't deserve.”

In recent years Weissenberg has been closely identified with the music of Rachmaninoff—having recorded the Second Piano Concerto for Angel and the Third Concerto and the complete preludes for RCA, for example. I asked him if, in the Rachmaninoff centennial year just past, he had made recordings of the other Rachmaninoff concertos which might still be awaiting release.

“Regrettably, no,” he replied. “I was asked to record all of the Rachmaninoff concertos several years ago when I was working in part with RCA, and I did the Third for them then. I had in principle accepted the idea of a complete set, although it was not in my contract. Now I am exclusively with EMI [whose American label is Angel], and it is impossible to do a complete set for that company because of a legal requirement that an artist wait a certain number of years—seven, I think—before he can re-record a particular work for another label. So that killed the project.

“I'm sorry, because I would have loved to do it—not just for the Rachmaninoff hundredth anniversary, but because I believe there are only certain years in your life when you can do this sort of thing. After all, the life span of a pianist is usually longer than the span of his ability to play certain works well. That's why I wish I could have recorded all the Rachmaninoff concertos while still in my early forties—which I believe are the best years of a

man's life, when you're physically fit to do concertos of that kind and have the experience and presumably the maturity too. There is something muscular that just doesn't function after a certain age, at least in certain repertoire.”

How then, I asked, does one explain Artur Schnabel, who is still going strong in his eighties? “I adore Schnabel,” he quickly replied. “The fact that he's not technically as well equipped as he once was is, I think, generally accepted. I don't think anyone should even question it or criticize him for it. What is so very special with Schnabel is that his glorious sound is always there. A man who has that kind of sound will never lose it. He's one of the greatest personalities we have and shows great intelligence about what he does.

“On the other hand, I will *not* listen to the last recordings of Casals. I think one should respect the person who is asked to spend his money for a record and not give him something that is a degeneration of what was once great but is now lost. No matter what the record companies say, I believe any artist should know when to stop.”

WEISSENBERG himself has already stopped once in mid-career. In 1957, ten years after he had won the Leventritt Award and was still being widely hailed as one of the most promising of the younger generation of pianists, he suddenly withdrew from active concertizing. He prefers to call it a sabbatical. “I took it at that time, contrary to what some people may think, because I wanted to do some more work and because I felt it was incompatible with traveling and playing the same programs too often. When you are very young and tour constantly, you cannot keep up with your success. Your life becomes terribly imprecise.”

The years that had preceded the Leventritt and those early concert tours undoubtedly had a great deal to do with any problems he was then having in coping with his life or his career. Born in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1929, Weissenberg was an eleven-year-old student when the Nazis moved into his country. During the next three years, Bulgaria was alternately in the grip of pro-Nazi and pro-Soviet factions as well as invasion forces of both Germans and Russians. The Weissenberg family made several attempts to leave Bulgaria but failed, and in 1944 young Alexis spent nine months in a Nazi concentration camp outside Sofia. He is reluctant to talk about that experience. “It is not important enough or tragic enough compared with what happened to so many others. The fact is that my immediate family survived,” he says.

“It was an English bombing raid on Sofia that saved us from extermination. The raid destroyed several major Nazi buildings, forcing the Germans to call many of their troops back to the capital, as they needed all the men they could get to rebuild the bombed facilities. For several

weeks, as a result, the frontiers were less well controlled than usual—and that made it possible for us to escape to Turkey. From there we went to Palestine, and the following year to New York.”

In New York, young Alexis continued his piano studies, which he had begun in Sofia at age three with Professor Wladigueroff, who is still a leading teacher and composer in Bulgaria. At the Juilliard School, Weissenberg studied with Olga Samaroff. When he was seventeen, he won the Leventritt Award and made his debut with the New York Philharmonic under George Szell, playing the Chopin Piano Concerto No. 1. He also made one recording for Columbia. “On one side was the Prokofiev Third Sonata and six *Suggestions Diaboliques*, and on the other side a Scriabin étude and the Nocturne for the Left Hand. It’s so completely out of print now that you can’t even find it in the Flea Market in Paris.”

In 1957, after ten years of touring all over the United States, plus Central and South America, Weissenberg decided to chuck it all and move to Paris. He acquired French citizenship, which he still retains.

“I just had to retire from the stage in order to think over things I had done well, things I could do much better, and things I should never do again. I had to know who I was. Every man has to know this. He has to know it as a lover. He has to know it as a musician. You may be born instinctively a great lover, but to be a great lover doesn’t mean that you must have *all* sorts of experience. On the contrary, you can know only one person and love magnificently! Similarly, you don’t have to perform coast-to-coast or world-wide to be a pianist of importance.”

**W**EISSENBERG gave up active concertizing, married a Spanish girl, and moved to Madrid to raise a family. But in the early 1960’s he was divorced and moved back to Paris. Nothing much happened professionally for several years.

“When you take a sabbatical as I did, the price you have to pay is not knowing whether you’ll ever be able to come back on the stage. An audience grows with an artist, young or old. And an audience forgets an artist the minute he’s away. I knew that if I took several years off, most people would think I had committed suicide or decided never to play the piano again, or gone off to Tahiti with some exotic girl to live the rest of my life.” He smiled broadly and said, “I might have *loved* to do that, but the climate in Tahiti is very bad for pianos.”

In Paris, Weissenberg worked on repertoire, studied new scores, and read extensively about the composers he felt closest to. He also started a thriving business designing Christmas cards. But perhaps most important of all, he made a film in Sweden playing Stravinsky’s *Petrouchka*—a dazzling performance. Herbert von Karajan saw it and invited Weissenberg to perform in another film with the Berlin Philharmonic. Other offers quickly came in.

Weissenberg credits conductor William Steinberg and artists’ manager Ronald Wilford with rekindling his American career. “Steinberg was of tremendous help to me in my first years in America, and when he heard that I was ready to come back, he was the first to say he wanted me to play again in Pittsburgh and New York with him. I met Wilford at about that time in Milan, and he expressed an interest in bringing me back to the States. When [the pianist] Michelangeli had to cancel a New York Philharmonic engagement with Steinberg, both Steinberg and Wilford suggested I be called to substitute. It’s frighten-

ing how many coincidences it takes for someone to come back to the concert stage.”

The Philharmonic concert, at which Weissenberg played the Rachmaninoff Third, was a sensational success. Critics spoke of his new maturity as an interpreter and his surer sense of structure and tonal shading. Both RCA and Angel Records signed him, and his international career was in full blaze again. Today it burns more brightly than ever. He now limits himself to eighty or eighty-five concerts a year and says “that will be boiled down to seventy as soon as I can possibly do so.” He is busier than ever in the recording studios. Last summer he recorded several Mozart piano concertos and the Brahms First with Giulini in London, as well as several Bach albums and a set of the Chopin mazurkas—all for Angel.

**W**HEN our conversation returned to Rachmaninoff, Weissenberg spoke of him first as a performer. “He was probably the greatest pianist of his time. And there have been none since with that kind of equipment or that kind of original style. It still seems original—and so exciting—and anything but old-fashioned. The proof is in the anniversary series of recordings RCA has brought out. When I listen to Rachmaninoff’s recordings, I am in heaven from the sheer joy of hearing great piano playing.”

I asked whether he thought the use of Rachmaninoff’s own compositions in movies and in pop arrangements had made his music *seem* old-fashioned. “Not only old-fashioned, but less important,” he replied. “I object to that. I do not believe that because something is popular or accessible it is therefore less important. Just as in literature and theater, there is lighter music which is *not* less important because it conveys pleasure and joy. I am a violent opponent of the tremendous nonsense that music must sound almost religious to be respected.”

Some critics have called Weissenberg’s performances of Rachmaninoff emotionally cool and perhaps lacking in passion. “It’s strictly a matter of taste,” he says. “I take my coffee black, but there are those who take it with an enormous amount of sugar. It’s the same in music.

“Rachmaninoff *can* be overdone, but so can *any* composer. I think it is as wrong to play Bach dryly as it is to play Bach sentimentally, but it is essential to play Bach *emotionally*. Why should we believe that because people lived in the Classical age they felt less than people in the nineteenth century? Human nature does not change. What changes is the *structure* of life and the *elements* that make people laugh, cry, love, or hate.

“I think we are coming back to a more romantic period. For a long time after World War II people needed absolute control because their nerves were beyond further shattering. They had homes that were broken, husbands or sons who had been killed. To survive, people then needed emotional elements that were uncomplicated, absolutely clear, and completely square. The music, paintings, films, and books of that period were often ice-cold, terse, and very explicit. And the performers who came out of that period were machines because people didn’t have the stamina for anything too sentimental, too soft, too involved.

“All of us were affected by that, but now we’re relaxing. People are not afraid to love any more—especially young people. They get excited, they *like*, they look for something brighter. And people have suddenly discovered that you can like and play Rachmaninoff and not be ashamed of it. I think that is marvelous.”



# STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT BEST OF THE MONTH



## CLASSICAL

### THE CONDUCTOR TRIUMPHS IN A NEW *FREISCHÜTZ*

*Kleiber's recording for Deutsche Grammophon holds its own in a field of strong contenders*

CARL MARIA VON WEBER's opera *Der Freischütz* is a work rarely heard in American opera houses, but it is comparatively well represented in the recordings catalog. Eugen Jochum's fine recording for Deutsche Grammophon has seen good service for more than a decade, and now the same company brings us a new recording that is even better.

Conductor Carlos Kleiber (son of the late, eminent Erich Kleiber) is the new set's greatest asset. Despite the fact that he has still to achieve adequate representation in the recordings catalog, he is already a widely respected figure in Europe. He dominates the performance in the new *Freischütz*, but he does so without imposing an excessively idiosyncratic imprint on the music and without suppressing the natural impulses of the singers. With fastidious attention to dynamic nuances and unusual sensitivity to orchestral textures, he draws the listener's attention to the beauty of Weber's writing time and time again: his reading is nothing short of revelatory. Lyrical episodes are set forth expansively and with great imagination, dramatic passages are moved along with unflagging energy, and the orchestral sound is a joy in itself.

There are some unusual tempo choices—too slow for "*Leise, leise,*" a trifle too fast for some of the choruses—but they are of negligible importance, for the overall effect is brilliant. Kleiber has a reputa-

tion for being fond of long and painstaking rehearsals, a tendency that may keep him from being used overmuch by record producers, but the results in this case speak for themselves.

The exceptional contributions of the orchestra are, moreover, lavished on a deserving cast, the feminine performances being particularly strong. The Agathe of Gundula Janowitz is sung with radiant tonal beauty and perfect intonation: her prayer "*Und ob die Wolke*" is quite simply breathtaking. Edith Mathis is a charming, youthful-sounding Änchen. She underplays the traditional soubretish quality of the role (possibly carrying out the conductor's wishes), and it is a plausible interpretation—except that, as a result, the timbres of the

two sopranos are not sufficiently differentiated. Nonetheless, Miss Mathis' singing is very pleasing throughout.

The light, lyric voice of Peter Schreier is better suited to Mozart than it is to Weber. He is correct, musicianly—and unexciting. Theo Adam is a convincingly villainous Kaspar on the dramatic level, and he is impressively adept in handling the rapid figurations of his music. He is not, however, particularly appealing vocally in the role. Supporting singers are, in general, adequate, and in two instances they are excellent: the dignified Hermit of Franz Crass and the outstanding Ottokar of Bernd Weikl, triumphing over the cruelly written high-baritone tessitura.



CARLOS KLEIBER  
*Fastidious attention, unusual sensitivity*

The musical elements of the production have been brilliantly handled technically, while the stage effects come off with varying degrees of success. The famous Wolf's Glen scene, for example, moves along excitingly enough, but it falls a little short of maximum effectiveness. And, unfortunately, DG has once again returned to the questionable practice of using standby actors for the spoken portions of the drama. The results here are no more successful than they have been in other such efforts.

On balance, however, I am very enthusiastic about this set and recommend it highly. It is, of course, challenging a field of strong contenders: Angel S-3748 offers the very fine, if more conventional, leadership of Robert Heger and two superior male leads in Nicolai Gedda and Walter Berry (though Birgit Nilsson is somewhat miscast as Agathe). Seraphim S-6010 offers a good all-around performance on two discs (no spoken dialogue) at a bargain price. And Everest 468/3 boasts the excellent Kaspar of Gottlob Frick and what is surely the scariest Wolf's Glen episode ever perpetrated.

*George Jellinek*

**WEBER: *Der Freischütz*.** Bernd Weikl (baritone), Otto-kar; Gundula Janowitz (soprano), Agathe; Edith Mathis (soprano), Annchen; Theo Adam (bass), Kaspar; Peter Schreier (tenor), Max; Siegfried Vogel (bass), Kuno; Franz Crass (bass), Hermit; Günther Leib (baritone), Kilian; Gerhard Paul (speaker), Samiel; Leipzig Radio Chorus; Dresden State Orchestra. Carlos Kleiber cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 046 three discs \$23.94.

## RACHMANINOFF BY ASHKENAZY

*His latest London recording documents  
his growth and fortifies his reputation*

WITH each new addition to his discography—it now totals some thirty-five records of music ranging from Bach through Prokofiev—Vladimir Ashkenazy has proved that he belongs without question among the elect of the pianists of our time. His latest London disc, devoted to the works of Sergei Rachmaninoff—the Corelli Variations and the nine Études Tableaux—is proof if proof were still needed. Further, inasmuch as the thirty-six-year-old Russian-born virtuoso has recorded one of these works (the Variations, Angel 35647, now deleted) at a much earlier stage in his career, this recording gives evidence of an impressive growth on his part, of an ability to rethink and reconsider.

The Corelli Variations of 1932 and the Études Tableaux, composed between 1916 and 1917 shortly after the death of Rachmaninoff's friend Scriabin, are the composer's last works for solo piano. His habits of self-criticism and almost unceasing self-doubt (not to mention the amount of time absorbed in concertizing) were the primary causes of his scarcity of output, and he was of course never in the forefront of the composing trends of his day. Yet, I feel that these last piano works, along with the Paganini Rhapsody, are, at least in comparison with most of what had come previously, more advanced than they are usually acknowledged to be in discussions of Rachmaninoff's music. To be sure, the Études are a far cry from the kind of work Scriabin, for example, was involved in at the time of his death, but there are occasional hints of a very individual kind of modernism. And the Corelli Variations (the *Folia* theme was not actually Corelli's, of course, but was used by him as the basis for *his* violin variations) are as tightly structured and even at times as astringent as the Paganini Rhapsody was to be two years later. Though atonality is never a part of Rachmaninoff's palette, he does appear to be experimenting here and there with an absent tonal center. Above all, however, these works reveal a mastery of organization and a solidification and concentration of his celebrated sardonic, even diabolic, style.

Ashkenazy brings all this out very clearly in his interpretations. The Études, extraordinarily difficult

VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY: *marvelously evocative*



London Records





THE LATE JIM CROCE: *straight-ahead charm*

works technically, never become overt display pieces in his hands. Instead, his readings of these little tone poems are marvelously evocative of the inspirational images one imagines must have been running through the composer's mind at the time of their composition, above all the sense of the weighty cares of Mother Russia that Rachmaninoff seemed always to carry on his shoulders.

Ashkenazy recorded three of the *Études* previously (London CS 6390), and his performances here are not markedly different, though there is a much wider range of piano sound. What has changed, and that radically from his previous (1957) recording, is Ashkenazy's view of the Corelli Variations. The older version displays incredibly fleet fingers and a mercurial personality. It was, in its own way, a gorgeous performance, but the new one, about four minutes slower (just short of twenty minutes altogether), is far weightier, more variegated in color and dynamics, expressively freer, and more improvisatory in concept. It is, overall, a more measured view of Rachmaninoff, one with an air of almost bitter resignation and a depth that quite negates the popular view of Rachmaninoff as a composer of effective late-Romantic trifles. London's sound, barring some overmodulated climaxes, is exceptionally vivid.

Igor Kipnis

**RACHMANINOFF.** *Variations on a Theme by Corelli, Op. 42; Études Tableaux, Op. 39.* Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). LONDON CS 6822 \$5.98.

## POPULAR

### JIM CROCE'S VALEDICTORY

*"I Got a Name," his last album, suggests that the best was yet to come*

THE late Jim Croce triggered something always dormant in the American psyche—something like large anti-think guns—with such fodder as *You Don't Mess Around with Jim* and the other one about the guy who was meaner than a junkyard dog. Ideally, pop music is neither pro nor con on the subject of brains, but in America one can always attract a kind of streetcorner audience by coming out four-square (or at least appearing to) against intelligence. Politicians do it continuously and successfully, and so does television. So there was this image of Jim Croce as the proud-to-be-dumb greaser.

But he had this *other* thing growing with another audience that was paying more attention to the music and less to the image. His singing style settled into something distinctive and fairly expressive, within some clear-cut limits, and his songwriting steadily improved. Such ballads as *Lover's Cross* and *I'll Have to Say I Love You in a Song* are particularly charming, and "mindless" in the best sense—natural and spontaneous, felt and unfiltered.

"I Got a Name" is Croce's last and best album. The title song, most notable of the three he didn't write here, has a simple, straight-ahead kind of charm—it's easily the best thing I've heard from Norman Gimbel and Charles Fox lately—and the up-tempo numbers in the album, *Workin' at the Car Wash Blues* and *Top Hat Bar and Grill*, work for the album instead of making it work for them, as might have happened in the old days. Croce's band has been a good one all along, one of those nice, airy, mostly acoustic folkie organizations, and the playing here is sharp. The album seems to say that Croce was aware he did have a name, and now he had the attention he'd been trying to attract, growth could begin. Funny place to end. *Noel Coppage*

**JIM CROCE: *I Got a Name.*** Jim Croce (vocals, guitar); Maury Muehleisen (guitar); Joe Macho (bass); Tommy West (guitar, keyboards); Rick Marotta (drums); other musicians. *I Got a Name; Lover's Cross; Five Short Minutes; Age; Workin' at the Car Wash Blues; I'll Have to Say I Love You in a Song; Salon and Saloon; Thursday; Top Hat Bar and Grill; Recently; The Hard Way Every Time.* ABC ABCX-797 \$5.98, © M 8022-797 \$6.98, © M 5022-797 \$6.98.

(Continued overleaf)



Atlantic Records

DOUG SAHM: among other things, a fine country fiddler

## “TEXAS TORNADO” DOUG SAHM

*A new Atlantic platter serves up a generous helping of his unique chicanogringo stew*

**D**OUG SAHM was the leader of the sometime group known as the Sir Douglas Quintet, which recorded originally for the Tribe label in Texas in the mid-Sixties and hit with *She's About a Mover*. They resurfaced on Mercury, putting out several good (and unnoticed) albums and hitting again with *Mendocino* just before they disbanded. Their product was that blend of chili-blues and pop ambitions known as “Tex-Mex,” a loose, mostly local Southwestern style whose other exponents were variously Buddy Holly, the Fireballs, and the Bobby Fuller Four.

After the Quintet broke up, Sahm returned to Texas, where he did some record producing. Now he is back with an Atlantic album that is entirely remarkable on one side and thoroughly pleasurable on the other. The best first: Sahm reveals himself on side one as a warm and ingratiating jazz singer suitably arranged (by himself), scored (by Willie Bridges), and backed. The horns include the stellar tenor-sax talent known as David “Fathead” Newman, and the rhythm section is mostly made up of Sahm’s new band, which includes Quintet veteran Augie Meyer on Vox organ. The result is a delicious chicanogringo stew, a remarkably successful blending of the Tex-Mex sound with New York jazz horns.

A nice little bonus is the *Pride of New Orleans*, pianist Dr. John, playing a tender little waltz-time intro on *Tennessee Blues*: I haven’t heard him play so lightly before, and it’s a welcome surprise. Eight of the eleven songs are Sahm’s own. I particularly liked *San Francisco FM Blues*, another in a series of songs he has done about Bay Area living, which apparently tickles him, and *Someday*, a bouncing ballad in which the band plays a riff that takes cues from *Satin Doll* and *Crazy Rhythm* while the lyrics borrow plots from *Someday You’ll Want Me to Want You* and *Your Cheatin’ Heart*.

Side two is given over to Sahm’s usual Tex-Mex style, the new band recreating the musical approach of the Quintet—a slugging little roadhouse combo that keeps people on the dance floor. *Chicano* is perhaps the best example here, with Flaco Jimenez playing accordion in a style that must go all the way back to . . . would you believe Fort Apache? Augie Meyer’s stylistic trademark of playing chords on the off-beat to get a hurdy-gurdy effect, Sahm’s ragged, almost sloppy guitar (and his fine country fiddling), and the general enthusiasm of the combo all make for satisfying music. It’s so nice to hear a band you don’t have to worry on. *Viva Sir Douglas! Saludos y mil gracias!*

Joel Vance

**SIR DOUGLAS BAND:** *Texas Tornado*. Doug Sahm (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *San Francisco FM Blues*; *Someday*; *Blue Horizon*; *Tennessee Blues*; *Ain’t That Loving You*; *Texas Tornado*; *Juan Mendoza*; *Chicano*; *I’ll Be There*; *Hard Way*; *Nitty Gritty*. ATLANTIC SD 7287 \$5.98, ® TP 7287 \$6.98, © CS 7287 \$6.98.





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# POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • NOEL COPPAGE • PAUL KRESH • PETER REILLY • JOEL VANCE

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**CHARLIE ALLEN/PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC.** Charlie Allen (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Gumbo Jones*; *Roll Georgia*; *Hold On*; *Dancin' in the Fire*; *Good Gospel Music*; *Sunshine Embrace*; and five others. ABC/DUNHILL DSX-50157 \$5.98.

Performance: **Superb**  
Recording: **Excellent**

This is my first experience with Pacific Gas & Electric, so for all I know they have been putting out high-quality music for years; they certainly do here. Charlie Allen is an excellent vocalist; he has the savvy of Ray Charles—that is, he sounds like what David Clayton-Thomas was always trying to sound like, minus the pomposity. But the best thing here is the superior songwriting, for which credit goes to Allen, Spencer Michlin, and John Hill (who was also the producer). *Gumbo Jones* is a funny, joshing tune, a folksy little tale of a New Orleans fellow who gets into a fight with a chef when he finds the cook has consumed all the gumbo; the production and writing here remind me of the great series Allen Toussaint turned out with Lee Dorsey in the 1960's (*Workin' in the Coal Mine*, *Ride Your Pony*, *Ever'thing I Do Gon' Be Funky*). I raved a few months ago about a Steely Dan tune, *Pearl of the Quarter*, about a boy in love with a chippie; Allen-Michlin-Hill's *Roll Georgia* seems to be a companion piece, a song in which you can see the characters.

### Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
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- ⓑ = eight-track quadraphonic tape
- ⓐ = quadraphonic cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

*Hold On* is a good reggae performance, and *Dancin' in the Fire* has a trace of Haitian voodoo about it. *Niggers in the Woods* is a little slice of Armageddon with brilliant, spare backing: the drummer plays a heartbeat on a



CHARLIE ALLEN  
*The savvy of Ray Charles*

cardboard box while a dobro guitar sends out little shivering phrases. The backing throughout is excellent. There are too many sidemen and -women to name, but I must single out saxophonist Michael Brecker for his fine solo in *Roll Georgia*.

I hope the Allen-Michlin-Hill songwriting-producing-performing collaboration continues and prospers, for they are turning out quality material and successfully maintaining artistic and technical control of its performance. Rock is either in its dotage or catching its breath after the giddy debauch of the 1960's. If it is going to make a comeback or hold its own, it will need all the good songs it can get, and these three fellows seem able to provide them. While looking forward to their next album, I am going to play this one a lot. J.V.

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**THE ORIGINAL BLUES PROJECT: *Reunion in Central Park*.** Danny Kalb (guitar, vocals); Steve Katz (guitar, harmonica, vocals); Al Kooper (keyboards, guitar, vocals); Andy Kullberg (bass); Roy Blumenfeld (drums). *Louisiana Blues*; *Steve's Song*; *I Can't Keep from Cryin' Sometimes*; *You Can't Catch Me*; *Fly Away*; *Caress Me Baby*; *Catch the Wind*; *Wake Me, Shake Me*; *Two Trains Running*. MCA MCA2-8003 \$9.98.

Performance: **Effusive**  
Recording: **Very good**

The Blues Project was a New York band of the mid-Sixties who introduced young white people to blues by black masters or wrote material in blues form. They did not attempt to copy the originals but added something of their own. A revelation in their day, they included such major talents as Al Kooper and Steve Katz. When Kooper left the group they floundered, re-formed, tried different images, and finally evaporated. Much has happened to educate audiences about blues since the time when the band was a harbinger. But that does not count now: the roars that greet the group on this reunion concert in Central Park are cheers for the band's and the audience's youth.

The band had personality problems during its career, but these were either negotiated or forgiven with the years. Here the group sounds relaxed and confident, even grateful (bless Steve Katz—in an interview he described himself as having "played with Blood, Sweat and Tears for twenty years") for not having to prove anything. Al Kooper has said that the reconstituted group will probably not make many—or even any—more appearances, since they don't wish to rehearse "so that we can get to where we were eight years ago."

The performances here are sometimes satisfying and sometimes not: for example, Jimmy Reed's *Caress Me Baby* is taken at a nod-out tempo that tries hard but becomes trying. Yet there are enough moments when the spirit that made them important comes through; it is good for them to have rediscovered it, since few adults or bands can capture their lost youth without being desperate or foolish. The



Blues Project is neither, and the recording is a love-feast. *J.V.*

**JACKSON BROWNE:** *For Everyman.* Jackson Browne (vocals, guitar, piano); David Lindley (guitar); Doug Haywood (bass); Jim Keltner (drums); other musicians. *Take It Easy; Our Lady of the Well; Colors of the Sun; I Thought I Was a Child; These Days; Red Neck Friend;* and four others. ASYLUM SD-5067 \$5.98.

Performance: **Very good**  
Recording: **Very good**

Jackson Browne is a highly respected songwriter, and has been for some time—one of many, to be sure, who owe a lot to Tom Rush, but one of such skill he would have made it anyway. This is only his second album, and it is a gentle, unspectacular one, perhaps a bit too quiet and civilized sometimes, but crammed with more quality material than you could reasonably expect. Vocally, Browne is an all-right interpreter but doesn't go out of his way—what Martin Mull calls that extra mile—to reach you. His singing isn't bad at all, but I don't find it particularly interesting. I keep imagining Tom Rush or Bonnie Raitt or somebody hitched up to each song, and Bonnie does sing a little dab of harmony in *The Times You've Come*. Other celebrity guests appear, too: David Crosby sings harmony for a minute or two, Joni Mitchell plays a few piano chords, and no less a figure than Rockaday Johnnie (come on, now, you remember: "Turned on my radio/It was Rockaday Johnnie singin'/Tell your ma, tell your pa/Our love's gonna grow, ooh-wah, ooh-wah") tickles the ivories in *Red Neck Friend*. Browne's singing of his "old" favorite *These Days*, indeed the whole arrangement of it, seems forced and self-conscious, perhaps because too many good arrangements already exist and he was trying to avoid me-tooism, or perhaps because he listened to the wrong advice; it says here the arrangement was "inspired" by Gregg Allman. Generally, the vocals aren't bad, though, and the arrangements are nice and clean. The songs are all good, solid; they don't hit you full in the face but hang around the edges of memory for a long time. Most memories can use something this nice hanging around their edges. *N.C.*

**TIM BUCKLEY:** *Sefronia.* Tim Buckley (vocals, guitar); Bernie Mysior (bass); Buddy Helm (drums); Mark Tiernan (keyboards); other musicians. *Dolphins; Honey Man; Because of You; Peanut Man; Martha; Quicksand;* and four others. DISCREET MS 2157 \$5.98.

Performance: **Voice of gold, songs of lead**  
Recording: **Very good**

Tim Buckley is one of our most gifted singers, but his taste is weird and his songwriting and song selection keep damaging his albums. For some reason, he keeps doing things like, in order of progressing dreariness, *Honey Man*, *Stone in Love*, and *Quicksand*—songs that have nothing to say beyond, "Hey, Babe, c'mere," and no melody in which to say even that. Buckley, who has jazz leanings (sometimes provocatively set down in his own compositions such as *Lorca* or this album's two-part *Sefronia*), may have concluded that a certain kind of stooping is necessary in order to conquer the rock audience. Anyway, consider the contrast when a good song

inexplicably turns up, although his vocal on Fred Neil's *Dolphins* is slightly mannered, it is still downright electrifying. This is what you call *interpreting*, folks, and this is a song with something worth interpreting. Buckley hits the "surprise" low note that most singers imply (with the bass player's help) in the chorus, and then, without strain, takes it up into a third octave for a little variety the third time through. He has incredible range, which I guess is the point of the Nilsson-like overdub fest in *Peanut Man*; Captain Beelheart supposedly can snort-to-squeak over four octaves, but who besides Buckley could actually sing this thing? We must also ask, of course, who would want to? So it goes. *N.C.*

**JIM CROCE:** *I Got a Name* (see Best of the Month, page 79)



JACKSON BROWNE  
*Hanging around the edges of memory*

**DAWN:** *Dawn's New Ragtime Follies.* Dawn (vocals); Tony Orlando (vocals); orchestra. *Say, Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose?;* and eleven others. BELL 1130 \$5.98, Ⓜ 81130 \$6.95, Ⓞ 51130 \$6.95.

Performance: **For the tots**  
Recording: **Good**

So, it's raining outside, *Sesame Street* has gone off, the kids are climbing the walls, your wife is on the verge of doing a Medea, and you are wondering why you ever chickened out of that vasectomy. Easy solution: get out this album and let Dawn and Tony Orlando take care of the situation. Almost any kid can be taught to strut in time, and every band here has a metronome beat that they can easily follow. For the older kids there is a song book with lyrics enclosed. *Gypsy Rose* is, of course, the big hit, but all the pseudo ragtime sounds so much alike that the tots will never notice. If you're over the age of eight the record will surely drive you nuts if you have to listen to more than one side, so earplugs are definitely in order. But then again it is a more humane parental tactic than suggesting to the little darlings that playing on the highway can be fun. Well, isn't it? *P.R.*

**ISAAC HAYES:** *Joy.* Isaac Hayes (vocals and instrumentals); orchestra. *Joy; I Love You That's All; A Man Will Be a Man;* and two others. ENTERPRISE ENS-5007 \$5.98, Ⓞ

EN8-5007 \$6.98, Ⓞ ENC-5007 \$6.98, Ⓜ EQ8-5007 \$7.98.

Performance: **Slick**  
Recording: **Good**

Here's more jive soul from one of the slickest commercial composer-performers around. Hayes is actually a black Kostelanetz, and this album is really background music, sweaty vocals and ominous musical effects aside. If you like Hayes, you'll like it. But no one will spend any time thinking about it. Surprisingly, for a Hayes album, the engineering is not all that it could be—there are noticeable lags between the vocal tracks and the instrumental ones. Otherwise, "Joy" is 100 per cent pure detergent (or is it margarine?). *P.R.*

**CHRIS JAGGER.** Chris Jagger (vocals); orchestra. *Handful of Dust; Hold On; Joy of the Ride; Something New; Riddle Song;* and five others. ASYLUM SD 5069 \$5.98.

Performance: **Okay**  
Recording: **Good**

You-know-who's brother makes his debut here, on an album that leaves me in a trance of indifference. Chris writes all his own material, and it is uniformly frenetic and five years out of date. He trained in India, we are informed, "learning the techniques of breath and scale," but all he has to show for it seems to be a brief flurry of sitar-guitar activity in *King of the Fishes* and a lyric—"Oh this burnin' fever"—that sounds like a plague report. Mick puts in a stint as a voice-over in *Handful of Dust*, a title that Evelyn Waugh borrowed from T.S. Eliot's *Wasteland* and that neither of the Jagers seems at all comfortable with. It's a very minor effort. *P.R.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**LEO KOTTKE:** *Ice Water.* Leo Kottke (vocals, six- and twelve-string guitars); Bill Berg (drums, percussion); Bill Peterson (bass); Bill Barber (piano); Cal Hand (dobro guitar, steel guitar). *Morning Is the Long Way Home; Pamela Brown; A Good Egg; Tilt Billings and the Student Prince; All Through the Night; Short Stories; You Know I Know You Know; Born to Be with You; A Child Should Be a Fish.* CAPITOL ST-11262 \$5.98, Ⓜ 8XT-11262 \$6.98, Ⓞ 4XT-11262 \$6.98.

Performance: **Astonishing**  
Recording: **Excellent**

It is not possible for me to be rational about Leo Kottke. Imagine a guitarist uniting the power of Leadbelly, the agility of Lonnie Johnson, the dignity of Laurindo Almeida, the loose expertise of Ry Cooder, and the poetry of Django Reinhardt. That is a rough idea of what Kottke does. And besides that, he's gotten more confident as a singer and is beginning to write good songs. Not yet thirty, he is still developing, so there is always the sense of high adventure upon hearing him—where will he take me next?

*Morning Is the Long Way Home* opens his new album and, in total, is the best single performance in it. His voice, delivery, guitar, lyrics, and careening melody line produce an alternating tension and relaxation that is irresistible. *Pamela Brown* is a Tom T. Hall tune, done in a straight-ahead cosmopolitan country way. Kottke's solo is more than fine country picking, but he keeps within country limits; he doesn't need or want to bludgeon or

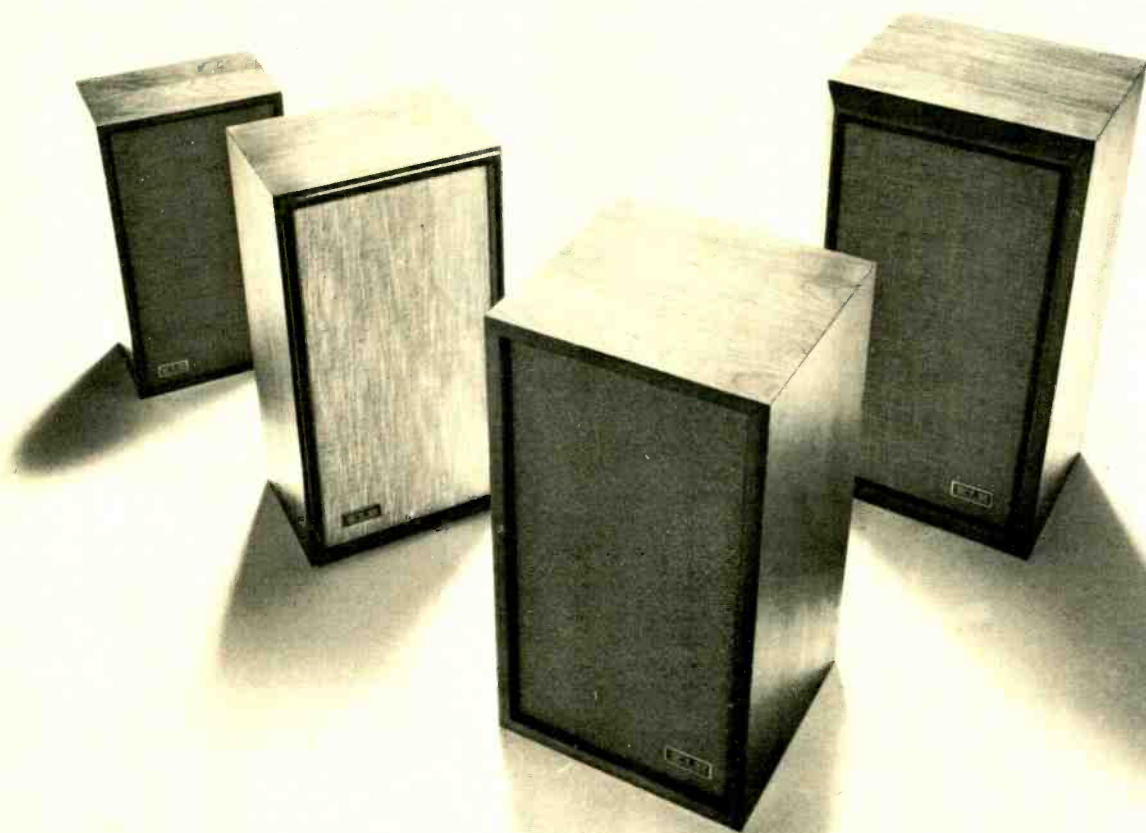
(Continued on page 86)



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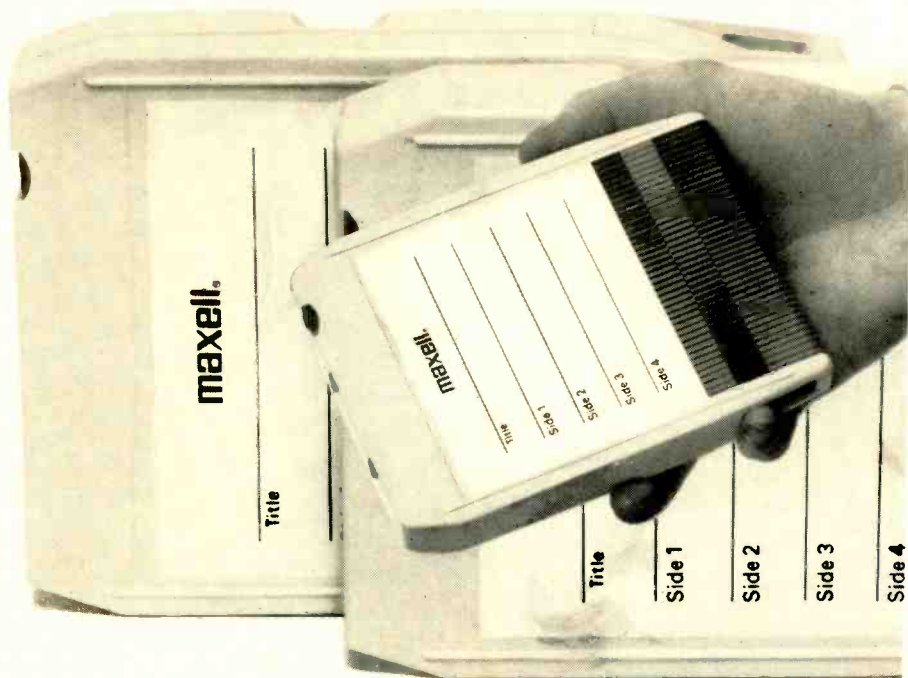


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compromise other styles to suit his own. *Born to Be with You*, written by one Don Robertson, is a reworking of the old folk melody *Banks of the Ohio*, done at breakneck country speed. Here again Kottke applies his ideas of tension and relaxation, overdubbing a six-string solo on a "Spanish" classical gut-string model. He takes his sweet time about picking the notes, slowly developing the solo while the band blazes on. The effect is terrific.

Of the glorious instrumentals, *A Good Egg*, done entirely solo, opens with a soft statement like spoken words that suddenly trigger an explosive chain of memories, thoughts, emotions, and ideas. The solo leaps into a series of stylistic bursts, both jumpy and smooth, and returns to the opening phrase to end the piece. Corny as it sounds, Leo Kottke *does* make the guitar talk. A superior musician makes his instrument a vehicle for language, the artist's dialect; with it he says what he cannot or would not put into words. Yet, at the same time, in the midst of his brilliant playing, Kottke seems to be saying, "My God, just listen to what this instrument can do!" He is fascinated *by the guitar*, not by himself. This kind of modesty and wonder is one of the things that identifies a superior musician.

Added to all this is the work of the sidemen, who are simply perfect. They follow Kottke's zooms, swoops, and swerves, contributing something of their own but never getting in his way. Please do stop everything else right now and run get this album. *J.V.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**LINDA LEWIS:** *Fathoms Deep*. Linda Lewis (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Moles; Wise Eyes; Guffer; Fathoms Deep; If I Could*; and seven others. REPRISE MS 2172 \$5.98.

Performance: **Lilac time**

Recording: **Excellent**

This is a delightful album, purposely and prettily scaled small by a young woman who has been wisely taking it a step at a time. Linda Lewis' previous release, "Lark," showed all the promise that this one fulfills. She is not *quite* there yet, but there is consistent charm in everything she does. Lewis is a composer of real gifts—listen to the acerbic yet compassionate *Red Light Ladies*, the gentle fantasy of *If I Could*—her guitar playing is perfectly complementary to her whispery voice, and, while she often presses too hard on a dramatic point (as in *I'm in Love Again*), she is a good actress.

Don't expect any fireworks here. Instead, look for the fragile affirmation of a lilac bud beginning to come into flower, that moony springtime moment Ferdinand the Bull understood so well. *P.R.*

**LIGHTHOUSE:** *Can You Feel It*. Lighthouse (vocals and instrumentals). *Set the Stage; Same Train; Magic's in the Dancing; Pretty Lady; Disagreeable Man; Can You Feel It*; and four others. POLYDOR PD 5056 \$4.98, Ⓢ 8F 5056 \$6.98. Ⓢ CF 5056 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Good**

Lighthouse is a perplexing nine-man Canadian jazz-rock group. They swing more than Blood, Sweat & Tears or Chicago does, and have none of their pomposity, but saying that a group swings more than BS&T or Chicago (Continued on page 90)



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# DYLAN REIDUX

Some reflections on  
the struggle for perspective  
and the transiency of it all  
by Noel Coppage

OUR hero was in peril, and I was so busy cutting firewood and listening to wicked messengers and losing confidence in government and so forth that I missed most of the drama. It *did* occur to me that Bob Dylan might be a bit edgy about The Return, his national concert tour with the Band, but I was so dazzled by the statistics—658,000 seats available in twenty-one cities and requests pouring in for perhaps thirty *times* that number of tickets at up to \$9.50 each—that I got lackadaisical and assumed all would come out socko-boffo in the end. Now I find that there was real suspense in Chicago on the eve of the first performance, half the city apparently staying up all night in order to bate its breath and get an early start on reading in three of the city's four big newspapers, "Can He Do It?" Could Dylan, that is, do what Ben Fong-Torres of *Rolling Stone* said the concerts were planned to do, "Show Dylan as a healthy, confident man at ease with all the identities and roles he has created and that have surrounded and sometimes saddled him over the years: protest voice, radical poet, absurdist folk-rocker, romantic loser, country gentleman, family man." Perhaps he didn't do all *that*, but socko-boffo is still socko-boffo, a conviction Dylan and the Band easily reinforce with their new Elektra-Asylum album, "Planet Waves."

Perhaps listening to Dylan's last Columbia album—more accurately described as Columbia's last Dylan album—had raised some of those doubts and created all those wonderful heebie jeebies about whether he could do it. Apparently inspired by A. J. Weberman, the lad who became famous for poking around in Dylan's garbage, Columbia followed its nose to the tape vaults, found some refuse, and released it as an album called "Dylan." The Band, meanwhile, played out *their* option at Capitol by turning out "Moondog Matinee," a straight-faced recycling of the kind of late-Fifties and



Photo: Bob Green, courtesy Elektra/Asylum Records

early-Sixties rock songs that most musicians think about only when they're very tired. So the elements of doubt were there, all right, blowin' in the wind, as it were, and I might have put it all together if I'd heard this *other* "Goodbye Columbia" story early enough: it seems someone teaching a music-studies course at Columbia University, wishing to be contemporary, assigned a paper on Bob Dylan . . . and was asked by one student out of three, "Who's he?"

Who—health, confidence, role-playing ability, and all aside—indeed?

In concert, he appeared to be *all* the Bob Dylans, one at a time, in a retrospective sort of program not terribly far removed from the "And Then I Wrote" format. He is somewhat retrospective in "Planet Waves" also, but the protest voice maintains its long silence. There are ten new songs, including some romantic losers, some folk-rockers, some verse that may very well be poetry and *could* be radical, and some schmaltz, but nothing very political. Perhaps it has to be so, for the times they have changed even more than Dylan has. He's got a million or so dollars he didn't have back in the old days, but what *we're* got is so infinitely complicated, compared to The Bomb and Selma, Alabama—so intricately confusing, and so . . . business-grey (our idea of something colorful these days is the waywardness of Sam Ervin's eyebrows) that perhaps it has become, after all, a job for Ralph Nader and not for folk singers. Still, it does smart a bit when, just before the end of the recording, our hero intones, "It's never been my duty to remake the world at large/Nor is it my intention to sound the battle charge." Also shucked is the country gent role: Dylan's "Nashville Skyline" voice is heard possibly for the last time in a depressingly awkward attempt at camping up *Spanish Is the Loving Tongue* in "Dylan." There are no country pies in "Planet Waves": the voice is the "New Morning" voice, a natural-sounding development from the harsh

protest voice and the sardonic, mocking inflections of "Highway 61" and electricity. The album fits as a successor to "New Morning," which, in God's way of numbering Dylan albums, it is, but it could just as well have been conceived as a "best of Dylan's (still operative) identities" collection. *On a Night Like This* quickly establishes a stylistic connection with "New Morning," but then *Going Going Gone* is a slow ballad that—somehow one just *knows*—was written with electric accompaniment in mind, reminiscent of "Blonde on Blonde" or thereabouts, and *Tough Mama* is—well, tell me if this makes it absurdist folk-rock or not: "Today out in the countryside, it was hotter than a crotch/I stood alone upon a ridge, and all I did was watch/Sweet Goddess, it must be time to carve another notch." *Forever Young* is done twice, straight and schmaltzy on side one, with Robbie Robertson nonetheless hitting some lovely Spanish guitar backup, and in Dylan's smug rock style on side two, where the schmaltz almost turns, Randy Newman-style, into irony. It falls short of that, but its tempo and attitude are a great boon anyway, providing contrast to set up *Dirge*, a dark masterpiece not written so much as wrenched from wherever came those magnificent downers in "John Wesley Harding." *Never Say Goodbye* seems likely to go relatively unnoticed until it crops up in the repertoire of every folkie on the stale beer circuit in Upstate New York, for it's a singer's song the way *Tomorrow Is a Long Time* was and still is: easy to do but not boring. *Wedding Song* is the only really lousy tune in the album, and it will have allowances made for it because any song with that kind of title is expected to be stylized and part of the stylization is mushy words and so forth.

ROBERTSON, in addition to his nice acoustic playing in *Forever Young* and *Dirge*, provides almost poetically restrained electric guitar all over the place—and his also seems the most distinguished playing in "Moondog Matinee." (Of that album, Perry Meisel said in the Boston *Phoenix*, "The temptation to theorize about the Band's homage to roots or its fall into the decadence of nostalgia is strong. But why put more effort into talking about 'Moondog Matinee' than it took to make it?" My sentiments exactly.) Sam Cooke's *A Change Is Gonna Come* needs no apologies in any decade, and the Band plays it and *Mystery Train* so well that both should have been on a Band album sooner or later anyway, but most of the others beg to be excused by virtue of their early-Sixties affliction. Sending the Band in to do *Saved* and *Holy Cow*—the two that, if one listens to them only once or twice, do come off as at least cute—is like sending a Rolls-Royce in as bait for a Broadway hooker; a gasping Studebaker would serve just as well.

Behind Dylan, though, the Band does not sound so—in Roger Miller's phrase—*sorry* it hasn't written lately. Garth Hudson plays no horn in "Planet Waves" and therefore doesn't *overplay* any horn the way he does in "Moondog"; what is more, his organ lines are much more disciplined and less vague than when they're probing around for meat in the oldies. Rick Danko's bass comes out of the mix light on volume in the Dylan album, possibly because the production was



rushed. And then, possibly for the same reason, Dylan let stand a touch or two of vocal unsteadiness, a time or two when he came in a bit tentatively after a break, and some of his harp breaks could have been cleaned up considerably. But the Band is a great band and makes an integrated sound of it all.

And, too, the production of "Planet Waves" is exemplary compared to that of "Dylan," which has a vague rattle—an abortive Indian rhythmic motif, perhaps—appearing in the right channel near the end of *The Ballad of Ira Hayes*, Dylan sounding sometimes confused about which voice (if not which identity) he's in at the moment, and a girl chorus doing the corniest backup singing that ever managed to keep off the Lawrence Welk program. It's an awful, dreadful, inept album, but not a very instructive one: there is little to be learned from its mistakes, for they result not from risk-taking but from slapdash offhand casual noodling about.

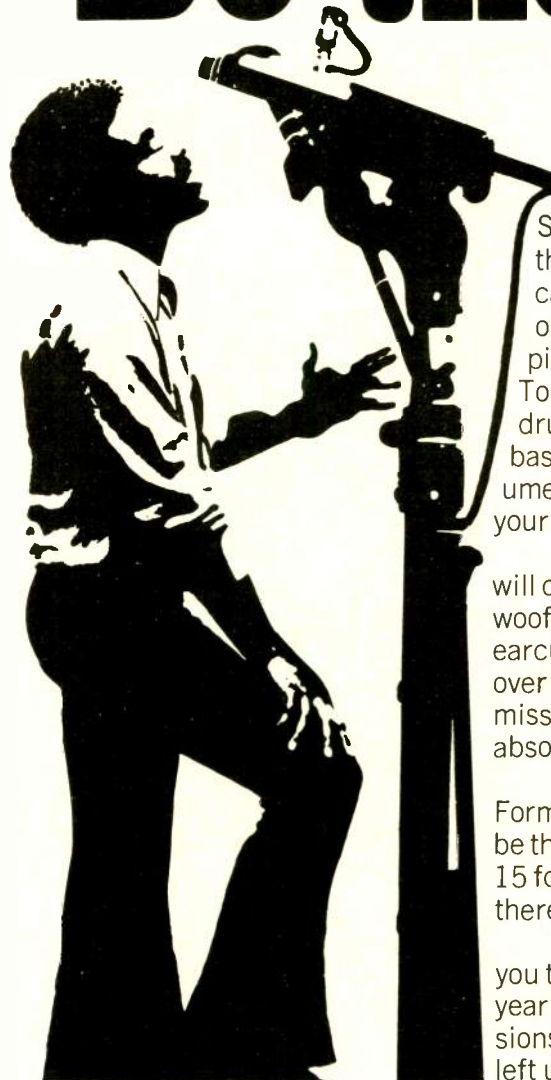
**L**ACKING the hand of the master, it isn't a Dylan album anyway. The one that strikes me as good and solid, probably as good as "New Morning"—which I overrated when it was new—but not a great and inspired work. The retrospective approach means a certain amount of rehashing, and it seems to have been used, to a degree, to avoid the hard work of sustained heavy thinking. Instead, we get flashes of the old craftsmanship—the ability to simplify and mystify at the same time, the feel for cadence and tone, the intangible larger-than-life quality—and that isn't bad: it results in some tough songs. Perhaps putting Dylan's latest work in perspective right away is impossible anyway, for all sorts of reasons, so why'n't we just call it socko-boffo and enjoy, enjoy? It is certainly that, and one way or another most people will enjoy it. The day we *all* mean the same thing when we wonder "Can He Do It?"—that day, if we're lucky, will never come.

**BOB DYLAN/THE BAND:** *Planet Waves*. Bob Dylan (vocals, guitar, harmonica); Robbie Robertson (guitar); Rick Danko (bass); Levon Helm (drums); Garth Hudson (organ); Richard Manuel (drums, piano). *On a Night Like This; Going Going Gone; Hazel; Tough Mama; Something There Is About You; Forever Young; Dirge; You Angel You; Never Say Goodbye; Wedding Song*. ASYLUM 7E-1003 \$6.98, Ⓢ ET-1003 \$6.98, Ⓒ TC-1003 \$6.98.

**THE BAND:** *Moondog Matinee*. The Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Ain't Got No Home; Holy Cow; Share Your Love; Mystery Train; Third Man Theme; Promised Land; The Great Pretender; I'm Ready; Saved; A Change Is Gonna Come*. CAPITOL SW-11214 \$6.98, Ⓢ 8XW-11214 \$6.98, Ⓒ 4XW-11214 \$6.98.

**BOB DYLAN:** *Dylan*. Bob Dylan (vocals, guitar, harmonica, piano); unidentified accompaniment. *Lilly of the West; Can't Help Falling in Love; Sarah Jane; The Ballad of Ira Hayes; Mr. Bojangles; Mary Ann; Big Yellow Taxi; A Fool Such as I; Spanish Is the Loving Tongue*. COLUMBIA PC 32747 \$6.98, Ⓢ CA 32747 \$6.98, Ⓒ CT 32747 \$6.98.

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does is damning with faint praise. And they are Canadian, and since I admire and believe in Canadian musicians I can't understand why Lighthouse isn't better than it is.

Lighthouse has put out a number of albums that have sold only enough to keep the group bouncing from label to label. This time out they are on Polydor and again are produced by Jimmy Ienner, whose notable achievement lately has been his productions for the delightful Raspberries, who are neo-Beatles. Ienner is a yeoman and a pro, and this particular Lighthouse album sounds better than any other, although Ienner's association with Raspberries has led to some spillover—for instance, the opening Lighthouse cut, *Set the Stage*, begins with a guitar figure that is the duplicate of the one on the Beatles' *Dear Prudence*. There are other Beatles references in the album—if not in direct swipes, then in spirit. Well, why not? There was never anything wrong with the Beatles' spirit.

Lighthouse performs better for Ienner (most of the best rock recordings involve artists who like their producer and will work for him as well as with him) than they have at any other time, and this is the best Lighthouse album I've heard. I still think that, unless something shattering happens, Lighthouse will never be more than a middling-good band, but their fans will probably be very happy with this session. At times even I am. J.V.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**LOGGINS AND MESSINA:** *Full Sail*. Jim Loggins and Kenny Messina (vocals, guitars): instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *Lahaina*; *Travelin' Blues*; *My Music*; *A Love Song*; *You Need a Man*; and five others. COLUMBIA KC 32540 \$5.98, Ⓢ CA 32540 \$6.98, Ⓢ CT 32540 \$6.98.

Performance: **Really nice**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Once in a while it is a pleasure to be proved to your own satisfaction that you were wrong. I had written off Loggins and Messina as able but not very interesting musicians, but on this outing they are so inventive and charming that I now wonder if my radar wasn't defective, if they weren't sending out signals that I missed or ignored in their previous efforts.

This album illustrates the happy catholicity in their material, which includes delicate and tasteful strokes of jazz, folk, and soft-rock. *Lahaina* is a more successful Caribbean reggae tune than some of the genuine articles we have been exposed to lately. Maybe that is because the genuine articles have sometimes come from young Caribbean blacks who use the form as a vehicle for short-view protest where their elders used it for expressing many long-view facts of life. Loggins and Messina plump for the latter and thereby capture the joy, the savvy, and the glory of Caribbean music.

Jon Clarke and Al Garth deserve special mention for their efforts on recorder, violin, flutes, and reeds, but the whole group is obviously having a good time, unhurried and unworried. This is pleasing music made for the sake of making same, as picturesque and satisfying as a good movie. Sail on, Loggins and Messina, and keep proving me wrong in the same good way. I love it, I love it. J.V.

**TAJ MAHAL:** *Ooh So Good 'n' Blues*. Taj Mahal (vocals, guitar, mandolin, dobro, bass, piano, harp); Pointer Sisters (vocals): Ra-

phael George (bass). *Buck Dancer's Choice*; *Little Red Hen*; *Mama Don't You Know*; *Frankie and Albert*; and three others. COLUMBIA KC 32600 \$5.98, Ⓢ CA 32600 \$6.98, Ⓢ CT 32600 \$6.98.

Performance: **Likable**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Musicians respect Taj Mahal, who plays several instruments well and sings quite well, but beyond all that he is a Presence. In fact, his personality sometimes overpowers the music, and sometimes all this *mystique* business apparently lulls him into being lazy—witness the offhand slide guitar work here in *Dust My Broom*. But normally this Presence is all mixed up with humanity and dignity, and it seems to be profoundly good for audiences. The thing about Taj that seems to have gone relatively unnoticed, though, is his impor-



LOGGINS AND MESSINA  
*As pleasing and satisfying as a good movie*

tance in pop music's sociology department. He is one of the few truly gifted young black musicians with a real interest in the blues. Stevie Wonder has kept in touch, perhaps, but most of the good young ones have emphasized the rhythm in r-&-b, looking back for inspiration only as far as Sam Cooke and Chuck Berry. B. B. King says the middle-class blacks, because of old associations, just can't see the blues as sufficiently upwardly-mobile. Buddy Guy once said, "The white kids went out and got it, but the black people aren't exposed to the real blues."

It's heartening to us blues lovers that Taj, such a magnificent musician, has this interest—even if we weren't exactly gasping for something like his shambling, drawn-out run-through of *Frankie and Albert*. The redeeming musical values may well bowl some of us over, his guitar solo in *Buck Dancer's Choice* being one, and the excellent use he makes of the Pointer Sisters' back-up, his vocal lead, mandolin, and guitar in *Little Red Hen* being perhaps the best value of all. The album is erratic, but I'm glad I have it. N.C.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**JOHN PRINE:** *Sweet Revenge*. John Prine (vocals, guitar); Steve Goodman (guitar); Reggie Young (guitar); David Briggs (keyboards); Mike Leach (bass); Ken Malone

(drums); Grady Martin (guitar); other musicians. *Sweet Revenge*; *Please Don't Bury Me*; *Christmas in Prison*; *Dear Abby*; *Blue Umbrella*; *Often Is a Word I Seldom Use*; and six others. ATLANTIC SD 7274 \$5.98, Ⓢ TP 7274 \$6.97, Ⓢ CS 7274 \$6.97.

Performance: **Just right**  
Recording: **Excellent**

John Prine's third album may be his best one yet: it's tough, funny, and nicely paced. The songs comment on a wide range of our activities: over *there* is one about that iron-jawed fundamentalist matron of our times (well, actually, she's not in the *Times*, but she's in practically everything else) *Dear Abby* and her befuddled correspondents, while over *there* is a strange mix of puns, bleak images, and seemingly pointless urgency called *Mexican Home*. In between are all sorts of things, reflective, nostalgic, whimsical, sardonic: it is all crawling with good lines and set to melodies that—well, you know, they're serviceable early-Dylan-type melodies. Prine can't afford to be *too* interested in melodies as long as he has to write stuff that John Prine's voice can sing. His voice sounds so right for many of his songs, though, that it probably comes out even, or a little ahead. *Christmas in Prison* (is that really about what I think it's really about?) needs just the gruffness that Prine's vocal has for it, and so does *Please Don't Bury Me*, which is about the human parts transplant situation . . . and other things—you really should hear this one for yourself. The backing is just that, backing, but it is inspired: every producer should listen to it until he gets the hang of it. There is no competing with the lyrics here, and yet it is clear that John's buddy Steve Goodman on acoustic guitar, Grady Martin doing his "wet-back-flavored" acoustic guitar licks, and Reggie Young and Steve Burgh on electric guitars are setting high standards that the supporting players happily meet. All that helps make this more than just another "writer's album," and, ironically, this—this spreading the emphasis around—helps the listener appreciate the quality of Prine's writing. So take warning, all you pickers. N.C.

**DIANA ROSS & MARVIN GAYE:** *Diana & Marvin*. Diana Ross and Marvin Gaye (vocals); orchestra. *You Are Everything*; *Love Twins*; *Don't Knock My Love*; *Include Me in Your Life*; and six others. MOTOWN M 803V1 \$5.98.

Performance: **Easy**  
Recording: **Good**

This is a parlor game of an album by two of the most interesting singers around. Both Ross and Gaye proved themselves superior entertainers years ago, and here definitely indicate that this time around they have no intention of placing any strain on themselves. It makes for a very relaxed, although often languid, recording. They waft through such things as *My Mistake* or *Pledging My Love* competently, easily, and always professionally. They seem to be having mild fun, and so will the listener. I admit that it is refreshing every once in a while to hear people who don't feel they have to come on like Gangbusters all the time, but I must also confess that by the middle of side two my yawns were becoming synchronous with the turntable's rotations. P.R.

(Continued on page 92)



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**LEON RUSSELL:** *Hank Wilson's Back, Vol. 1.* Leon Russell (vocals, piano); Harold Bradley (bass guitar); J. J. Cale (electric guitar); Charlie McCoy (harmonica); Chip Young (guitar); Tut Taylor (dobro); Bob Moore (bass); other musicians. *Rollin' in My Sweet Baby's Arms; She Thinks I Still Care; I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry; Sail My Ship Alone;* and nine others. SHELTER SW-8923 \$5.98, © 8XW-8923 \$6.98, © 4XW-8923 \$6.98.

Performance: **Rugged to ragged**  
Recording: **Very good**

Leon Russell singing country standards is not exactly an idea to conjure with, but Leon whipping a typically (for Leon) oversized collection of musicians through their intricately interrelated paces is a qualified good deal. In the slower and mellower songs, such as *She Thinks I Still Care*, Russell's own vocal is an unacceptable distraction; it's too harsh to start with, and it tends to wander *painfully* off key. The up-tempo pieces zing right along, though, with some particularly fine licks generated by electric guitarists J. J. Cale and (Ernest Tubbs' old buddy) Billy Byrd, steel guitarist Curley Chalker (least famous and best of the three heard here), rhythm guitarist Ray Edenton, and, naturally, the ubiquitous Charlie McCoy on harp. The one slow one that really cooks is *Goodnight Irene*, with one of the most integrated, least self-conscious vocals Leon has ever managed. What's extraordinary is how they can keep me so engrossed all the way through such a familiar, old-shoe sort of ditty.

There are, of course, places where this record couldn't engross me if it held a shotgun on me, but it does establish that Russell has some country-music sensibilities and that some songs, played well, never wear out. *N.C.*

**PETER SCHICKELE:** *The Intimate P.D.Q. Bach* (see Classical Discs and Tapes, page 107)

**SIR DOUGLAS BAND:** *Texas Tornado* (see Best of the Month, page 80)

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN:** *The Wild, the Innocent, and the E Street Shuffle.* Bruce Springsteen (vocals and guitars); Garry Tallent (bass); Clarence Clemons (saxes); David Sancious (keyboards); Danny Federici (accordion); Vini Lopez (drums). *The E Street Shuffle; 4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy); Kitty's Back; Wild Billy's Circus Story; Incident on 57th Street; Rosalita (Come Out Tonight); New York City Serenade.* COLUMBIA KC 32432 \$5.98, © CA 32432 \$6.98.

Performance: **Sensational**  
Recording: **Excellent**

I am pleased to report that, despite Columbia's monumentally ill-advised "New Dylan" hype, Bruce Springsteen has come up with a sensational follow-up to his "Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J." In fact, not the least of the pleasures of "The Wild, the Innocent, and the E Street Shuffle" is that with it he has permanently laid Zimmerman's Ghost to rest. Clearly, we are dealing here with a highly individual *auteur*, and, I might add, the first big American rock talent since John Fogerty.

Good as the debut set was, this new one is a staggering advance. Bruce is playing *electric* guitar now (there was very little on "Greetings"), and he's superb, both as a rhythm player and as a soloist (check out his highly

charged lead at the end of *Incident on 57th Street* and see what I mean—you'd have to go to Robin Trower for comparable intensity). There's a good deal more overdubbing here, too. The added instrumental density is beautifully handled; the textures overall are still reminiscent of "Highway 61," but they go light years beyond it, into something I can only describe as the Coasters on Abbey Road. The new songs are all superb. Side one is (consciously, I think) a warmup, yet it's marvelous, especially *Sandy*.

But side two is positively epochal; it's been giving me goosebumps for weeks now. It's a sort of suite, a homage to New York City, and no one in recent years has so accurately captured the city's violence and poetry. *Incident on 57th Street*, the opener, may be a masterpiece. Without using much more than the chords to *La Bamba* (like so many great



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN  
*Laying Zimmerman's Ghost to rest*

rock songs—notably *Like a Rolling Stone*), it conveys more atmosphere, more of the aching romanticism of the New York streetcorner rock ethos, than anything I can remember in years. More, it has one of the all-time great sing-along fade-out choruses. Then there's *Rosalita*, an incredible mishmash of everything from Jay and the Americans to the Byrds, which plays with musical and lyrical chestnuts in a dizzying way. The haunting *New York City Serenade* ends with an ode to a singing junkman, which may be at once the silliest and most magnificent image any rocker has ever concocted.

I realize that I have made this album out to be the greatest thing since indoor plumbing (or the Two-Thousand-and-Thirteen-Year-Old Man's beloved liquid Prell) but you're just going to have to trust me on this one. Springsteen impresses me more and more as the major American figure of the decade. He and his superb band have seemingly digested every important strain of urban rock-and-roll of the last twenty years, emerging with a uniquely powerful and personal vision. If the Hibbing Minstrel's new album with the Band has even half of the fresh energy demonstrated here, we are going to be in for an extremely exciting 1974. *Steve Simels*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ROOSEVELT SYKES/LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY:** *Urban Blues.* Roosevelt

Sykes and Little Brother Montgomery (piano and vocals): instrumental accompaniment. *Drivin' Wheel; Set the Meat Outdoors; Hangover; Santa Fe; No Special Rider; Vicksburg Blues;* and eighteen others. FANTASY 24717 two discs \$6.98.

Performance: **Urban, but not urbane**  
Recording: **Good Van Gelder**

During the late Fifties and early Sixties, when many a bogus folk singer reaped success and wealth from a revival of "ethnic" music, interest inevitably turned to its authentic survivors. Consequently, countless blues performers whose names were imprinted on time-worn race-record labels of the Twenties and Thirties were "rediscovered" and, in most cases, exploited.

Roosevelt Sykes and Eurreal "Little Brother" Montgomery were among the few who did not sound like living relics of a bygone era, although that is for the most part how they were presented to the public. In fact, they were only forty-seven and fifty-four, respectively, when they made these recordings in 1960, and their work here is that of mature artists steeped in a tradition they helped to create—a tradition that never made them rich, but one that now is the canvas upon which successful soul artists paint. It would be hard to make a choice between Montgomery and Sykes, for they are actually a matched pair: each has his own style, making up in spirit for what he lacks in technique; each gives as good a performance here as he ever has, which is to say that both of them play forcefully and put a great deal of feeling into their homespun lyrics.

When these albums first appeared, separately, on the Prestige/Bluesville label thirteen years ago, they were but drops in a very large bucket of blues revival sessions. Time has now drained away much of that deluge, giving us a much clearer look at what remains. Sykes and Montgomery sound even better the second time around. *C.A.*

**T-BONE WALKER:** *I Want a Little Girl.* Aaron "T-Bone" Walker (guitar, piano, vocals); Hal Singer (tenor saxophone); rhythm section. *Late Hours Blues; I Hate to See You Go; Ain't This Cold, Baby;* and five others. DELMARK DS 633 \$5.98.

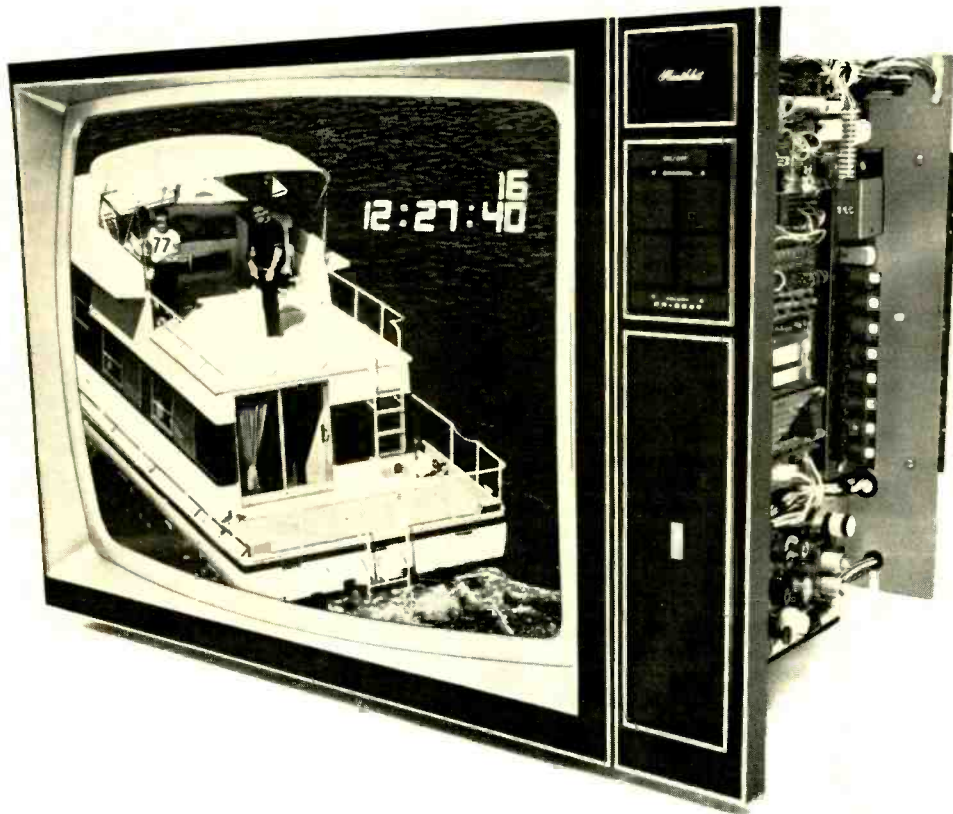
Performance: **Choice cuts**  
Recording: **Good**

T-Bone Walker is perhaps best known as the composer of *Stormy Monday Blues*, a tune he confesses he did not write. But he should be far better known for his work as a performer, for he is an excellent singer and he plays superb single-string guitar.

Blues enthusiasts are, of course, familiar with Walker's work over the years—he once accompanied Ma Rainey—but, despite recent attempts to commercialize his recordings, he has not been able to achieve any sort of mass audience recognition. Still, there are now seven T-Bone Walker albums on four different labels in the catalog, so *somebody* must be interested.

This album, made in Paris for a French label five years ago, is straightforward and admirable. With a typical r-&-b backing of tenor, bass, and drums, Walker sails through a repertoire of blues and such mainstream standards as *I Want a Little Girl* and *Gee Baby, Ain't I Good to You*, performing with a youthful spirit lyrics that are never as interesting as his de-  
(Continued on page 96)

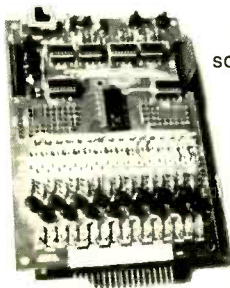




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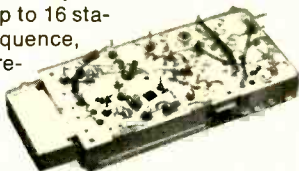
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livery. But, good as his voice is, it is Walker's guitar playing that really makes him stand out—this is playing that has inspired far more successful performers. And this is a veteran blues man who deserves much more than consignment to the relics files. C.A.

**TRAFFIC: *On the Road*.** Steve Winwood (vocals, guitar, piano); Roger Hawkins (drums); Jim Capaldi (vocals, drums); Barry Beckett (keyboards); David Hood (bass); Chris Wood (sax, flute); Reebop Kwaku Baah (percussion). *Low Spark of High Heeled Boys; Shoot Out at the Fantasy Factory; (Sometimes I Feel So) Uninspired; Light Up or Leave Me Alone.* ISLAND SMAS 9336 \$5.98, Ⓢ 8XW 9336 \$6.98, Ⓢ 4XW 9336 \$6.98.

Performance: **Meandering**  
Recording: **Good**

I generally disapprove of live albums. Theoretically they capture the excitement and unexpected delights of musicians working in front of an audience—that extra oomph on the vocal, the sudden inspired instrumental solo. But in rock, at least, live albums usually result in either pale imitations of recording studio performances or indulgent laziness—tunes running (as they do here) for ten minutes when they could be better played in five. Live albums are also expedient for groups and labels when they don't have anything else to release and the fans are screaming.

"On the Road" has some of the drawbacks of live albums, but it does have some positive effects on Traffic. *(Sometimes I Feel So) Uninspired* certainly lived up to its title in its studio version: here it has what little life the tune itself allows and whatever life performance can give it beyond that.

Like other rock bands, Traffic has developed a kind of modern jazz form which permits a minimum of musical ideas to be stretched out at great length in riffs and solos. In the absence of real tunes it is often difficult to tell when someone is extemporizing on a melodic base or just messing around. There are no referents. The performances are all middle: there is no beginning or end. I feel left out, but I'm not sure I want to get in. J.V.

**URIAH HEEP: *Sweet Freedom*.** Uriah Heep (vocals and instrumentals). *Dreamer; Stealin'; One Day; Sweet Freedom;* and four others. WARNER BROS. BS 2724 \$5.98, Ⓢ M8 2724 \$6.98, Ⓢ M5 2724 \$6.98.

Performance: **Surprising**  
Recording: **Good**

You may remember from previous reviews that I am not impressed by Uriah Heep. After hearing this album, though, I want to amend my former opinion: I am not *much* impressed by the band. The reasons for this cataclysmic reversal? Well, for one, the writing is getting better, as in *Stealin'*, which contains the line: "Made my break and a big mistake stealin' when I should have been buyin'." And in *Dreamer* they attach capable lyrics to—no fooling, now—a melody, enough of a feat for any recent rock band.

Their liabilities still include a lead singer who apparently has trouble singing or just tries too hard; the intent may be there, but I don't think the lungs are. The band is still noisy, but they're cutting back on that, and the best track here, the acoustic *Circus*, displays some accomplished guitar work and tasteful drumming.

Weighing the assets against the liabilities, I find myself hoping and expecting that the assets will win out eventually. I don't quite believe it, but I am looking forward to the next Heep album. J.V.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III: *Attempted Mustache*.** Loudon Wainwright III (vocals, guitar, banjo); Ken Buttrey (drums); Johnny Christopher (guitar); Tom Cogbill (bass); other musicians. *The Swimming Song; A.M. World; Bell Bottom Pants; Liza; I Am the Way; Down Drinking at the Bar;* and six others. COLUMBIA KC 32710 \$5.98, Ⓢ CA 32710 \$6.98, Ⓢ CT 32710 \$6.98.

Performance: **Courageous**  
Recording: **Very good**

Look at that title. You're relaxing already—



LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III  
*His outrageous comic muse persists*

right?—for Loudon Wainwright III obviously has not sold out. Even though *Dead Skunk in the Middle of the Road* from his previous album was a, er, mild hit, and therefore exposed Loudon to a larger audience, he still either trusts the audience or is willing to risk losing it (those are pretty much the same thing, I keep arguing, but let it pass); he has not reined his outrageous comic muse to any degree that I can detect. Plunging right in with the opening cut, *The Swimming Song*, he can't resist dealing in passing with some of the show-offy aspects of simple summertime fun, slipping it into a catchy melody that's aided by a tasty banjo bounce and what Loudon calls a "cajun exclamation" (eeeeeeeee—yo, it goes) from ol' Doug Kershaw. *Bell Bottom Pants* is more ruthless about getting to the quick—his, mine, yours: who dared *not* wear the damned things to the "pop festivals, rock festivals, folk festivals and the dances"? Loudon slurs all that, late in the song when things get to rocking, into "at the pop rock folk slop hop dance, baby . . . Oh, them pants. . . ."

And so on. *Liza* is a reminiscence (unaccompanied) of "pre-pubescent play" with Liza Minnelli, whose black driveway they used to cruise in her Junior Thunderbird, it says here, back when she said she wanted to be a nurse. Then there's a remake of Woody's *Standin' Down in New York Town*: "I was standin' down in Jerusalem town one day. . . Singin' 'I am the Way.'" The song

was recorded live and some people in the audience let out a whoop right on key and perfectly timed—one of those freakish accidents—to embellish the line, "Don't tell nobody but I kissed Magdalene." *Clockwork Chartreuse* doesn't quite work, either as anti-violence propaganda in a *Bonnie and Clyde* way (that is, by being ridiculously violent itself) or as a glimpse at the Beast in each of us—it just isn't funny or otherwise interesting enough, our shockability being what it is now—and *Dilated to Meet You*, thoughts on the imminent birth of a child, doesn't get past its own cuteness. But just about everything will tease and/or sweat your mind into examining those details it has been hurriedly filing while looking away and pretending to be interested in something else. And Wainwright doesn't waste your time and energy in getting down to it: his language is plain and used with remarkable economy. *The Man Who Couldn't Cry*, which perhaps could be subjected to several kinds of analysis, is clear enough in the most intriguing of its aspects: the concept of heaven as being something roughly equal to Getting Even With Them All.

Wainwright is just enough of a musician to put it across, and the backing musicians are just right, so I don't merely recommend that you listen to this, I insist upon it. If you really loved me, you'd listen to it. . . . N.C.

**Z.Z. TOP: *Tres Hombres*.** Z.Z. Top (vocals and instrumentals). *Waitin' for the Bus; Jesus Just Left Chicago; Beer Drinkers & Hell Raisers; Master of Sparks; Hot, Blue & Righteous; Move Me On Down the Line;* and four others. LONDON XPS 631 \$5.98, Ⓢ M 72206 \$6.98, Ⓢ M 57206 \$6.98.

Performance: **Solid Texas chili-blues**  
Recording: **Good**

Z.Z. Top is a good Texas blues band, but there have been an awful lot of white blues bands over the last ten years and the musical form is, I think, nearly exhausted. Blues are a lot of fun to sing and play, and great stuff for dancing to. But without individual brilliance in musicianship (such as Eric Clapton possesses) or the ability to alter the blues form (as Clapton did), white blues can very rapidly go stale.

There is nothing worse than a bad white (or black) blues band and nothing more difficult to praise without dismissing than a good one—it really does hold true that if you've heard one you've pretty much heard them all. I am glad to have heard Z.Z. Top, though, and I am quite taken with *Jesus Just Left Chicago* because I still like to hear a good blues. If you're in the market for some, then you ought to try this band. J.V.

#### COLLECTIONS

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**THE GREATEST SONG HITS OF WALTER DONALDSON.** Marlene Ver Planck, Ken Bridges, Jack Manno (vocals); Jack Manno Singers; Gentlemen of Jazz Orchestra, Jack Manno arr. and cond. *Medley—My Mammy/My Buddy/Carolina in the Morning; At Sundown; After I Say I'm Sorry; My Blue Heaven; Medley—I Wonder Where My Baby Is Tonight/Because My Baby Don't Mean Maybe Now/Yes Sir, That's My Baby; Love Me or Leave Me; Changes; Makin' Whoopee!; My Baby Just Cares for Me;* and four

(Continued on page 98)



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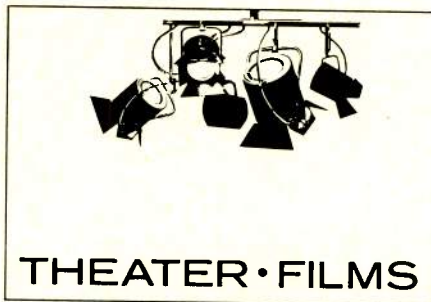
Performance: **Merry medley**  
Recording: **Very good**

In the nineteen-twenties, the apartment in Washington Heights where I grew up was almost perpetually awash, via Atwater Kent, Victrola, or mother humming in the kitchen, with the sound of songs like *Carolina in the Morning*, *My Blue Heaven*, *Yes, Sir, That's My Baby*, *Makin' Whoopee!*, and *Little White Lies*. There must have been other songs—I know for a fact that George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, and Jerome Kern were turning them out constantly—yet none had the cling-to-the-ear inanity and irrepressible cheerfulness of the ones I have mentioned. But nobody ever told me that they all were written by one man named Walter Donaldson—not only the music but the words for half of them as well—and I am glad Mr. Donaldson finally has his very own record of hits, even though he died in Santa Monica, California, back in 1947 and cannot be with us to celebrate this musical occasion.

The life of Mr. Donaldson, who was born in Brooklyn in 1893 and was a fun-loving fellow who delighted in squandering the profits from his hits at the race track, would not make particularly good material for one of those old-time Hollywood movie biographies of composers; he doesn't seem to have passed through any very painful period of hardship but made a living as a pianist at the Irving Berlin Music Company as a youngster and wound up founding his own publishing house—Donaldson-Douglas and Gumble—in 1928. His favorite kind of song had “baby” in the title—*Because My Baby Don't Mean Maybe*, *Yes, Sir, That's My Baby*, *I Wonder Where My Baby Is Tonight*, *My Baby Just Cares for Me*—but he could also turn out hits about motherhood (*My Mammy*), brotherhood (*My Buddy*), and the madness of adoration (*You're Driving Me Crazy*). Apparently his songs are imperishable—I know they have never stopped running maddeningly through my head at times—and it is both strange and wonderful to hear them resurrected, miraculously free of needle scratch and Orthophonic Sound, in orchestrations that evoke—even if they don't match—the originals, sung and played by a game, spirited group with a real feeling for the Twenties idiom. Here are no heavy-handed attempts to kid the material—just high-spirited homage to a happy man who made happy songs.

The Jack Manno Singers and the Gentlemen of Jazz carry out Bill Borden's production plan with a style that never scrimps on the necessary amount of cooing, crooning, and plunking—interspersed deliciously with hot licks on trumpet and flugelhorn from Rusty Derrick—in hit after hit, persuasively enough to Take You Back even if you were never there. Everybody is wonderful in all eighteen selections, but Dick Hyman's piano, Urbie Green's period trombone, and Don Anderson's sentimental accordion should be singled out for special nods. P.K.

RAGTIME MUSIC (see LAMB, page 112; “First Annual Ragtime Roundup,” page 116)



**CARMEN JONES (Bizet-Oscar Hammerstein II).** Original-soundtrack recording. Marilyn Horne, LeVern Hutcherson, Olga James, Pearl Bailey, Marvin Hayes, Bernice Peterson, Brock Peters, and Joe Crawford (vocals); orchestra and chorus, Herschel Burke Gilbert cond. RCA ARL1-0046(e) \$5.98.

Performance: **Wicked and winning**  
Recording: **Suffers from “enhancement”**

Today *Carmen Jones* is mildly offensive in the same way as *Porgy and Bess* because of the (probably unconsciously) patronizing portraits of its black protagonists, but Hammerstein did not intend the slightest offense, and *Carmen Jones* was a labor of love he worked on with neither commission nor contract. At any rate, hearing the movie soundtrack album, now that we know it was Marilyn Horne at the age of twenty who dubbed in Carmen's singing voice for Dorothy Dandridge, is something of a revelation. There have been other recordings of the score: Grace Bumbry's foursquare, utterly nonmischievous approach still available from Heliodor, and the original-cast recording of the Billy Rose production with the fiery Muriel Smith as Carmen and the famous Cozy Cole drum solo in *Beat Out Dat Rhythm on a Drum*. But even the entirely idiomatic Miss Smith never found as much mischief in Hammerstein's lyrics as did Miss Horne, who matched the Dandridge characterization to perfection. When one recalls that only recently Miss Horne was playing the French Carmen on the stage of the Met in New York, one thinks—why, she had been working up to that moment for decades!

Not to be slighted are the achievements of LeVern Hutcherson doing Joe's arias for Harry Belafonte, Brock Peters as Rum, Olga James as the sweet little Cindy Lou, and Pearl Bailey's lazily insinuating approach to the role of Frankie. They are all marvelous, and much more a delight to the ear now that they are free of the clumsy visual trappings of the movie itself. But there is one disappointment. With Hollywood's sure instinct for clipping out quality, the Otto Preminger production scissored precisely those passages where Hammerstein's wit was at its keenest.

The “reprocessed” monophonic sound from the film track on RCA is deplorable. But endure it for the sake of Horne's devastating singing in the title role—there's never been anything quite like it. P.K.

**THE STING:** Original-soundtrack recording (see “First Annual Ragtime Roundup,” page 116)

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (Alex North).** Original-soundtrack recording. Orchestra, Ray Heindorf cond. **SINCE YOU WENT AWAY; NOW, VOYAGER; THE**

**INFORMER (Max Steiner).** Themes from the soundtracks. Orchestra, Max Steiner cond. ANGEL S36068 \$5.98.

Performance: **Recovered treasure**  
Recording: **Good**

Alex North's spare and poignant score for Elia Kazan's production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* in New York in 1949 was still lingering in the producer's head a year later when he was called to Hollywood to make a movie of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* for Warner Brothers. Mr. Kazan insisted that North be brought out to write the music, and finally had his way—with the result that the score for the film that starred Vivian Leigh as Blanche DuBois and Marlon Brando as Stanley Kowalski had real music to heighten the drama. The piercing wails of blues and jazz welling up out of the New Orleans milieu to suffuse the screen in sensuality, derision, longing, pain—real emotion, real sex—music that can get drunk on cheap booze and suffer a hangover and know what lust is, music that knows remorse, too, and nostalgia, and madness. The earthy sounds of the trumpet, tenor sax, whorehouse piano, and wailing clarinet are a far cry indeed from the usual sentimental soup Movieland splashed all over its soundtracks.

Indeed, if you want to know how sturdy and enduring a score North wrote for *Streetcar* you have only to turn over the record and listen to the sentimental schlock perpetrated by Max Steiner for *Since You Went Away* and *Now, Voyager*—gush that seems to be oozing out at us from all directions these days in record-company revivals. Steiner's music for *The Informer*, on the other hand, although it's based on the insipid tune of *The Wearin' o' the Green* and tries too literally to evoke the strife-torn Dublin atmosphere of 1922, is more substantial stuff. The episodes underlining the informer Gypo's escape from Black and Tan headquarters after his betrayal of the Irish cause, the melancholy theme suggesting the bleak life of Gypo's girl Katie, and the beat of the march of the Black and Tans are part of a score that really deserved its Academy Award; the Oscar that went for the music of *Now, Voyager* only further glorified the triumph of mediocrity. Nevertheless, it's instructive to have both of these available again on one disc (they were both on Capitol P-387, which was cut out of the catalog some years back; until recently it was selling for collector's-item prices). The North music alone makes this one well worth owning, and Rory Guy's detailed notes add to the album's significance and value. P.K.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

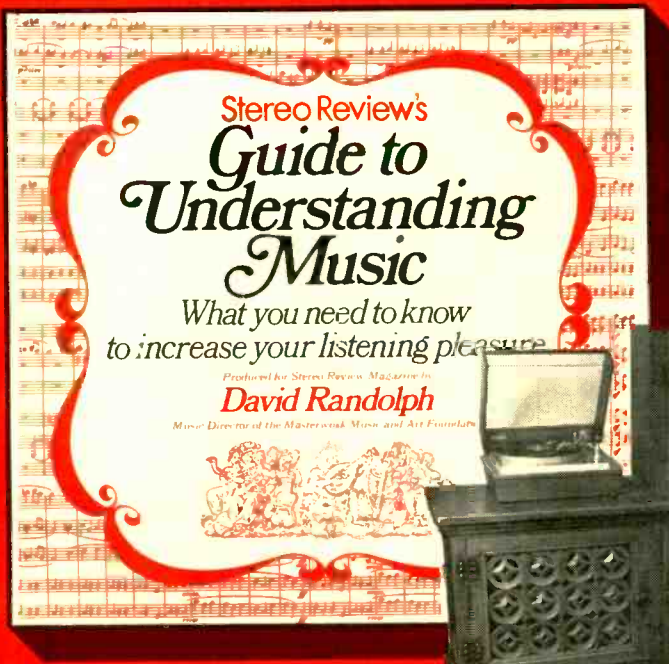
**STOMU YAMASHITA'S RED BUDDHA THEATRE:** Music for “*The Man from the East*.” Stomu Yamash'ta (percussion); Morris Pert (drums and percussion); Peter Robinson (electric piano); Alyn Ross (bass guitar); others. *Scoop; Awa Odori; What a Way to Live in Modern Times; My Little Partner; Mandala; Memory of Hiroshima; Mountain Pass.* ISLAND SMAS 9334 \$5.98.

Performance: **Exciting experiment**  
Recording: **Very good**

Producer, director, composer, and performer of the Red Buddha Theatre, which he founded in Tokyo in 1971, Stomu Yamash'ta has made a name for himself in France and England as  
(Continued on page 100)



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well as in Japan (and more recently in New York) for the power of his group's theatrical productions, the originality of his music, and his skill as a virtuoso percussionist. It was Yamash'ta who collaborated with Peter Maxwell Davies on the score for Ken Russell's film *The Devils* and who composed the scores for Kurosawa's *Yojimbo* and *Sanjuro*. An earlier album of Yamash'ta's pieces, called "Floating Music," was also released by Island Records.

The score for *The Man from the East* cannot be called "incidental music" for the play. It is the play, which is acted out by a small group of mimes and dancers as a group of musicians surrounded by fifty or sixty percussion units convey the emotional elements of the action on drums, cymbals, bells, steel plates, wooden blocks, vibrating rods, triangle, cowbells, marimba, and shamisen. This is theater without dialogue or conventional story line, where movement and music become the language of the stage. *The Man from the East* opens with a prologue about its symbolical protagonists—a lame little girl and an old hunchback. There is a "Festival of Peace," with banners and slogans, which the girl is too lame and the hunchback too old to join. There are scenes representing life in modern Japan—the crush of crowded trains, the hectic city pattern of work by day and play by night, and an empty street at dawn where a lone drunk staggers. We are taken to a hell on earth where slaves are yoked and a mother is borne by her own children to the top of a mountain to die. Then, one by one, in the midst of their private preoccupations, men and women drop to their deaths on the island of Hiroshima. In the end, the old hunchback pursues the lame girl in a deadly game amid corpses. When she falls, he thinks he has killed her and goes off to end his own life. Well—and what is the music for all this? Propulsive, sinuous, febrile, tough and tender by turns—always meticulously crafted. Oriental themes of wistful delicacy are wedded with a sudden fierceness to outbursts in a rock idiom; the city works to abrasive rhythms and plays to brash ones; icy spirits carry off the dying mother to a mystery-shrouded mandala. "Memory of Hiroshima" employs the sustained wail of an air-raid siren (recalling, perhaps deliberately, Penderewski's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*, composed in 1960); shouts and sound effects heighten the musical action; the macabre hide-and-seek finale culminating in death and mocking laughter is punctuated by bleak, chilling strains. Pop, kabuki, and traditional styles meet head-on but are woven into a score that ranges from humor to desolation, from harsh horror and jolting brutality to a misty euphoria. In the long run, the score is almost exhausting in its sustained intensity (although for critic Clive Barnes it added up only to "gentle banality"), but it stands alone as music, and well rewards the riveted attention it demands. A program booklet accompanies the album. P.K.

#### COLLECTIONS

**CLASSIC FILM SCORES.** *Music from the Films of Bette Davis.* Steiner: *Now Voyager*; *Dark Victory*; *A Stolen Life*; *In This Our Life*; *Jezebel*; *Beyond the Forest*; *The Letter*; *All This*, and *Heaven Too*. Korngold: *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*; *Juarez*. Waxman: *Mr. Skeffington*. Newman: *All About Eve*. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Gerhardt cond. RCA ARL

1-0183 \$5.98, © ARS 1-0183 \$6.98, © ARK 1-0183 \$6.98.

Performance: **Eight handkerchiefs**  
Recording: **Great**

Anyone who has spent a lifetime suffering in the dark with Bette Davis, as I have, knows very well that she could never have survived all those terrible misadventures on the silver screen if it hadn't been for the brave musical scores that saw her through. She could never have survived that ill-fated affair with a married man in *Now Voyager*, braved her way through blindness in *Dark Victory*, had Errol Flynn's head removed in *Elizabeth and Essex*, or conquered Broadway as Margo Channing in *All About Eve*—no, none of it, if it hadn't been for the music. And if we didn't already know that, here is our conductor, Charles Gerhardt, to declare in a testimonial that "It is my conviction that so powerful an artist as Miss Davis, through the strength of her portrayals, inspired a variety of composers to produce some of their best work." In order to keep Miss Davis supplied with appropriately stormy and emotional scores and underline every mood of her performances, Warner Brothers assigned its own stable of composers to score the films in which she starred, and many of the Big Moments they supplied can be heard here, newly recorded by Mr. Gerhardt and a mammoth orchestra that manages to rival in turbulence and glycerine-teared torment the sound produced by the original studio orchestras that turned out this stuff between 1938 and 1950.

Max Steiner undoubtedly was her favorite—once she permitted a passage of his music to drown out her own dialogue in one of her scenes—and he is well represented here. Nothing was too much for Steiner, who in a couple of weeks turned out two hundred and eighty-two episodes, with separate themes for every character, for the movie of *Gone with the Wind*. He favored the use of leitmotifs of a poignant nature, repeated over and over in various guises and tempos. These are generously quoted on this record in passages from eight of the films in which Miss Davis starred, and it is a pleasure to hear them loosed from the tubby, compressed sound of the old soundtracks.

One of the most haunting and restrained scores Mr. Steiner ever turned out was his music for *The Letter*, and I was disappointed to find in the album only a minute or so from the opening title—played, moreover, with insufficient expansiveness or mystery: I wish Mr. Gerhardt had favored this sort of understatement elsewhere—in the finale from *In This Our Life*, perhaps—rather than suddenly to go all cool and selective for *The Letter*. But room had to be found, I suppose, for Franz Waxman, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, and Alfred Newman. It's all pretty emotional stuff, as lavender-colored as an old-fashioned candy box, and the "end cast" music from *All This*, and *Heaven Too* even affords the spent listener a chance to gather his or her belongings and furtively wipe away the tears before the lights go up. In addition to the music, there are some positively fulsome notes by Tony Thomas, author of *Music for the Movies*—an author whose admiring prose will cause no pain at all to Miss Davis, the music department at Warner Brothers, or the ghosts of Steiner and Korngold. What a legacy they have left us! Musical geniuses they may not have been, but there is no doubt that they knew their business. P.K.



#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**GARY BARTZ NTU TROOP:** *Follow, the Medicine Man.* Gary Bartz (alto and soprano saxophones, soprano, electric piano, vocals); others: *Sifa Zote*; *Whasaname*; *Betcha by Golly*, *Wow*; and four others. PRESTIGE PR 10068 \$5.98.

Performance: **Distinguished**  
Recording: **Excellent**

If you haven't yet heard Gary Bartz—and you should have—this album will provide an excellent introduction. Bartz, a thirty-three-year-old musician-composer from Baltimore, is a major talent who over the past six years has eased onto the jazz scene through a stint with Miles Davis and five superb albums of his own on the Milestone label. (I say *eased* because jazz artists are traditionally not made benefactors of the promotion machine that hatches "overnight" successes.) Each of his albums has been an artistic success, and his sixth is no exception.

With a supporting cast of five, including singer Andy Bey, Gary Bartz achieves a sound richer than most of today's pseudo-jazz-soul stuff with brass and string afterthoughts. Furthermore, both in his solos and in his arrangements, Bartz is master of his instruments; he applies their sound with exquisite taste to a superbly prepared canvas. His style is free, but unlike many exponents of the so-called "new jazz" Bartz does not abuse his musical liberty. His head is clearly into black music, and whether the source be Africa, the Caribbean, or Motown, he gives it all his own, distinct stamp (or is it stomp?). C.A.

**ART BLAKEY AND THE JAZZ MESSENGERS:** *Buhaina.* Art Blakey (drums); Jon Hendricks (vocals); Woody Shaw (trumpet); Cedar Walton (keyboards); other musicians. *Moanin'*; *Mission Eternal*; *Gertrude's Bounce*; and three others. PRESTIGE 10067 \$5.98, © M81067 \$6.95, © M1067 \$6.95.

Performance: **Worthy message**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Art Blakey joined the big league in 1939 when he became Fletcher Henderson's drummer, but he really "arrived" in the mid-Fifties when he formed his successful Jazz Messengers. The list of musicians who have passed through the Messengers since then is impressive, but the current group is no less imposing from a musical point of view.

There's trumpeter Woody Shaw, who combines a crisp, clear tone with imaginative dexterity and swing; the prodigious pianist Cedar Walton, continuing an association that goes back more than a decade; and newcomers Carter Jefferson and Michael Howell, whose work on saxophones and guitar, respectively, is beyond reproach.

Also heard in a guest appearance is Jon



# CORNER PROOF

Hendricks of the old Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross group. He sings his own lyrics on Bobby Timmons' *Moanin'* and Benny Golson's *Along Came Betty*—two former Blakey hits—but he is still more interesting as lyricist than as singer. Nevertheless, he blends in well with the group, sounding a great deal more at home than he did on some of his solo efforts.

Blakey is as outstanding a drummer as he ever was, and his messages continue to be meaningful jazz statements. C.A.

**RUBY BRAFF AND ELLIS LARKINS:** *The Grand Reunion*. Ruby Braff (cornet); Ellis Larkins (piano). *Fine and Dandy; Liza; Ain't Misbehavin'*; and seven others. CHIAROSCURO CR 117 \$5.98.

Performance: **Soothing dialogues**  
Recording: **Good**

Louis Armstrong collaborated successfully on a couple of duet recordings with Earl Hines and Buck Washington in 1928 and 1930, but the combination of trumpet and piano obviously did not tickle the fancies of record producers. In 1955, when Ruby Braff and Ellis Larkins teamed up for two Vanguard albums, such duets were still the sort of thing one was apt to hear only at informal get-togethers. Now producer Hank O'Neal (who recently reinstated Braff in the catalog with the International Quartet Plus Three album) has brought Braff and Larkins together again, and it is still a winning combination.

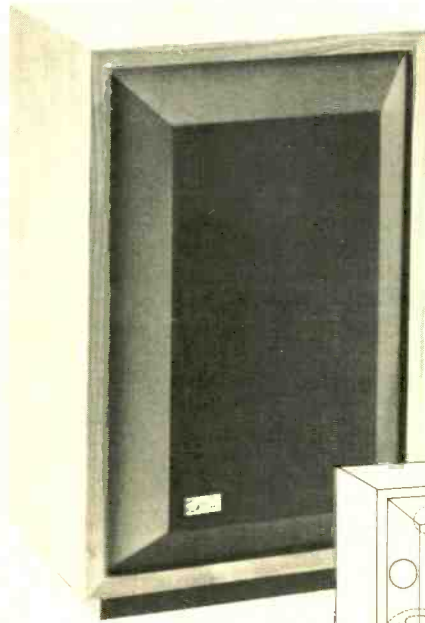
Duplicating only one tune, Hoagy Carmichael's *Skylark*, from their previous joint efforts, the excellent duo runs gently and lyrically through ten standards. Larkins underlines perfectly the full cornet tone that is Braff's main asset, making it of little importance that neither musician can boast a strong individual style. Their playing is, in fact, a synthesis of various statements made in the past by men they obviously admired: Armstrong, Roy Eldridge, and Buck Clayton, with a dash of the Chicagoans in Braff's cornet, and Teddy Wilson, Fats Waller, and traces of Nat Cole in Larkins' piano. It's a good album, soft and easy on the ears. C.A.

**DAVE McKENNA:** *Solo Piano*. Dave McKenna (piano). *Scrapple from the Apple; Sweet Georgia Brown; Norwegian Wood; Emaline*; and eight others. CHIAROSCURO CR 119 \$5.98.

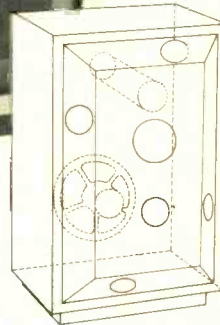
Performance: **Gratifying**  
Recording: **Disappointing**

Dave McKenna's name is not a household word. In fact, it is a rather obscure name even in jazz circles these days, but McKenna has remained quietly active since the Fifties when he worked with such name people as Gene Krupa, Charlie Ventura, Woody Herman, and Bobby Hackett. I wouldn't say that McKenna is such a remarkable talent that the whole world should know about him, but he is very good. And, thanks to producer Hank O'Neal's penchant for pianists, we now have his first solo album since 1955.

Capable of generating a good amount of swing by himself, McKenna, whose style is often reminiscent of Joe Sullivan, is a good choice for a solo album, and the repertoire he has selected is an interesting mixture of the old and the new. The program ranges from Bird to the Beatles to Stevie Wonder, and it includes some swing era standards that are seldom heard today. In one instance the old and new are combined as McKenna subtly



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injects *Yesterdays*, the 1933 Harbach/Kern tune, into the more recent *Yesterday* by Lennon/McCartney.

On the negative side, engineer Fred Miller has favored the treble, which is unfortunate because McKenna is very much a two-handed player. My reviewer's copy is marred throughout by a scratchy noise indicating a fault in the pressing which I hope has been corrected. C.A.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**CEDAR WALTON TRIO: *A Night at Boomers, Vol. 1.*** Cedar Walton (piano); Clifford Jordan (tenor saxophone); Sam Jones (bass); Louis Hayes (drums). *Holy Land; Down in Brazil; St. Thomas*; and four others. MUSE 5010 \$5.98 (available by mail from Muse

Records, 160 West 71st Street, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Exemplary**  
Recording: **Excellent remote**

Cedar Walton and Clifford Jordan first worked together in J. J. Johnson's band fourteen years ago, and they have maintained a close musical relationship since then. Walton, forty years old this month, gained wide recognition as a member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers during the early Sixties; in recent years he has recorded several albums as a leader and is frequently heard as a sideman. He is an extremely lyrical pianist with brilliant technique, and he manages to sound thoroughly modern without entering the avant-garde arena. Jordan, at forty-two, *does* flirt with the "new music," but he maintains at

least one foot on Walton's ground at all times, so his excursions with Walton's trio add dimension without interfering with the flow of things.

And a flow it is, for although these musicians follow separate pursuits they work together as regularly as possible—Walton and Jordan taking turns as leaders—and have created a cohesiveness that comes close to matching that of the Modern Jazz Quartet. Star billing goes to Walton and Jordan, but Sam Jones and Louis Hayes also make superb contributions. It would be hard to single out any particular moment in this live set recorded during a Greenwich Village club date last January; it is simply excellent small-band jazz played by four of the finest artists in the field—and happily it is to be followed by a second volume. C.A.

## CLASSIC JAZZ

Reviewed by Chris Albertson



MANY record anthologies have been designed to reflect the history of jazz, but such undertakings are usually handicapped by the fact that producers can select only from recordings belonging to the company for which they work. Nevertheless, there have been some impressive attempts in the past, most notably Riverside's "History of Classic Jazz," which relied heavily on the rich Gennett and Paramount catalogs, and Leonard Feather's four-volume "Encyclopedia of Jazz on Records," which consisted of Decca material. Until now, though, only Folkways—in an eleven-volume jazz anthology released during the Fifties—blended material from various major and independent labels, and the packaging and technical quality of that set left just a bit too much to be desired.

There was a time when such sets were aimed at the older collector, but young people have in recent years been demonstrating more concern with their cultural roots, and this has led to a revival of interest in the history of Afro-American music, now the subject of courses taught throughout the country. Thus the need for a well-produced history of jazz on records has never been greater—and we have just that in the new "Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz."

Responsible for this six-record collection, and fully deserving of our gratitude, is Martin Williams, a highly respected jazz author, critic, and historian who currently serves as director of the jazz program for the Smithsonian Institution Division of Performing Arts. Assembling over eighty-five selections from the catalogs of seventeen record companies, Mr. Williams spent two years completing this monumental project, and the result, from packaging to content, is very impressive.

An accompanying forty-six-page booklet contains numerous photographs; an excellent, condensed history of jazz written by Mr. Williams; a useful guide to the uninitiated listener (what to listen for, etc.); a selected and annotated jazz bibliography; a guide to obtaining records, with addresses of national and overseas record outlets; and

complete discographical and explanatory notes for each selection in the set.

As Mr. Williams points out in his notes, the choice of selections was his, and it reflects to a great extent his own personal taste, but, having always considered that to be excellent, I have no complaints about the performances included. There are, however, some notable omissions, six of which—Ma Rainey, Jimmy Rushing, Big Bill Broonzy, Jack Teagarden, Bud Freeman, and Jimmie Noone—come immediately to my mind. Perhaps if he hadn't leaned so heavily on Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk (represented by seven and six tracks, respectively) we might have had a more representative program, but, given the vast resources available to the producers, the process of elimination must have been awesome. Inexplicably, there is a considerable drop in volume throughout the second track of side two (Red Onion Jazz Babies' *Cake Walking Babies*), but otherwise the sound—some tracks in mono, some in stereo—is uniformly excellent. For the music itself, I can do no better than direct you to the "table of contents" that follows and urge you to satisfy the appetite thus raised as soon as possible.

**THE SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION OF CLASSIC JAZZ.** *Maple Leaf Rag* (Scott Joplin). *Maple Leaf Rag* (Jelly Roll Morton). *Hellhound on My Trail* (Robert Johnson). *St. Louis Blues; Lost Your Head Blues* (Bessie Smith). *Dippermouth Blues* (King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band). *Grandpa's Spells; Dead Man Blues; Black Bottom Stomp* (Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers). *Cake Walking Babies* (Red Onion Jazz Babies). *Blue Horizon* (Sidney Bechet and His Blue Note Jazz Men). *Carolina Shout* (James P. Johnson). *Struttin' with Some Barbeque; Hotter Than That; West End Blues* (Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five). *Potato Head Blues; S.O.L. Blues* (Louis Armstrong and His Hot Seven). *Weather Bird* (Louis Armstrong and Earl Hines). *I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues; Sweethearts on Parade* (Louis Armstrong

and His Orchestra). *Singin' the Blues; Riverboat Shuffle* (Frankie Trumbauer and His Orchestra). *The Stampede; Wrappin' It Up* (Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra). *Moten Swing* (Benny Moten's Kansas City Orchestra). *I Ain't Got Nobody* (Fats Waller). *Honky Tonk Train* (Meade Lux Lewis). *Body and Soul* (Benny Goodman Trio). *Body and Soul* (Coleman Hawkins and His Orchestra). *The Man I Love* (Coleman Hawkins Quartet). *He's Funny That Way; All of Me* (Billie Holiday). *You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To* (Ella Fitzgerald). *Willow Weep for Me; Too Marvelous for Words* (Art Tatum). *Luncheon Special* (Jimmy Lunceford and His Orchestra). *Rockin' Chair* (Gene Krupa and His Orchestra). *I Can't Believe That You're in Love with Me* (Roy Eldridge and Benny Carter). *When Lights Are Low* (Lionel Hampton). *Doggin' Around; Taxi War Dance* (Count Basie and His Orchestra). *Lester Leaps In* (Count Basie's Kansas City Seven). *I Found a New Baby; Blues Sequence from Breakfast Feud* (Benny Goodman Sextet). *East St. Louis Toodle-oo; New East St. Louis Toodle-oo; Creole Rhapsody; Harlem Air Shaft; Concerto for Cootie; In a Mellotone; Ko-ko; Blue Serge* (Duke Ellington and His Orchestra). *I Got Rhythm* (Don Byas). *I Can't Get Started; Shaw Nuff* (Dizzy Gillespie). *KoKo; Embraceable You* (two versions); *Klacksonvedsedsteen; Little Benny; Parker's Mood* (Charlie Parker). *Fantasy on Frankie and Johnny* (Erroll Garner Trio). *Somebody Loves Me* (Bud Powell Trio). *Dancing in the Dark; Ain't No Use* (Sarah Vaughan). *Crosscurrent* (Lennie Tristano). *Boplicity* (Miles Davis and His Orchestra). *Lady Bird* (Tadd Dameron's Sextet). *Bikini* (Dexter Gordon Quartet). *Misterioso; Criss-Cross; Evidence; Smoke Gets in Your Eyes; I Should Care; Blues Improvisation from Bag's Groove* (Thelonious Monk). *Summertime* (Miles Davis and the Gil Evans Orchestra). *Blue 7; Pent-Up House* (Sonny Rollins). *Hora Decubitus* (Charles Mingus and His Orchestra). *Enter Evening* (Cecil Taylor). *So What* (Miles Davis Sextet). *Lonely Woman; Congeniality; Excerpt from Free Jazz* (Ornette Coleman). *Alabama* (John Coltrane). *Django* (Modern Jazz Quartet). SMITHSONIAN P6 11891 six discs \$20.00 (plus \$1.50 for postage and handling, from Classic Jazz, P.O. Box 14196, Washington, D.C. 20044).



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# CHOOSING SIDES

By IRVING KOLODIN



## THE REAL MAX REGER

LIKE the unwound clock which is nevertheless right twice in every twenty-four hours, any reputable composer is "in" at least twice in every century: in those two years that mark the centenary of his birth and death. Max Reger, whatever else he may *not* be, is certainly a reputable composer, and the hundredth anniversary of his birth, on March 19, 1873, has lately been upon us—which means that these commemorative words are somewhat delayed. But they are appropriately so, for Reger and his music are subjects to be approached soberly and carefully, not taken by ill-considered surprise.

Amid a resurgent flood of recorded Reger called forth from several sources by his centennial year, the items that most aroused my interest were contained in a pair of Vox Boxes (SCBX 586 and 587) labeled "The Complete Chamber Music, I and II." My knowledge of the chamber music of Reger is not unlike my knowledge of most other Reger—fragmentary. The appeal of being versed in the complete *anything* of Reger, and at the price of listening to a mere six discs, was therefore hard to resist (ironically, the set turned out to be *incomplete*, though the project is perhaps ongoing).

My choice for a first immersion was a quintet for strings and clarinet. This was not wholly for the good reason that it is in A Major (the key in which Mozart began the history of such quintets with the ever-radiant K. 581), but also because the instrumental combination is so appealing aurally that it would be compensation for the time spent in listening to anything written for it. The results Reger wrung from the form were of such unexpected beauty and downright sensuous satisfaction that I went on to swallow the contents of the other five-and-a-half records in the next forty-eight hours. Not everything went down quite as smoothly as the Clarinet Quintet did, but I can't say that I suffered any intellectual indigestion as a result.

Also in Vox Box I is a pair of serenades for flute, violin, and viola which bring out the ballet composer in Reger—one with a capacity for capers that are not only learned but light-footed (the current Schwann catalog, unfortunately, is restricted in its listings in this genre to the same two serenades, back-to-back on Lyricord 7217). I can recommend these serenades for, shall we say, Sunday brunch purposes; likewise the two string trios (if not the

"Canons and Fugues in the Old Style" for two violins). I say "Sunday brunch" because the trios now and then tend to suggest the kind of amiable sound-spinning that Richard Strauss sometimes wrote as a background for conversation (as in *Ariadne auf Naxos*). This of course reminds us that Reger was born ten years after Strauss and can be expected to have absorbed some of his older contemporary's early writings into a vocabulary that might otherwise have been wholly Brahmsian.

Encouraged by these pleasant experiences, I next plunged into the five string quartets in Vox Box II, only to find myself somewhat awash in a number of cross-currents. Two of the quartets—Nos. 3 and 5—have sparkle, depth, and an occasional flicker of vagrant charm. The other three have each their attractive movement or two, but rather more academic involvement than I relish. And invariably, when all else fails, there is the Regerian recourse to canon or fugue (theme and variations, if we are lucky), in which the normal complications of such counterpoint are compounded by tonal whereases and wherefores.

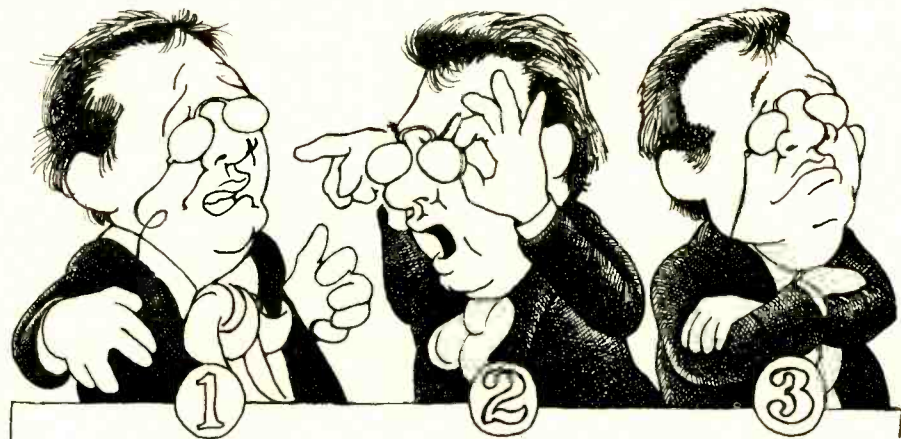
According to Douglas Townsend, in his commentary in the chamber music package, "Few composers have been fortunate enough to be 'controversial' during their lifetime *and after*." I can accept this as a come-on to disarm the skeptical, but I cannot accept as serious the seeming implication that an argument still rages as to whether Reger was a great composer or not. He *was* a composer who was capable of writing music of high quality. He was learned, but he was also facile, undis-

criminating, and verbose. What he sorely needed but apparently never acquired was a dear friend courageous enough to be a severe critic as well, one who could say, when the flesh was all too willing to write, but the musical spirit was weak, "Knock it off, Max!"

Nevertheless, having found seven or eight appealing works out of a total of fourteen. I was encouraged to expose myself to other Reger recordings that have been accumulating beside the turntable in recent months. My expectations were aroused, though not immoderately, by four of the Seven Sonatas for Solo Violin (Op. 91) as well as by the Six Preludes and Fugues (Op. 131a) for the same instrument. Both are Musical Heritage Society releases (MHS 1697 and 1698, respectively)—good but not great; one of each would have served as well as six or seven. But I did discover that Philipp Naegele, who plays the Sonatas, is as excellent a violinist as he is an unknown one, and that Sandor Karolyi, the performer of the Preludes and Fugues, is almost as good as Naegele.

Another Musical Heritage Society issue (MHS 1620/21/22) contains a collection of thirty-five piano pieces called *Aus Meinem Tagebuch* (Op. 82). It proved, upon sampling, to be worth fuller investigation. Composed between 1904 and 1912, each of the pieces represents, as the German title indicates, a page from a day book or diary. Like all of us, Reger had his good days and his bad: a *vivace* day is succeeded by an *adagio* one, then an *andante sostenuto*, another *vivace*, and even an *andante innocente*. For the most part, the expressions of these sentiments are epigrammatic, not merely by Regerian norms, but in absolute terms, and they are performed with total sympathy and communicative fervor by Richard Laugs.

OBSERVING how much Reger could do in brief statements when he chose to, one would have to conclude that his real interest was simply the solving of problems, whether briefly (as in the *Tagebuch*) or lengthily (as in the Violin Concerto, clocked at fifty-seven minutes when done by the brothers Busch and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in 1941). But why thirty-five pieces for a *Tagebuch*? Why not thirty, one for each day of the month, or twenty-four, one a month for two years? But to invoke such considerations of logic is to argue that artistic creation is a logical procedure. As consumers of the results will agree, such is rarely the case. The compulsion to create was as much a part of Reger's being as it was of Schubert's. That Schubert had a higher percentage of hits and a lower incidence of misses than Reger must be traced to



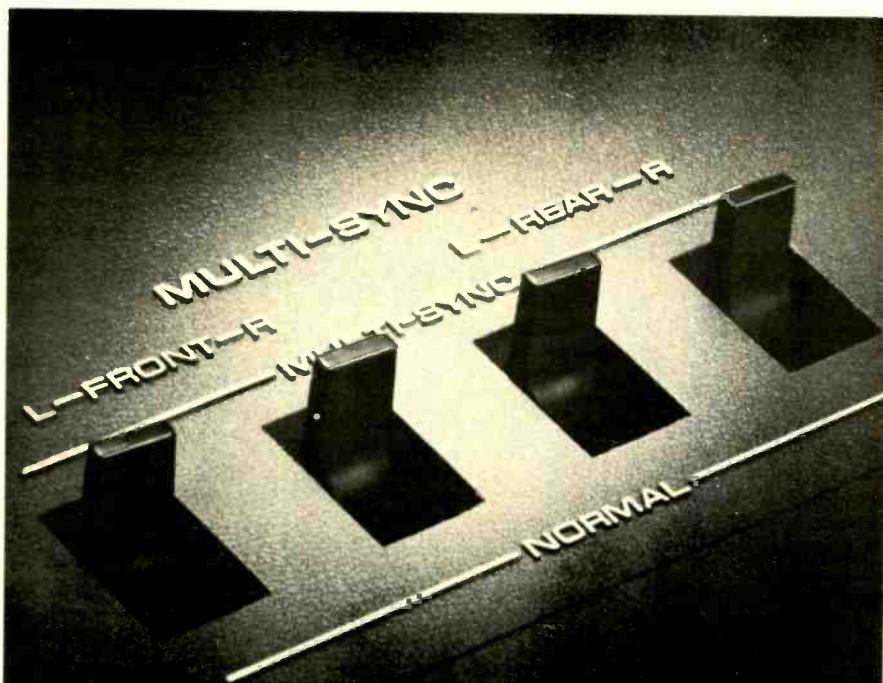


such factors as body chemistry, innate disposition, and native endowment, not to the virtues or shortcomings of the method by which the results are achieved.

Mention of Schubert might remind us that he was the twelfth child born to his mother and father. Had the pair run out of hope or impulse when only three of the first eleven survived, we would have no *Ave Maria*, no *Winterreise* or *Schöne Müllerin*, no *anything* by Schubert. Similarly, Reger's Clarinet Quintet, for which admiration has been previously expressed, bears the opus number 146. It is the highest number, and thus the last work, in the vast catalog the composer created in his relatively brief (forty-three years) lifetime. Had Reger been minded to work more deliberately and selectively, we might well have been denied this lovable work. Following the same logic, we might have lost Reger's single best-known work as well: *Mariä Wiegenlied*, Op. 76, No. 52, is one of sixty "Schlichte Weisen" in the six books of songs under this single opus number. But suppose he had stopped at fifty; there would then be no *Mariä Wiegenlied* to sing, to the vast regret of sopranos from Elisabeth Schumann to Elisabeth Grümmer (both of whom recorded it) and even of tenor Mario Lanza, whose English-language version (*The Virgin's Slumber Song*) is still available on RCA LSC 2607(e).

The question that poses itself, then, is this: Which is the *real* Reger? The composer of *Mariä Wiegenlied* or the man who transcribed all the Bach Brandenburgs for two pianos? The creator of the engaging tone poems after Böcklin (of which there is, alas, no currently available recording) or the man who wrote the hopelessly complex, numbingly prolix variations on the opening theme of Mozart's A Major Sonata (K. 331)? Can he be found somewhere in the organ works, of which an introductory sampling is offered in Telefunken's SAT 22519, Rosalinde Haas playing the Fantasia and Fugue on B-A-C-H and the Introduction, Variations, and Fugue on an Original Theme in F-sharp Minor? Or do we need another question entirely—*Is* there a real Max Reger?—to deal with something like the Franck-flavored Violin Sonata (No. 7, in C Minor, Op. 139), beautifully played by Pina Carmirelli and Rudolf Serkin on Columbia M32221 (it is coupled with the Brahmsian Cello Sonata, superbly performed by Mischa Schneider and Peter Serkin)?

**T**HE late Oscar Levant once conceived of a fantasy concert in which soloist, conductor, composer, and *all* the members of the orchestra were mirror images of himself. I rather fancy a broadcast of the TV show *To Tell the Truth* in which all three members of the panel would look like Reger. Then, when that final question—Will the real Max Reger please stand up?—was put, all three would rise. Which is to say I have concluded that all the music discussed above is a manifestation of some aspect of the same man. That some of these aspects are more interesting than others leads me to hope that Reger may find, now that he is dead, that true friend and severe critic he lacked in life, one who will go through those 146 opus numbers and separate the live coals from the ashes, the Clarinet Quintet from the Quartets 1, 2, and 4, or, as some earlier enthusiast has already done, rescue Number 52 from the other fifty-nine songs of Op. 76. I am not, I hasten to add, a candidate for the assignment.



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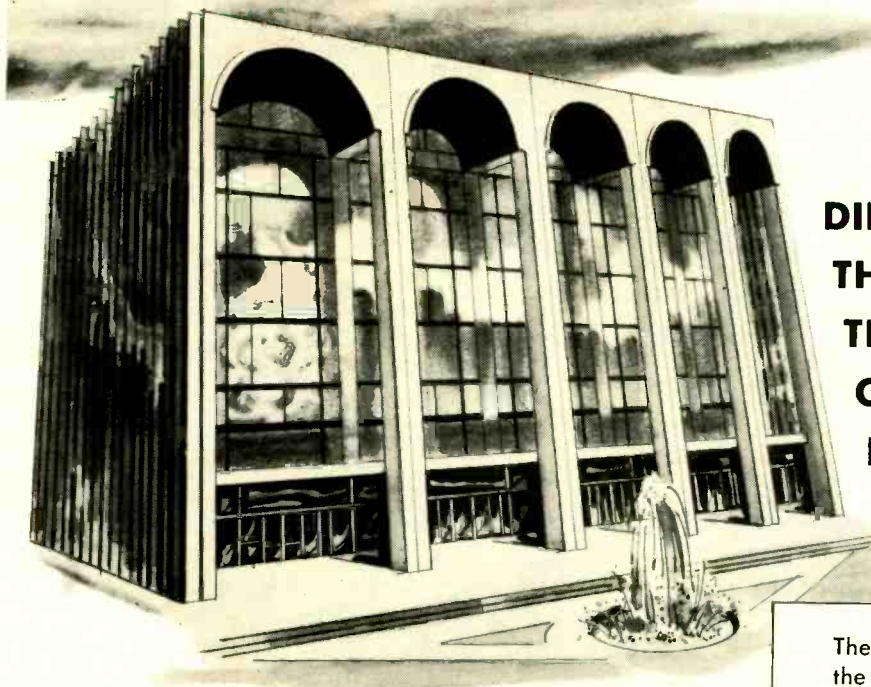
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Dec. 8	L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI	(Rossini)	2:00
Dec. 15	DIE ZAUBERFLOETE	(Mozart)	2:00
Dec. 22	RIGOLETTO	(Verdi)	2:00
Dec. 29	MANON LESCAUT	(Puccini)	2:00
<b>1974</b>			
Jan. 5	SALOME	(R. Strauss)	2:00
Jan. 12	CARMEN	(Bizet)	1:30
Jan. 19	SIMON BOCCANEGRA	(Verdi)	2:00
Jan. 26	TRISTAN UND ISOLDE	(Wagner)	1:00
Feb. 2	LES CONTES D'HOFFMAN	(Offenbach)	2:00
Feb. 9	OTELLO	(Verdi)	2:00
Feb. 16	LA BOHEME	(Puccini)	2:00
Feb. 23	DER ROSENKAVALIER	(R. Strauss)	1:30
Mar. 2	IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA	(Rossini)	2:00
Mar. 9	I VESPRI SICILIANI	(Verdi)	2:00
Mar. 16	LES TROYENS	(Berlioz)	1:00
Mar. 23	DIE GOETTERDAEMMERUNG	(Wagner)	12:30
Mar. 30	MADAMA BUTTERFLY	(Puccini)	2:00
Apr. 6	L'ELISIR D'AMORE	(Donizetti)	1:30
Apr. 13	DON GIOVANNI	(Mozart)	2:00
Apr. 20	PARSIFAL	(Wagner)	1:00
Apr. 27	*TURANDOT	(Puccini)	1:30

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# CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • IGOR KIPNIS  
PAUL KRESH • ERIC SALZMAN

ARNOLD: *Concerto for Two Violins and Orchestra, Op. 77* (see MARTIN)

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BACH, J.S.: *Mass in F Major (BWV 233); Mass in A Major (BWV 234); Mass in G Minor (BWV 235); Mass in G Major (BWV 236)*. Renate Kraemer (soprano, in BWV 233, 234, 236); Annelies Burmeister (contralto); Peter Schreier (tenor, in BWV 235 and 236); Theo Adam (bass); Dresden Kreuzchor; Dresden Philharmonic, Martin Flämig cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIVE 2533143/4 two discs \$6.98 each.

Performance: **Excellent**  
Recording: **Excellent**

The four Masses recorded here are settings of the *Missa brevis*, for they include only the Kyrie and Gloria portions, unlike the large-scale Mass in B Minor. They date from 1735 or shortly after, a period when Bach was reworking much of his previous output for use either in Leipzig or, perhaps, in Dresden where he hoped to obtain an honorific title as court composer. Thus, these Masses involve no completely original material but are rewritings of a variety of cantata movements in which the material is altered (melodic lines, accompaniment, scoring details, added vocal parts, transposition, and the like), sometimes only slightly but often quite drastically, from the original. Bach chose his sources well, and there is some gorgeous music here, particu-

larly, I think, in the choral movements. These are the sections, too, that make such a fine impression in the present performances, for although the solo singing is at all times more than satisfactory, the most impressive attri-



DELICINA STEVENSON  
*Something of a revelation*

bute is the clarity, precision, and rhythmic verve of the all-male choir.

Martin Flämig's pacing of each Mass is in general faster (sometimes by as much as five minutes for an approximately half-hour work) than the fine competing versions by Helmuth Rilling on Nonesuch HC-73020, which stretches the music to six sides. Overall, the main difference between the two sets has to do with a preference for a legato line in Rilling's performance and a greater amount of detached or detailed phrasing in Flämig's conception. Flämig's, for my taste, is the more exciting set of interpretations, though on a few stylistic points (such as the lack of trills in some vocal cadences) it is not quite the ideal statement. The recorded sound is first-rate, except for a bass line that on a few occasions seems to be overly dominant and too heavy. I.K.

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BACH, J.S.: *O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit, Cantata No. 210*. Delcina Stevenson (soprano); Mitzelfelt Orchestra, H. Vincent Mitzelfelt cond. CRYSTAL S951 \$5.98.

Performance: **Very good**  
Recording: **Excellent**

This "Wedding Cantata" is a bit long and somewhat lacking in variety: its only vocalist has to deliver five recitatives and arias. It lacks neither melodic invention nor boldness of ornamentation, however, and the final aria really soars; the joyous vocal line and the rhythmic animation are irresistible. Delcina Stevenson, apparently a busy vocalist on the West Coast, is something of a revelation. She sails through the forbiddingly high tessitura with an amazing combination of pure tone and exceptional agility. Her intonation remains secure even in the highest reaches. The diction is indistinct, alas, but in music of this demanding character, you simply can't have everything. Miss Stevenson has studied with Lotte Lehmann and Martial Singher. She has won awards and all that, but on the basis of what she has disclosed here she deserves to be much better known.

The small orchestra (flute, oboe d'amore, harpsichord, and strings) is led by conductor Mitzelfelt in a well-prepared and spirited performance. The recording is clear and extremely well balanced. Crystal, a small company, has here brought together a group of unknown musicians and has gratifyingly produced a record of real distinction. G.J.

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BACH, P.D.Q.: *The Intimate P.D.Q. Bach. Hansel and Gretel and Ted and Alice: The O.K. Chorale; "Erotica" Variations: The Art of the Ground Round*. Professor Peter Schickele and the Semi-Pro Musica Antiqua. VANGUARD VSD 79355 \$5.98.

Performance: **Authentic**  
Recording: **Mimetic**

One of the best things to happen to classical music lately was the emergence, several years ago, of the raffish Peter Schickele and his

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- Ⓛ = quadraphonic disc
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- Ⓟ = eight-track quadraphonic tape
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.





## Copland's APPALACHIAN SPRING

Columbia records  
the whole thing,  
Eric Salzman reviews it

APPALACHIAN SPRING was written in 1943-1944 for a Martha Graham ballet on the somewhat unusual subject of putting up a farmhouse in a pioneer settlement in the mountains. The original work was scored for a small string ensemble with flute, clarinet, bassoon, and piano. Shortly thereafter Aaron Copland orchestrated his music more fully—shortening it considerably in the process—and it is in the latter form that the work achieved a popularity independent from the dance. Now Columbia has had the genial idea of recording the complete (except for a little connective tissue) original score under the composer's direction, with a companion disc of not-so-well-known Copland chamber music and a seven-inch bonus record of the composer in rehearsal. Both of the new releases, as well as the George Crumb record reviewed elsewhere in this issue, are part of Columbia's revitalization of its Modern American Music Series, which was begun years ago but has been allowed to languish somewhat in recent years.

*The Gift to Be Simple*, an old Shaker tune quoted and developed at length in *Appalachian Spring*, could well be the motto for a major part of Copland's work. Copland was well aware of, and to some extent participated in, the avant-garde movements of the Twenties and early Thirties, but his famous scores of the Thirties and Forties all develop—with great art as well as artfulness—an aesthetic of simplicity and accessibility.

No work of Copland's shows this better than *Appalachian Spring*, and these qualities of directness and simplicity are most evident in the original chamber version. Although the orchestral version was described as a condensation of the ballet score, in fact it matches the original measure for measure a good part of the way but lacks the music for one large scene—what I remember as the music for the appearance of a hell-and-damnation revivalist minister. It perhaps is not of the same high musical interest

as the rest of the score, but this section (which, of course, is restored in this recording of the original version) provides a welcome dramatic contrast and makes the return of *The Gift to Be Simple* and the final pages that much more striking and moving.

The recording of Copland chamber music covers a period of nearly three decades and, in a striking way, closes a circle. The Violin Sonata, composed at about the same time as *Appalachian Spring*, is also an excellent example of the Gift-to-Be-Simple genre. Later on, Copland turned to a more complex style, even incorporating elements of serialism in his music. The Nonet for Strings of 1960, while certainly not twelve-tone, has some of the sonic, structural, and emotional density of serial music. But it is striking that the melodic and rhythmic inventions of this work are often reminiscent of the old, pre-serial Copland.

The Duo for Flute and Piano of 1971 completes the circle. This is the first large-scale Copland work in many years—except for the orchestral *Inscape* of 1967, his first "full-length" work in a decade—and it is vintage Copland: simple, charming, and, to use the composer's own term, "Amerikanisch." Perhaps serialism was a dead end for Copland—as it has been for others—and his return to the themes of his youth has a certain compelling logic about it. Copland himself was one of the leading figures in the evolution of American music from the avant-gardism of the Twenties to the broader-based populism of the Thirties and Forties. In a way, we are living through a similar transition now, and it is interesting to find Copland again reflecting the mood of the times. Maybe this is a lot of historical baggage to put on the shoulders of a charming and, after all, a rather slight work. But it is very well done and perfectly authentic Copland.

THE performances are something of a mixed bag. The Nonet was set down way back in 1962 by Copland himself with a good New York string ensemble. The Violin Sonata, performed by Isaac Stern with the composer, was recorded in 1968, and the Duo, with Elaine Shaffer as the excellent flutist, dates from 1972. The *Appalachian Spring* recording is the most recent, dating from the spring of 1973. The ensemble recordings—old and new—have some of the lack of polish that is associated with works that must be performed and recorded largely on studio time. But they have vigor if not rigor, and at least you can feel reasonably sure of getting what the composer intended. The solo performances are excellent, and the sound is generally good. The bonus record of Copland rehearsing *Appalachian Spring* very nicely suggests the wit and sophisticated simplicity of this complex man.

**COPLAND: *Appalachian Spring* (original chamber version).** Columbia Chamber Orchestra, Aaron Copland cond. COLUMBIA M 32736 \$5.98.

**COPLAND: *Sonata for Violin and Piano; Duo for Flute and Piano; Nonet for Strings.*** Isaac Stern (violin); Elaine Shaffer (flute); Aaron Copland (piano); Columbia String Ensemble, Aaron Copland cond. COLUMBIA M 32737 \$5.98.

probable alter-ego, P.D.Q. Bach. As all the world must know by now, this son of *the* Bach is the one all the rest of them joined together to deny the existence and suppress the works of. They have failed, for he has surfaced again, as disreputable as ever, in a new Vanguard release.

Somewhere along the line (wouldn't you know it) he has managed to embrace the new sexual freedom and to anatomize it in his "Erotica" *Variations* (for banned instruments and piano), a work just about as disgraceful as the title suggests and as shameful to stay awake for as a lieder concert is to sleep through. The decadent *Hansel and Gretel* and *Ted and Alice* is an operatic roundelay (so to speak) of mixed identities and confused sexes that is enough to make a Humper dinck. Not content with playing fast and loose, with making light of all the sacred, mystical traditions of nineteenth-century German opera, Schickele has cast John Ferrante, described as "a bargain-counter tenor," in the role of Gretel. The size of this affront to decency can perhaps be gathered from the title of Gretel's big aria: "There's something about a monk."

Two other selections from the P.D. Quatlog, *The O. K. Chorale* (out of the *Toot Suite for Calliope Four Hands*, S. 212<sup>o</sup>) and *The Art of the Ground Round* (S. 1.19/lb.) finish off the album, and with it, very likely forever, any hope of preserving the good name and reputation of the solid Bach burghers.

Schickele's work smacks (albeit deliciously) of colliitch yuma, but it is the nearest anyone has yet come to introducing the absurdist mayhem of the Marx Brothers into that dreary thing Americans have managed to make of *The Classics*. There is always some element of anti-intellectualism in the reception of such spoofs, but we should not permit it to becloud Schickele's intent, which is nothing more (or less) than letting a little light and a few breezes into our dark and airless concert halls, and, of course, making a little money on the side. When we stop being so sober about "serious" music, we'll enjoy it all the more.

Peter Reilly

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BAX: *Symphony No. 1, in E-flat Major.*** London Philharmonic Orchestra, Myer Fredman cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1586 \$2.99 (plus 75¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Excellent**

Recording: **Very good**

One of the happiest affiliations the Musical Heritage Society has made, as far as I'm concerned, is the one with Lyrita, the English company from whose catalog MHS has leased so many fine recordings of Elgar, Holst, Vaughan Williams, Ireland, *et al.*, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult, Norman Del Mar, Raymond Leppard, and others. Perhaps the most fascinating single consequence of this arrangement is the discovery of the symphonies of Sir Arnold Bax: MHS has released four of them now (Nos. 1, 2, 5, and 6), and they are astonishingly rich works.

Bax did not write his First Symphony until he was thirty-eight years old (1921-22). He had written a number of fine symphonic poems, including *Tintagel* and *The Garden of Fand* (both of which have been recorded for Lyrita by Boult and may be issued by MHS soon), but the Symphony No. 1 started out to



be a piano sonata (his third). When Harriet Cohen pointed out that the work taking shape was really a symphony, Bax orchestrated the sonata's first movement, then composed a new slow movement and added the scherzo-finale that became the prototype for his later symphonic finales, with a coda in march form. It is a forceful, dramatic work, alive with tension and strength; it will evoke for some listeners an H.G. Wells visionary quality, and for some the idea of a miniaturized *Eroica* (thirty-two minutes long: stormy allegro with stark, insistently hammered theme; intensely elegiac slow movement, with echoes of military music; much lighter finale).

It has been suggested that the First Symphony reflects Bax's reactions to the upheavals of World War I, or to one or more of the other shattering events of that time: the Irish uprisings of 1916 in which some of his friends were executed (which did inspire him to write some moving poetry, under the pseudonym Dermot O'Byrne), the dissolution of his marriage, the death of his father. In 1924 Bax remarked on the work's "fierce, almost defiant character" which he said "seems to suggest some conflict," and he described the funereal significance of the slow movement in some detail, but twenty-five years later he insisted the symphony was "absolute music." There is no attempt at picture-painting or a description of events in the music, but, perhaps inevitably, a self-portrait of the spirit that had weathered those various personal and emotional storms—a resolute, affirmative spirit, tempered in the crucible of experience. Even this is a good deal more than need be said, for the music needs no programmatic or philosophical crutch.

Myer Fredman obviously has Bax in his blood, and, in this beautifully recorded performance, it sounds as if every member of the London Philharmonic does, too. I recommend this disc highly, and when you're ready for more you will find that the Bax symphonies get even more interesting as the cycle continues. *R.F.*

**BEETHOVEN:** *Leonore Overture No. 3* (see *The Basic Repertoire*, page 55)

**BRAHMS:** *Liebeshieder Waltzes, Op. 52* (sic); *Zigeunerlieder, Op. 103* and *Op. 112*. Salvati Vocal Quartet; Richard Laugs and Frederic Capon (pianos). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1625 \$2.98 (plus 65¢ handling charge from Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Turgid**  
Recording: **Good**

The spirit of Vienna got into Brahms' piano and string quartets, his First and Third Symphonies, his concertos for violin and for violin and cello, and other works, but the most infectious music of all he was to write under that Viennese influence was the suite of *Liebeshieder Waltzes* (Op. 52 and Op. 65), enchanting vocal solos, duets, and quartets in swaying waltz and ländler rhythms to four-handed piano accompaniments. Reading the text from verses by Daumer one wonders what possibly could have inspired Brahms in these gushy lyrics about maidens with trustful eyes, captive songbirds, a mother who "pins roses" on her son, and other dubious poetical equivalents of nineteenth-century costume jewelry. Hearing them set, one understands at once. The plastic flowers turn into real ones, the halting metrics of the little verses expand to



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glorious waltzing rhythms. There are eighteen waltzes in Op. 52 and fifteen in Op. 65. Though this disc is supposed to contain Op. 52 complete, it does not; there are only sixteen from that collection, with four from the second series interspersed among them.

As for the gypsy influence on Brahms, it had started long before he ever saw Vienna and was with him always. The *Zigeunerlieder* offer splendid examples of the way his exultation over the beauties of nature and the ardors of love could turn the flimsiest raw materials into superb music. Again, only twelve of the fifteen songs are performed.

I wish I could report that either the *Liebesslieder* Waltzes or the *Zigeunerlieder* were done as marvelously as they might be, but despite attractive voices, deft pianism, and good engineering, these are academic, stric-tured interpretations not up to the intoxicating potential of the scores. These voices do not sway to the rhythms of a waltz or a gypsy ballad; they are hopelessly earthbound by the atmosphere, not of the ballroom, but of the schoolroom recital hall. And the translations of the text supplied are, frankly, terrible. *P.K.*

**BRITTEN:** *Diversions on a Theme (for Piano Left Hand and Orchestra), Op. 21.* **LADERMAN:** *Concerto for Orchestra.* Leon Fleisher (piano, in Britten); Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Sergiu Comissiona cond. DESTO DC-7168 \$5.98.

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Adequate**

The *Diversions*, composed in 1940, is one of several works written by various composers

for the famous one-armed pianist Paul Wittgenstein. Recorded by Benjamin Britten himself about twenty years ago, with the late Julius Katchen as soloist, it is one of the few of his pieces Britten has not got round to remaking in stereo and one of the few major ones missing from the catalog for the last dozen years or so. That no one else has recorded it till now is astounding, for it is an ingratiating and ebullient piece, filled with the same inventiveness and vitality that made the earlier *Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge* a staple of the string-orchestra repertoire, and there is in it a good deal of mischief as well (one of the variations is a good-natured parody of Rachmaninoff). Leon Fleisher plays the very devil out of it, and Comissiona gives him enthusiastic support.

The three-movement Laderman work of 1968 is well-crafted and reasonably diverting in terms of display opportunities for the various orchestral choirs, and it even shows some heart. Although it lacks the personality to make it really stand out among several similar pieces of the same period, and although it has little to offer in the way of melodic interest, it is nevertheless a work tonally oriented listeners can respond to, and the orchestra does very well by it. It is the Britten side, though, that justifies investing in the disc.

The sound is adequate, but not outstanding, with a little of the "canned" feeling we've grown unused to. The crudely written blurbs about the performers need not concern us perhaps, but surely Fleisher's name ought to be on the label of the Britten side, and we might have had bands separating the movements of the Laderman concerto. *R.F.*

**CHOPIN:** *Piano Concerto No. 2, in F Minor, Op. 21* (see GINASTERA)

#### RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

**CRUMB:** *Voice of the Whale (Vox Balaenae); Night of the Four Moons.* Jan DeGaetani (alto); Aeolian Chamber Players. COLUMBIA M 32739 \$5.98.

**CRUMB:** *Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death.* Lawrence Weller (baritone); Philadelphia Composers' Forum, Joel Thome cond. **SESSIONS:** *Concertino for Chamber Orchestra.* Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago, Ralph Shapey cond. DESTO DC 7155 \$5.98.

Performances: **Excellent**  
Recordings: **Columbia is gorgeous**

George Crumb's long love affair with the poetry of Federico García Lorca—Lorca appears in the greater part of Crumb's work of the 1960's—has inspired some of the most poetic and atmospheric music written in this century. These interpretations of Lorca are not really profound—indeed, Crumb often clearly misinterprets the poet—and all of the pieces are cut from a single basic pattern. But who can resist Jan DeGaetani as she intones the mystery of Spanish death and the moon to the twang of a banjo and the poignant whisper of a flutist vocalizing through his flute? Crumb's art concerns itself with the mystery and silent terror of existence, and it communicates remarkably well.

The *Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death* of 1968 and the *Night of the Four Moons* of



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the following year immediately precede the better-known and highly successful *Ancient Voices of Children*. The *Songs* has the most colorful orchestra of all: an electric collection of guitar, bass, harpsichord, and piano along with more than fifty different sorts of percussion instruments. A partial list of these gives a very good idea of Crumb's taste in sound: Jew's harp, Flexatone, water-tuned crystal glasses, Japanese hand bell, finger cymbals, sleighbells. These high sounds are balanced by some very low frequencies on the electric instruments. The baritone is required to sing much of his music through a speaking tube, and the instrumentalists seem to sing and shout almost as much as they play. *Night of the Four Moons* is still simpler and more evocative in a notably beautiful performance and recording that culminates in the muffled, distant effect of Jan DeGaetani singing an ineffable, familiar fragment at some great, unbridgeable distance. Ah, bitter mystery of life!

I have said elsewhere that the real subject of Crumb's music is time—more specifically, the attempt to suspend the passage of time in the endless flow of floating bits of sound and color that constitutes his expressive vocabulary. *Voice of the Whale (Vox Balaenae)*, for three masked players) begins with a vocalise for flutist "... for the beginning of time," passes through a series of "Variations on Sea-Time (Archeozoic, Proterozoic, Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic)" and ends with a "Sea-Nocturne (... for the end of time)"! This belongs to a more recent cycle of works for masked musicians: these works are set on a similar suspended-time scale but increasing-

ly use the debris of traditional culture as artifacts trapped in what can only be called (to adapt a famous malapropism about music) Crumb's frozen architecture. Additionally, the composer has added fragments and evocations of the humpback whale, thus joining the remarkable number of composers (as well as choreographers and others) inspired by the music of these great cetaceans—who, of course, being relatively recent arrivals on the evolutionary scene, did not grace the prehistoric oceans with their music until the very last of the unimaginable epochs celebrated in this work. No matter! The music is infinitely evocative and beautifully captured in this gorgeous performance and recording.

Roger Sessions' *Concertino* on the over-side of the Desto release is a flowing, mellifluous sort of American expressionist music, extremely well made and played by the excellent Chicago group under Ralph Shapey. The Philadelphia Composers' Forum—the third well-known chamber ensemble represented here—and baritone Lawrence Weller give an excellent account of themselves in Crumb's *Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death*, but this recording is much less atmospheric than the Columbia (some may object to all that sensuous atmosphere and argue for a purer approach, but frankly Crumb's evocative simplicity cries out for the kind of sonic space that Columbia gives it). The Desto disc—my review copy, at any rate—is disturbingly noisy all the way through, while the Columbia record, reviewed from test pressings, is superb (and ought to be sensational in the quadraphonic version to be released). One assumes that the usual texts, translations, and

explanations will be along in the finished package. Desto provides not only all of that but also some good chunks of Crumb's visually fascinating scores. E.S.

DVOŘÁK: *Slavonic Dances* (see SMETANA)

ELGAR: "Enigma" Variations (see IVES)

GINASTERA: *Milena, Cantata No. 3 for Soprano and Orchestra, Op. 37*. CHOPIN: *Piano Concerto No. 2, in F Minor, Op. 21*. Phyllis Curtin (soprano, in Ginastera); Nerine Barrett (piano, in Chopin); Denver Symphony Orchestra. Brian Priestman cond. DESTO DC 7171 \$5.98.

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Good**

*Milena* was composed in 1971, on commission from the Institute of International Education, and premiered in Denver last April. In a touching program note, Alberto Ginastera writes that the work "had been on my mind for decades. . . . Since my youth, when Kafka first became my favorite twentieth-century author, these 'Letters to Milena' fascinated me because in them the creator of fantastic and metaphysical stories becomes a man in love and heartsick. . . . I selected and adapted the texts in the form of a 'collage,' and thus every movement . . . corresponds to a literary unit comprising an integrated subject: apparitions in the *Prelude*, love in *Cantus I*, dreams in *Prosa I*, letters in *Cantus II*, jealousy and despair in *Prosa II*, and the Infinite in the *Cantus Finalis*. . . . In the *Cantus Finalis* the theme of the organ grinder in the



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  - LSC-7027 Verdi: *Rigoletto* (Complete) (D) Opera (Moffo; Kraus; Merrill; Solti; RCA Italiana Opera Orch. and Cho.)
  - LSC-7029 J. Strauss, Jr.: *Die Fledermaus* (Complete) (D) Opera (Leigh; Rothenberger; Stevens; Konya; Wachter; Danon, Vienna State Opera Orch. and Cho.)
  - LSC-7040 Verdi: *Requiem* (D) Leinsdorf, Boston Symp. Orch. (Nilsson; Chookasian; Bergonzi; Flagello)
  - LSC-7048 Puccini: *La Rondine* (Complete) (D) Opera (Moffo; Scutti; Barioni; De Palma; Sereni; Molinari-Pradelli; RCA Italiana Opera Orch. and Cho.)
  - LSC-7053 Strauss, R. *Salome* (Complete) Opera (Caballe; Resnik; King; Lewis; Milnes; Leinsdorf, London Symp. Orch.)
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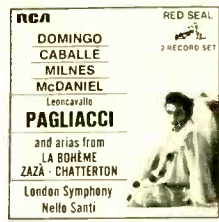
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last *Lied* of the *Winterreise* by Schubert is to me a song for the dead."

This is a moving work, its style by now familiar from Ginastera's operas but here as apposite to the intimate nature of the text as the writing in *Bomarzo* and *Beatrice Cenci* is to the demands of the stage. The long *Prosa* sections are neither sung nor treated as recitative, but are declaimed (with accompaniment). While Ginastera does not mention this, the statement of the Schubert theme by the English horn in the final section is reminiscent of another "song for the dead," recalling the solo for that instrument in the *Abschied* which concludes Mahler's *Lied von der Erde*. The performance is sensitive and convincing on the part of both Miss Curtin and the orchestra; the composer, who supervised the sessions, must have been pleased. Full Spanish texts are provided, but in English there are only pithy synopses that leave some points unclear.

This is not the first time a new work has been improbably paired with a standard repertoire item without even the link of a soloist in common. Improbable or not, Miss Barrett gives a more than respectable account of herself in the Chopin, and the orchestra's strong contribution displays Priestman's special talent for such partnerships. Both sides are well engineered, the pressings clean. R.F.

**HARRIS:** *Fantasy for Violin and Piano* (see RIEGGER)

**IVES:** *Symphony No. 1*. **ELGAR:** *Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 36* ("Enigma"). Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CS 6816 \$5.98.

Performance: **Excellent**  
Recording: **Excellent**

The "Enigma" Variations have only twice before been coupled with non-English material on records, and the Ives First has never appeared before with anything but more Ives; the coupling on this disc is a happy step in lifting both composers a bit further out of the parochial context in which they were until very recently almost universally regarded. It is also excellent value, since all earlier recordings of the Ives, and many of the Elgar, have taken more than a single side. The way the Ives was accommodated on one side here, however, will not please everybody: Zubin Mehta has cut the final movement "three or four minutes, making a much more compact and convincing finale." The cut is more like five or six minutes, or nearly half of the entire movement. It is true that the finale is the weakest part of the work, and Ives himself would have been the last to insist that every note he wrote at the age of twenty-three was sacrosanct, but Mehta has altered the proportions of the symphony by making what was originally the longest of its four movements the shortest but one.

This may not be such a bad idea, though. In listening to the new record I am not aware of any foreshortening, and, more to the point, I have no feeling of rambling, padding, or anticlimax: anyone who can accept the idea of the cut is bound to find this a surpassingly beautiful performance. It might be argued, however, that the European influences present in this predominantly lyrical work (Dvořák, occasionally even Bruckner, Tchaikovsky in the finale) seem less insistent, that more of Ives' own character is discernible, in Morton Gould's recording with the Chicago Sympho-

ny Orchestra on RCA LSC-2893. Gould's version is uncut, of course.

Mehta's Elgar is another performance of great sensitivity and perceptiveness, about as good as any now current and clearly superior to all the others in terms of sonics (not in terms of documentation, however: the titles of the respective variations, fairly significant in this work, are nowhere mentioned. R.F.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**JONGEN:** *Symphonie Concertante*. Virgil Fox (organ); Paris Opera Orchestra, Georges Prêtre cond. ANGEL S-36984 \$5.98.

Performance: **Titanic**  
Recording: **Gorgeous**

The last century has seen the composition of some mammoth symphonic works that com-



Photo: Simon Robert Neve

**VIRGIL FOX**  
*A tireless Jongen champion*

bine the great range of the organ with the greater range of the symphonic ensemble—one thinks of Saint-Saëns' Third Symphony, of Copland's Symphony for Organ and Orchestra, even of Poulenc's Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani—but Jongen's great whale of a *Symphonie Concertante* has somehow been forgotten these past forty years. Indeed, in recent years you couldn't even find Jongen's name in a Schwann catalog. But the organ master Virgil Fox has been a tireless champion of this particular beached giant. He has played it in Philadelphia, Detroit, and Houston, as well as in New York with the Philharmonic under Mitropoulos, and it was only just that he won the exclusive rights from the publishers to make this first recording. We can be glad he has.

Joseph Jongen was a Belgian composer (1873-1953) whose musical ancestry can be traced to Franck and Chausson and the impressionist masters who followed. He wrote the *Symphonie* while he was director of the Brussels Conservatoire, and he himself was a practicing organist with a thorough knowledge of the potentialities of his complex instrument, few of which he fails to explore in this big work. It opens with an allegro molto moderato in the Dorian mode, briskly adventurous—as though the musical adventure story of a Bruckner first movement were being retold by a French impressionist. A diver-

timento follows, like a holiday at some vast exhibition, where a huge calliope plays against a background of flashing colored lights. Then comes the most remarkable of the four movements, a lento misterioso, hypnotic, tidal as a Scriabin tone poem, but less knotty, more expansive—like a Gustav Holst who has traded his *Planets* spaceship for Captain Nemo's submarine, and draws us underseas with him on an eerie voyage as he awakens mad harmonies from the keyboard in his dim salon. In the final toccata, which begins with a *moto perpetuo* that drives furiously forward through the last frenzied pages, one can almost hear the imprisoned spirit of Romanticism battering its wings against the bars of its post-Victorian cage, trying to break out into the free spaces of modernity. But it is Jongen's lavish resources as a colorist rather than his powers of invention as a symphonist that make this almost too shamelessly romantic work worth hearing and the record worth acquiring—especially in this astonishing performance by Fox and the Paris Opera Orchestra under Georges Prêtre. My only regret is that Angel did not take advantage of the opportunity to release this one in quadraphonic sound. Even so, the sound quality is breathtaking. P.K.

**LADERMAN:** *Concerto for Orchestra* (see BRITTEN)

**LAMB:** *The Classic Rags of Joseph Lamb*. *Hot Cinders*; *Arctic Sunset*; *Bohemia Rag*; *Cleopatra Rag*; *American Beauty Rag*; and eight others. (Includes one-sided 12-inch disc with Milton Kaye and Rudi Blesh discussing Lamb and his music.) Milton Kaye (piano). GOLDEN CREST CRS 4127 \$5.98. (Available by mail from Golden Crest Records, 220 Broadway, Huntington Station, N.Y. 11746.)

Performance: **Worthy**  
Recording: **Very good**

Joseph Francis Lamb, who died in 1960 at the age of seventy-two, became a legend in his own time. A white ragtime composer who commonly was thought to be black—and believed by some to be Scott Joplin composing under a pseudonym—Lamb was most productive from 1908 to 1919, at which time classic ragtime went out of vogue. More interested in his music than in any acclaim or money it might bring him, and unwilling to subject himself to the Tin Pan Alley rat race, he spent the next thirty or so years of his life living in relative obscurity with his family in a modest Brooklyn house while making a living in a nine-to-five job in New York's garment district. And then, in 1949, Rudi Blesh and the late Harriet Janis, researching their extraordinary book on the history of ragtime (*They All Played Ragtime*, Oak Publications), found Lamb listed in the Brooklyn telephone directory. His subsequent prominence in the book led many ragtime enthusiasts to his door and inspired him to resume his composing and ready manuscripts for a new publication. The portfolio, entitled *Ragtime Treasures*, was finally completed by Mrs. Lamb four years after his death, and some of its music is included in these new recordings.

Lacking any real frame of reference, I cannot comment authoritatively on the faithfulness of Milton Kaye's interpretations, but Rudi Blesh's involvement in this album as producer leads me to believe that the artist here has done the composer justice. In any event, it is a delightful album dedicated to a



truly American art form that faded from popularity long before its importance was recognized.

The one-sided disc that is included as a bonus contains a very informative, informal talk on Joseph Lamb and his music by Blesh and Kaye.  
*Chris Albertson*

**MALIPIERO:** *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra.* **MILHAUD:** *Concerto No. 2, for Violin and Orchestra.* André Gertler (violin); Prague Symphony Orchestra, Václav Smetáček cond. SUPRAPHON 1 10 1120 \$5.98.

Performance: **Excellent**  
Recording: **Good**

The death of Gian Francesco Malipiero last year at the age of ninety-one went virtually unnoticed. Toscanini used to conduct his music now and then, and Mitropoulos once recorded his *Sinfonia delle Canzoni*, but his name simply does not turn up in our concert programs, and the entire Malipiero discography in this country now comprises a total of four titles—the classic *Rispetti e Stranbotti* for string quartet on Nonesuch and three later orchestral works on the Louisville Orchestra's own label. The violin concerto was recorded once before, but the work remains unknown here.

Because Malipiero was especially known for his scholarly interest in early music and his numerous editions of compositions of Monteverdi, Corelli, Vivaldi, *et al.*, it is understandable that his violin concerto has been bracketed by some with the *Concerto Gregoriano* of Respighi. But Respighi very consciously drew on Gregorian chant for his concerto of 1921, and such influences are much subtler in the one Malipiero composed in 1932. Perhaps the listener can actually discern that the composer had steeped himself in Gregorian chant and Renaissance vocal music, but he was also aware of and responding to the jazz influence then making its way through European music. In any event, this is a handsome work. Romantic in spirit and craftsmanlike in construction.

Darius Milhaud's slightly better-known Violin Concerto No. 2 is a splendid choice as companion piece, and it is especially welcome since the only previous recording—by Claire Bernard and Edouard van Remoortel—was among the casualties in Philips' withdrawal of its short-lived "World Series" label a few years ago. This is one of Milhaud's strongest works in concerto form—serious, substantial, almost Bloch-like in parts, with a particularly moving slow movement. Both the Milhaud and the Malipiero are fortunate in having Gertler as their champion: he plays both works with consummate understanding and enjoys sympathetic partnership from Smetáček and the orchestra. The recorded sound could be brighter, but it is satisfactory. *R.F.*

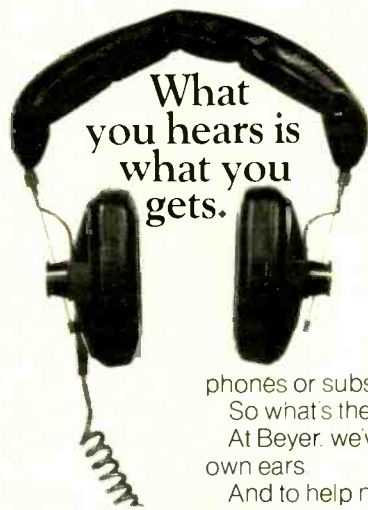
#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MARTIN:** *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra.* **ARNOLD:** *Concerto for Two Violins and Orchestra, Op. 77.* Stephen Kates (cello, in Martin); Paul Kling, Peter McHugh (violins, in Arnold); Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester cond. LOUISVILLE LS-731 \$5.95 (from Louisville Orchestra First Edition Records, 333 West Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40202).

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Good**

Frank Martin is eighty-three now—still pro-

APRIL 1974



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ductively composing and conducting, and enjoying a new wave of international recognition. His Cello Concerto, composed about eight years ago, is filled with the vitality and profundity that have characterized his writing for decades: this is no rehash of an old formula, but fresh, inventive, meaty music, with superbly idiomatic treatment of the solo part and just enough of a suggestion of exoticism in the orchestral coloring to be intriguing. Stephen Kates turns in a gorgeous performance, the orchestral playing is on a high level, and the two elements mesh as one always hopes they will in a concerto performance.

Most of the Malcolm Arnold works we hear are light ones: it is good to hear one as handsome and substantial as the Double Concerto, in which the high point is the thoughtful and eloquent slow movement. The annotation does not disclose the date either work was composed, and the year of Martin's birth is given as 1880 instead of 1890, but both sides of the record itself are among the finest we've been offered from Louisville. **R.F.**

**ROD MCKUEN:** *The City—Suite for Orchestra and Narrator in Five Movements; I Hear America Singing—Suite for Orchestra, Soprano and Narrator, Op. 43.* Paula Seibel (soprano); Rod McKuen (narrator); Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester cond. LOUISVILLE LS-732 \$5.95 (from Louisville Orchestra First Edition Records, 333 West Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40202).

Performance: **Not for eggheads**  
Recording: **Better than deserved**

Rod McKuen continues to go from strength to strength, while his detractors stand abashed by the wayside, the dust from his passing chariot stinging their bedazzled eyes. Meanwhile, his eight books of poems have sold nine million copies in hard-cover alone, and his thousand or so songs have sold one hundred and fifty million records. And even those of us who have gone unmoved by the ceaseless lyric outpouring of America's Simple Simon of letters, and have found in his music both popular and serious all the profundity of a puddle, have had to admit that his score for *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* was an asset to the film. So, if the Louisville Orchestra, having generated so much that is fine in American music, chooses to commission a work from this money-maker, who are we to argue? We must listen attentively. I have so listened, and feel I can reassure you that Mr. McKuen has not betrayed his reputation. The theme of city life has inspired in him—both poetically and musically—a metropolis fashioned entirely out of Tinkertoy parts, and every bit as flimsy.

The narration in *I Hear America Singing* is made of sturdier stuff, having been written by another celebrated American poet named Walt Whitman. McKuen has improved on the original, though, by inserting "many of Mr. Whitman's lines to arrive at a text a good deal longer than the thirteen lines of the original poem of the same name," and by adding lines of his own like this one: "... and when America sings her song, I am by her side, singing along." He has also dipped into his anemic musical reservoir to supply a score for female voice and orchestra to which soprano Paula Seibel contributes—well, more skill than it deserves. And the fine Louisville Orchestra, conducted by Jorge Mester, plays bravely on.

I hope that the money expected to pour in from this venture will be used to encourage

other deserving talents in the field. Mr. McKuen, undaunted all the while, reports that he's working on a new song cycle for Marilyn Horne. We'll keep you informed. **P.K.**

**MILHAUD:** *Concerto No. 2, for Violin and Orchestra* (see MALIPIERO)

**MOSS:** *Elegy; Timepiece* (see RIEGGER)

**PERI:** *Euridice.* Nerina Santini (soprano). Euridice: Elena Barcis (soprano). Dafne; Karla Schlean (soprano). Ninfa; Adele Bonay (alto). La Tragedia. Venere, and Proserpina: Rodolfo Farolfi (tenor). Orfeo: Franco Ghitti (tenor). Tirsi and Aminta; Adolfo Filistad (tenor). Pastor; Gastone Sarti (baritone). Arcetro: Federico Davia (bass). Plutone: Giuseppe Donadoni (bass). Caronte; Coro Polifonico of Milano; I Solisti di Milano.



GABRIEL TACCHINO  
A new explorer of Prokofiev's garden

Angelo Ephrikian cond. TELEFUNKEN SAWT 9603/4-B two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **Primitive**  
Recording: **Good except for balances**

Opera received its start from the ideas of the Florentine Camerata, a group whose aesthetic aims were to merge words and music so that the affect of the notes depended on the meaning of the text, a concept that was based on an imagined classic ideal. It was a revolutionary reform that saw monody, or melody and accompaniment, as a reaction to the previous all-enveloping polyphonic style of writing. One of the earliest operas resulting from the Camerata's efforts was Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (1607), but even earlier, as part of the festival surrounding the wedding of Maria de Medici to Henry IV of France in 1600, was *Euridice*, by Jacopo Peri (1561-1633); the music to the first opera. Peri's *Dafne* (1594?) is unfortunately lost, so that *Euridice* can technically qualify as the earliest surviving opera. This alone gives the present release, the first recording of this work, considerable importance. Most of *Euridice* is in recitative style, but there are some strophic sections in strategic places, as in the prologue and a few choruses. Providing one is used to the earlier style of a Monteverdi or a Cavalli, much of the music is quite beautiful and affecting, especially the mourning of Euridice's death, Or-

pheus' pleas in the underworld, and the joyous dance rhythms at the work's conclusion (in this version, incidentally, Euridice does not nag Orpheus to look at her).

The performance features some good singers, notably the Orfeo of Rodolfo Farolfi and several singers of minor roles. The Dafne (the messenger who tells Orpheus the bad news), however, has one of the strangest fast tremolos I have ever heard, and, in general, there is a curious balance problem, with some voices too distant, even veiled, and others too close-up; on occasion, the same voice seems to be heard in different perspectives. What is more distressing, however, is the terribly measured way in which everything is sung, as though the singers were being shown precisely where all the beats should be, and as wrong for this music as anything could be. One need only listen to the Harnoncourt Monteverdi operas, also on Telefunken, to see what's wrong here: there is little comprehension of the stylistic requirements, of flexible pacing, of instrumentation (the group uses modern strings, oboes, some brass, and, for continuo, only a harpsichord and cello—not even a lute!) or of the application of certain instruments and groups to certain characters. The conductor may have meant well enough, but Telefunken should have suggested that he listen to the Harnoncourt productions before trying this one. Better still, Harnoncourt should have been assigned this important production. What adds insult to injury is that the two-disc album contains a complete Italian text but no English translation. **I.K.**

**PERSICETTI:** *Serenade for Violin, Cello, and Piano, Op. 17* (see RIEGGER)

**PISTON:** *Trio* (see RIEGGER)

**PROKOFIEV:** *Piano Concerto No. 2, in G Minor, Op. 16; Piano Concerto No. 3, in C Major, Op. 26.* Jorge Bolet (piano); Nürnberg Symphony Orchestra. Ainslee Cox cond. GENESIS GS 1021 \$5.98.

Performance: **Needs sparkle**  
Recording: **Distant**

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**PROKOFIEV:** *Piano Concerto No. 2, in G Minor, Op. 16; Piano Concerto No. 3, in C Major, Op. 26.* Gabriel Tacchino (piano); Orchestra of Radio Luxembourg, Louis de Froment cond. CANDIDE CE 31075 \$3.98.

Performance: **Sparkling**  
Recording: **Excellent**

It was Jorge Bolet who in 1954 brought to records for the first time (with the Cincinnati Symphony under Thor Johnson for the Remington label) Prokofiev's highly original and altogether fascinating G Minor Piano Concerto. Unhappily, and through no fault of his own, he does not fare as well in this, his second go at the piece, which is paired with the ever-popular Concerto No. 3. His Genesis album compares unfavorably with the Candide issue of the same coupling, for the alert and sparkling playing of the Radio Luxembourg Orchestra makes an enormous difference, abetted as it is by clean recording with excellent balance and presence, and featuring in Gabriel Tacchino (heretofore associated mainly with French repertoire) a soloist who clearly knows his way in and around the Prokofiev brambles and blooms. There are wonderfully brambly things in the Second Concer-



to, by the way, after the lyrical opening movement: a brilliantly motoric scherzo, followed by an intermezzo in the composer's best dissonant, bearish, ostinato manner.

The Bolet-Ainslee Cox collaboration is hampered not only by a less than scintillating orchestra, but by a rather distant microphone placement that dilutes much of the impact of the G Minor Concerto's middle movements, as well as the more turbulent of the variations in the central movement of No. 3.

There are formidable competitive recordings of both the Second and Third concertos in all price ranges, but I certainly would rate the Candide offering a best buy. *D.H.*

**PUCCHINI: *Madame Butterfly*.** Maria Chiara (soprano), *Madame Butterfly*: James King (tenor), B. F. Pinkerton; Hermann Prey (baritone), Sharpless; Trudeliene Schmidt (mezzo-soprano), Suzuki; Ferry Gruber (tenor), Goro; Richard Kogel (bass), Bonzo; Anton Rosner (baritone), Yamadori; others, Bavarian Radio Chorus and Orchestra, Giuseppe Patané cond. EURODISC 86 515 XR three discs \$20.94. (Available from German News Company, 218 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028.)

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Good**

Here is a most commendable enterprise: a major broadcast entity (the Bavarian Radio) and a major record company (Ariola-Eurodisc of Germany) combine their resources first to broadcast and then to release a complete opera. I only wish that all this good effort had been channeled into *another* opera, for surely the catalog could do well enough without another recorded *Butterfly*. Just the same, it has merit and may, in time, lead to even more significant undertakings.

After an unspectacular Entrance Aria (minus the climactic D-flat) Maria Chiara carries her part well enough. Her tone is fresh, with a pleasing, warm timbre, though the top notes are rather effortful. There are some distinctive moments—the famous phrase "*rinnegata e felice*" is one of them—in her poignant, intimately scaled portrayal, but there is room for more artistic growth. James King possesses neither the ideal sound nor the true style of a Puccini tenor, but his singing is ardent, manly, and musically. Prey is a rich-sounding but mannered Sharpless; the Suzuki is fine. The supporting singers are adequate, and the Italian text is acceptably handled throughout.

I am rather disappointed in the work of conductor Patané (of Milan's La Scala), who has the music securely in hand but provides the kind of efficient, brisk leadership that displays little emotional involvement and has little sympathy with soaring phrases. (The Yamadori scene in Act 2, for instance, is downright metronomic.) Technically, too, the production is far from perfect, with the voices singing too close to the microphone for either balance or natural effect. The tenor hero is identified as Pinkerton by some and "Linkerton" by others (following a misprint in an outdated German libretto), which indicates rather careless supervision. *G.J.*

**RACHMANINOFF: *Piano Concertos: No. 1, in F-sharp Minor, Op. 1; No. 2, in C Minor, Op. 18; No. 3, in D Minor, Op. 30; No. 4, in G Minor, Op. 40. Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43.*** Agustín Anievas (piano); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos cond. (in First and Fourth

Concertos). Moshe Atzmon cond. (in Second Concerto and Rhapsody). Aldo Ceccato cond. (in Third Concerto). ANGEL SCB-3801 three discs \$17.94.

Performance: **Good to superb**  
Recording: **Good all the way**

**RACHMANINOFF: *Piano Concerto No. 3, in D Minor, Op. 30.*** Rafael Orozco (piano); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Edo de Waart cond. PHILIPS 6500 540 \$6.98.

Performance: **Blood-and-thunder**  
Recording: **Very good**

**RACHMANINOFF: *Piano Concerto No. 2, in C Minor, Op. 18.*** TCHAIKOVSKY: *Piano Concerto No. 1, in B-flat Minor, Op. 23.* Sviatoslav Richter (piano); Moscow National

Symphony, Kiril Kondrashin cond. (in Rachmaninoff); Leningrad Philharmonia, Yevgeny Mravinsky cond. (in Tchaikovsky). EVEREST 3345 \$4.98.

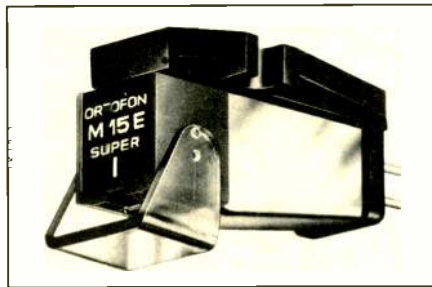
Performance: **Remarkable**  
Recording: **Shortwave quality**

That most formidable of Rachmaninoff's instrumental works, the D Minor Piano Concerto, certainly does not lack for fine recorded performances of its original uncut text. We already had the pioneering Cliburn-Kondrashin collaboration of 1958 as well as Ashkenazy-Previn and Mogilevsky-Kondrashin performances. Now there are two more entries.

The Agustín Anievas album, which has been gathered together from various recordings (Continued on page 118)

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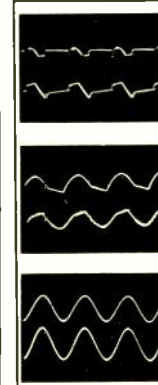
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CIRCLE NO. 32 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Young ragtimers Paul Hersh and David Montgomery: an effective arsenal of musicianly means

## FIRST ANNUAL RAGTIME ROUNDUP

Paul Kresh casts a critical eye on the bandwagon

OUR subject today is *ragtime*. As those of you who have been attending class regularly already know, this is a species of music that came floating down from the Oversoul to re-enter the American consciousness only a few short years ago. It had its origins in the nineteenth-century minstrel music of the Mississippi Valley and flourished, to the horror of the musical Establishment, in saloons, brothels, gambling joints, and eventually on the parlor pianos of perhaps half the turn-of-the-century world. If you went into your local five-and-ten any time during the first decade-and-a-half of this century, you could almost always find a young lady in a shirtwaist plonking out the latest ragtime hits personally from the sheet music or pumping them out by proxy from piano rolls.

The patron saint of ragtime was and is Scott Joplin. A black musician born in Texarkana, Texas, in 1868, he studied music with a German teacher whose name is lost to history and left home at fourteen to earn his way in the world playing piano in those disreputable establishments enumerated above and on Mississippi River showboats as well. He was thirty when he wrote the *Maple Leaf Rag*, and hit though it was, nobody at the time realized it was to become the classic of its genre any more than they could see that ragtime was really a fine, if minor, musical art being created by talented and serious men.

In addition to Joplin, the "Big Three" of ragtime included James Scott and Joseph Lamb [see review on page 112]. There were others whose music typified ragtime or evolved out of it—Robert Hampton, James Reese Europe, and "Jelly Roll" Morton, who wrote the once ubiquitous *Tiger Rag* and went on to cover himself with glory as a composer and pianist in the world of jazz. But when Scott Joplin died in 1917, having despaired, for all his popularity, of ever

seeing his music taken seriously, ragtime, with its swaggering high spirits, its glittering syncopated melodies, and that irresistible "ragged-rhythm" left-hand beat, went to the grave with him. The Victrola and the radio replaced the piano, the foxtrot became the dance of the hour, and nobody was marching or singing or dancing to the rhythms of ragtime any more.

At the start of this Seventies decade, the "sleeping beauty" of ragtime rose from a half-century's slumber through a series of accidents and flukes of propinquity of the kind that must drive musical scholars wild. Perhaps it was only a particularly sharp whiff of the smelling salts of nostalgia so much in the air of late that did it, but None-such's series of ragtime recordings (with pianists Joshua Rifkin and William Bolcom), together with Angel's "Red Back Book" album of orchestrated rags, succeeded where the patient efforts of such keepers of the flame as Rudi Blesh (author of the book *They All Played Ragtime*, 1950) and the indefatigable pianist Max Morath did not.

Ragtime records are now coming out at a feverish pace, but not all of them are worth collecting, even by those who are slaves to the genre. It becomes clear after our first flush of delighted response to this happily rollicking—and, at times, tenderly touching—music that there are as many ways to play it as there are to skin a cat, some of them rather less interesting than others.

TAKE, for example, Trebor Tichenor's approach. He is a St. Louis *aficionado* who calls himself the "King of Folk Ragtime" and expounds most absorbingly in the notes for his own record on the composing techniques of Missouri's Percy Wenrich. He tells how he himself wrote the tune *The Last Trip Down from Hannibal* on a steamboat excursion with other St. Louis "Ragophiles": how the banjo virtuosos on the old

Southern plantations presaged the ragtime idiom; and how Tom Turbin's *Harlem Rag* was the first "black rag" to see publication way back in 1897. When it gets down to the music, however, Mr. Tichenor is one of those sleeve-gartered, metronome-beat, saloon-type piano-pounders, and the rags and two-steps about which he discourses so beguilingly sound as mechanical and are as relentless as the output of a player upright with no "off" switch. After reading all about the delicate nuances of difference between, say, Scott Joplin's *Weeping Willow* and the *Sunflower Tickle* (which Mr. Wenrich apparently wrote under the provocative pseudonym Dolly Richmond), it is a distinct disappointment to hear them come out sounding exactly alike under the steely fingers of Mr. Tichenor at his "personal Steinway." Where is the comic spirit, the lyricism, the jaunty strut? It's like listening to a computer tell jokes.

E. POWER BIGGS, a star of the first magnitude in the firmament of classical organists, attempts to come to terms with Joplin's music through the medium of the pedal harpsichord, an instrument of rather equivocal, though temporarily fashionable, appeal. (It has one or more additional sets of strings to be played by foot pedals, a facility your ordinary garden-variety harpsichord lacks.) Biggs, who I am sure gives whatever soul he has to the *Maple Leaf Rag*, *Peacherine Rag*, *Elite Syncopations*, and other top-drawer Joplin, hopes his efforts won't be regarded as "Heresy for Harpsichord." The shoe, however, is on the other pedal, for what is blasphemed here is not the instrument but the music. It may be possible to put ragtime over on a harpsichord, but Biggs has not made a particularly good case here for bringing the "music of the saloon" to the "instrument of the salon." The rags under his (and the instrument's) ministra-



tions sound like lumpy dances played on a circus calliope for a procession of drowsy hippos. Though he speaks of the virtues of his instrument's harp stop for damping the strings to produce "a very plausible imitation of a banjo," what comes out is quite implausible, both as banjo and as ragtime. There is much, much more to ragtime than this unnecessary record suggests.

**I**F you want to hear ragtime played with all its potential realized, I could not do better than to recommend RCA's new "Ragtime—The Great Classics" as interpreted by duopianists Paul Hersh and David Montgomery. You'd never know that the *Entertainer* and the *Maple Leaf* (regarded as Joplin's two supreme achievements) played here are the same pieces that were so wanly ineffective in other collections. If the proper performance style can be rediscovered, any great old music can be made to live again for contemporary ears as freshly as it did originally, and this pair has made that discovery for ragtime. Hersh, once violinist with the Lenox Quartet and a lecturer "on topics ranging from late Beethoven to Romantic poetry," seems to be one of those rare academicians whose music-making lives up to his lectures. Montgomery, also a lecturer and teacher as well as conductor (and the author of the careful, informative notes for the album), is every bit his partner's match. Together they blow away all the dust from these forgotten tunes and make it possible for Lamb's *Bohemia* and once-popular *Cleopatra Rag*, Jelly Roll's *Shreveport Stomp* and *King Porter Stomp*, Europe's *Castle House Rag*, and four others by Joplin to slip past our prejudices and convince us that they are indeed the great music they claim to be. This is accomplished not by trickery, camp, or cuteness, but by that traditionally effective arsenal of musicianly means—technical precision, unerring instinct for the proper tempo, a rhythmic rightness that surpasseth understanding, the subtlest of color shadings and dramatic contrasts, an alert sense of humor, and absolutely galvanizing dynamics.

The disc is billed as "the only four-hand recording of ragtime music available to the modern listener." Those who have been content up to now with the true but, one must confess, rather overcareful interpretations of Joshua Rifkin (to whom, nonetheless, all praise for his successful pioneering) will find the Hersh-Montgomery treatment a revelation. *The Entertainer*, by the way, is presented in its original two-hand form; Jelly Roll's arresting habit of striking the lower keys with his fist for rhythmic emphasis is exemplified to excellent effect in that composer's cheery *Grampa's Spells*; and *Castle House Rag* makes use of tinkling spoons, a traditional ragtime ploy. And how it all sparkles and flows and lives!

**O**UR lesson for today concludes with a solemn consideration of the recording put together from the soundtrack of George Roy Hill's film *The Sting*. The picture is set in the Thirties and has Paul Newman and Robert Redford cast as two confidence men who put the "sting" on a racketeer. But director Hill cares not a fig for chronological correctness: "If I thought a jazz band would give me the feeling I wanted for a Roman

epic," he says, "I'd use it." Well, it may have been the feeling he wanted, but it isn't the feeling I get. Even though Joplin was writing his early rags during the Depression of 1893-1898, they are all wrong for a Thirties gangster film. But they do make an entertaining record, especially as Marvin Hamlisch, who put the track together, treats the stuff.

Here once again are *The Entertainer* and *Easy Winners*, plus the *Pine Apple* and *Gladiolus* rags. There is some tendency to subdue and sentimentalize the songs, but seldom at the total expense of their natural pungency. Hamlisch's piano version of the softly haunting *Solace* is particularly lovely. And to make sure that there was some Thirties music in the film, Hamlisch (who also wrote the wacky scores for Woody Allen's *Take the Money and Run* and *Bananas*) wrote three interludes of his own: *Hooker's Hooker*, evoking the runways of Depression-days burleycue; *Luther*, a mood piece in the Ellington idiom; and *The Glove*, a spangly foxtrot that is more Twenties than Thirties. Despite the confused calendar, the score is a successful one, notable for its slightly romanticized but honest classical ragtime. Any questions?

**TREBOR TICHENOR:** *King of Folk Ragtime*. Trebor Tichenor (piano). **Wenrich:** *Ragtime Chimes*. **Tichenor:** *The Last Trip Down from Hannibal*; *Ragtime in the Hollow*; *Boon Town Echoes*. **Joplin-Hayden:** *Kismet Rag*. **Joplin:** *Weeping Willow*. **Drumheller:** *Banjo Twang*. **Marshall:** *The Peach*. **Hunter:** *Just Ask Me*. **Turpin:** *Harlem Rag*. **Richmond:** *Sunflower Tickle*. **Broadly:** *A Tennessee Jubilee*. **Campbell:** *Ginger Snap Rag*. **Harney:** *You've Been a Good Old Wagon*. DIRTY SHAME 2001 \$5.95 (available from Dirty Shame Records, Box 5217 Hannegan Station, St. Louis, Mo. 63139).

**E. POWER BIGGS:** *Plays Scott Joplin*. E. Power Biggs (pedal harpsichord). *Original Rags*; *Maple Leaf Rag*; *Peacherine Rag*; *Elite Syncopations*; *Cleopha—March and Two Step*; *The Easy Winners*; *Pine Apple Rag*; *Binks' Waltz*; *The Strenuous Life*; *Sunflower Slow Drag*. COLUMBIA M 32495 \$5.98.

**PAUL HERSH AND DAVID MONTGOMERY:** *Ragtime—The Great Classics*. Paul Hersh and David Montgomery (pianos). **Lamb:** *Bohemia*; *Cleopatra Rag*. **Roberts:** *The Music Box*. **Marshall-Joplin:** *Swipesy Cakewalk*. **Joplin:** *The Entertainer*; *Maple Leaf Rag*; *Wall Street Rag*. **Morton:** *Shreveport Stomp*; *King Porter Stomp*; *Grampa's Spells*. **Hampton:** *Cataract Rag*. **Europe:** *Castle House Rag*. RCA ARL 1-0364 \$5.98.

**THE STING:** (Scott Joplin-Marvin Hamlisch). Original-soundtrack recording. Marvin Hamlisch and Gunther Schuller, arrangers. Marvin Hamlisch, piano and cond. *Solace*; *The Entertainer* (orchestral and piano versions); *Easy Winners*; *Hooker's Hooker*; *Luther*; *Pine Apple Rag*; *Gladiolus Rag*; *The Glove*; *Little Girl*; *Listen to the Mocking Bird*; *Darling Nellie Gray*; *Turkey in the Straw*; *Rag Time Dance*. MCA 390 \$5.98.

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ing sessions, includes the 1968 reading of the C Minor Concerto and the Paganini Rhapsody, still available on Seraphim S-60091. The other performances are new releases, highlighted for me by the superb conducting of Frühbeck de Burgos in the First and Fourth concertos, which enables both Anievas and himself to get more musical substance out of these not altogether satisfactory works than I have heard before, on or off records. The other singularly impressive element in the Anievas set is his beautiful playing of the slow movements in the C Minor and D Minor concertos. The recorded sound is exceptionally rich and full-bodied throughout all six sides, the piano being rather forward for the most part, but not obtrusively so.

Rafael Orozco's rendering of the D Minor

Concerto contrasts sharply with those of Anievas and Ashkenazy. Where Anievas is for the most part deliberative and intensely lyrical and Ashkenazy is freely poetic, especially in the quasi-improvisatory episodes, Orozco goes at the end movements like a real fire-eating virtuoso. The music is certainly big enough in conception and scale to take this approach, and in general Orozco carries it off impressively, with topnotch collaboration from Edo de Waart and absolutely superb recording in terms of sonic richness from the Philips engineering staff. But in the poignant utterance of the central intermezzo Orozco miscalculates, brazening his way at breakneck speed through the recitative episode, so that it merely passes through the mind's ear rather than seizing one's whole psyche as it does

when played by Anievas, Mogilevsky, or Ashkenazy.

Given the range of choice now available, I would hesitate to recommend unreservedly any stereo "package" of all the Rachmaninoff piano-and-orchestra works. Despite recorded sound somewhat lacking in presence, I suppose I would opt for Ashkenazy-Previn. But of the recordings of individual works, I would be loath to pass up the Rubinstein-Ormandy C Minor, the Mogilevsky-Kondrashin D Minor, and the Anievas-Frühbeck de Burgos F-sharp Minor and G Minor coupling—if it ever becomes available separately from the album.

I have left till last consideration of the curious Everest issue of Sviatoslav Richter's readings of the Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky concertos. This is one of those odd packages with confusing antecedents that Everest inflicts on the record-buying public every so often, adding to the general confusion with contradictory or inaccurate labeling. The record labels and title copy on both sides of the sleeve credit the orchestral accompaniment to "Kiril Kondrashin conducting the Moscow State Orchestra." But the right-hand column of the liner notes gives the credits as cited at the head of this review, and the column in question appears to have been photocopied from another source.

As of this writing, I have not been able to trace the precise origin of either of the performances, but I believe that the Rachmaninoff is the same one that has been available at various times on the Bruno, Vox, and Period labels, while the Tchaikovsky has been available on the same three labels as well as on an MK pressing imported from the USSR via Artia back in 1960. Does Westminster's recent release (8228) of the Tchaikovsky also derive from the same original? A spot check of the MK and Vox Tchaikovsky pressings indicates that they are one and the same performance with Mravinsky and the Leningrad Philharmonic. The Everest sounds like the same, but with inferior sonics, bordering on shortwave quality and with lots of reverberation added. I have yet to encounter a Soviet original pressing of the Rachmaninoff performance, but it seems to be the same one as on Vox, credited to Kondrashin but with inferior sound.

In any event, despite the poor sonics on my Everest review copy, enough emerges to show these readings by the younger Richter to be truly remarkable in their combined lyrical passion and dazzling virtuosity. The Tchaikovsky in particular is tauter in execution than the performances he has recorded in Prague and Vienna, which may indicate that he works better on home ground than abroad.

If you want what I feel to be the best Richter realization of the Tchaikovsky with reasonably good and honest mono sonics, I suggest you keep an eye out for the MK import, which still turns up in remainder browser boxes here and there. *D.H.*

**RACHMANINOFF:** *Variations on a Theme by Corelli, Op. 42; Etudes Tableaux, Op. 39* (see Best of the Month, page 78)

**RIEGGER:** *Trio, Op. 1*. **PERSICETTI:** *Serenade for Violin, Cello, and Piano, Op. 17*. **PISTON:** *Trio (1936)*. Temple University Trio. GOLDEN CREST □ CRS 4117 \$5.98.

**RIEGGER:** *String Quartet No. 2 (1948)*. New Music Quartet. **HARRIS:** *Fantasy for Violin*



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and Piano. Paul Zukofsky (violin): Gilbert Kalish (piano). MOSS: *Elegy* (1969). Paul Zukofsky and Romuald Teco (violins): Jean Dupouy (viola). *Timepiece* (1970). Paul Zukofsky (violin): Gilbert Kalish (piano): Raymond Des Roches (percussion). COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. CRI SD 307 \$5.95.

Performances: **Very good to excellent**  
Recordings: **Assorted**

Wallingford Riegger was, at one time, one of this country's most important "advanced" composers. Active in the avant-garde and experimental movements of the Twenties—along with Cowell, Varèse, Ruggles, and others—he was one of the first American composers to write twelve-tone music, and he continued to be active and prominent until his death in 1961. He was fond of pointing out that not all of his music was far out—he used to hand out a catalog with his works graded according to listening difficulty—but it still comes as a surprise to find, in his Trio, Op. 1, a full-blown piece of American Romanticism, no apologies needed. The work, written in 1919, is a fine late example of old-fashioned chamber music composed with skill, invention, and character. The performance by the excellent Temple University Trio (Alexander Fiorillo, piano, Helen Kwalwasser, violin, and Michael Haran, cello) is very good, but there are major cuts. I found the Persichetti only moderately engaging, and the busy Piston—1935 neo-Classicism of a surprisingly dissonant variety—struck me as a very ugly piece of music.

The Riegger String Quartet No. 2, written in 1948, is, I suppose, to be classified with his "difficult" works, even though it hovers rather uncertainly between a hermetic expressionism and a more open, accessible way of speaking. This recording was made for Columbia many years ago by the now defunct New Music Quartet and has been reissued here by CRI as part of its very valuable program of rescuing out-of-print American music recordings.

The other recordings on this disc, all involving the considerable violin skills of Paul Zukofsky, are shiny new. Donald Harris' 1957 Violin and Piano Fantasy—an obvious descendent of the late Schoenberg piece of the same name and instrumentation—is a strong expressionist-type twelve-tone work. Two pieces by Lawrence Moss on the over-side are of exceptional interest. *Elegy*, written in memory of his brother, is an excellent and really touching example of the application of dramatic situation and form toward the re-ignition of musical substance. The first violin becomes a real personage—alternately assaulted and consoled by the other strings, who desert their colleague and offer their later comments from off-stage. *Timepiece* uses somewhat similar basic ideas but the idea of dialectic or conflict is not so clearly expressed, and the results, although attractive, do not hang together quite so well.

These are excellent performances and good recordings. I should add that the Golden Crest recording, although clear, is extremely close-up, with everything in the front plane in two-channel stereo. Unfortunately you can even hear the musicians loudly flipping pages to make a big cut in the Riegger. The recording is compatible quadrasonic (SQ matrix): I have not heard it in this mode, but I must confess that the thought of hearing a quartet of page turners—perhaps from the four points of the compass—is at least intriguing. E.S.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUBERT: *Sonata in G Major, Op. 78 (D. 894)*. Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). LONDON CS 6820 \$5.98.

Performance: **Sublime**  
Recording: **Very good**

Ashkenazy's realization of this work is extraordinary. Never one to omit repeats, he plays them all here, and the sonata, far from meandering, takes on a new dimension in depth as well as breadth. It is not the question of repeats, of course, that makes the performance, but the radiant, deceptively straightforward playing, the subtle regard for the shifting moods of the vast opening movement (the so-called "Fantasy"), the tension beneath

the repose of the andante, the beautifully judged drama of the familiar minuet (no slowing down for the trio), the softly lit gaiety of the allegretto—elements that carry happy reminders of Schnabel's Schubert as they coalesce into a glorious whole. And even Schnabel did not command Ashkenazy's unique gift for nuance in the realm of tone. No piano record in the last four or five years has given me so much pleasure. R.F.

SESSIONS: *Concertino for Chamber Orchestra* (see CRUMB)

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SMETANA: *The Czech Song*. DVORÁK: *Slavonic Dances: No. 9, in B Major; No. 10, in E*

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**Minor; No. 15, in A Minor. Symphony No. 5, in F Major.** Festival Chorus of the University of Michigan Choral Union; Prague Symphony Orchestra, Jindřich Rohán cond. TAPE TEAM TT-33 two discs \$9.95, © TT-33 \$9.95 (available from Tape Team Inc., P.O. Box 33, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48107).

Performance: **Immensely vital**  
Recording: **Excellent location job**

The first stereo recording of Smetana's single work for chorus and orchestra. *The Czech Song*, might seem at first to be the major fruit of this two-disc set derived from the February 27, 1972, concert of the Prague Symphony Orchestra at the University of Michigan's Hill Auditorium. But one has only to listen to the Dvořák Slavonic Dances to realize that this concert was no ordinary occasion, for the orchestra plays these pieces with absolutely hair-raising zest and precision. The performance of the first of Dvořák's mature symphonies (it was originally Op. 24, then revised and published as Op. 76) is not one whit inferior to that of the dances.

Relatively few recordings deriving from public performances manage to convey both the aura of a special occasion and the essence of the music itself, but this album certainly does. Intelligent microphone placement has yielded excellent orchestral and choral-orchestral balance as well as remarkable solo and ensemble textures. The presence of what seems to be a capacity audience does deaden somewhat the Hill Auditorium acoustic, but the lack of sonic brightness is more than made up for by the effective orchestral presence as it emerges from the loudspeakers. I enjoyed every minute of this album! *D.H.*

**SZYMANOWSKI: Four Etudes, Op. 4; Twelve Etudes, Op. 33; Masques, Op. 34.** Carol Rosenberger (piano). DELOS DEL-15312 \$5.98.

Performance: **Brilliant, brittle**  
Recording: **Dead studio**

It is unfortunate that two of the three major recordings of piano works by Poland's twentieth-century master Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) should overlap: this new release and Martin Jones' recent Argo issue both offer the *Masques* and the Op. 4 Etudes. Meanwhile, the best of Szymanowski's late piano works—most notably the twenty Op. 50 Mazurkas—still await ready availability in this country.

The Op. 33 Etudes, recorded for the first time since the wartime 78-rpm Columbia album by Jakob Gimpel, are most welcome. They are written with extraordinary brilliance for the instrument and contain within their fourteen-minute span an amazing variety of rhythmic, harmonic, and coloristic devices. The whole adds up to a kind of brilliant amalgam of Ravel and Bartók, for Szymanowski at this time had yet to achieve the synthesis of Polish national idiom with the classic mainstream—he was still an amazingly creative and brilliant eclectic. The *Masques*—*Scherazade*, *Tantris the Buffoon*, and *Don Juan's Serenade*—are pungent programmatic pieces in much the same vein as the Op. 33 Etudes, but more extended in scope. The Op. 4 pieces, as noted in my November review of the Argo disc, are fine examples of Szymanowski's youthful post-Romantic manner.

I find Detroit-born Carol Rosenberger's playing brilliant in the extreme, which is fine for the Op. 33 Etudes, but Martin Jones on the Argo disc achieves decidedly more of a

variety of keyboard coloration and tonal richness in the *Masques*. I fear these differences are as much a result of recording as performance, for Jones' piano has a comfortably warm and roomy sound, while Miss Rosenberger's instrument seems to have been recorded in a very tight and dry acoustic ambience, which soaks up the overtones and subharmonics that make for the special kind of coloration so necessary to this music. *D.H.*

**TCHAIKOVSKY: Piano Concerto No. 1, in B-flat Minor, Op. 23** (see RACHMANINOFF)

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**VERDI: I Vespri Siciliani.** Martina Arroyo (soprano), Duchess Elena; Plácido Domingo (tenor), Arrigo; Sherrill Milnes (baritone), Monforte; Ruggero Raimondi (bass), Giovan-



FEODOR CHALIAPIN  
*Vivid individuality and coarse vigor*

ni da Procida; Leo Goeke (tenor), Danieli; Maria Ewing (soprano), Ninetta; James Morris (bass) Roberto; Kenneth Collins (tenor), Tebaldo; Terrance Sharpe (bass), Bethune; Richard Van Allan (bass), Vaudemont. John Alldis Choir; New Philharmonia Orchestra, James Levine cond. RCA ARL 4-0370 four discs \$23.80.

Performance: **Spirited, often very good**  
Recording: **Very good**

As *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* (1855), this opera provided Verdi with a Parisian success between his two Venetian failures, *La Traviata* (1853) and *Simon Boccanegra* (1857), and the lavish budget of the Paris Opéra assured him generous remuneration for his labors, though perhaps, as it turned out, not enough to compensate for his vexations. Grand opera à la Meyerbeer was not really Verdi's *métier*; his practical stage wisdom rebelled against the clumsy five-act format and the obligatory ballet. On top of this, the plot, in which Italians were the villains, offended his patriotism, and the assembly-line libretto of Eugène Scribe displeased him as much as the man himself: Scribe was too rich and successful to be fastidious. After the French commitment ran its course, Verdi himself translated the libretto into Italian.

The odds were thus very much against this opera at the outset, but the Verdi of 1854-1855 was too skilled a composer to have cre-

ated a completely unsuccessful work for the stage. Unquestionably there are some dull patches here and some empty Meyerbeerian gestures. The third-act ballet music is not lacking in quality—it is merely too long. But when *Vespri* is good, it is very, very good, and RCA rates our thanks for putting it on records to coincide with its revival this season at the Metropolitan Opera. This is the opera's first complete recording, aside from a German-language (and quite elusive) item that derives from a wartime broadcast.

As he did in his previous major assignment (Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco*, Angel 3791), James Levine displays not only forceful and vital leadership but also a natural affinity for the spirit of Verdi's music. At its best, his direction is immensely exciting. At its less-than-best (for it is never bad), it has the excesses of youth: loudness and an equation of speed with excitement. The fierce brassiness he often favors tends to coarsen an orchestral sound that is not particularly refined to begin with, and his frequent misjudging of orchestral dynamics sometimes overwhelms the singers and the chorus to the detriment of clarity. (The opening ensemble provides one good example, the opera's troublesome finale another.) His most damaging tempo misjudgment comes in the concluding portion of the very fine Arrigo-Monforte duet of the third act. The singers are driven too hard, and the music loses its impact.

The role of Arrigo makes heavy demands on the tenor. Plácido Domingo handles the high tessitura with some effort, but in a characteristically musical and tonally pleasing fashion, and the ringing quality of his voice has been captured here with more presence than in several previous recordings. The timbre of Ruggero Raimondi's voice is that of a light *basso cantante*, lacking perhaps in the massive weight which would better convey the image of Procida, that formidable zealot. It is remarkable what mellifluous music Verdi placed in the throat of such an objectionable fanatic, and Raimondi delivers all of it with great tonal beauty.

Characters rolling off the Scribe assembly line are bound to be lacking in dimension, and perhaps the least convincing among them is the Sicilian Governor Monforte, who is asked to alternate between tender paternal feelings and brutal tyranny. Dramatically, Sherrill Milnes does all that can be expected of him, and perhaps even a little more. Vocally, there are some rough spots in his singing, but also many impressive moments. The weak link is Martina Arroyo. She probably saved the undertaking from cancellation when she consented to substitute for the indisposed Montserrat Caballé. Unfortunately, however, her voice lacks the agility the part calls for. It is a pity, because Elena, though dramatically as unconvincing as the rest, is given a great deal of beautiful music to sing.

The choral passages are not among the most inspired elements in this opera, nor do they emerge in their best estate here, perhaps because of insufficient rehearsal, or perhaps as a result of Levine's hard-driving conducting. Except for some balancing problems, the technical production is all one could ask for.

*G.J.*

**WAGNER: Piano Music** (see Collections—Bavaria's Courts and Residences)

**WEBER: Der Freischütz** (see Best of the Month, page 77)



COLLECTIONS

**BAVARIA'S COURTS AND RESIDENCES—BAYREUTH.** Wagner: *Grand Sonata in A Major (1831)*; *Fantasia in F-sharp Minor (1831)*; *Sonata in A-flat Major for the Album of Mathilde Wesendonck (1853)*; *Zürcher Vielliebchen-Walzer (1853)*; *Albumblatt in C Major for the Princess Metternich (1861)*; *Albumblatt in E-flat Major for Betty Schott (1875)*. Bülow: *Ballade, Op. 11*. Liszt: *Richard Wagner—Venezia*; *La Lugubre Gondola I*; *Csárdás Macabre*; *Nuages Gris*. Werner Genuit (piano). BASF KBF-21108 two discs \$9.98.

Performance: **Competent**  
Recording: **Good**

The material here is not exactly "overexposed," but it's not much to get excited about, either. The little waltz is pleasant enough, I suppose, and the *Albumblatt* in C Major did provide the tune for Bing Crosby's old sign-off number (*Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day*), but in my opinion Wagner was a surpassingly dull piano composer. If you disagree, you will surely prefer the old Vox set with Martin Galling (SVUX-52022), for it devotes four sides wholly to Wagner, including another sonata (in B-flat) and the *Black Swan Albumblatt* as well as the half-dozen works Werner Genuit plays here.

These late works of Liszt are not recorded too often: the elegy composed on the occasion of Wagner's death is not otherwise available on records in this country now, and both Alfred Brendel and Louis Kentner, in their respective Turnabout collections, play the more interesting second version of *La Lugubre Gondola*. The one super-novelty here is the eleven-minute *Ballade*, which represents the first recording (to my knowledge) of any composition of Hans von Bülow—an undistinguished piece, but clearly superior to any of the Wagner keyboard works.

With a release whose curiosity value is greater than its intrinsic musical worth, one relies on comprehensive documentation to make it worthwhile. Alas, BASF not only persists in translating the series title as "Bavarian's Courts and Residences" (and identifies the Festspielhaus as the "Bayreuth Concert Hall"), but has published annotation (in three languages) which studiously avoids any reference to the music on the discs!

Genuit does a competent job, but he is far from Brendel's level in the Liszt and less persuasive than Galling in the Wagner—which needs every ounce of persuasiveness the pianist saddled with it can muster. His piano is very well recorded, though, and the surfaces, while not as quiet as one might like, are more discreet than most of the BASF pressings that have come my way. But the first of the two discs in my review album is one of the most spectacular examples of warpage I've ever seen—or struggled to play. R.F.

**FEODOR CHALIAPIN:** *Opera Arias and Russian Songs*. **Rachmaninoff:** *Aleko: The moon is high in the sky*. **Rossini:** *The Barber of Seville: La calunnia*. **Gounod:** *Faust: Le veau d'or; Mephistopheles' Serenade*. **Ibert:** *Don Quichotte: Four songs from the film (1934)*. **Mussorgsky:** *Trepak; Song of the Flea*. **Rubinstein:** *Persian Love Song*. **Malashkin:** *O could I in song tell my sorrow*. **Glinka:** *Doubt*. **Gretchaninov:** *Glory to Thee, O Lord*. **Traditional:** *Song of the Volga Boatmen; Down the Petersky*. Feodor Chaliapin (bass):

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orchestras. Lawrence Collingwood, Henri Busser, Jacques Ibert, Eugene Goossens, Albert Coates cond; Ivor Newton (piano, in Glinka); Cedric Sharpe (cello, in Glinka); Choir of the Russian Metropolitan Church, Paris, Nicholas P. Afonsky, dir. SERAPHIM 60218 \$2.98.

Performance: **Exceptional**  
Recording: **Dated but listenable**

This is a bargain-price reissue of Angel COLH 141, long deleted. The recordings cover the period 1926-1933, when Chaliapin was in his middle to late fifties. Veteran collectors will find familiar material here, but others will be in for fascinating discoveries. They may begin with the *Persian Love Song*, in which the artist floats some spectacular *mezza-voce* tones in the high register, and then turn to the tormented, wrenching statement of *Doubt*. All the Russian songs, in fact, are superbly rendered, while the atmospheric if musically not too interesting songs of Ibert testify to Chaliapin's exceptional evocative powers. His Basilio and Mephistopheles were extraordinary stage interpretations, and they are recalled here in all their vivid individuality and coarse vigor. Chaliapin's standards of textual enunciation and vocal refinement were his own. The artistic liberties he allowed himself would not be tolerated today, but he was Chaliapin, a unique phenomenon. He knew it then; we know it now. The reproduction of the different selections varies but always remains listenable. G.J.

**ERZSÉBET HÁZY: Songs from Operettas.** Johann Strauss: *The Gypsy Baron: Gypsy Song; Duet.* Lehár: *The Land of Smiles: Mi's Entrance Song. The Merry Widow: Vilia.* Kálmán: *Czardas Princess: Sylva's Entrance Song; O jag' dem glück nicht nach. Circus Princess: Pour l'amour.* Abraham: *Ball in the Savoy: Toujours l'amour; La bella Tangolita.* Viktoria: *Good Night.* Bernstein: *West Side Story: I Feel Pretty.* Erzsébet Házy (soprano); Tibor Udvardy (tenor); György Melis (baritone); vocal ensemble; various orchestras and conductors (sung in Hungarian). QUALITON LPX 16573 \$5.98.

Performance: **Full of paprika**  
Recording: **Very good**

Erzsébet Házy is a leading soprano of the Hungarian State Opera. She is a very beautiful woman, and, since Qualiton usually (and wisely) uses her as a cover decoration, I look forward to all her record releases. As a singer, though, she is a bit more controversial. Her voice is quite attractive, but she indulges in too much vibrato for my taste. She displays an abundance of temperament and an extremely zesty manner of singing that often leads to careless musicianship. Still, she is thoroughly at home in this music, and she knows how to put it over in the proper style.

It should be remembered that *The Gypsy Baron* and *Czardas Princess* are operettas with Hungarian subjects. The others, too, sound quite idiomatic in that language, since Lehár, Kálmán, and Abraham were all Hungarians and their operettas enjoy frequent revivals there. Leonard Bernstein is, of course, another (West Side) story.

This is not a record for a broad audience, but operetta fanciers are likely to find it entertaining. *I Feel Pretty* in Hungarian will no doubt produce a pleasant jolt, but Paul Abraham's jazz-influenced scores sound more dated now than do the earlier "classics." G.J.

**MUSIC FROM FRENCH OPERA.** Meyerbeer: *Le Prophète: Coronation March.* Massenet: *La Navarraise: Nocturne. Cherubin: Entr'acte to Act 3. Don César de Bazan: Sévillana. Le Roi de Lahore: Prelude to Act Five and Valse. Les Érinnyes: Invocation.* Gounod: *La Reine de Saba: Grande Valse. Le Tribut de Zamora: Danse Grècque. Boieldieu: La Dame Blanche: Overture.* Bizet: *Don Procopio: Entr'acte to Act 2. Saint-Saëns: Henry VIII: Danse de la Gypsy. Delibes: Le Roi l'a Dit: Entr'acte to Act 3.* Auber: *La Neige: Overture.* London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyng cond. LONDON CS 6744 \$5.98.

Performance: **Sugar and spice**  
Recording: **Sweet and savory**

Dipping into the deep storage bins of French operatic music, Richard Bonyng has come up with a tempting candy box of tuneful passages by composers whose sometimes perishable but always entertaining scores kept Paris opera audiences diverted throughout the nineteenth century. A wily and unpredictable program-maker, the resourceful Mr. Bonyng presents not only such familiar *marrons* as the Invocation from *Les Érinnyes* (familiar to most of us as Massenet's *Elegie*) but has decorated his package artfully with such prettily wrapped surprise nougats—potential hits rescued from forgotten flops—as the two nocturnes from Massenet's *La Navarraise*, the *Danse Grècque* from Gounod's obscure *Le Tribut de Zamora*, and the Prelude and Entr'acte to Act 2 of Bizet's early opera *Don Procopio*, which contains thematic seeds of melodies later incorporated into *Carmen*.

In addition to this ravishing display of melodies, the conductor has sprinkled his liberal liner notes with special information he seems to have squirreled away for years in anticipation of just such an opportunity—to tell us, for example, that although Auber was accused of imitating Rossini when he took over the composition of *La Neige* from Boieldieu, he wrote a tune for it that was to be played on every barrel organ in Europe; that Massenet's favorite instrument was the saxophone; that the composer of *Scènes Pittoresques* could write brutal music as well as the pretty stuff that made him popular. The conducting is a bit bland, but the playing makes up in sumptuousness for what it may lack in spine. P.K.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**TIBETAN BUDDHISM: Tantras of Gyütö: Mahakala.** Lamas and Monks of Gyütö Tantric College, Dalhousie, Himachal Pradesh, India. NONESUCH EXPLORER H-72055 \$2.98.

Performance: **Astounding**  
Recording: **Excellent**

In 1959, one hundred or so members of the sacred College of Gyütö escaped from the Chinese invasion of Tibet and re-established their ancient monastery in India, thus preserving a remarkable tradition of chant.

The cover of this extraordinary recording shows a reproduction of an eighteenth-century Tibetan illustration of the Great Black Lord of Transcending Awareness. This charming fellow has six hands that clutch at a flaming dagger, a skull containing blood and brains, a rosary of skulls and other delightful paraphernalia—yet he comes to bring peace. The combination of the terrifying and the serene is exactly characteristic of the Gyütö



chanting. This technique of meditative chanting goes back at least to the fifteenth century. Each individual singer produces a sound that can only be described as a chord: an extraordinarily low shifting fundamental, generally between B and C two octaves below middle C, with clearly audible overtones (mostly major thirds and fifths) that appear in the octave above middle C faintly but quite palpably. This technique is taught in regular classes and takes at least three years to learn. The version here is enlivened by the presence of instruments: cymbals, drums, and, every once in a while, the bellow of the Tibetan six-foot horns.

Obviously this is an experience intended to be learned and absorbed by participation and not vicariously, and even the nearly forty minutes of this disc is a great deal of apparently very little. Nevertheless, the recent development of certain kinds of minimal experience in recent Western music and the tremendous interest in meditation and Eastern religious thought have refocused our mental set, our attitudes and hearing habits; it is possible to glimpse a universe in the shifting overtones of these powerful, disturbing-yet-serene sounds. The David Lewiston recordings and annotations are excellent. *E.S.*

**THE VIOLINS OF VERSAILLES:** *Beautiful Music to Love* By. Andre Durand cond. *Pastures Green/Pavements Gray* (McKuen); *Venus: The Bringer of Peace*, from *The Planets* (Holst); *The Gentle Folk* (McKuen); *Gymnopedies* (sic) #1 (Satie); *Gymnopedies* (sic) #3 (Satie); *Variations on Aranjuez*, from *Concierto de Aranjuez* (Rodrigo); *And to Each Season* (McKuen); "Elvira Madigan," *Andante from Concerto No. 21* (Mozart); *Fantasia on "Greensleeves"* (Vaughan Williams). STANYAN RECORDS □ SRQ 4000 \$5.98 (also available from Stanyan Record Co., P.O. Box 2782SR, Los Angeles, Cal. 90028).

Performance: **T. L. C.**  
Recording: **Just fine**

The High Aesthetic Attitude, I find, is a hard pose to hold indefinitely: accelerating cramps in the overworked sensibility begin to make one long, at least temporarily, for a more relaxed, even indolent posture. Just as, after feasting too long on *pâté de foie*, the appetite begins to yearn for a bowl of *pasta e fagiolo*, as the mind sated with the great Russian novelists craves a little Mickey Spillane, so, from time to time, the ear welcomes a half-hour or so with music that makes no demands whatsoever—it need only be there, not too loud, no vulgar attention-grabbing, the musical equivalent of junk food. "Beautiful Music to Love By," I should think, is about what the doctor ordered, one of the most impressive examples of canny commercialism (just look at those titles!) I have heard in some time. From start to finish, from the vagrant piano arpeggios of *Pastures Green* to the last pizzicato chord of *Greensleeves*, it is the purest aural popcorn, non-nutritious, fattening, and irresistible.

I shouldn't be doing this, I know, but you just can't keep that old High Aesthetic Attitude down for long: *Gymnopédie #1* is transposed up a full tone for some reason, and sounds just a little odd in that key; *Gymnopédie #3* is played, but it is #2 that is listed on the album jacket. Also, contrary to the jacket credits, it is *Joaquín*, not *Juan*, Rodrigo. The "Elvira Madigan" concerto (unidentified pianist) is a little draggy and metronomic,

which Mozart andantes should never be. And there is much more to the "Violins of Versailles" than the stringy pseudonym suggests—horns, woodwinds, harp, guitar, and piano all materialize when needed. No matter. Try it anyway; you'll likely listen to the whole thing.

Sound in mono is slightly pinched and boringly centered. The spread in stereo is more luxurious, but four-channel (SQ) playback is a proper sonic wallow. Back to Bach.

*William Anderson*

**THE YELLOW RIVER CONCERTO.** Central Philharmonic Society of the People's Republic of China: *The Yellow River Concerto*. Chinese Folk Song (arr. William Smith and Jesse Taynton): *San Pei March*. Sousa: *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. Respighi: *The Pines of Rome*. Daniel Epstein (piano, in Concerto); Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA ARL1-0415 \$5.98, Ⓟ ARS1-0415 \$6.98, Ⓒ ARK1-0415 \$6.98.

Performance: **Glittering**  
Recording: **Good**

At Saratoga last summer, shortly before Ormandy's Philadelphians became the first American orchestra to perform in China, they gave the U.S. premiere of *The Yellow River*, with Epstein as soloist; subsequently, at the request of their Chinese hosts, they played the work in Shanghai and Peking with a native pianist. The recording was inevitable, and discloses a work by no means as startling as one might have expected. The concerto was assembled about ten years ago from materials in a cantata composed some twenty years earlier by a single musician, Hsien Hsing-hai, and its four movements reflect the patriotic burden of the cantata: the awakening of the idealistic Chinese to throw off the invader's yoke. This is a "heroic-romantic" work in the shining tradition of the film music of the Forties; anyone who remembers Max Steiner's *Symphonic Moderne* (also for piano and orchestra) with fondness may find a place in his heart for it.

From the sound of the cello tune in the second movement, the river here depicted must be a *Deep* one, and portions of the third and fourth movements suggest it is also an *Ol' Man*. As in the similarly created (*i.e.*, by committee) *Youth* Concerto on Everest SDBR 3212, reminiscences of Gershwin, Glière, Liszt, Grieg, Delius, Ketelby, Stephen Foster, and Rachmaninoff come and go, along with echoes of Steiner and Miklós Rózsa. The Philadelphia's first flute, Murray Panitz, plays a bamboo flute affectingly, and the *pipa*, a Chinese lute, is played with gusto by Hauman Lee; Epstein sounds like a more than capable pianist. *The Yellow River* is half again as long as the *Youth* Concerto, more polished, better organized, far less campy—and much less fun. Curiously, the little march *San Pei* turns out to be the first of the themes heard in *Youth*, and it is most ingratiating in the "straight" Western arrangement offered here.

This is the third *Pines of Rome* recorded by this conductor and orchestra, and at least their fourth version of *The Stars and Stripes Forever*; both are, as before, very handsomely accomplished, marred only by a pre-echo at the beginning of the Respighi side. The documentation includes not a word on either of these familiar items, but there is a pleasantly chatty report by Louis Hood on the Philadelphians' visit to China. *R.F.*



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# TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



## MORE ABOUT MIXERS

LAST month I discussed some of the things to consider when you are thinking about buying a mixer. Since you'll most probably be using your mixer to combine the signals of two or more microphones into a single channel, I recommended that you be sure to get an "active" type—one with mike preamplifier circuits built in. And I also suggested that you'll want one whose output is high enough (about one volt) to be plugged into the high-level rather than the microphone jacks of your recorder.

In deciding between various models, however, there are a number of other features to take into account. For example, many stereo mixers automatically route mikes 1 and 2 into channel A (left), and mikes 3 and 4 into channel B (right). In effect, you have two separate mono mixers in the same box. But suppose you're recording a small group with soprano vocalist. How do you put her in the center? If you use only one mike for the singer, she'll be completely on one side or the other. You could give her both mikes 2 and 3, but that would leave you with only two remaining pickups to cover all the accompanying instruments. Moreover, if she's a pop singer, she's probably accustomed to a hand-held mike, and will just not be able to juggle two successfully. This points up the importance of a feature not found on all mixers: the ability to feed a single input source into both left and right channels together to obtain a center sound image.

Here's another consideration. In applications where you'll want to use a mixer you're likely to be using microphone cables long enough (over 15 feet) to require "low-impedance, balanced-line" operation. Otherwise you'll lose high-frequency response and risk hum pickup. Without getting into technical details, what it means in practice is that your mikes must terminate in three-conductor "Cannon-type" plugs (instead of the more usual phone plugs), and they will require impedance-matching transformers at the mixer end.

Most top-quality mixers come equipped with Cannon-type receptacles. More important, however, they should incorporate the requisite microphone input transformers, for if you have to buy them as outboard accessories they'll cost about \$12 to \$15 each. That can turn an "economy" six-input mixer into a rather expensive "bargain." (Incidentally, should you have to convert two-conductor phone-plug inputs to balanced, three-conductor Cannon types, both Electro-Voice and Shure make a variety of plug-in adapters in various impedances.)

Almost all mixers permit you to switch their inputs from microphones to "line-level" sources, so you can, for example, mix several tape-recorder tracks together. But today's trend toward close mike placement and hard-rock music make a subtler feature desirable: a switch that can cut down a given mike's signal before it is amplified and gets to the volume control. This "padding" of a microphone runs counter to the normal proper procedure of immediately boosting mike signals, but with today's sound levels it is occasionally required to prevent overloading the mixer's input stages. Electro-Voice and Shure also offer attenuators in plug-in form.

Another valuable feature that goes against normal hi-fi practice is a switchable low-frequency cut-off filter. Very often in recording you don't want flat response down to 20 Hz, for, ignoring the lowest notes of the pipe organ, about all you'll pick up in the extreme bass area is the air-conditioning system and hum from the power lines.

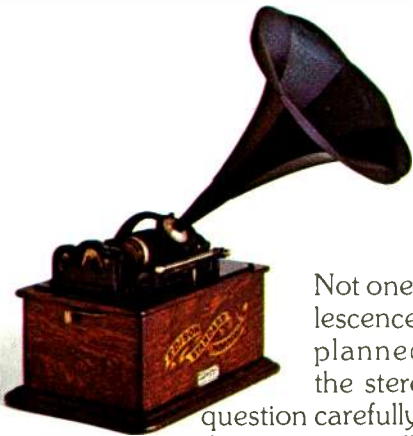
My advice is to pick a mixer with at least two more inputs than you expect to use at present. Otherwise, you run the risk that your increasing demands will make it obsolete. Quality costs money, but a cheap, scratchy input-level control can cost you a recording, and a unit that has a high noise level will ruin everything you process through it. Therefore, pay attention to the essentials that will make your investment worthwhile.

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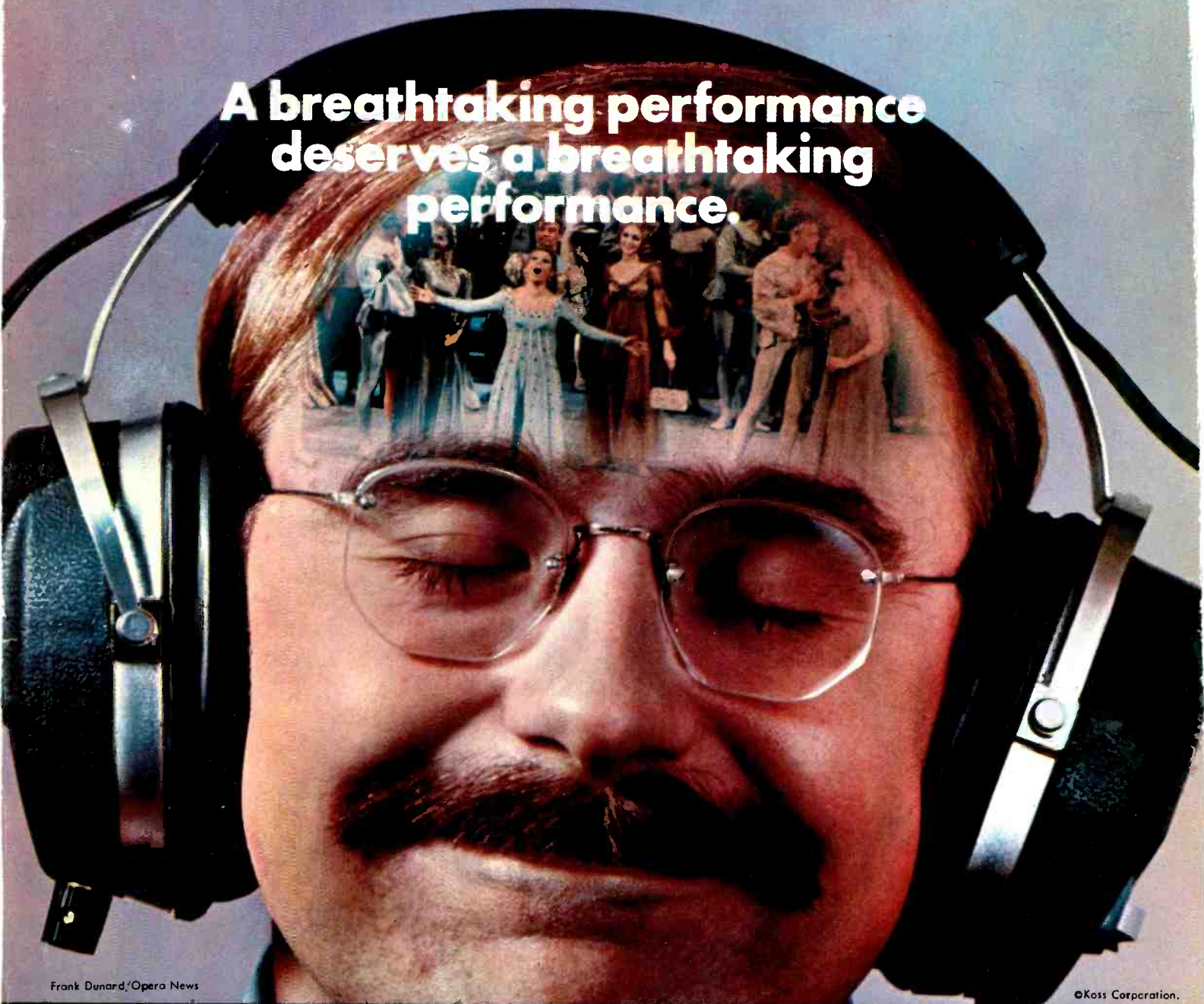


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Slip on a pair of Koss K2+2 Quadrafones® and slip into the closest thing to a live performance you'll ever hear. Because unlike speakers, the Koss K2+2 mixes all four channels in your head instead of on the walls of your living room. So what you'll hear is a 4-channel sound so breathtaking, you'll feel the deepest bass all the way down to your toes and the highest highs running up and down your spine.

And because all Koss

Quadrafones feature volume-balance controls on each ear cup, you'll have any seat at the opera at your fingertips. A twist of your fingers will put you front row center one minute and in the middle of the opera house the next. And all without moving from the comfort of your easy chair.

But even more importantly, Koss has added a 2-channel to 4-channel selector switch on the

4 CHAN 2 CHAN



left ear cup. In the 4-channel position, two 1½-inch dynamic driver elements in each ear cup deliver breathtaking quadrasonic sound from either matrix or discrete systems. In the 2-channel position, both drivers in each ear cup are connected in parallel for an unparalleled sound of 2-channel stereo. Either way, the switch to Koss Quadrafones is worth it.

Ask your Audio

Specialist for a live demonstration. Or write for our free full-color catalog, c/o Virginia Iamm. The Sound of Koss Quadrafones will take your breath away, but the price won't... from \$45 to \$85.

Koss K2+2 Quadrafones



**KOSS QUADRAFONES®**  
from the people who invented Stereophones.

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