

ICD

FEBRUARY 1974

HIGH FIDELITY®

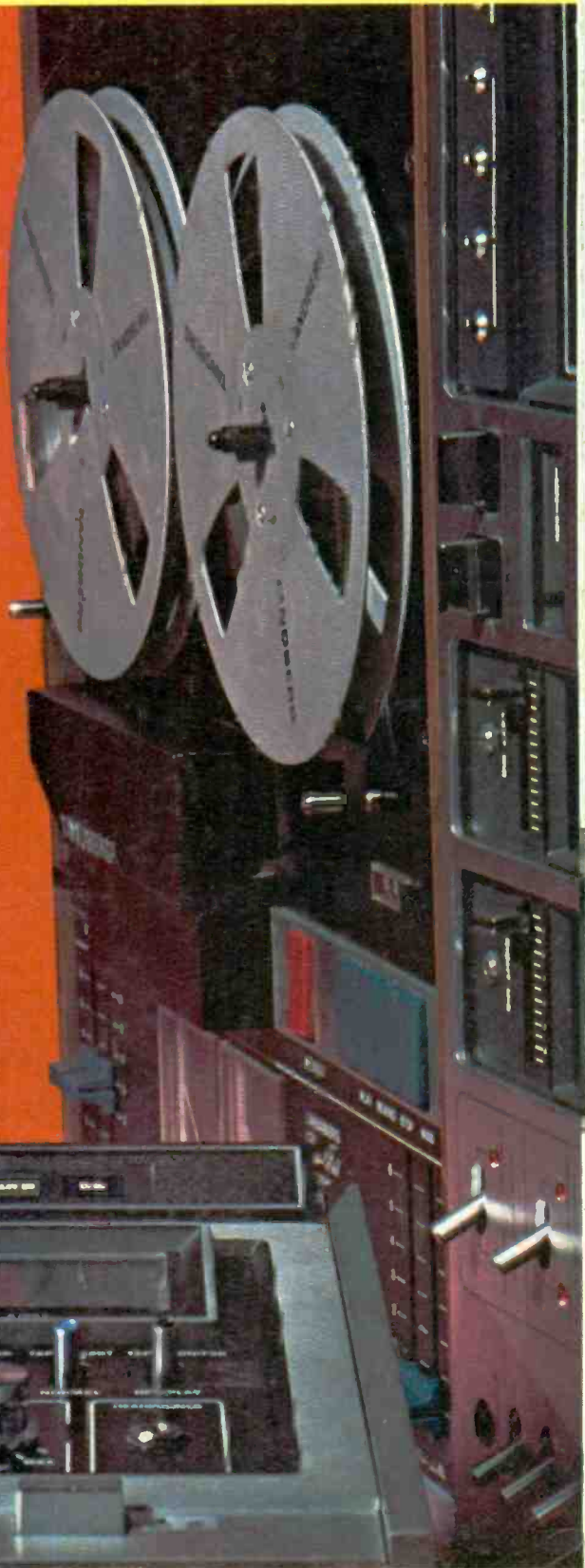
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Obsolete? Glenn
Gould Interviews
Glenn Gould**

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- Premium Dioxide Tapes Too Abrasive?**
- Why Always Help?**
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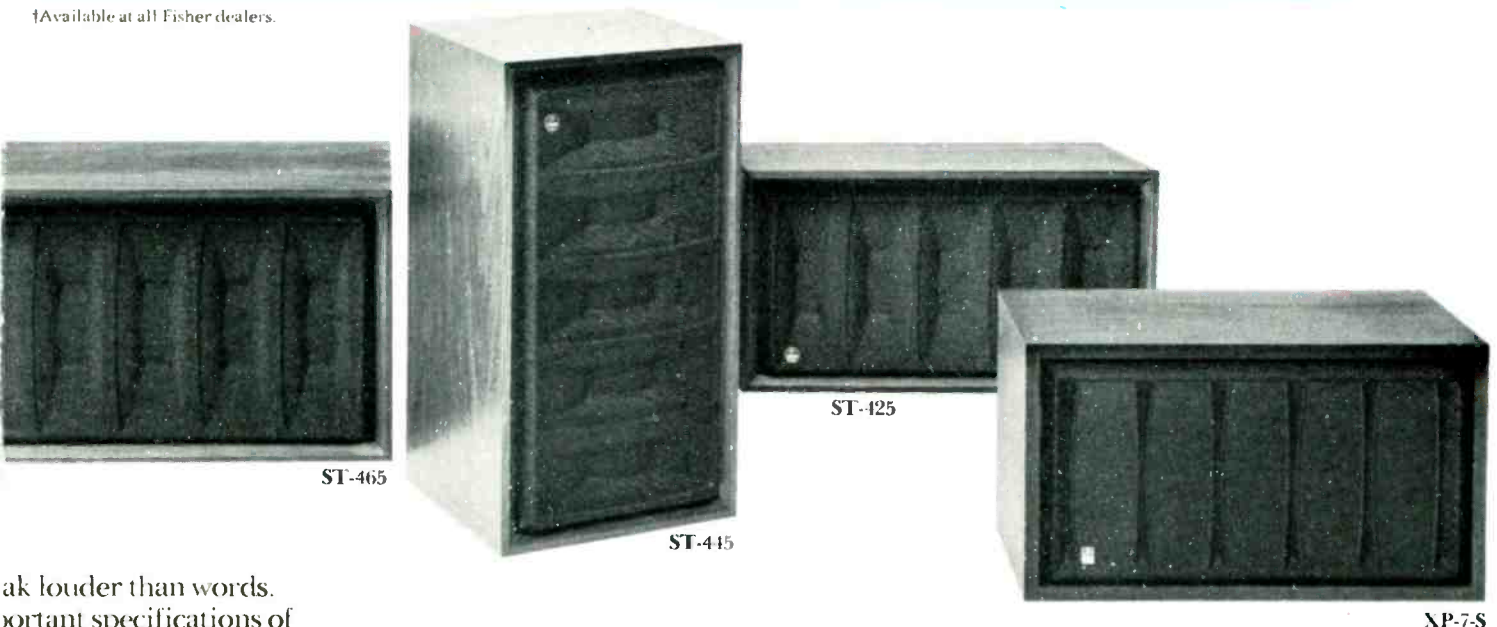


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Price:	\$169.95	\$109.95	\$89.95	\$59.95	\$49.95	\$138.00
Frequency response:	33-20,000 Hz	33-20,000 Hz	35-20,000 Hz	37-20,000 Hz	39-19,000 Hz	40-18,000 Hz
Maximum music power:	45 Watts	30 Watts	30 Watts	30 Watts	20 Watts	50 Watts
Bass speaker diameter:	12 inches	10 inches	8 inches	8 inches	6 inches	—
Voice coil diameter:	1½ inches	1 inch	1 inch	1 inch	1 inch	1 inch
Free air resonance:	20 Hz	25 Hz	38 Hz	38 Hz	38 Hz	—
Magnet structure:	3 pounds	2 pounds	2 pounds	2 pounds	2 pounds	2.64 pounds
Mid-range:	5 inches	5 inches	—	—	—	—
Voice coil diameter:	¾ inch	¾ inch	—	—	—	—
Magnet structure:	½ pound	½ pound	—	—	—	—
Treble speaker diameter:	3 inches	3 inches	3 inches	3 inches	3 inches	—
Voice coil diameter:	⅞ inch	⅞ inch	⅞ inch	⅞ inch	⅞ inch	1 inch
Sound dispersion:	90 degrees	90 degrees	90 degrees	90 degrees	90 degrees	360 degrees
Crossover frequencies:	800, 4,000 Hz	600, 3,000 Hz	1,500 Hz	1,500 Hz	1,500 Hz	—
Impedance:	8 ohms	8 ohms	8 ohms	8 ohms	8 ohms	8 ohms
Dimensions:	24½" x 13⅝" x 12" deep	23" x 13" x 10" deep	21" x 11½" x 9" deep	20" x 10" x 7½" deep	15½" x 8½" x 6¼" deep	23¾" x 29¾" x 27" deep
Weight:	32 pounds	27 pounds	20 pounds	18 pounds	16 pounds	21 pounds
Cabinet:	Walnut Vinyl	Walnut Vinyl	Walnut Vinyl	Walnut Vinyl	Walnut Vinyl	Walnut or White

¹Available at all Fisher dealers.



ST-465

ST-425

ST-445

XP-7-S

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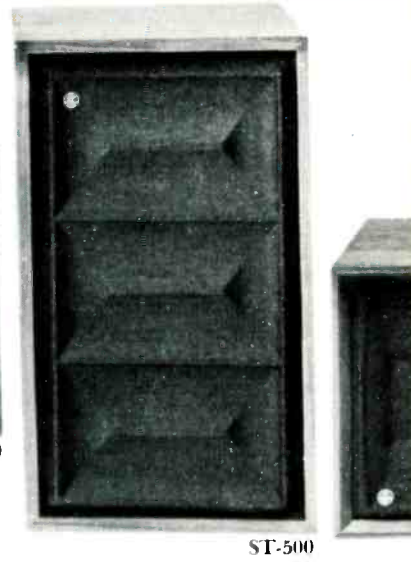
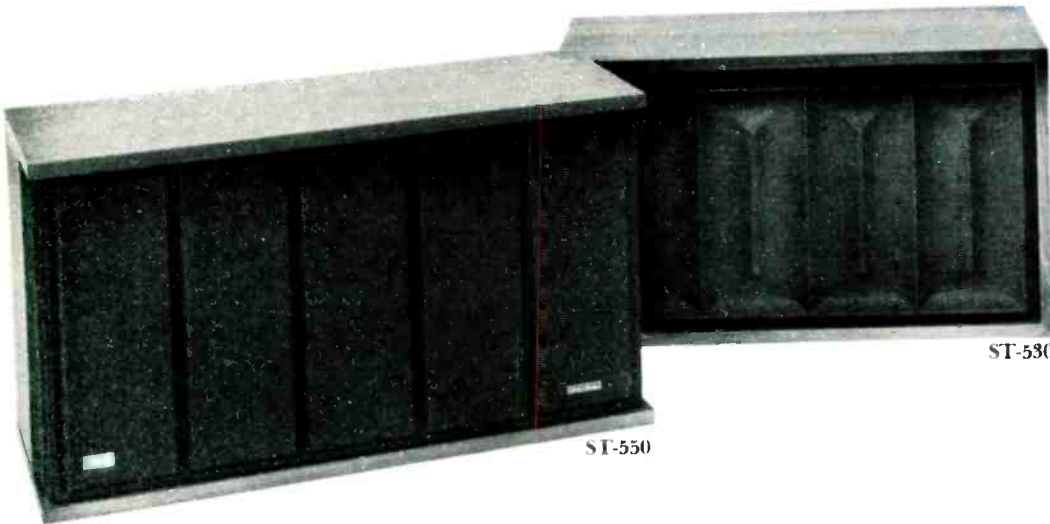
The Fisher

Numbers speak louder than words.

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Effective frequency response, on axis. (Pink-noise source, 1/3 octave bands.):	35-20,000 Hz	38-20,000 Hz	40-20,000 Hz	40-20,000 Hz	50-20,000 Hz	55-20,000 Hz
Impedance, nominal:	8 ohms	8 ohms	8 ohms	6-8 ohms	6-8 ohms	6-8 ohms
Continuous power-handling capacity:						
2-second duration:	300 Watts	200 Watts	100 Watts	100 Watts	90 Watts	80 Watts
60-second duration:	100 Watts	100 Watts	50 Watts	50 Watts	45 Watts	40 Watts
Long-term duration:	50 Watts	50 Watts	25 Watts	25 Watts	22 Watts	20 Watts
Minimum continuous power requirement:						
at 8 ohms	25 Watts	25 Watts	25 Watts	25 Watts	15-20 Watts	15-20 Watts
Total number of drivers:	7	6	4	3	3	2
Woofer cone diameter:	15"	15"	12"	12"	10"	10"
Voice-coil diameter:	2"	2"	2"	2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"
Magnet structure:	13 lbs.	13 lbs.	6 lbs.	5 lbs.	4 lbs.	2 3/4 lbs.
Midrange speaker type:	soft dome	soft dome	soft dome	flare dome	cone	—
Diameter:	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	3 1/2"	4 1/2"	—
Voice-coil diameter:	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	3/4"	—
Magnet structure:	6 lbs.	6 lbs.	6 lbs.	2 1/2 lbs.	1 1/2 lbs.	—
Tweeter type:	2 cones	4 cones	2 cones	dome	dome	dome
Dome or cone diameter:	2"	2"	2"	1"	1"	1"
Voice-coil diameter:	9/16"	9/16"	9/16"	1"	1"	1"
Side dispersion speakers:	2 soft domes	—	—	—	—	—
Voice-coil diameter:	1 1/2"	—	—	—	—	—
Crossover frequencies:	600, 6,000, 1,000 Hz	600, 6,000 Hz	600, 6,000 Hz	450, 5,000 Hz	650, 5,500 Hz	2,500 Hz
Controls:	3	2	2	2	1	1
Midrange:	3 pos.	3 pos.	3 pos.	3 pos.	—	—
Treble:	3 pos.	3 pos.	3 pos.	3 pos.	3 pos.	3 pos.
Side-dispersion:	3 pos.	—	—	—	—	—
Weight:	75 lbs.	56 lbs.	45 lbs.	39 lbs.	30 lbs.	25 lbs.
Dimensions:	30" x 17" x 12 3/4" deep	27" x 16 1/4" x 13" deep	26" x 15" x 12" deep	24 1/2" x 14 1/4" x 11 1/16" deep	23 1/2" x 13" x 11" deep	22 1/2" x 12 1/4" x 10" deep
Cabinet finish:	Walnut	Walnut	Walnut	Walnut	Walnut Vinyl	Walnut Vinyl

*Studio-Standard speakers are available only at Fisher Studio-Standard dealers.
 Fair trade prices where applicable.
 Prices slightly higher in the Far West and Southwest.



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ST-465



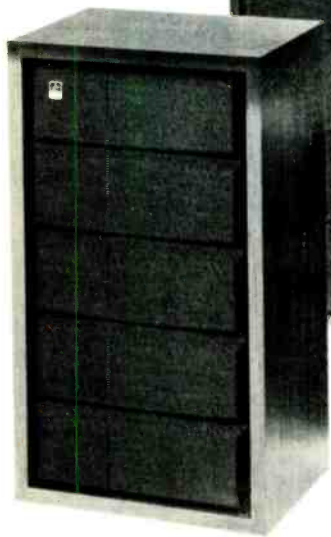
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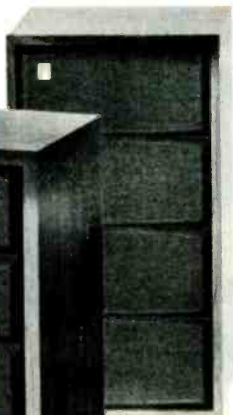
ST-425



XP-7-S



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PL-E Sound Panel

Here's a
Review that tells
it like it is...



**"PICKERING
XV15/1200E:
LE SENS
DE LA MESURE"***

*Translation: The cartridge
against which all others must
be measured.

Marcel Marnat writes:

"When subjected to 'Difficult' recordings, the Pickering cartridge is the one that gives the most correct reproduction, perhaps even the most supple. Having good bass, and avoided a too strong medium-low field. It is never wooly and gives no 'steam roller' overtones."

This absence of stickiness, even in the "forte" assures a very natural sound which is still giving the airiness to the very fine highs, helping to refine the timbres.

Alain Gerber writes:

"I very much appreciated that the cartridge reveals more of its qualities the more one listens to it. As you get used to it, you soon realize that you are in the presence of a remarkably well balanced device. In brief, one is enjoying a particularly civilized cartridge which will satisfy all the exacting requirements of those for whom the music is not good without a certain sense of measure."

Technical Characteristics: Its first quality is the exceptional linearity of its frequency response curve, obtained by the maximum compatibility of its moving parts. Like all cartridges in its class, it has a very high compliance, which gives a very high tracking ability and low distortion.



*Translated from the original, SON Magazine, May 1973 issue.

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The [prod.]

What do comics Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks, rock star Frank Zappa, bass player Andy Kulberg, the late film composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold's son George, and guitarist Rick Derringer have in common with Columbia Records' Masterworks Directors Tom Frost and Tom Shepard, Angel's Svi Raj Grubb and Christopher Bishop, and London's Ray Minshull and David Harvey? They are all record producers whose productions are reviewed in this issue. Last August we began to identify the producer, when we knew who he was, in our listings of recordings up for review. You will find his identity just before the record company's, e.g.,

... Georg Solti, cond. [David Harvey, prod.] LONDON. . .

Ever since we began the practice we have noted two results: More record companies have begun to identify more of their producers on the album jackets; and our readers have begun to send their comments about recordings to the albums' specific producers, according to Columbia Records exec Pierre Bourdain, who adds that it's "a good development." It was Bourdain, incidentally, who first stimulated our new policy by confronting me with a comment by one of our critics who complimented the "engineers" of one recording for its particularly good sound. "Why the engineers?" Bourdain wondered. "It's the producer who's in charge. He's responsible for what comes out on the record. Why don't you identify *him* so that he can get the credit or blame?"

Which brings up the question of how important the record producer really is to a recording. On a pop record, he is often more important than the performers. (To be sure, as in the case of some of the producers cited above, he may even be one of the performers.) The sounds produced by rock musicians may simply be the raw material for the producer to work with; artificial sounds, overlays of sound upon sound, electronically introduced reverberation, multichannel effects such as directional interplay and moving instruments, all may serve as ingredients in turning the musk of the music into the perfume of the performance (and—to continue this smelly if alliterative metaphor—even diluted into the cologne of the concert, for paradoxically, as technological advancement has brought recordings beyond the limits of simply imitating live performances faithfully, popular musicians have long since begun to bring complex electronic equipment into the concert halls in attempts, generally feeble if noisy, to imitate the sounds of their recordings).

In productions of classical music the producer's role is generally more subtle. But the clarity of an orchestra, its dynamics, its balance, and the degree of channel separation are generally as much the result of the producer's decisions as the conductor's. It is not all that extraordinary for him even to catch bloopers that the famous conductor didn't hear. ("May we have that again, Maestro? One of our channels wasn't working right.") Phrasing and tempos may sometimes be all that a conductor retains under his control. And in an opera the producer may function as stage director as well, guiding his performers around the aural stage, presumably after consultation with the conductor. Even in solo recitals the record producer has a say in determining the sonics as well as which "take" to take, although I must say I found it a bit tasteless when one producer referred to "my" *Hammerklavier* Sonata.

Next month we will present **10 TEST REPORTS** and two discographies, a complete one (including "private" recordings) of an artist whose long-awaited return to the stage has finally been made, and a selective one of an artist who will unfortunately never again make an appearance. We have tentatively titled these articles **THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS OF MARIA CALLAS** and **FACE YONKERS, DRUMMERS! GENE KRUPA LIVED THERE.**

Leonard Marcus

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They're all mixed together. This is the kind of sound an ordinary radio gives you.

Now cup both your hands behind your ears, palms facing forward.

You're listening to stereo.

You are able to distinguish the direction of any individual sound source in front of you.

This is the way you listen to your stereo system.

Like a spectator at a concert.

Now take your hands away from your ears.

Sounds are coming at you from all around you. You are able to distinguish the direction of any individual sound source.

You're listening to the equivalent of quadriphonic sound.

This is the way you hear in real life. Quadriphonic is natural sound.

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letters

Newman Done In?

That Royal S. Brown should dislike the RCA and Angel albums devoted to Alfred Newman [November 1973] is not surprising: that he should call Newman "a pop composer trying unsuccessfully to expand musical ideas in symphonic directions. . . ." is an appalling misnomer based on these recordings. The Newman scores heard on film and on original-soundtrack recordings (*The Robe*, *The Egyptian*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*) reveal a composer as far removed from the pop syndrome as, say, Arnold Schoenberg (with whom Newman studied).

If anyone is to blame for the RCA album's failure, it is conductor Charles Gerhardt for his cold—even contemptuous—readings. The wretched, sloppy playing of the Band of the Grenadier Guards and the distant, diffuse sound do not help either. To make matters worse, Gerhardt alters, transposes, excises, and/or rearranges the best material. These orchestrations, far less "straight" than Brown indicates, recall Newman's remark to me concerning his monumental, badly butchered (by producer George Stevens) score for *The Greatest Story Ever Told*: "It's my name, but not my music."

To add chimes (in *Anastasia*) where there are none, to alter tempo so that it becomes a lumbering dirge, to eliminate the thrilling percussive effects, practically a Newman copy-right, is tantamount to professional sacrilege. Newman's own recording of *The Robe* on Decca is a milestone in film music, but rendered by Gerhardt it becomes a patchwork quilt left to rot in the desert. If Newman is the best of the film composers, only those who watch late-night television will know.

Baxter Moss
Chicago, Ill.

That's what makes horse races. Mr. Brown's negative judgment of Alfred Newman might be "an appalling misnomer" if it were based solely on these two discs; but, as the review made clear, it isn't. Apparently it is possible to study with Schoenberg and still write the scores for The Robe and Airport. The description of the RCA arrangements as "more or less 'straight'" was in contrast to the "non-Newman, son-of-Muzak" arrangements on the Angel disc—conducted by the composer!

Angel, EMI, and Melodiya

In recent years the American collector has, in my opinion, been shortchanged by Angel Records' policy of omitting filler works from EMI and especially Melodiya discs as issued in Europe. For example, all of Svetlanov's Tchaikovsky symphonies, his Rachmaninoff Third, Shostakovich Seventh, Kalinnikov Second, and *Scheherazade*; Rozhdestvensky's Prokofiev Third and Sixth Symphonies and Scriabin First—the English editions of all these and many others have fillers not included in the Melodiya/Angel versions. Then there is Rachmaninoff's *Covetous Knight*, released in England on a single disc, but spread over three sides here and coupled with the Svetlanov *Isle*



Alfred Newman—
was that really his music?

of the Dead previously issued with the Scriabin Fourth Symphony.

There is an equally long list of EMI recordings that have not been released here at all—for example, Barbirolli's Sibelius Third through Seventh Symphonies, the Klemperer *Marriage of Figaro* and *Così fan tutte*, and the numerous Viennese operetta recordings with Nicolai Gedda.

I'm aware that recording in Europe is cheaper than it is here. But it *does* cost money, and any record that has any small claim to merit is going to sell a few copies here: so why not release it and give it and the record buyer a chance? Why should the buyer have to seek out an import shop and pay higher prices for a record or set that will generally have notes and/or librettos in a language other than English? When I was in the retail record business some years ago, I had the distinct impression that a great many people in the Capitol Tower thought that Capitol owned EMI. It's the other way around: you're distributors, fellows, that's all.

Wilfred J. Healey
Los Angeles, Calif.

Robert E. Myers, general manager of the Angel Records division of Capitol Records, replies: *Mr. Healey seemingly has been misinformed about the nature of the relationship between EMI, Capitol Records, and Melodiya.*

EMI Records of England and Capitol Records issue recordings from Melodiya under entirely separate contracts. It must be noted that the Capitol contract requires the issuance of many more records than the English contract does. As a matter of fact the Melodiya/Angel releases of Russian origin correspond much more closely to the way the recordings are issued in the Soviet Union than do the English releases. Since the Capitol contract has been in existence several years longer than the English contract and our obligations are greater, we frankly do not have the latitude of using up so many fillers and different couplings that our English colleagues do.

As I understand Mr. Healey's other complaints, he feels that Angel Records should press in this country every record that other EMI companies do. The simplest way to reply is to note that we are not expected to do so.

There are many fine recordings available to us that are not released simply because in our judgment, based upon past history, their release would be a source of financial loss to Capitol. I would remark that the EMI management takes a very dim view of any of its subsidiaries losing money and that no two EMI companies ever follow the same release pattern, because of the different musical tastes existing in the various markets.

It would require a book to explain all the variances between English and American policy, and I must decline to do so simply because in many cases it would be necessary to reveal facts or confidences that need not be known.

The Potential of FM

Your November article "Who's Monkeying with Your FM Signal?" made me especially appreciate the "Adventures in Sound" series on WGBH-FM in Boston. These programs, produced and hosted by Victor Campos of K.L.H., present some of the finest commercial recordings (such as the Bernstein *Carmen* on Deutsche Grammophon) in the form of 15-ips Dolby-A tapes dubbed directly from the original master tapes.

What is perhaps unique is that all attempts are made to preserve the quality of the sound broadcast. All compressors and limiters (and even the control board) are removed from the broadcast chain, and the remaining equipment is adjusted for top performance. The result is the best sound I have ever heard emerge from my system—in a word, magnificent. It is no doubt very expensive, however, and commercial considerations will prevent similar programs from appearing around the country. Nevertheless, I have found that once one has become accustomed to FM broadcasting at its finest, anything less seems almost criminal.

Jack H. Stevens
Somerville, Mass.

Do-It-Yourself Electronic Music

Many thanks for your report on our electronic-music exhibit ["Pushbutton Music for the Public," November 1973]. We're very happy with the enthusiastic response the public has accorded this exhibit (made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Pew Memorial Trust, and the Franklin Foundation) and hope your article will encourage more to come and experience it.

One correction: All the equipment was not donated by Arp Instruments, as stated in a caption; we also had equipment contributed by Tascam Corp., Dynaco, Aria Corp. (U.S. distributors for Braun), and Sound and Music Ltd.

James P. Harrington
Director of Exhibits
Franklin Institute
Philadelphia, Pa.

Rochberg's Musical Synthesis

I am writing to commend Robert P. Morgan's remarkable elucidation of Rochberg's Third String Quartet in his review of the Nonesuch recording [November 1973] and to disagree with his conclusion about the failure of the piece.

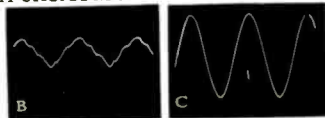
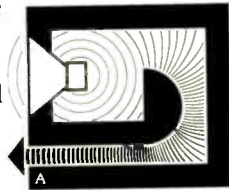
Rochberg's own reference to the phenomenon of a collective musical past is the clue to appre-

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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CIRCLE 8 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

ciating the work as a whole. If he follows "pulsive pan-tonality" with Beethoven-like and Mahler-like tonality, how much musical history has been coured? Actually not much. A Martian would likely find the first and third movements only slightly different.

It is our awareness of pastness that creates the tension between stylistically contrasting parts of the Rochberg quartet. But the tension need not blow the whole to pieces, as it does for Morgan. The pressure of our need to locate the sound of the Beethovenesque third movement in the past is resisted by our knowledge that a contemporary wrote it, the same man who wrote the first movement. We are challenged as listeners to create a synthesis that includes all these sounds. Such a synthesis enables disparate parts to maintain their integrity while forging them into a whole.

Morgan appropriately heard the movements as centuries apart. The next step would seem to be to hear them in the context of history, which makes adjacent centuries close and integrated neighbors.

Robert Chianese
Northside, Calif.

Horenstein Footnotes

It appears that Jascha Horenstein's first Mahler recording, the *Kindertotenlieder* with baritone Heinrich Rehkemper made in the late 1920s for Polydor, was accompanied by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra, not the Berlin Philharmonic as identified on the Parnassus LP and in the discography accompanying my article on Horenstein [October 1973].

I would like to thank Leslie Klein of Cam-

bridge, Massachusetts, for bringing this to my attention. John C. Goldsmith of Unicorn Records confirms that he "had occasion to speak with Mr. Horenstein on the telephone [about the Austrian Preiser reissue], and he was very pleased to think that this performance was still going the rounds. He spoke as if he himself had been very pleased with it at the time. He had a remarkable memory for orchestras, concerts, and dates, etc., and was able to tell me immediately that the orchestra was the Berlin State Opera Orchestra."

Readers may also be interested in knowing that Mr. Goldsmith has reached an agreement with Polydor to issue on Unicorn the late-'20s Bruckner Seventh (which was with the Berlin Philharmonic). He also hopes to be able to issue the fine Stockholm broadcast performance (in stereo) of the Mahler Sixth.

Jack Diether
New York, N.Y.



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For an Ives Stamp

The United States Postal Service has an American Art series of commemorative stamps, which has so far honored (or will soon honor) Robinson Jeffers, Willa Cather, Henry O. Tanner, and George Gershwin.

As 1974 is the centennial of the birth of the great American composer Charles Ives, I feel that a stamp honoring him would be appropriate in this series. If HIGH FIDELITY readers write the Postal Service urging such a stamp, perhaps it will happen. Write to the Stamp Advisory Committee, United States Postal Service, Washington, D.C. 20260.

Douglas B. Moore
Assistant Professor of Music
Williams College
Williamstown, Mass.

Information, Please

A society, whose honorary president will be Leonard Bernstein and whose honorary members will include Herbert von Karajan, Eugene Ormandy, Rudolf Serkin, Janos Starkner, and Isaac Stern, has been formed to further appreciation of the art—uniting the nobility of Artur Nikisch and the aristocracy of Richard Strauss—of the man about whom Joseph Szigeti said, "He did not depart from the score, but he drew everything from it." As the biographer of Fritz Reiner, I will gather religiously and gratefully any information about him. (Magyarul beszélő.)

Jean-Do. Mondoloni
5, rue Jacques-Mawas
75015 Paris, France

I am compiling a John Charles Thomas discography, which I hope will be published here in Britain sometime this year by *The Record Collector*. Since my collaborator and I are here in England and Thomas did most of his singing and all his recording in America, we are having some difficulty! We would be grateful for any information regarding his records—labels, numbers, titles, dates, and matrix numbers, both published and unpublished. He also made several V discs and quite a number of 16-inch Armed Forces Radio Services discs (the latter 30-minute LPs); information about these would be especially welcome.

Since several pages of biographical notes accompany the discography, any anecdotes

The exasperating truth about cassette decks.

A lot of the money you shell out for a cassette deck is supposed to buy you a superb cassette recorder. Certainly most manufacturers try to give that impression. They sport big VU meters, slider-type pots and other professional recording-console accoutrements.

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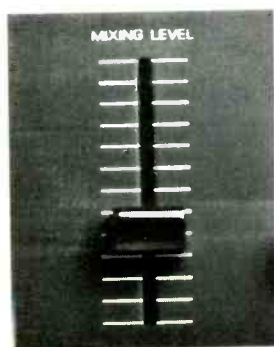
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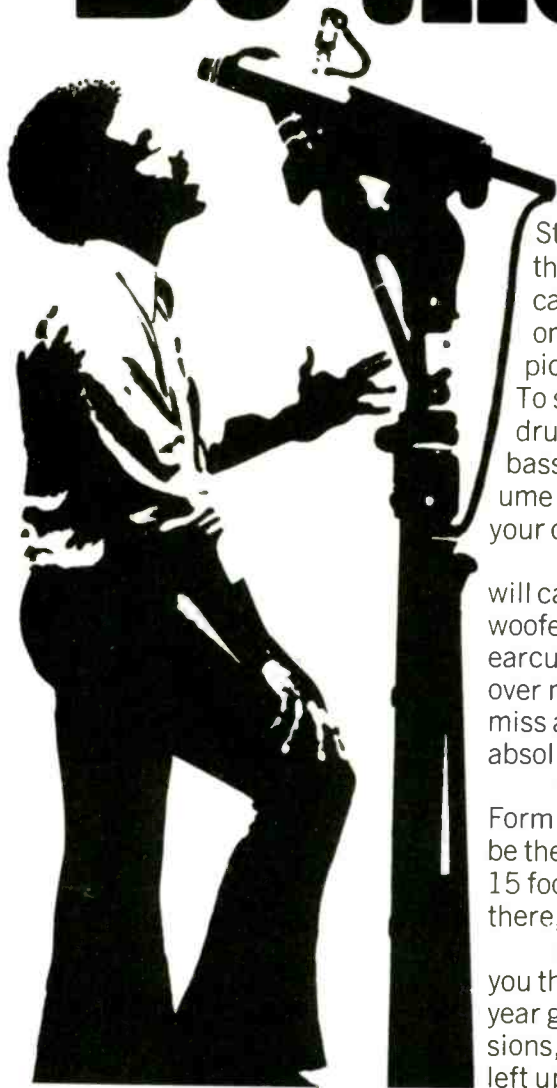
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about the baritone will also be greatly appreciated.

Edward Bridgewater
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England

From previous reviews in *HIGH FIDELITY* of Arturo Toscanini Society releases, which gave our address as Amarillo, Texas, many of your readers have written to that address, which we left in June 1970. The postmaster in Amarillo has informed us that, since a change-of-address is valid only for one year, they can no longer forward mail. The correct address is below.

Clyde J. Key, President
Arturo Toscanini Society
812 Dumas Ave.
Dumas, Texas 79029

In addition to the above, we should add several other frequently asked for addresses of special-issue societies: Bruno Walter Society, P.O. Box 921, Berkeley, Calif. 94701; Thomas Beecham Society, 664 S. Irena Ave., Redondo Beach, Calif. 90277; International Piano Library, 215 W. 91st St., New York, N.Y. 10024.

Return of a Classic Recording

In his review of Mozart's two-piano concerto, K. 365 [October 1973], Harris Goldsmith calls the "long-deleted" recording by Clara Haskil, Géza Anda, and Alceo Galliera "virtually perfect . . . though not in stereo." He may be pleased to know that a stereo recording by the same combination (presumably the same performance) is available here in Switzerland on EMI (C 053 00439).

Peter Millward
Basel, Switzerland

It is indeed good news that this classic performance is available again—and in stereo to boot! And there is good news for American collectors: The German Odeon disc cited is available here through Peters International.

Clara Schumann: an Alternative

In Harris Goldsmith's otherwise excellent and comprehensive review of Philips' set of the piano trios of Robert and Clara Schumann [November 1973], he states that "there is no current version" of Clara Schumann's G minor Trio, Op. 17.

There is, in fact, a fine recent recording of that work, well performed by pianist Monica Saalfeld, violinist Franziska Kosczielny, and cellist Gisela Reith, on Musical Heritage Society MHS 1339.

Julian L. Rogatz
New York, N.Y.

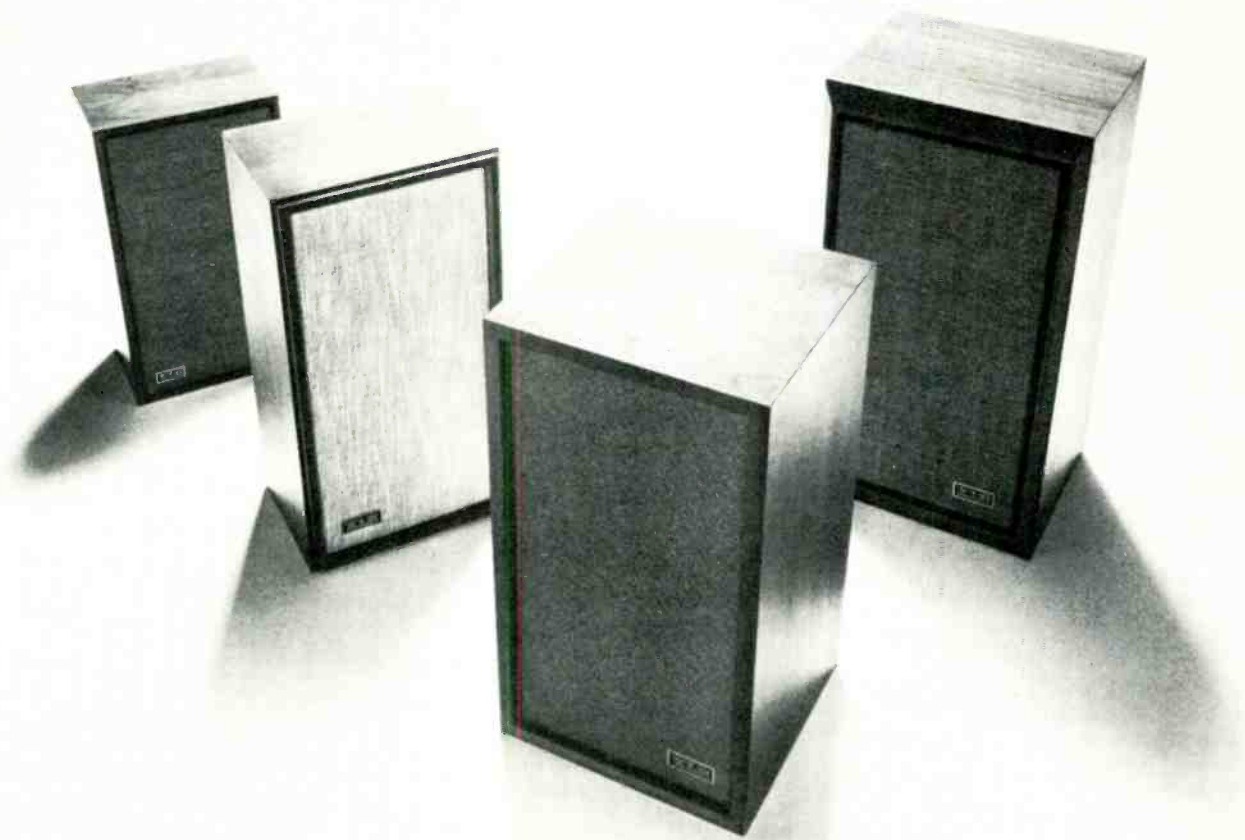
Rossini, Si . . .

In ten years of reading *HIGH FIDELITY*, I have never been more pleased by a review than I was by Paul Henry Lang's long overdue essay on the long neglected music of Rossini [October 1973]. In reviewing Vanguard's *Pietra del paragone*, Mr. Lang said precisely all the things we Rossini admirers have been saying for years—that Rossini had a genius for melody not unlike Mozart's, and yes, why is it a crime to have fun in music?

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Current recordings of *L'Italiana in Algeri* and *La Cenerentola* prove conclusively that Rossini is not a one-opera composer; *La Pietra del paragone* should bury the myth forever. Let us hope the record companies read Mr. Lang's perceptive review and bring us more of those musical gems. We have enough *Rings* for a while.

C. David Oliphant
Vernon, Conn.

... Glitter Rock, No

Who is this Henry Edwards with his "glitter-rock phenomenon" in the October issue? He asked the question, "Will the glitter-rock phenomenon take over the pop-music scene?"

Cooper, Bowie, and the other "rock-and-rouge" bands aren't going to take over the pop-music scene; they're only half of the music today. People like Helen Reddy and the Osmonds are as well up with a lot of people's standards. Everyone should remember that there is more than one type of person.

All these new phonies (the glitter bands) really don't even have a chance of making it big. Cooper's albums are already on most record stands in teenage bedrooms. Why should they gamble on someone else?

D. J. Betts
Marshalltown, Iowa

Duparc, Not Dukas

I found Royal S. Brown's November review of the Martinon disc of works by Florent Schmitt (Angel) perceptive and interesting, but he errs in calling the coupling of Almeida's RCA recording of *La Tragédie de Salomé* "Dukas" and Chausson. The "Dukas" work is Henri Duparc's *Léonore*, one of the best tone poems of the Franck school and unfortunately one of the few orchestral compositions left by this outstanding composer.

Stephen C. Adamson
Stoughton, Mass.

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†This research is presented in the article "Sound Recording and Reproduction" published in *TECHNOLOGY REVIEW/MIT*, Vol. 75, No. 7, June '73. Reprints are available from BOSE for fifty cents a copy.

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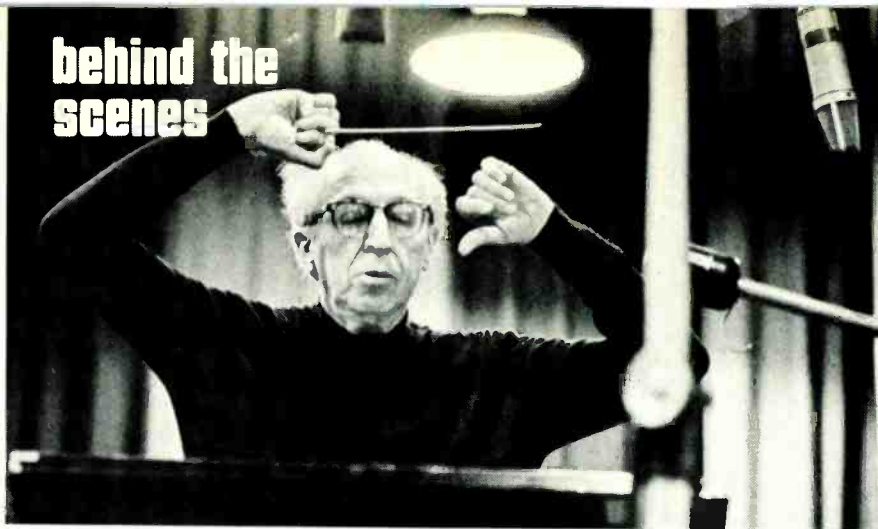


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behind the
scenes



Familiar Copland—with a Surprise

NEW YORK

"Don't forget, we're not playing the *Sacre du printemps*; this is meant to be light, happy, *amerikanisch*." In this case the conductor could speak with authority on how the music was meant to sound, since it was Aaron Copland leading his players through the rhythmically quirky section of his *Appalachian Spring*, in the second of three sessions at Columbia's Thirtieth Street Studio C.

Appalachian Spring is probably the most popular orchestral work this country has produced. But with two composer-conducted stereo versions in the current catalogue, why a new recording? Simple: This was not another recording of the 1945 orchestral suite, but the long-hoped-for recorded premiere of the "original version" (well, not exactly—but more on the version in a moment) of the ballet Copland wrote for Martha Graham in 1943-44. In arranging the suite Copland had, according to the score, "[retained] all essential features but [omitted] those sections in which the interest is primarily choreographic"; at the same time he expanded the scoring from thirteen instruments to full symphony orchestra.

The new recording used a star-studded ensemble (three first and three second violins, two violas, two cellos, bass, flute, clarinet, bassoon, and piano—the extra violin on each part bringing the total up to fifteen) including such names as violinists Broadus Earl (of the Yale Quartet) and Gerald Tarack and pianist Paul Jacobs (who, along with Copland, was in the control room scrutinizing every playback). The strings were seated in a straight line beginning at Copland's left and ending with the violins at the rear; the winds were at his right with the piano at the rear.

In 1972 Copland prepared a new edition of *Appalachian Spring*, following the text of the orchestral suite but reduc-

ing the scoring to the original chamber-size ensemble. That version was used, with one vital addition: an insert of about eight minutes at number 65 in the score, just before the tutti restatement of the *Simple Gifts* tune. Some of this music was included in the Ormandy mono recording of the suite; most of it will be a startling and delightful discovery—rhythmically and harmonically it adds a new dimension to the piece, and of course those eight minutes dramatically alter its shape. Apparently this is as close as we will come to the original version; Copland considers the remaining music—mostly brief connecting material—unworthy of reinstatement.

The first two sessions were devoted to the standard suite, with frequent reminders of the conductor's special authority. At one point he asked the musicians to play a passage "broadly . . . I marked that 'non legato,' but don't take that too seriously." After the first take of the gorgeous final section, with its seemingly modal harmonies played by soft muted strings, Copland commented with justifiable pride, "That's heaven." But the ensemble had been pretty ragged, prompting producer Andrew Kazdin's "If I may intrude on heaven. . ."

The sound in the control room was most impressive; the surround four-channel setup provided a textural clarity singularly appropriate to the score. If the finished product sounds as good, it could even convince this quadriphonic skeptic; to date the only really convincing four channel I've heard has been in control rooms!

Columbia plans to issue the new *Appalachian Spring* on a single LP with a bonus disc of Copland rehearsing. It's to be part of an American-music month, scheduled for February, that will include another Copland disc (three chamber works), a Kirchner disc [see Royal S. Brown's report last month], and discs devoted to Crumb and Subotnick.

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too hot to handle

I use a Koss ESP-9 electrostatic headset, driven from the speaker taps of my Pioneer SX-2500 receiver. The sound is excellent below half volume. As I raise the volume it develops a high rate of distortion and eventually the receiver blacks out. The blackout is temporary and the amp restores itself in about 30 seconds. Both units have been checked by several technicians. They can't provide an explanation or a cure. Can you?—Vincent Fruccl, Newark, N.J.

We can take a stab. Electrostatic devices—headphones and speakers alike—tend to have relatively low effective impedances at high frequencies. And the lower the impedance of the load, the greater the current drain from a solid-state amplifier such as that in your receiver. If you are using the headphones simultaneously with a pair of speakers—even conventional ones—the problem is exaggerated because the effective combined impedance of the headphones plus the speakers, as “seen” by the amplifier, is lower than that of either alone. So as you lower the impedance loading and/or raise the volume, the current drain on the amplifier will go up, eventually triggering the current-limiting protective circuitry built into the amp. It sounds as though that's what's happening. We'd suggest you try inserting a 2-ohm power resistor (the common 10-watt type should be sufficient) into the hot (+) leads to each channel of the ESP-9s.

I want to install a pair of AR-7s in my bathroom, but would its often high humidity damage any of the speaker-system components?—David Pruy, Osprey, Fla.

AR confirms that such a high-humidity atmosphere is less than ideal for the longevity of speaker systems, but says the ARs can withstand 80 per cent humidity at 80 degrees F. “without noticeable degradation.” This does not allow for actual condensation on the loudspeaker, however, and it seems likely that water drops would form on the enclosure, if not on the driver cones themselves. Incidentally if you simply want to sing along with Mitch (or Elvis or whomever) while you're in the shower, you might consider an all-plastic speaker like the Poly-Planar panels. We've seen them operated even under water, so they should stand up pretty well in a steam-filled bathroom. But if you want a furniture-style model, it looks as though you'll have to take your chances.

The Heath 1973 catalogue calls the Heath AA-2010 a “universal four-channel amplifier. . . . Handles all matrixed material as well as discrete four channel.” Also the unit's specifications seem superior to

nearly everything else available. Yet I don't find magazines talking about this unit as one of the best available. I wish HIGH FIDELITY would either confirm its quality or explain why I shouldn't be misled by Heath's specifications.—Barry Bartle, New York, N.Y.

There are a number of very attractive features in the AA-2010 and a number that are not so attractive. The relative importance of these features we must leave to individual purchasers to decide; to some the negative factors won't amount to beans. First, the good news. It has unusual flexibility of inputs, both in terms of the number provided and in terms of the separate input level controls for each. We know of no unit that will let you balance everything as accurately as the AA-2010. The fact that it is a kit is a big plus for some users since it can be altered by the builder, if he wants, with relative ease. The decoder circuit is an example. It is on a separate circuit card, and Heath already has upgraded the decoder once (changing the model number from the original AA-2004 in the process). And some users will appreciate the ease with which it can be used as a pair of low-distortion stereo amps operating independently of each other (for example to feed two rooms with separate stereo programs). Among the negative factors are the relatively low output power and the want of “strapping” to increase per-channel output power on a single stereo program. Some users may consider the decoder itself a minus, preferring “logic” or similar techniques for enhancing the quadriphonic effect from matrixed program material. (See our report in the January issue, comparing this unit to the logic decoder in the Lafayette LR-4000 receiver, for example.) And while the AA-2010 can be called “universal” in the sense that it will handle discrete-quadriphonic inputs and its decoder is designed to reproduce both SQ and QS matrixed discs, the unit will not reproduce Quadradiscs quadriphonically without the addition of a CD-4 demodulator. Some users will consider the controls a negative factor, since in quadriphonics you must punch two selector buttons (one for the front channels, one for the back), adjust two volume knobs, check two tape-monitor switches, and so on. But these same controls were just listed as a plus factor, right? That's exactly why we must leave the final value judgments to our readers.

Discussions concerning the merits or even survival of open-reel recorded tapes blame the consumer for not supporting the most sensible medium for recorded sound. The blame lies elsewhere! Why should the buyer tolerate consistent blun-



3 good reasons for owning the AR-3a.

Records, tapes and cassettes represent a significant investment in your home music system. To take full advantage of this, you should be able to accurately reproduce that sound which the recordings offer.

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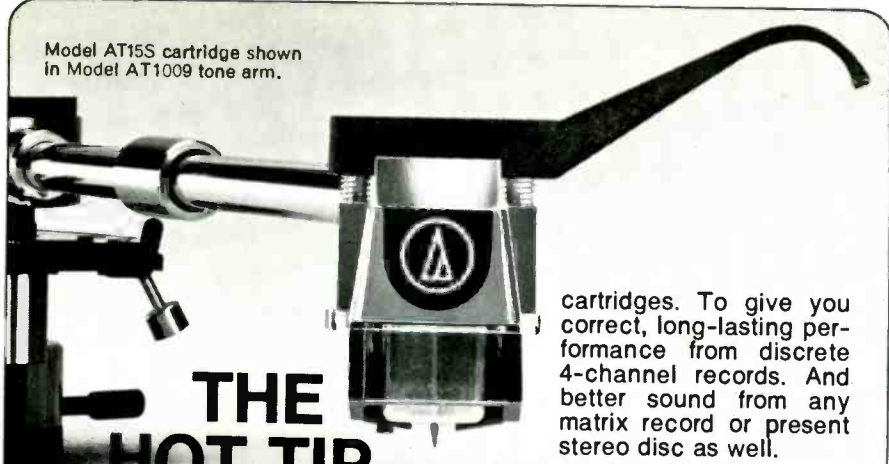
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ders of marketing or packaging departments or be expected to gleefully purchase whatever is thrust at him? I won't.—
William V. Holman, Portland, Ore.

We have deleted from Mr. Holman's letter a long list of processor sins—to which we could add many more examples from our own experience. But we don't think assignment of blame really is to the point. Some "sins" in Mr. Holman's catalogue are accounted virtues by other buyers. (For instance he dislikes 3¼ ips, while some buyers are pleading for more tapes at this speed.) So to some extent the processor can please some customers only by displeasing others. It is therefore futile to argue whether Ampex, for example, won't extend itself for Mr. Holman because he won't buy the tapes, or Mr. Holman won't buy the tapes because Ampex won't extend itself to please him. The fact is that open reel is a small and demanding—and for that reason marginal—market. Ampex and Magtec are trying to develop it into a viable market, but neither appears to have succeeded yet. If they don't succeed, we may have to write off open-reel processing as a cause that couldn't pay for itself.

I am happy to report that my "lost" Scott receiver—see my earlier letter [which described how the unit had been returned to the factory for repair only to be held incommunicado while Scott went through bankruptcy proceedings]—is back. It is good to know that audiophiles have friends like the people at HIGH FIDELITY.—**Ewald Nickel, Winnipeg, Canada.**

We like to take credit, but only where it's due. Scott is definitely back in business and seems to be pulling itself together with remarkable success following its reorganization. We'd prefer to believe that the credit therefore is due to the new management and hope that other readers who've been left stranded by the temporary closing of the Scott plant will now get similar satisfaction.

I have a Marantz Model 4430 quadriphonic receiver (30 watts rms per channel) and four EPI Microtower speakers. I like the sound best with the treble control set flat and the loudness compensation on. Most of my listening is done at low to medium volume levels, and I am happy with the sound I'm getting. But after reading Mr. Feldman's article about controls in the September issue I became worried that I might be doing serious harm to my receiver and/or my speakers by always using the loudness compensation. Am I?—**Ronald B. Russenn, Oak Park, Ill.**

Not to worry. What you appear to be thinking of is Mr. Feldman's statement about the kind of bass power you can be demanding of your amplifier when you boost bass in an attempt to extend the effective response of your woofers. But you say that you play music at low to moderate levels, so we can assume that you are leaving considerable headroom for such demands. Furthermore it is part of the nature of loudness compensation that as you increase the level, the compensation automatically decreases. So your demands on the bass will not increase as fast as your demands elsewhere when you turn up the volume.

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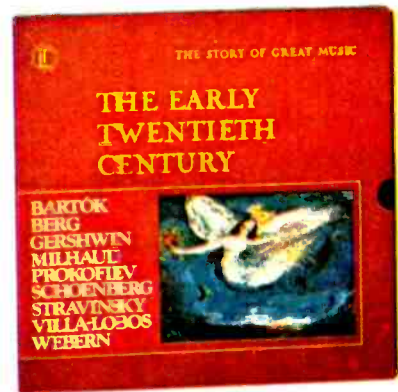
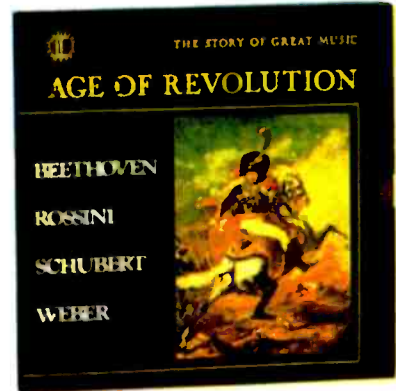
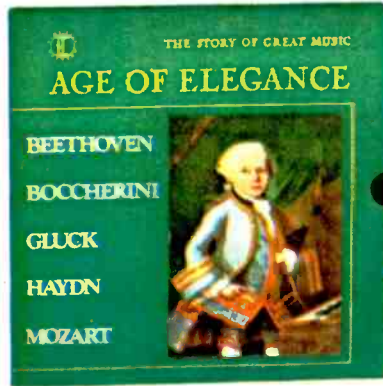
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Letting the Chips Fall

For the past two years the battle in quadriphonics has been over the number of hardware and software licensees signed by each of the three formats—SQ, QS/RM, and CD-4. The battle has now shifted to IC chips, those relatively inexpensive super-miniaturized circuits that allow hardware manufacturers to incorporate a particular quadriphonic format at minimal cost.

Although many manufacturers had been licensed for one or more of the formats, some had held off making equipment until ICs became available. For example Fisher scheduled the introduction of its receivers incorporating CD-4 for early this year to take advantage of the recently developed CD-4 chip. Production quantities of SQ logic chips are just now ready for delivery. And a new Hitachi IC rounds out the chips needed for Sansui's "variomatrix" decoder.

Sansui says the IC package will decode to spec both QS/RM and SQ encoded material. It differs from SQ logic in that it actually alters the matrix decoding parameters (rather than output levels as such) from moment to moment to increase effective separation in the quadriphonic sound image.

news and views

You Had to Be There

The announcement said "... black tie—black towel," and it wasn't kidding. Soprano Eleanor Steber recently gave a recital at the Continental Baths in New York City (where Bette Midler achieved her first steam-heated fame) wearing a "formal" black-towel toga; many in the audience were draped in towels. Spurred by publicity surrounding the event, RCA has rushed to release a Red Seal recording of the performance, which included opera arias of Mozart, Charpentier, Puccini, and Massenet, as well as a Strauss-Lehár Viennese group. (Couldn't Schubert's *Auf dem*

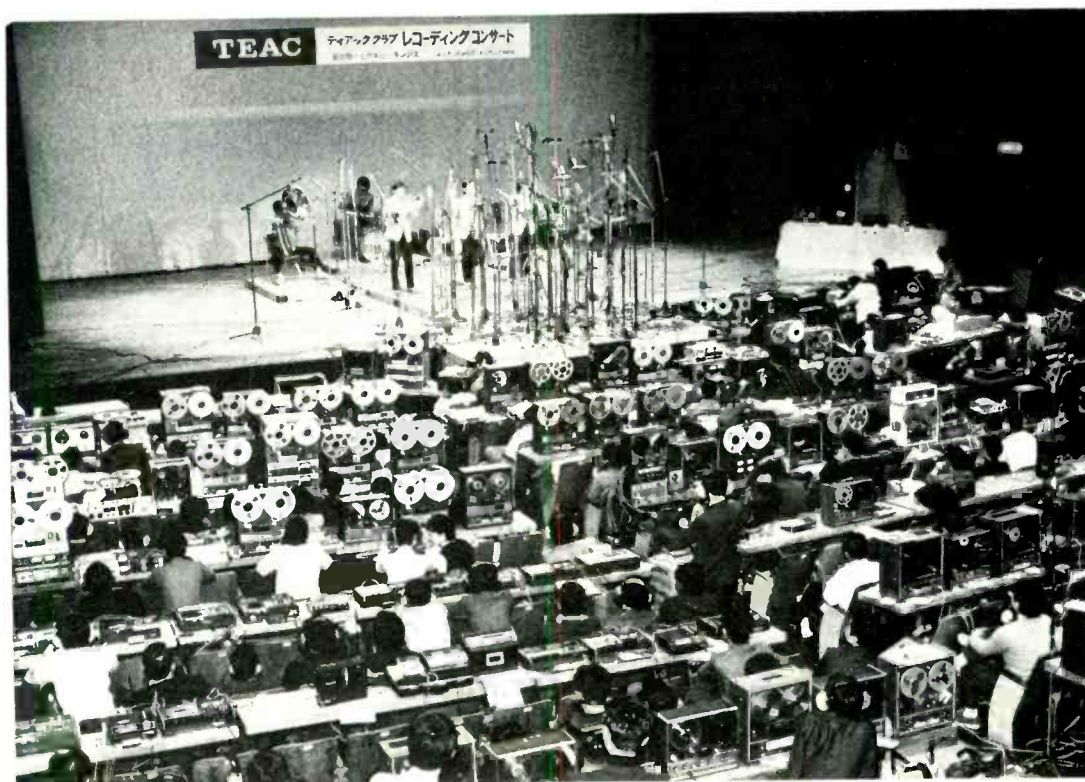
Wasser zu singen have been worked in?) Anyway, towels off to RCA for revealing a new dimension in operatic recordings!

SQ Eyes the 45 Market

Columbia Records has released its first SQ 45 single to broadcasters, and says it hopes to offer a limited number of SQ 45s to the general public sometime this year. The promotional 45, *All I Know*, was excerpted from Art Garfunkel's "Angel Clare" album and was sent to all stations on CBS's mailing list—even the AM stations. (Columbia admits the inclusion of the AM stations—which broadcast in mono only—was for promotional purposes only, and that they will be omitted from subsequent distribution.)

All I Know will not be offered to the public in the SQ version, Columbia says, "but we are giving very serious consideration to offering an SQ 45 to the general public early in 1974."

Columbia is not first with matrixed singles however. For some time now Ovation—one of the first QS matrix software licensees—has issued its LPs, cassettes, and 45s in QS. But Columbia's entry into this market could trigger serious consideration of the 45 format by other major labels.



The ultimate audience of the technological age? Possibly. These hundreds of tape recorders belong to enthusiasts attending one of many free live concerts that have been sponsored by Teac in Japan. Teac supplies the hall, band, chairs, tables, and cables; audiophiles bring their mikes, recorders, and tape. A seminar in live recording techniques and recorder care precedes the concert; a playback and a critical review of some of the tapes follow it.

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video topics

Best-Laid Plans?

RCA, one of the few U.S. companies still touting the potential of the home video-tape market, has once again revised its marketing schedule for SelectaVision. Introduction of RCA's magnetic-tape format has slipped to sometime this year. William C. Hittinger, executive vice president of consumer and solid-state electronics, says: "We intend to gain more marketing and engineering experience in 1974 . . . before making final commitments on the scope of our participation in the video-recording industry."

But SelectaVision is feeling the pinch of rising costs. A pause control already has been eliminated from prototypes; if the \$700-\$800 target price is the next victim, RCA admits it may have to introduce SelectaVision initially as an educational/institutional system.

equipment in the news



RTR's 280DR medium-priced speaker

RTR credits a new way of placing multiple woofers within its column system enclosures for excellent low-frequency response. The 280DR has four 10-inch drivers: one slot-coupled to the floor on which the unit is placed, the others mounted in the front and two sides. Six 2½-inch tweeters are mounted above and below these three woofers. Frequency response of the total system is given as 22 to 18,500 Hz, with the crossover at 3,500 Hz. Recommended output power in the driving amplifier is 15 to 100 watts at the 8-ohm (nominal) im-

pedance. With its walnut enclosure, the 280DR costs \$299.

CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Akai adds four-channel open-reel deck

Among several open-reel models recently announced by Akai is the GX-280-DDS, a two-speed (7½ and 3¼ ips) bidirectional deck with stereo/quad erase and record/play heads for the forward direction of tape travel and stereo erase and record/play in the reverse. This configuration permits continuous recording or playback in stereo with automatic reversing and repeat play of tape provided with foil cues. Other features include sound-on-sound, a tape bias switch, input mixing, and three motors—including a servo-controlled, direct-drive capstan motor. The deck lists for \$799.95.

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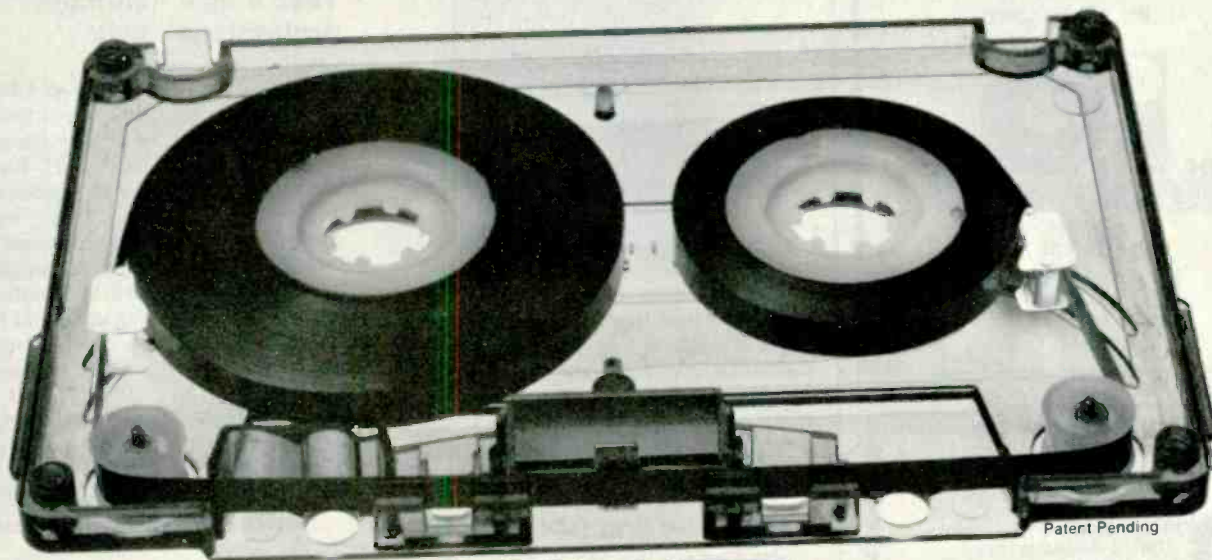


New Two-Four receiver from Kenwood

Like its predecessors in the Two-Four Series, Kenwood's KR-5340 four-channel receiver more than doubles its power when "strapped" in the stereo mode: 10 watts per channel (into 8 ohms) in four-channel increases to 25 watts per channel. SQ and QS/RM quadriphonic decoder circuitry is built in; a CD-4 demodulator module is optional. Inputs are provided for phono, four-channel aux, and four-channel tape. The amplifier section has direct-coupled circuitry and a dual-protection circuit to guard both speakers and transistors from overload. The KR-5340 costs \$419.95.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

THE TOMORROW CASSETTE



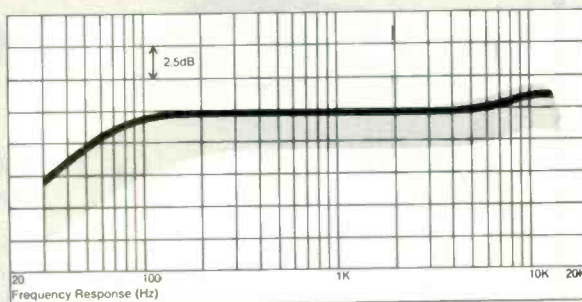
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"Studio-standard" speaker from Frazier

Frazier's Model Seven is next to the top of its eight-model line. The studio-standard system, as Frazier calls it, utilizes a 12-inch woofer, two isolated 4-inch midrange drivers, and two high-frequency horns—one mounted horizontally and the other vertically for improved dispersion. Frequency response is rated at 30 to 18,000 Hz; variable



midrange and high-frequency controls are provided. A two-piece base on the cabinet allows for vertical or horizontal speaker placement. The removable foam grille is available in brown, black, or burnt orange. The Seven costs \$310.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Lafayette's first CD-4 offering

One of the leaders in SQ quadriphonic equipment, Lafayette, is offering a demodulator (Stock No. 99-03345W) as its first CD-4 unit. At \$89.95 it is said to be the least expensive of available separate demodulators. Front-panel



switches select between two-channel and CD-4 modes or allow bypassing of the demodulator's circuitry, which includes automatic carrier-level control. Left-to-right separation (at 1 KHz) is stated as 45 dB, and front-to-back, 30 dB. Rated frequency response is 20 to 16,000 Hz, with S/N greater than 60 dB. A CD-4 test record and connecting cable are included.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Teac's new half-track professional deck

The latest addition to Teac's long line of open-reel tape decks is a two-speed (15 and 7½ ips), half-track stereo mastering deck. The 3300S-2T has 10½-inch reel capacity with Quik-Lok reel holders and features a "logic" transport control system, three motors, three heads, separate bias and equalization switches for standard and high-energy tape, a dual-level bias oscillator for low-noise recording, and a DC-coupled equalization network. Performance specs are given as 60 dB S/N, 0.04% wow and flutter at 15 ips (0.06% at 7½ ips), and 30 to 22,000 Hz ±3 dB frequency response at 15 ips (30 to 20,000 Hz ±3 dB at 7½ ips). It costs \$679.50.

CIRCLE 153 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Philips adds a medium-priced turntable

To help you protect your discs, the Philips GA-407 turntable from North American Philips Corp. has a direct-reading tracking-force indicator. The two-speed (45 and 33 rpm) unit is a single-play turntable featuring automatic arm lift, arm return, and motor shut-off at the end of this record. Other features include a dynamically balanced, low-speed synchronous motor and a low-mass tone arm with a cueing feature and tracking-force adjustments from 1 to 4 grams. The GA-407 costs \$99.50.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

When two loudspeakers sound different, at least one of them is wrong. Maybe both.



Unpleasantly Distorted Reproduction

Which is better: the Rectilinear III, at \$299, or a comparably priced but totally different-sounding speaker by another reputable manufacturer?

The ready answer to that question by a nice, clean-living salesman or boy-scout hi-fi expert is: "It's a matter of taste. Whichever you prefer for your own listening. They're both good."

We want you to know how irresponsible and misleading such bland advice is.

Think about it:

A loudspeaker is a reproducer. The most important part of that word is the prefix *re*, meaning *again*. A loudspeaker produces again something that has already been produced once. Not something new and different.

Therefore, what it correctly reproduces should be identical to the original production. And *identicalness* isn't a matter of taste.

For example, it isn't a matter of taste whether the body shop has correctly reproduced the original color of your car on that repainted fender. Nor is it a matter of taste whether your mirror correctly reproduces your visual image. Is the reproduction identical to the original or isn't it?

Okay. We know. The ear is less precise than the eye. And in the case of loudspeakers, it's usually impossible to compare the reproduction and the live original side by side. Furthermore, the speaker is only a single link in a whole chain of reproducers. But these



Seductively Distorted Reproduction

problems only complicate the matter without changing the basic principle. *The reproduction is either right or wrong. Two different-sounding reproductions can't both be identical to the original.*

The common fallacy is to call the reproduction wrong only when it's obviously unpleasant (fuzzy or shrieky highs, hollow midrange, etc.). But what about a pleasingly plump bass, lots of sheen on the high end, and that punchy or zippy overall quality known as "presence"? Equally wrong. And, because of the seductive "hi-fi" appeal, much more treacherous.

To glamorize the original that way amounts to having a built-in and permanently set tone control in your speaker. For some program material it can be disastrously unsuitable. Like the funhouse mirror that makes everybody look tall and thin, it's great for short and fat inputs only.

At Rectilinear, we design speakers to approach facsimile reproduction of the input as closely as is technologically possible. We restrict the "taste" factor

to twiddling the tone controls of our amplifier in the privacy of our home. Not in our laboratory.

The Rectilinear III is our best effort to date in this direction.

And our inspiration for it was a totally different and rather impractical design: the full-range electrostatic speaker.

Any serious audio engineer will tell you that electrostatics

are inherently superior

to conventional speakers in producing an output that's identical to the input. This superiority is due to scientifically verifiable characteristics, such as flatness of frequency response and low time delay distortion.

The trouble is that electrostatics create tremendous problems with amplifiers, have difficulty playing *really* loud without distortion and are also somewhat deficient in bass. But—they're accurate, undistorted "mirrors" of sound.

The Rectilinear III is the first successful attempt to give you this electrostatic type of sound in a conventional speaker without any of the above problems.

It allows you to hear what composers, musicians and record producers have created for you and not what some speaker manufacturer thinks will please you.

So, next time you're in a store and you hear another \$299 speaker that sounds different from ours, you'll have an idea which of the two is wrong.

And which is the one to buy.

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crossover)



speaking of records



Kyung-Wha Chung's performance of William Walton's violin concerto won the composer's obvious approval during the 1972 recording session.

Learning to Play with Heifetz and Szigeti

by Kyung-Wha Chung

THROUGHOUT MY CAREER as a violinist, the musician who has most fascinated me is Jascha Heifetz. I first heard his recordings when I was nine. In Korea, records cost a small fortune—far more than my family was able to afford. The place where many people went to hear them were coffee houses. These places were similar to discotheques, except that the music was classical, and there was no dancing. My mother knew the owner of a place called the Dolce (the Italian word transliterated into Korean), where one could order coffee and pastry; and on a piece of paper one would write down a record one would like to hear. One huge wall of the Dolce was entirely filled with records, and the phonograph was inside a glass booth. One heard a wide range of classical music there, though with some exceptions. Because of the political situation, there could be no public performances of Soviet composers—no Shostakovich, no Prokofiev. And for some reason, opera was not often played. What was especially favored by the customers at the Dolce was instrumental music, perhaps because so many of the young people were studying piano and violin.

My mother used to take me there in the evening, a few hours before curfew, and always I would take along my violin. I'm not sure why, but at the Dolce there was a small stage. The man in the glass booth would put on a concerto recording—Mendelssohn, Wieniawski, or Mozart—and I would get onstage and play along with it. What a pleasure it was, to play against all that orchestral sound.

Those records served the same function for me as music-minus-one albums; only here there was no minus; there were soloists like Oistrakh and Heifetz. Oistrakh did not make much of an impres-

sion on me—I simply played along, too enchanted by my own playing. But it was different with Heifetz. He is, of course, famous for his very fast tempos—and he proved too much for me! I'll never forget the time they put on a disc of him playing the Mendelssohn concerto. I played along for the first two movements, just managing to keep up. But when that final movement began, it was no longer possible—my fingers simply could not move that fast. And I remember feeling discouraged, and thinking: "I'll never be able to play up to this kind of speed. If this is what great violin playing is all about, I haven't got a chance."

At the age of twelve, I moved to America with my family. We were now able to afford records; the ones I most doted on were those of Heifetz. We had a terrible record player. Even so, for several years, I would put on a stack of Heifetz records every night and keep listening until I fell asleep. They fascinated me, not merely as music, but as displays of ultimate technical wizardry.

Violinists hold the instrument in different ways. Heifetz' way is to hold it straight out, almost as though it were an extension of his shoulder. Differing radically was the great artist Joseph Szigeti, who held it inwards, more perpendicular to the body. It was a habit he had gotten into, and it always posed a problem for him. One unkind joke had it that he always looked as though he were playing in a telephone booth. But he was a marvelous man, under whom I had the rare privilege of studying. I had some misgivings about him, though, before going to Switzerland, where he lived. This was

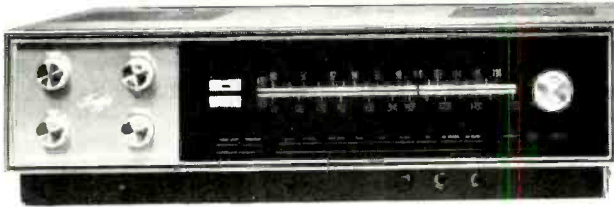
due to having listened to his recordings of some Mozart sonatas, with George Szell playing the piano part. I must confess that I found these performances disappointing. Szell's playing was so heartless, so bone-dry, so unlike the incredible performances I heard him bring off as conductor. Nor was I terribly happy with Szigeti's playing. His odd huddled posture while playing caused problems in handling his bow—and the results were quite discernible on the recordings.

When I went to study with him, I was in for a surprise. I had been told that Szigeti did not listen to his own recordings. Well, perhaps he didn't listen to them for pleasure, but he often played them for his pupils to demonstrate the points he was trying to make. First he would try to show me by playing the violin himself. But he was already well on in years and sometimes he could not function up to his own high standard. At such times he would get frustrated and would, instead, play his recordings.

I learned a lot from him. Once I was working on a Bartók sonata, and he said to me, "That's out of tune." I was flabbergasted. I protested that I was in tune. "No," he said, "it's not sour enough; that passage should be so sour you can taste it in your mouth!" And he played his own recording to illustrate. He had an uncanny instinct for such coloristic devices as playing sharp on certain leading tones, or even playing a bit flat. All violinists do this to some extent, but Szigeti did it with a full awareness of the musical and harmonic implications. Studying with him was therefore an eye-opener. Up until that time, perhaps because of my training under Ivan Galamian, I had become overly rigorous, too much the disciplinarian. Or maybe I had gotten too involved in technique—because of all

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Only the Heathkit Audio-Scope gives you triggered sweep for a stable, jitter-free trace without constant re-adjustment. Inputs are provided on the rear panel of the Audio-Scope for Left-Front, Left-Back, Right-Front, Right-Back, and Multipath. Any of these inputs can be switched and observed on the cathode ray screen, independently or in combination.

In addition, a front panel input is provided for observing any external source, permitting you to use the AD-1013 as a conventional oscilloscope for checking out malfunctions in various stages of your tape equipment, receiver, amplifier, tuner, turntable, etc. A built-in independent 20 Hz to 20 kHz low distortion audio oscillator provides a convenient means of setting up and checking your 4-channel or 2-channel stereo system. Front panel controls are provided for frequency selection of the audio oscillator as well as controlling the amplitude of the generated signal. Outputs from the audio oscillator are located on both front and rear panels. Output voltage will not vary with frequency change.

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those Heifetz records. When I came back to the States, I listened again to those Mozart sonata performances with Szigeti—and this time their effect on me was wholly different. For sheer music-making, they were glorious. Another album I came to love at that time was Szigeti's glorious performance of the Beethoven violin concerto. Bruno Walter conducting.

I guess the moral is, one shouldn't judge an artist on the basis of a few records. Recently, I've been listening to some old—*really* old—78s of Heifetz, and I couldn't believe it was the same man. Here he is so mellow, so lyrical. He hadn't developed that instantly identifiable style by then: the rapid tempos, and that way of sliding into notes that seemingly only he can get away with. Though not always: His performance of the Mozart Sinfonia Concertante in E flat with Primrose is something unforgivable. He plays the slow movement as though it were an allegro. The music is completely destroyed.

On the other hand, you can hear all the Heifetz trademarks used to glorious effect in his recording of Korngold's violin concerto. I don't care what anybody says about Korngold, that concerto—except for its Hollywoodish last movement—is marvelous. Its phrasing is so demanding that one might have assumed it was actually written for Heifetz. The opening is extremely difficult, much in the same way as the opening of the William Walton violin concerto, which was written for Heifetz.

Because of that soupy last movement, though, I've never performed the Korngold concerto in public. But I did perform—and subsequently record—the Walton. Learning this work was a Herculean job, one of the hardest things I've ever tackled. How I sweated over that last movement! Anyway, it was in September 1972 that I recorded it with the London Symphony Orchestra under André Previn, at Kingsway Hall [London CS 6819]. During one rehearsal section, I became aware that the musicians were looking out into the auditorium, and I kept hearing the name Willie being whispered. Since I wasn't wearing my glasses, I couldn't see that far, and I kept wondering, "My goodness, who's Willie?" Then André brought the visitor over. It was Sir William Walton.

He was very sweet, very complimentary. I asked him if there was anything he wanted done in my playing.

"No, no, no, my dear," he answered. "Everything is very well."

"Then can I ask one thing?" I asked. And when he nodded, I said: "Why did you make the last movement so difficult?"

He whispered to me: "That damned Heifetz!"

A tuner and an amplifier should be mated somewhat more carefully than a husband and wife.

Marry a tuner with an amplifier, and you have not only a receiver, but a union that's truly indissoluble.

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That's why the Sony STR-7065 receiver is a perfect mating. Its tuner has the sensitivity to reach out for signals from even the most distant fringe locations, yet has discrimination enough (70dB IHF selectivity, 1dB capture ratio) to pluck one signal clearly from a crowded band.

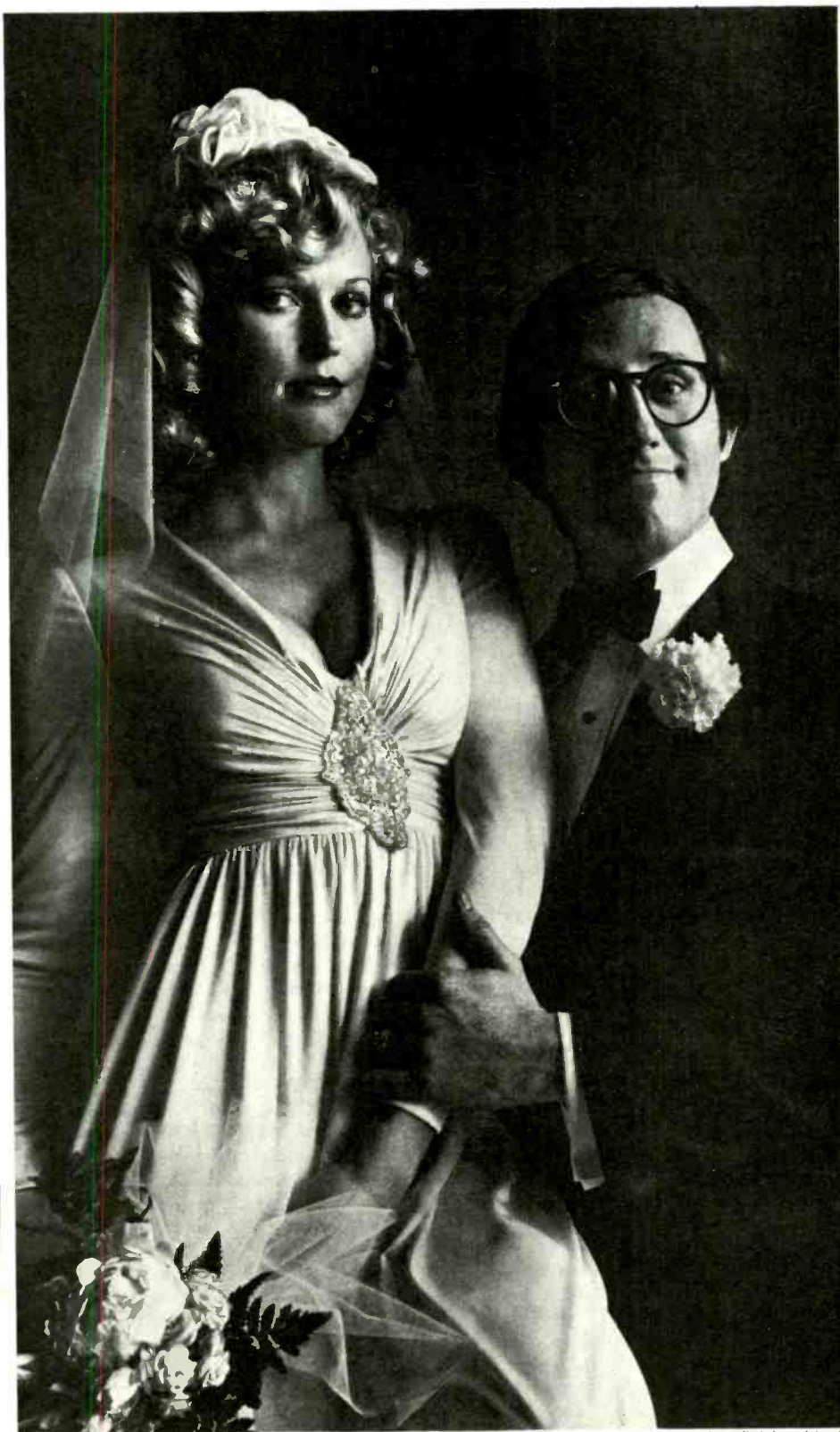
And the 7065's direct-coupled amplifier brings to this union the strength of 60 + 60 RMS watts (from 20Hz to 20kHz at 8 ohms with less than 0.2% distortion). Versatile controls offer a choice of three speaker pairs, mic mixing and dual tape monitors. Switchable preamp-out/amplifier-in connections permit independent use of each section and addition of accessories.

Such a happy union should sparkle visibly as well as musically. And the 7065 does, with lights that tell which of its many functions are in use and dual tuning meters.

The Sony 7065, at \$529.50* is our top-of-the-line receiver. For those who feel a union can survive with fewer luxuries (no indicator lights, signal strength meter or mic mixing control), we offer the Sony STR-7055. It has 35 + 35W RMS, 20Hz to 20kHz at 8 ohms with 0.2% THD. At \$429.50* it's an equally well-mated receiver. Sony Corporation of America, 9 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.



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*Suggested retail. Prices include walnut finish cabinets.

CIRCLE 49 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Classics and Jazz—Together at Last



Pat Williams—not only is he handy with a cigar, his ability to meld the classical and jazz styles into a “third stream” has resulted in the “best instrumental album of the year.”

AS FAR BACK as the 1930s at least, someone—I think it was Walter Damrosch—said that the classical world had been sniffing around the edges of jazz like a cat beside a plate of hot milk, waiting for it to cool. That American jazz had a tremendous vitality was obvious to anyone with an open ear. But classical people never knew what to do about, or with, it. The attempts of classical composers to incorporate jazz elements are among the more embarrassing musical experiments of our time.

The problem of fusing the two musical styles lay in the inherent antipathy between the two time feelings. To oversimplify:

Classical musicians play eighth notes in a European way. Or in the maxim of jazzmen: “String sections don’t swing.” Jazz musicians play them quite differently. Their execution of such phrases has a dotted eighth and sixteenth feeling, although that definition isn’t adequate. Indeed, if you score a passage that way and lay it on a symphony orchestra, they’ll play it with a stiffness that leaves you squirming. Tuh-KUH-tuh-KUH-tuh. None of that lazy loping ease that marks the jazzman.

But things have been changing rapidly in recent years, and there’s a whole generation of young musicians who are quite at ease in both classical music and

jazz. They are, indeed, almost stupefyingly good, possessed of a versatility that is unprecedented in history. Enter Roger Kellaway, Pat Williams, and a host of younger composers whose work has received inadequate attention from both critics and the academic community.

To gain an insight into what’s happening, it would be well to listen to a new album on Capitol called “Pat Williams: Threshold” (Capitol ST 2-11242). One is tempted to call it a jazz album, because it swings. But so elegantly are the elements of jazz and “legit” music interfused that the definition collapses on any serious reflection. Nor is it only Pat’s writing that makes it: He has assembled a twenty-seven-man orchestra of musicians of comparable ambidextrous persuasion. They can function in either world, and in this album they are required to function in both, alternately or simultaneously. This, in my opinion, is one of the most important albums of the last ten years. And that Capitol elected to issue a recording that has nothing to commend it but its musical value suggests that the industry is not totally morally bankrupt.

With such musicians on the album as trumpeters Marvin Stamm and Buddy Childers, trombonists Billy Byers and Kenny Shroyer, plus a superlative rhythm section, the album’s perform-

ance alone makes you want to stand up on a chair and cheer.

But it is the new musical direction that Williams suggests to us that makes the album so overwhelmingly important. Back when John Lewis and others were experimenting with a “third stream” of American music (they were ahead of the time: there weren’t enough instrumentalists schooled in classical music and jazz to pull it off), a certain self-consciousness pervaded the attempts to fuse the two musics. As André Previn said, “It won’t do just to have Percy Heath walking four in front of a string section.”

But in the past few years, the experiment has ceased to be an experiment. Perhaps the most important breakthroughs came in movie music. Film scorers are nothing if not pragmatic. And they will use anything that works. If they want a jazz alto solo to suggest a certain mood in this scene, and a string quartet to suggest another in the next scene, they won’t hesitate to use the two effects. Thus the writing of Johnny Mandel, Henry Mancini, Oliver Nelson, Jerry Goldsmith, Lalo Schiffrin, and others of their universalist persuasion, has long had an importance that has simply been missed by the academics and the critics of the *New York Times*. You might say they just didn’t notice what was happening, baby.

Pat Williams gained his foothold in the business ten years ago in New York, after composition studies at Columbia University. He later wrote all sorts of jingles—the music for television commercials—and albums for such singers as Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme. Then MGM let him make an album called “Shades of Today,” a humorous blend of jazz and rock elements that is a collector’s item among arrangers today—and unobtainable. He later moved to Hollywood and got into film scoring; you may recognize his name from such film and TV scores as *Hex*, *A Short Walk to Daylight*, *Hardcase*, *Macho Callahan*, *A Nice Girl Like Me*, and others. This season he is represented on television by “The Magician,” “The Streets of San Francisco,” “The Mary Tyler Moore Show,” and the “Bob Newhart Show.” These shows do not represent what Pat Williams is capable of. The new album does.

Such is the album’s variety that any attempt to describe it would consume a

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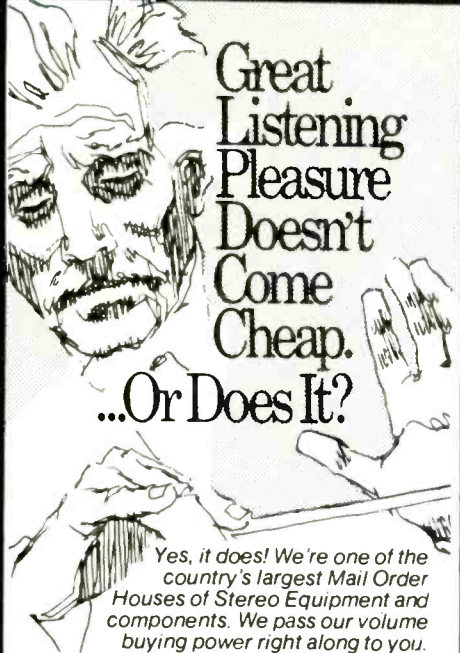
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CIRCLE 12 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

vast amount of space: A section called *On the Sixth Day* is one of the most dazzling fanfares for brass you've ever heard; it promptly dissolves into a powerful jazz swing. In another section called *The Witch*, he uses a string quartet over a rhythm section. And he makes that string section—the violinists are Jerry Vinci and Jake Krachmalnick, the former concertmaster of the Philadelphia Orchestra—swing. The string players loved it, though the jazz players pushed them. And Marvin Stamm plays the finest flugelhorn solo of his career over the racing, tense string passages.

Pat Williams has a bee in his bonnet. He thinks that this new generation of young American players has far exceeded in executional ability the literature available to them. He points to bassist Jim Hughart, whose floating, joyous time pulse contributes so much to the album. Hughart is a great jazz bassist; his father was principal bassist with the Minneapolis Symphony. *This* is the new generation, not the rockers of record-company touting.

Williams is working to set up an orchestra that is built for such younger men: players at university level or just beyond it, who are so far beyond the capabilities of the generations preceding them. He wants to see an orchestra of perhaps eighty men, most of them schooled in both jazz and classical music.

"It's not that this is a new concept," he says. "John Lewis had that Orchestra USA years ago. But I feel that the time is right for it."

The orchestra he conceives would not be designed to play only his music; he would be merely one of the contributing writers. "Roger Kellaway, for one, would have important things to write," he says. He sees it having a board of directors drawn from both the professional studio music world and from the academic world. It would be an ongoing organization, playing "music especially written for these young players," he says. "And it would grow as the literature grows."

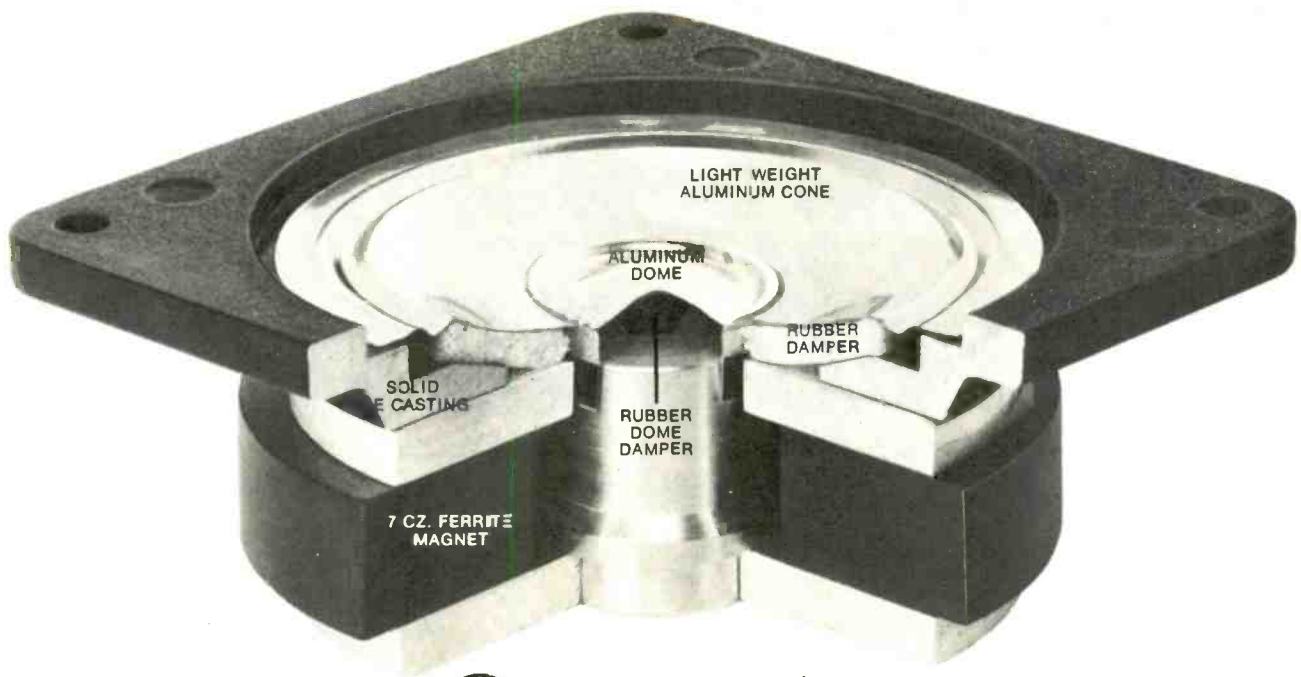
It is, essentially, an idea waiting for a place to happen in. Westminster College in Salt Lake City has expressed interest in it. But nothing has been set. What the concept needs, really, is funding.

In the end, all efforts to describe music in words are doomed to failure. To grasp what Williams is talking about, it is best to listen to the new album.

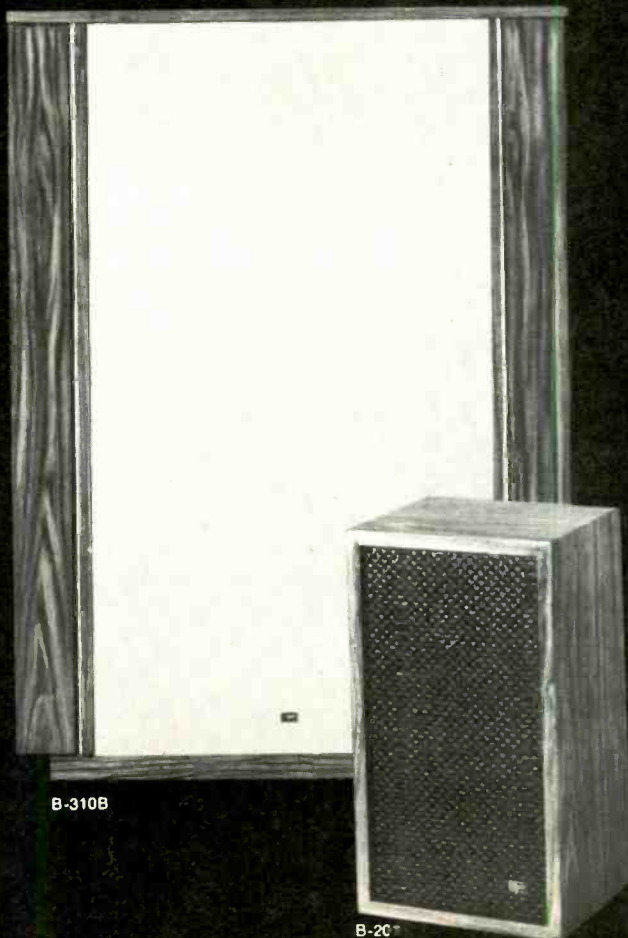
"The guys really enjoyed it, and I enjoyed it," Williams said. "It's my fifth album, but it was the most fun of all of them. I just hope it sells enough so we can do another one."

This is the best instrumental album of the year. And it is very important.

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B-20

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XT-6 SPECIFICATIONS

NOMINAL IMPEDANCE:	6 ohms
RESPONSE:	45Hz to 20 KHz \pm 3dB in average listening room.
HIGH FREQUENCY DRIVER:	2 1/2" viscous impregnated cone tweeter with 1 1/2" Dia. effective radiating surface.
LOW FREQUENCY DRIVER:	6" with high compliance, soft suspension and viscous coated cone.
CROSSOVER FREQUENCY:	2000Hz Nominal.
HIGH FREQUENCY LEVEL CONTROL:	When in "treble down" condition tweeter level is pivoted from the crossover point to approximately 3dB down at 10kHz.
ENCLOSURE:	Walnut finish air-tight cabinet 12 1/8"H x 7 7/8"W x 8 1/2"D. Filled with sound absorbent material.
POWER REQUIREMENTS:	10 watts RMS power output per channel.
PRICE:	\$ 58.00



ADC XT-6 SPEAKERS
-the insider's choice.



E-V's Speakers-Plus-Equalizer Combination

The Equipment: Electro-Voice Interface A, a stereo speaker system in walnut enclosure, sold in pairs together with equalizer unit. Dimensions: 22 by 14 by 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (each speaker); 8 by 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ by 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (control/equalizer unit). Price: \$400 for two speakers plus control/equalizer unit. Warranty: 5 years parts and labor on speakers; 3 years parts, 1 year labor on control unit. Manufacturer: Electro-Voice, Inc., Buchanan, Mich. 49107.

Comment: Interface A transcends the commonplace in a number of respects. Most obvious is the inclusion of an active equalizer unit. Less obvious—until you remove the black knit grille cloth—is the design of the bass reproducer: a 10-inch driver coupled with a port-loading device that resembles a 12-inch woofer. And only when you look at the back of the enclosure will you discover that in addition to the front-firing tweeter there's one facing the back.

An avowed design aim of the system is to deliver "uniform total acoustic power output" into the listening room. The back-firing tweeter contributes to this aim, and its effectiveness is demonstrated by the response graph, which is unusually flat (plus or minus only 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ dB from 63 Hz to 16 kHz!) in the omnidirectional measurement. A second design aim—and one that would seem a contradiction in terms at first glance—is to keep the enclosure size relatively small while increasing efficiency by contrast to typical acoustic-suspension systems, and to do so without sacrificing bass performance. This is what the port-loading "passive radiator" (a term E-V dislikes in this application) is all about. Its size and mass are chosen so that its loading of the air within the 1,350-cubic-inch enclosure is equivalent to that of a 20-foot air column 10 inches in diameter—the size of an air column needed to tune the enclosure to 32 Hz. E-V calls this loading device a "vent equivalent"; it is intended as an equivalent of a larger ducted design and to this extent does reduce enclosure size without paying the rule-of-thumb price in bass response and/or efficiency.

To set up the Interface A you begin by connecting the

control unit to the tape recording/monitor jacks of your stereo system. The control unit itself has outputs for two tape recorders, plus monitor input for one. You can therefore run one tape deck (normally connected to the jacks pre-empted by the control unit) to the control unit and add a second deck, feeding its playback output to the aux jacks on your stereo system—thereby increasing the tape flexibility of the system as a whole. A tape/source switch on the control unit will then allow you to monitor from the first of these decks. A second switch is marked "off/1/2/3" and controls tweeter response in the speakers. At the "off" (which cuts AC power to the active equalizer's circuitry) position, signals will get through, but they will sound fuzzy. To prevent this from happening accidentally, you can plug the control unit into a switched convenience outlet on your receiver or amp and drive another unit you want similarly switched (perhaps a separate tuner) from the convenience outlet supplied on the back of the E-V.

The speakers are connected in the normal way, using binding posts that will accept spade lugs or bared wires. In addition to the two for the audio signals, each speaker has two "extra" binding posts, one of which is delivered strapped to the common terminal. This second pair is for E-V's TS-1 tweeter protector (\$15), an optional accessory that uses a reed relay to cut power to the tweeters for as long as it is dangerously high—though not on transients too brief to damage tweeter windings. E-V cautions against connecting power leads to these terminals by mistake.

The lab measured the control range of the three treble positions on the equalizer as about plus 6 (the "1" position) or minus 6 dB ("3") above 10 kHz with respect to the normal setting at "2"—the setting used in all subsequent lab tests. Some of our listeners preferred the sound with the setting at "3"; those who have expressed a preference for "flat" response in the past preferred the normal setting. The equalizer also adds some boost in the bass. According to the lab tests it increases gradually below about 100 Hz, reaching some 6 dB of boost around 35 to 40 Hz, and falls off again at

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lower frequencies. This accounts for the somewhat rounded slope of the bass rolloff in our response curve, though the effect is difficult to hear in most program material when A/B-ing the sound with the equalizer in and with it out.

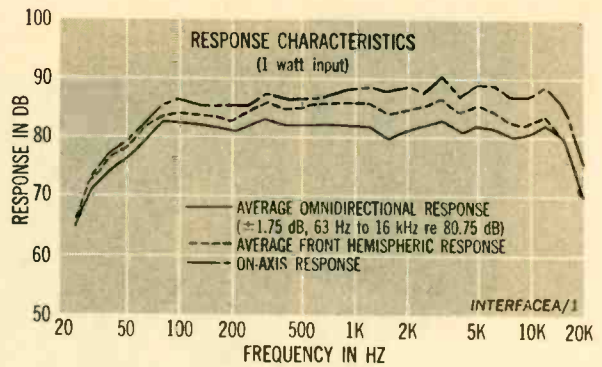
In a normal room the bass response seems better than the curve would suggest of course—a normal condition due to room reinforcement of the low frequencies. Down to about 35 Hz test tones remain strong and unusually clean; below that frequency response falls off. At the top end, thanks to the dual tweeters, there is very little sense of beaming. With test tones the response is reasonably smooth and, though cancellation can be spotted at 90 degrees off axis above 10 kHz, very well dispersed. From that frequency upward, the sound becomes progressively beamy. At 18 kHz it is considerably down in level and is audible (to those of our listeners whose hearing extends that far) only on axis.

From musical material we judged the Interface A to be unusually clean and smooth, though—perhaps because of its utter lack of boominess in the bass—it conveys somewhat less sense of "body" in orchestral music than you might expect in typical bookshelf systems. "Crisp" was one word used to characterize its reproduction of music—particularly instrumental music. And though the sound is not colored in the usual sense, its flat upper range led some listeners to call it "rather bright."

Efficiency of the system is higher than that of typical acoustic-suspension systems. It requires 4.4 watts to produce the standard midband output of 94 dB at 1 meter on axis. It handles up to 100 watts of steady power for an acoustic output of 108 dB, and it handles pulses to 160 watts average for 113 dB output—an ample dynamic range.

Nominal impedance measured 5 ohms in the lab—as opposed to E-V's 8-ohm rating. From the rating point at about 200 Hz the impedance rises to beyond 16 ohms in the region around 1 to 2 kHz, then descends to about 8 ohms from 5 kHz upwards. But though most of the curve lies relatively high, it might be better to treat the Interface A as you would a 4-ohm model in multiple-speaker hookups.

The Interface A is handsome both in sound and in ap-



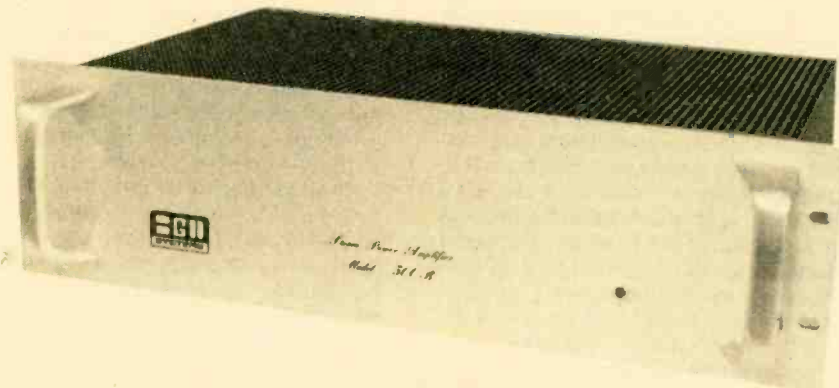
Electro-Voice Interface A Harmonic Distortion*

Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	0.50	1.0	0.55	0.60
75	0.45	0.70	0.55	0.60
80	0.60	0.70	0.55	0.60
85	0.95	1.1	0.55	0.60
90	1.6	1.8	0.55	0.60
95	3.1	3.4	0.55	0.60
100			0.58	0.60
105			0.58	0.62
108			0.65	0.65

*Distortion data are taken on all tested speakers until distortion exceeds the 10 per cent level or the speaker produces the spurious output known as buzzing, whichever occurs first.

pearance. The unusual shallowness of its enclosure makes it really fit on a bookshelf, though if you want to retain the full high-frequency dispersion provided by its rear-firing tweeter you should plan on a space of at least two inches between the enclosure and the wall behind it. The enclosures can be positioned either vertically or horizontally (E-V gives you their medallions in a separate envelope so you can orient them accordingly after you have decided on placement) and their thin profile makes them seem less bulky than most enclosures when they are free-standing.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



A Fine Amplifier from BGW

The Equipment: BGW Model 500R power amplifier, in metal case suitable for rack mounting. Dimensions: 19 by 5¼ by 12¼ inches. Price: \$685. Warranty: Three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: BGW Systems, P.O. Box 3742, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212.

Comment: BGW is a relatively new company, producing electronic equipment primarily for professional use but which—like the products of other companies that could be similarly characterized—is also appropriate for use in high-quality home systems. At a rating of 200 watts per

channel, the Model 500R can be called a super-power job with considerable justice; and it is among the most basic of basic amps since it has no operating controls whatever. This is, in fact, the product area in which BGW may be said to specialize.

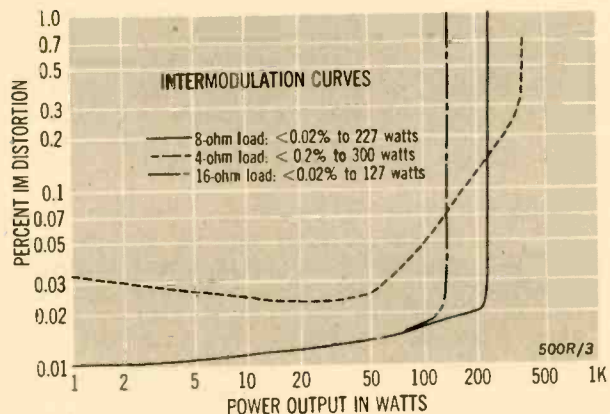
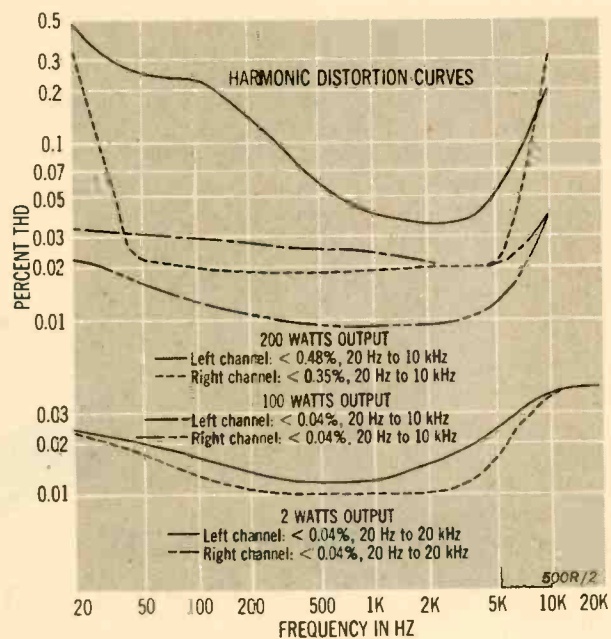
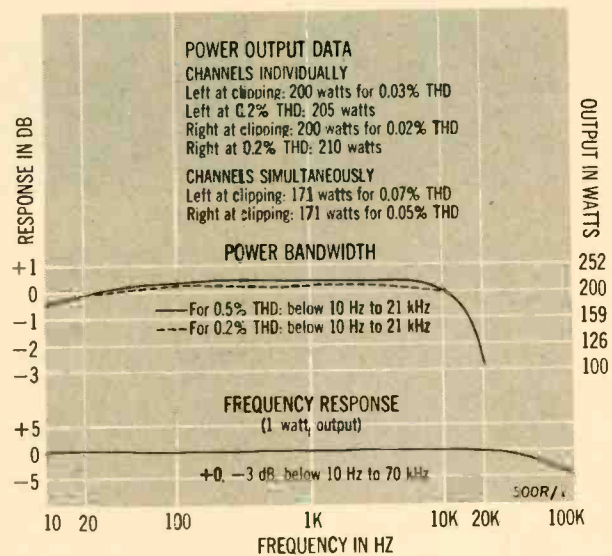
Don't let the power rating lead you astray when you come to examine the lab data on the unit, however; while the figures show it to be a very powerful amplifier indeed, they also show that alternate rating techniques might have pegged the output a little lower than BGW does. More important, this emphasis on power itself overlooks what is perhaps the 500R's most significant single characteristic: its extremely low distortion even at very low output. In due course we'll explain why we think this so important in such a product; but first, the lab data.

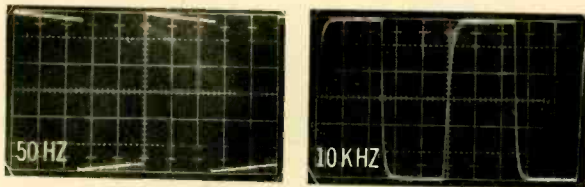
The power bandwidth curves show that at either the manufacturer's rating of 0.2% THD or at our arbitrary measurement standard of 0.5% the output exceeds the 200-watt rating by a hair in the range between about 40 Hz and 10 kHz but falls off at both extremes. Put conversely, distortion at full output rises a little above the 0.2% rating in the extreme bass, a good deal above it at the extreme top. But true harmonic products of frequencies above 10 kHz all are themselves above 20 kHz and therefore above audibility. Furthermore program material in which the extreme top frequencies (representing only overtones of normal musical instruments) must be produced at levels equal to those required in the midrange is rare indeed. Similarly, we doubt that most users ever will need 200 watts at 40 Hz.

Nonetheless, some manufacturers do try to rate their amps in such a way that the product will meet spec at all audible frequencies, which the 500R does not quite do. And with both channels driven the output at clipping is down to 171 watts per channel. That's still plenty of power, however; and even if we were to assume that an ultraconservative rating might be some 150 watts per channel, this output level is only about 1 dB below that of BGW's rating. So no matter how you slice it, the 500R is powerful, though not among the most powerful on the market.

Far more important, as we say, is the way distortion behaves at lower output levels. Too often, judging from reader letters, the purchaser of "a great high-powered amplifier" forgets that fixed distortion (typically, in solid-state designs, "crossover" distortion) and noise factors will eventually swallow up the signal if its level is cut back far enough. The smaller the signal, the larger a percentage of that signal the fixed factors represent; hence the typical rising distortion characteristics for progressively lower output levels. In practical terms this means that you can buy 200 watts or so of "superbly clean" amplifier power only to find that when you drive your prized new amp at modest levels—say around 1 watt—it no longer is superbly clean.

But look at the distortion curves for the 500R. At 1% of rated output (2 watts) the distortion curves are slightly better than at 50% of rated output (100 watts). In searching through past lab test records we find precious few amplifiers or amplifier sections of receivers for which a comparable statement might be made. And of course all the 500R readings for 2 watts and for 100 watts are well below 0.1% THD. (Although CBS Labs obtained short-term readings below 0.1% THD above 10 kHz at 100 watts' output, this portion of the curve is omitted here because the readings rose somewhat with longer testing, preventing exact numerical characterization of distortion. Harmonic-distortion data





Square-wave response

above 10 kHz are omitted in the 200-watt curves because the distortion here was too high to allow useful data.) And intermodulation is comparably low.

This is, then, essentially an amplifier that will do an outstanding job of delivering equally clean sound to a high-efficiency speaker system operating at moderate output levels or to a power-hungry air-suspension-plus-equalizer setup driven hard. While you may be hesitant to connect a 200-watt amplifier to a high-efficiency speaker not rated to handle this much power—and we would certainly suggest the fusing of speakers whose capacity is significantly lower—BGW has taken care that you need not worry about the amplifier itself. It has

BGW 500R Amplifier Additional Data

Damping factor	40	
Input characteristics (for 200 watts output)	Sensitivity	S/N ratio
	2.1 V	103 dB

replaced the conventional fused or relay-controlled amplifier protection circuit with a fast-acting thyristor design that discharges the power supply and turns off the unit when current surge or other conditions reach dangerous proportions.

The 500R is thus a close approach to the ideal of a "black box that amplifies" without doing anything else. It's not black of course; the brushed aluminum front panel is designed with rack-mounting in mind. It has elegantly formed, heavy-duty handles at either side, plus a pilot light. Aside from company and model identifications and holes for mounting hardware, that's it. The on/off switch is, on the back panel, together with mono phone jacks for the input to each channel and double binding posts (for single or double banana plugs, large spade lugs, or bare wires) for the output from each channel. The heavy-duty power cord is terminated in a grounded AC plug.

Considering the power that the amp can deliver, we'd prefer not to see it plugged into the convenience outlet on a preamp, meaning that you will either have to reach to the back of the unit to turn it on or plug it into an externally switched outlet. For permanent installation, the latter seems preferable; then the amp can be hidden away in a convenient but adequately ventilated niche. Not only do we see no reason why you'll want to get at it—you may not even think of it, so clean and apparently effortless is its sound. It is, in fact, a super amp in every way—not just in output power.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Monitor-Head Cassette Deck from Technics

The Equipment: Technics by Panasonic Model RS-279US, a cassette deck with Dolby noise reduction and separate monitor head, in wood case. Dimensions: 16½ x 5½ by approx. 12 inches. Price: \$499.95. Warranty: labor, 90 days; parts, 1 year; HPF tape heads, 10 years parts and labor; customer pays shipping to authorized service agency. Manufacturer: Matsushita Electric, Japan; U.S. distributor: Matsushita Electric Corp. of America, 200 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Comment: One of the "hottest new features" in cassette-recorder design is the separate monitor head. Panasonic created considerable stir when it displayed a prototype of the present unit a year and a half ago; more recently several other manufacturers have evinced interest in adopting the feature—long a hallmark of the better open-reel decks—in cassette hardware. Essentially there are two reasons why it is desirable. Only with a monitor head can you check the quality of a tape while

it is being recorded. In live recording, or whenever the recordist will have only one shot at the program material, this ability can forestall bitter disappointments later on. Second, it is possible to build separate playback heads with narrower gaps than those needed in combination record/play heads, and the narrower the gap the higher the frequencies it will resolve.

The Technics design is based on the first of these considerations, but not on the second. That is, the monitor head in the RS-279 is intended for checking recording quality, but not for regular playback. This may seem an odd approach at first, but our experience with what little monitor-head cassette equipment has come our way so far suggests that it is difficult to keep cassette tapes from skewing somewhat—and in ways that may differ from one cassette to another—between the record head and the monitor head. (The Nakamichi 1000, for example, gets around this problem by adding aids to monitor-head alignment so that the head can be

optimized for whatever cassette is at hand; the question is whether the average home user will want to bother with frequent head alignment for ideal performance.) By using the record/play head as the normal playback head, Technics gives up the promise of slightly better high-frequency response in favor of predictable—and therefore “permanently” optimum—tape-to-head azimuth alignment.

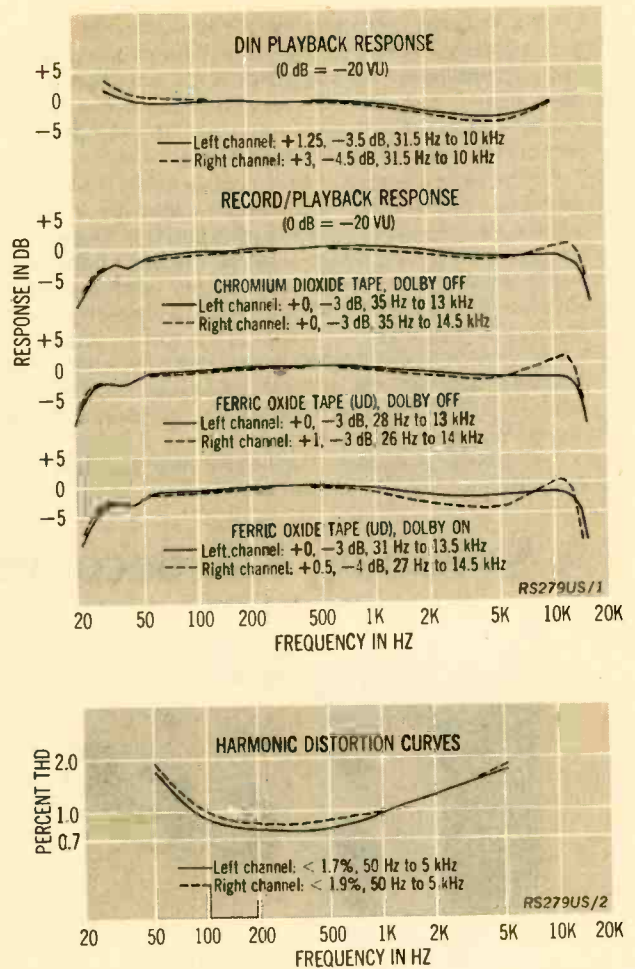
To see how this design works out in practice, let's examine the controls. The drive mechanism is controlled by a series of rectangular buttons in front of the cassette well. At the extreme left are an eject button and a red recording button. To the right are buttons for the two fast-wind modes, play/record, pause, and stop. Since most of these functions are controlled by solenoids, triggered by their respective buttons, rather than by mechanical linkages, Technics has used some options unavailable with mechanical linkages. For example the solenoid action is so quick and positive in starting recording or playback that a pause is almost unnecessary. The Technics' pause action (turned on by pressing the near end of the button—which lights a small green pilot light nearby—and turned off by pressing the far end or by pressing the play button) duplicates that of the stop button except that it does not turn off the recording function automatically when the transport stops. It is therefore a handy start/stop device during recording, but in playback its action can be duplicated with the start and stop buttons.

Internal “logic” permits going directly from playback (or recording) to one of the fast-wind modes, but the stop button must be pressed first in going from fast wind to playback. The transport disengages at the end of the cassette in any transport mode. To monitor levels in advance of actual recording, simply press the record button without pressing the play button. When you're ready to record, simply press the play button and you're rolling; if you decide against recording you can press the stop button to turn off the recording function.

The electronics (as opposed to transport) controls are on the panel at the right. Along the near edge are four knobs for input (recording) levels and output levels in each channel. (We prefer slides to knobs as recording-level controls, in the interest of quick one-hand fades, but recognize that many recordists may not agree.) At their right is a stereo headphone jack.

When you switch to the monitor head during playback—and remember that this is not the normal playback mode—you may hear some increase in high-frequency response. With some high-quality non-Dolby ferric cassettes (Abbado's Brahms Second on DG is one of our favorites) we judged the highs perhaps a hair more open and piquant when heard through the monitor head than through the regular record/play head. The effect does vary from cassette to cassette, however, and is compromised to some extent by either chromium dioxide or Dolby processing.

This is because the output of the monitor head bypasses both controls; to have Dolby-decoded monitoring of Dolby-encoded recordings, Technics would have been required to include an extra pair of Dolby circuits (one per channel) for that purpose alone. Dolby cassettes therefore will have the somewhat shrill, compressed sound that allows of only partial compensation with the treble control in your stereo system; chromium dioxide cassettes will sound only a trifle shrill, and while good compensation can be made with a treble control, A/B comparisons of tonal balances between input and playback are awkward at best. They are impossible, of



Technics RS-279US Additional Data

Speed accuracy	105 VAC: 0.7% slow 120 VAC: 0.6% slow 127 VAC: 0.5% slow
Wow and flutter	playback: 0.05% record/play: 0.07%
Rewind time (C-60 cassette)	67 sec.
Fast-forward time (same cassette)	67 sec.
S/N ratio (re 0 VU; Dolby off)	
playback	L ch: 54.5 dB R ch: 53.5 dB
record/play	L ch: 51.5 dB R ch: 49.5 dB
Erasure (333 Hz at normal level)	68 dB
Crosstalk (at 333 Hz)	
record left, play right	41 dB
record right, play left	41 dB
Sensitivity (for 0 VU recording level)	
line input	L ch: 62 mV R ch: 51 mV
mike input	L ch: 0.37 mV R ch: 0.40 mV
Meter action	externally adjustable (0-VU calibration approx. 2 dB below Dolby ref. calibration)
IM distortion (record/play, -10 VU)	7.5%
Maximum output (line, 0 VU)	
	L ch: 0.75 V R ch: 0.60 V

course, in Dolby recording. What the monitor head tells you is whether or not the recorder is functioning properly and whether or not you are driving the climaxes into distortion—not whether the tonal balance is exactly as you would like it. For that you must monitor the input and rely on the deck to preserve what you hear.

On the back panel are pairs of pin jacks for line output and line input and miniature phone jacks for mike inputs. A switch selects between mike and line; there is no provision for mixing inputs. Also on the back panel is a receptacle for the RP-9275 accessory remote-control unit (\$34.95), which handles all the standard transport functions. Note that the line outputs are designed to "work into" at least 50,000 ohms. Input impedance at the tape connections of most amps and receivers is above this figure, but we suggest you double check the impedance rating in advance.

The measurements at CBS Labs (using Maxell UD tape except where chromium dioxide—BASF's—is

specified) show the RS-279 to be typical of the better cassette decks we have been seeing. Among the measurements that are particularly attractive are those for wow and flutter: by a hair, the best we have measured so far in a cassette deck. Part of the credit must go to the two-motor transport design, in which a DC motor is directly coupled to the capstan and a separate AC motor is used to power fast-wind modes. While we have seen flatter response curves and more exact matching between channels, the Technics cannot be called substandard in these respects. In terms of over-all performance it is good without being spectacularly so. What really sets it apart are the lush feel and precise action of the solenoid controls and, of course, the monitor head. That last feature lends important new capability to the deck as an instrument for the serious home recordist. To such a user we can commend the RS-279 as a deck that is a joy to use.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

A Switching Box Becomes a Speaker-Control System



The Equipment: Russound Multi-Play MP-2, a control unit for amplifier and speaker switching with level controls, in wood-grain finished case. Dimensions: 8 by 3¼ by 4 inches. Price: \$74.95. Warranty: six months parts and labor, return shipping from factory prepaid. Manufacturer: Russound/FMP, Inc., Portsmouth Ave. Traffic Circle, Stratham, N.H. 03885.

Comment: In the December 1972 issue we reported on what might be called an earlier version of the present unit: the SWB-2. It was a cleverly designed and inexpensive gadget (it's still available at \$14.95 in a utility case) that allowed you to run any or all of three stereo pairs of speakers from either of two amplifiers. The speaker switching was handled so that the combined impedance would never fall dangerously low even with all three speaker pairs in operation; yet with any one pair in operation the coupling was direct—unlike some speaker-switching devices it left no impedance-matching resistors in the circuit when they were not needed.

Even ignoring its added features, the new unit is not exactly like its predecessor. Because of the level controls for each of its four (not three) loudspeaker output pairs, the new unit cannot retain the impedance-matching system of the older one. Care has been taken that no speaker combination will present a dangerously low impedance to the amplifier, but some resistance (about 2 ohms) is added by the switching unit when only a single speaker pair is in use.

The level controls pose some limitation on the power-handling capacity of the unit. Whereas the older one

was rated for up to 70 watts per channel, the MP-2 is rated for 20. With the level controls all the way up, however, they are essentially out of the circuit; and since their windings are the limiting factor in power handling, levels considerably over the 20-watt rating should be entirely safe as long as all level adjustments are made at the amplifier in use.

This is how the unit is supposed to be used, anyway. The outputs from two stereo amplifiers can be connected to the MP-2's A and B inputs and up to four speaker pairs connected to its outputs. To balance the system you would set to maximum the control for the speakers making the greatest power demands and turn down the other controls until the remaining speakers balance with the first pair. Individual switches for each speaker pair choose one or the other (or neither) of the amplifiers—a big plus over the old unit, which had only a single amplifier selector switch for the whole unit. From then on, all level adjustments are made at the amps.

They need not be separate stereo amps; the MP-2 works equally well in controlling quadriphonic systems. With the front channels connected to A and the back channels to B inputs, you can use the MP-2 for two full quadriphonic speaker sets. You can even flop the sound image over within the room, so to speak, by reversing the positions of the amplifier switches for each speaker pair.

There are, in fact, far more applications for the new unit than for the old one. For example, it will feed two *separate* stereo programs to different rooms; it allows A/B/C/D speaker comparisons with compensation for varying speaker efficiencies, rather than A/B/C comparisons without compensation; it has the quadriphonic capability. And Russound has added positive identification for each of the screw terminals and its terminal strips themselves now have barriers as a hedge against accidental shorting between a bare wire or spade lug and its neighbor. Assuming reasonable intelligence and care on the part of the user, we judged the old design, without labeling or barriers, entirely adequate; but the new one certainly is more convenient. And all the added uses to which the new one can be put, plus its more handsome appearance, make it well worth the added cost.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



An Attractive Stereo-Plus Receiver from Rotel

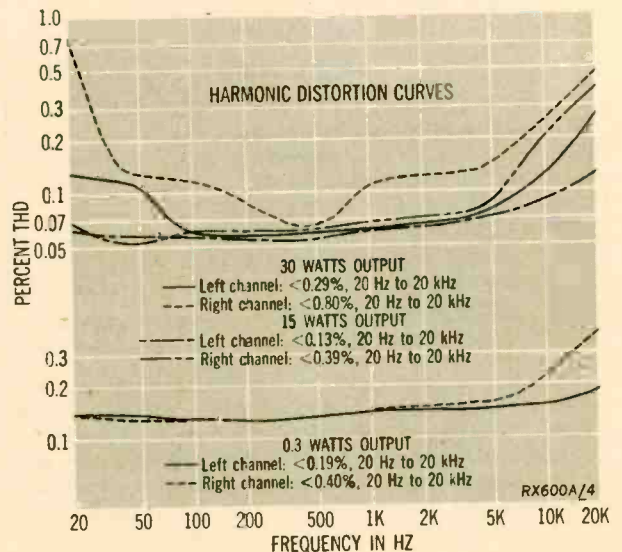
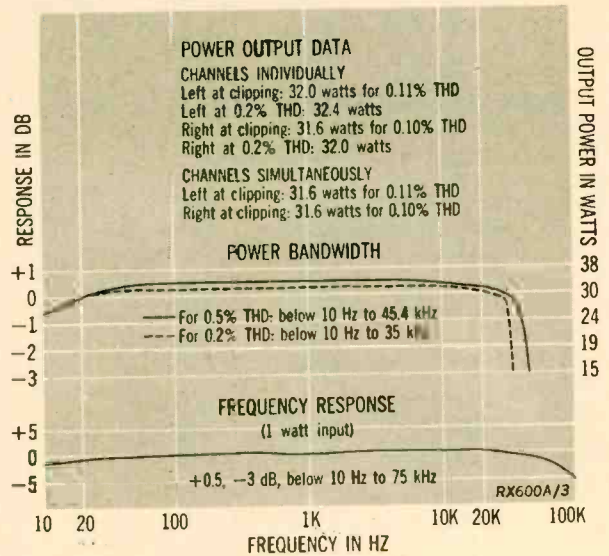
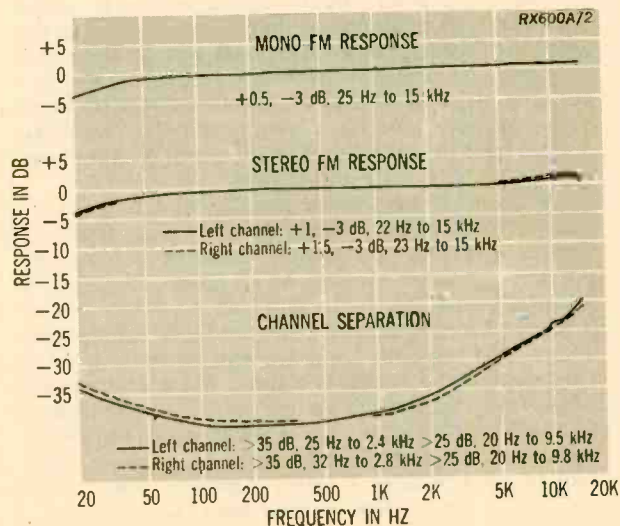
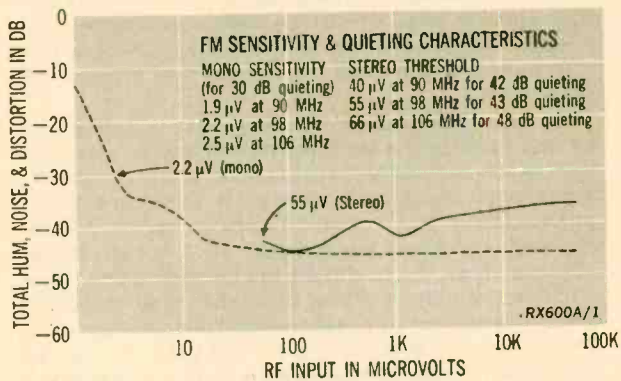
The Equipment: Rotel RX-600A stereo FM/AM receiver with provision for "speaker matrix" simulation of quadraphonics, in wood case. Dimensions: 16 3/4 by 5 1/4 by approx. 13 inches. Price: \$349.95. Warranty: two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Roland Electronics Co., Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Rotel of America, Inc., 2642 Central Park Ave., Yonkers, N.Y. 10710.

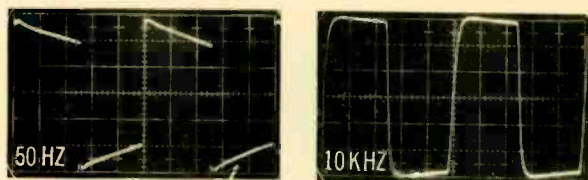
Comment: Since Rotel has "specialized" in budget-priced components, we were pleasantly surprised on unpacking the RX-600A to note the unusually attractive finish of the unit. Not that it's flashy by any means; though it's smaller than average for a receiver, the neatness and balance of its design prevent a cramped, chintzy appearance.

The tuning dial—which, though it dominates the front panel, is somewhat smaller than average for a receiver—is flanked by the usual AM/FM signal-strength

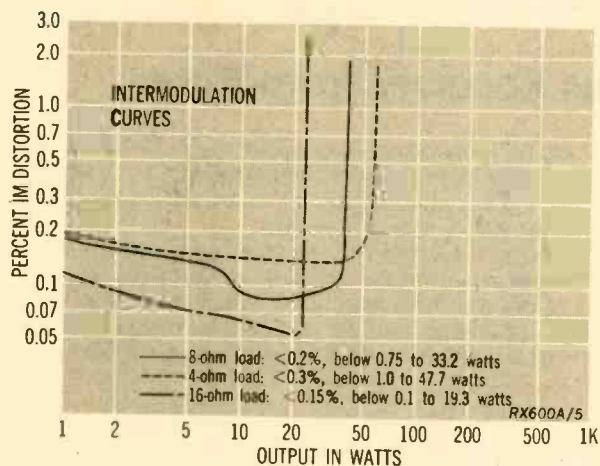
and FM-only center-tuning meters to the left and the tuning knob to the right. Below the dial are a series of lighting selector indicators; immediately to its left is a stereo FM-reception indicator.

Along the bottom of the front panel are the headphone jack (which is live at all times); pushbuttons for AC power, FM muting, tone defeat, high filter, mode (stereo/mono), tape monitor, and loudness compensation; and knobs for speaker selection, bass, treble, bal-





Square-wave response



Rotel RX-600A Receiver Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	4 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	61 dB		
S/N ratio	71 dB		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.62%	1.0%	1.1%
1 kHz	0.32%	0.38%	0.35%
10 kHz	0.35%	1.6%	1.2%
IM distortion	0.33%		
19-kHz pilot	better than -63 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	better than -63 dB		
Frequency response			
mono	+0.5, -3 dB, 25 Hz to 15 kHz		
L ch	+1, -3 dB, 22 Hz to 15 kHz		
R ch	+1.5, -3 dB, 23 Hz to 15 kHz		
Channel separation			
	>35 dB, 32 Hz to 2.4 kHz		
	>25 dB, 20 Hz to 9.5 kHz		
Amplifier Section			
Damping factor	32		
Input characteristics (for 30 watts output)			
	Sensitivity	S/N ratio	
phono 1 (mag)	2.0 mV	66 dB	
phono 2, mag	2.8 mV	66 dB	
phono 2, cer	150 mV	66 dB	
aux 1	83 mV	78 dB	
aux 2	85 mV	78 dB	
tape monitor	86 mV	78 dB	
RIAA equalization accuracy +3, -1.5 dB, 37 Hz to 20 kHz			

ance, volume, and function selector. The speaker selector has positions for main, remote, both, neither, and speaker matrix. In the last position, a Dynaquad-type circuit is inserted at the output of the stereo power amplifier section, driving the main speakers as the front channels and the remote speakers as the back channels of a simulated quadraphonic setup. The function

selector includes positions for phono 1, phono 2, AM, FM, aux 1, and aux 2.

On the back panel there are the usual pin-jack pairs for inputs: phono 1 (magnetic only), phono 2 (separate jacks for magnetic or ceramic cartridges), aux 1, aux 2, tape monitor. Similar jacks allow for two tape-recording outputs—the first for use in conjunction with the monitor input, the other for a deck that has no monitor provision, using one of the aux inputs for playback. There are also pre-out and main-in jacks, supplied with jumpers that could be replaced by the leads for a speaker equalizer or other outboard equipment. Speaker connections are spring-loaded to accept bared wires; screws accepting spade lugs or bare wires are used for antenna connections—300-ohm and 75-ohm FM or external AM to supplement the built-in AM ferrite bar antenna. A grounding screw is located near the phono inputs. Two switched AC convenience outlets also are provided.

The amplifier section is rated with reasonable conservatism at 30 watts per channel. Note that at 1 kHz it can exceed this figure even with both channels driven, though in the harmonic-distortion tests figures run above Rotel's 0.2% rating at the frequency extremes—a situation that is neither unusual nor serious, since there normally is no reason to want full rated power at these frequencies. And Rotel's rating is more stringent than average for a moderate-priced receiver. Note that in both power bandwidth curves (that at Rotel's 0.2% THD and that at our 0.5% standard) the amp makes its full 30 watts at all audible frequencies—with a mere 0.25 dB greater margin for 0.5% THD at most frequencies. Overall, the amplifier section is a competent if unspectacular design for driving almost any pair of speakers; where all four speaker taps are to be used, reasonably high speaker efficiency would be desirable if you also want resounding, undistorted reproduction of musical climaxes.

Readers in the habit of perusing these reports will not be impressed by the lab's findings on the FM tuner section. Mono sensitivity is respectable at 2.2 microvolts, but quieting beyond this minimum is no better than fair at a maximum figure of 46 dB—which requires 500 microvolts or more of input signal. Thus in high signal-strength areas, the sound will not be particularly clean; and this probably would not be a receiver to choose for a fringe reception area, even with a fairly good antenna. This conclusion is reinforced by CBS Labs' findings on stereo performance. It takes more than average signal (55 microvolts at 98 MHz) to trip the automatic stereo switching, and although quieting is beyond 40 dB at this point, the quieting does not improve with greater signal strength. And indeed the best stereo signals available in our area do not sound as clean on the RX-600A as on other equipment we have tested recently. The difference is hard to tell by ear, however, with poorer stereo signals or with most mono signals.

Taking all things together, the RX-600A is a receiver whose "feel," styling, and amplifier section all are attractive—the latter particularly because of its quadraphonic-simulation feature. As we have commented in reviewing other products with this capability, stereo recordings and broadcasts can produce quadraphonic effects that are both attractive and convincing when played through a "speaker matrix." It is a welcome additional feature. Though we can't be equally enthusiastic about the FM section, the receiver should be of interest to users to whom broadcasts already are an "also-ran" to discs or tapes in terms of pure sonics.

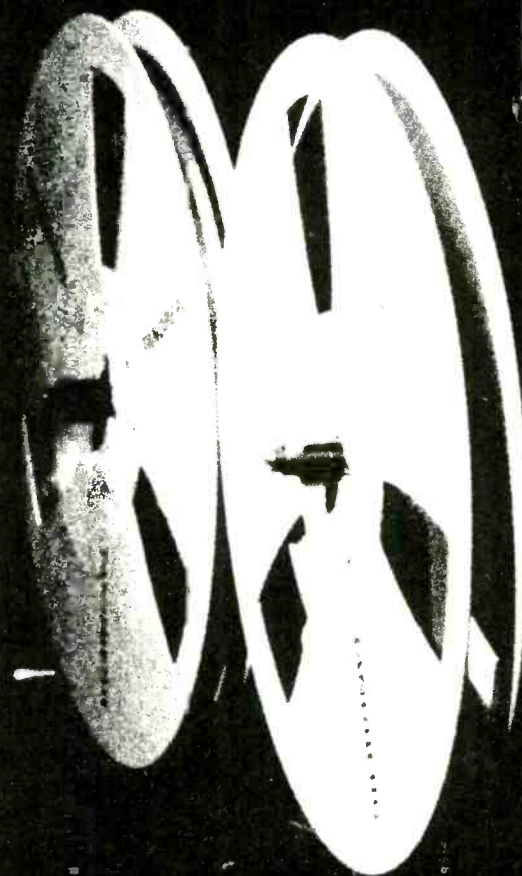
CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Experts Answer Fourteen of Your Questions

You, dear readers, have been the inspiration for this special tape issue of HIGH FIDELITY. Each month we receive letters from you asking us for advice and information about all audio matters, much of it centering on tape and tape recording. Of course many of your queries are answered in our "Too Hot to Handle" column, at least if they can be "handled" briefly. But some questions are repeated over and over again and seem to deserve more extensive answers. We have therefore culled from your correspondence fourteen questions touching on all aspects of tape recording, choosing them for their breadth of application and for the frequency with which our readers have asked them.

For answers, we have turned to a group of writers whose experience we believe makes them unusually qualified for the specific questions at hand.

Robert Angus not only is well known for his many articles on tape and tape equipment, but is an active amateur recordist and collector of unusual tapes—everything from interviews to old radio shows to historic opera performances. Audio engineer Edward J. Foster was until recently with CBS Laboratories and now free-lances in both product testing and technical writing; tape and recorders constitute an area of particular interest to him. Michael B. Martin is the technical director of the Audio-Video Group, Media Products Division of Memorex Corporation—a company that produces both ferric and chromium dioxide cassettes among its consumer tape products. William Slatkin, by profession a public-relations man, was at one time an Ampex employee and is familiar with the problems of the tape business at both the manufacturing and the retail level. Peter E. Suthern, now the operations manager of KPFK, the listener-sponsored Pacifica station in Los Angeles, is past audio editor of *Radio-Electronics* magazine and a free-lance recordist.



Tapes and Recorders

Does Automatic Reverse Detract from Quality?

CERTAINLY the operational advantages of an automatic reverse feature in an open-reel tape deck are attractive. Why get up, flip that reel over, and rethread the tape if you don't have to? Why not combine the endless play of an eight-track cartridge with the superior sound of the open-reel format? Bidirectional cassette equipment has been developed too, of course; but since it is both less common and less advantageous (cassettes never need rethreading) than the reel type, I'll confine my remarks to the latter.

In the early days of auto-reverse, conventional decks had better performance. Even if the auto-reverse mechanism could match the conventional in the forward direction, it seldom did in "reverse." More often, however, the bidirectional model was a poor second to its unidirectional counterpart in terms of reliability, wow and flutter, value, and—at least in movable-head models—head-alignment accuracy. But over the years HIGH FIDELITY's lab tests of automatic-reverse equipment appear to show that a great deal of improvement has been made. Although a small gap in performance remains, that gap is narrowing.

Several different design approaches have been tried. Some early models had a single capstan located in the same position as on conventional decks. Two sets of heads were used—one for the Side A tracks and the other for Side B. At the end of Side A, the motor is electrically reversed, the function of the supply and take-up reels is interchanged, and the electronics are switched to the second set of heads. To my mind this approach is the least desirable since it includes all the problem areas of auto-reverse. For one thing, tape motion in the reverse direction is seldom as good as in the forward direction because the capstan is "upstream" of the head rather than "downstream" and seldom is the take-up tension as uniform as the hold-back tension. Furthermore, magnetic heads are not as uniform electrically as one might like. Usually the electronics are factory-adjusted to suit the particular set of heads in the machine. Sharing the same electronics between two sets of heads means the adjustment must be a compromise between forward and reverse.

To avoid the first problem (the capstan being "upstream" of the heads in reverse play) two approaches have been taken: 1) a single capstan located centrally between the forward and reverse heads; and 2) dual capstans—one at either end of the head stack. Both are an improvement over the first method. Obviously, though, one is still left with two different sets of heads.

Some manufacturers have tried a single set of heads, mounted on a movable platform; the heads are repositioned for the reverse run. This trades in the electrical problem for a mechanical one. Track positioning and azimuth alignment must be maintained after repeated head shifts. Furthermore, the heads may wear differently in forward and reverse, eventually inhibiting smooth tape motion. Improved design in the head-shifting mechanisms has ameliorated this problem but not eliminated it.

As I say, there are some fine auto-reverse machines available. The performance gap is narrowing. But these machines are complex; be prepared to pay more for them, and perhaps to turn them over to the repairman more often than conventional machines.

Edward J. Foster

Which Drive System Is Best?

ONE MOTOR? Two motors? Three motors? Is a hysteresis motor ideal for the capstan drive or is a DC servocontrolled system better?

Single-motor machines *have* been built to outperform three-motor decks. But in any specific examples you generally will find that the single-motor deck was a top-of-the-line model and the three-motor machine was a sop to multimotor enthusiasts. With otherwise equivalent design and construction, a three-motor deck should outperform *and* outlast a single-motor deck. It should be more reliable and handle the tape more gently. Why?

The reliability of a three-motor deck stems largely from its simplicity. There is a capstan motor whose shaft is either the capstan itself or is belted to a flywheel-capstan assembly, and there are two reel motors directly connected to the hubs, usually with a solenoid-operated brake. There are an absolute minimum number of mechanical

linkages. All function changes are electrically controlled—either directly or via solenoids. When you go into fast forward, for example, the pinch roller solenoid is de-energized, the take-up motor receives a high voltage and the supply motor a low hold-back voltage. Rewind means zapping the supply motor and reducing the take-up voltage. Recording or playback engages the pinch roller and reduces both supply and take-up voltages. All this can be done by electrical switching and it can be done by remote control—a nice feature.

A single-motor machine is a mass of sheet metal and wire or rod linkages. The single motor is engaged and disengaged through a series of different clutches to control both the direction and the amount of torque delivered to the reel hubs. Linkages bend, get hung up, and jam; clutches foul and change their torque transfer characteristics; belts harden and break, or pick up oil and slip; adjustment nuts loosen. Obviously there's a lot more to go wrong with single-motor machines than with tri-motor decks.

With the capstan motor devoted solely to turning the capstan, speed stability (wow and flutter) should be improved. Contrast this with the single-motor machine where the capstan motor must supply the energy to take up the tape. (Usually hold-back tension is supplied by a clutched brake on the supply reel—hardly ideal for uniform tension.) As the tape-pack diameter increases on the take-up side, the loading on the motor changes and this can affect the speed. Further, a bump in the pack can be transmitted directly into the tape motion as wow.

What about the capstan motor itself? Is the hysteresis motor all it's cracked up to be? Personally I favor a well-designed DC servomotor over the hysteresis type. Although the *average* speed of a hysteresis motor is independent of power line voltage and mechanical loading (within reason of course), its *instantaneous* speed does reflect *changes* in the voltage or loading. If you suddenly increase the load on a hysteresis motor, it will instantaneously slow down—sort of skip a beat. This doesn't show up in lab tests since the tests are based on the long-term average speeds, but it can produce a momentary slowdown, i.e. wow, in the tape. On the other hand, a well-designed servo can rapidly respond to load changes with an increase in motor drive. Speed is determined entirely by the stability of the circuitry—not by line or frequency changes. Of course, there is more circuitry to get out of whack and DC motors generally don't have the life of a hysteresis motor, but I'll still take them for over-all performance. E.J.F.

Will Chromium Dioxide Tape Cause Severe Cassette Head Wear?

THE INTRODUCTION of the unique chromium dioxide magnetic particle for use in audio cassette tapes made possible high fidelity recordings that can compete with all but the highest quality professional open-reel recorders. But there have been questions raised concerning the effect of its use on the delicate record/play heads.

With all magnetic tape, the rate of head wear depends more on the environmental conditions, the processing, and the specific binder formulation used by the tape manufacturer than it does on the magnetic particle. All the evidence available to date leads to the conclusion

that if there are any differences in the fundamental abrasivity of the chromium dioxide particle as compared with ferric oxide powders, it is, to all practical purposes, completely obscured by the other factors involved.

Environmental conditions have a very significant bearing on the rate of head wear. For example where normal quantities of dust are present, some will become buried in the surface of the tape; this can convert a tape with a low rate of head wear to one that is quite abrasive. Atmospheric humidity also has a significant bearing on the abrasiveness. Figures in a technical paper on this subject by Carroll and Gotham show that a change in relative humidity from 20 per cent to 80 per cent will cause a corresponding rise in the rate of head wear with ferric oxide tapes. This means head life on any recorder will probably be less in Florida than in Arizona.

The company with which I am associated has been making and testing chromium dioxide cassettes for approximately three years. During this time continuous quality-control testing has resulted in head life of 1,000 to over 4,000 hours depending on the design of the head. A thousand hours' use represents almost three hours per day for one year, which is the normal warranty period for the over-all piece of recording equipment.

Another technical paper, by Jordan, Kerr, and Dickens, shows that on an audio cassette recorder with a mu-metal head (commonly known as an iron head), chromium dioxide will wear the head at the rate of 1/1,000 to 1/2,000 of an inch per 1,000 hours of use, while a ferrite head wears at less than 1/10 that rate. How this translates in terms of head life will, again, depend on the design of the head—some have deeper gaps than others and can therefore theoretically tolerate more wear. Moreover equipment manufacturers' confidence in chromium dioxide is demonstrated by their willingness to fit relatively expensive, high-quality mu-metal heads into their top-of-the-line cassette recorders.

The concern that chromium dioxide causes excessive head wear may possibly stem from knowledge of the early trials of chromium dioxide for video use, where the recording head pressures were very much higher than those used in audio transports and the tape formulations and processes were much less sophisticated than those now used in the manufacture of chromium dioxide audio cassette tape. In fact chromium dioxide is used today as the tape in the new video cassettes—without significant wear problems.

Michael B. Martin

Does Dolby Always Help?

TO ANSWER the question we must keep in mind how the Dolby system operates; a surprising number of subtle consequences flow from its essentially simple principle. The B-type Dolby circuit now licensed to many manufacturers of home sound equipment boosts low-amplitude midrange and high-frequency program material during the recording process, according to a precise and standardized curve, and then proportionately reduces the same program material during playback, according to the exact inverse or mirror-image curve. (Actually the same circuit is used for both steps. It is electronically

turned upside down, in effect, by a switch.) The result is that the program material comes out virtually unaltered, while mid- and high-frequency noise is reduced by the variable attenuation during playback.

Point number one is that this is a "closed-loop" system, and only noise originating *within the loop* is reduced. The Dolby process has no effect on noisy originals—like bad cassettes or old records. It is possible to experiment with the playback processor alone for noise reduction in that sense, but you will lose high frequencies in the program, when it is at low volume levels, along with the noise.

Second, the system depends for its effectiveness on the exactly complementary nature of the recording compression and the playback expansion. Any miscalibration, overload, or tape-speed errors will impair its performance. So will incorrectly biased tape or serious peaks or dips in the frequency response of the tape, whether caused by wrong biasing, by deficiencies in the tape itself, or by mechanical problems such as head misalignment or poor tape-to-head contact.

Third, since the Dolby system operates only on low-level signals, its effects will not be noticeable on loud music of limited dynamic range—for example, hard rock. It can even be argued that there will *be* no effects—the system will simply remain quiescent. But then, of course, there is no need for it to operate, since the program will mask any noise. (The "blank" tape between numbers will be quieter with Dolby than without it of course.)

Fourth, there are a few tape recorders whose own dynamic range (the spread between the noise level and the production of a specified amount of distortion) when used with premium-quality tape is actually as great as or greater than that of any Dolby unit that might be used with them. In such a case, a Dolby unit could degrade the over-all signal-to-noise ratio instead of improving it. As that condition is approached, the signal-to-noise ratio of the Dolby circuits themselves becomes the limiting value of the system.

Finally, the home (B-type) Dolby system is effective only from the midrange (about 2 kHz) upward; there is no noise reduction for low-frequency noise. This point is relatively academic, however, since it normally is high-frequency noise that is audible and bothersome.

So the answer, of course, is that Dolby processing does not always help—which in no way impugns the merits of the system. It simply has its limitations and fallibilities, and to use it effectively you should know what they are.

Peter E. Sutheim

Is Your VU Meter a Rip-Off or a Valuable Tool?

WHATEVER THE OBJECTIONS to the meters found in typical consumer tape equipment, rip-off is a pretty strong term; a meter that you find of little help could be a valuable tool to the professional recordist. But for home use that meter on your tape deck probably is far from ideal.

To start with, most meters aren't VU meters even if they claim to be and that *is* a rip-off! A true VU meter has carefully defined specs, especially with respect to frequency response and motional characteristics (called ballistics). The latter is very important. Speech and music have constantly varying levels. By standardizing the ballistics of the VU meter, the professional recording engineer knows that the pointer will respond to a sudden increase in level in 0.3 seconds with an overshoot of no more than 0.15 dB. And he knows that, with these ballistics, the peak levels can be as much as 14 dB above what the meter is indicating. He therefore sets his levels accordingly, leaving from 8 to 14 dB of headroom between his 0 VU record level and the capability of the tape. (NAB standards specify a 0-dB record level that is 8 dB below 3 per cent distortion point of the tape specifically to leave some headroom for these peaks.) And the professional recordist usually has a limiter available to detect and control any signal that otherwise would go "over the top" of that headroom. Thus he can use a professional VU meter and produce low-distortion tapes at high recording levels.

The home recordist seldom has the experience of the pro, and he usually doesn't have that limiter to help save him from his goofs. Furthermore, any resemblance between the miniature recording-level meters on many tape recorders and a professional VU meter resides mainly in the similarity of their scale markings! Some home record meters may be overdamped but most are underdamped. They flick back and forth erratically like waterbugs, often overshooting the mark on sharp transients. The novice, recording from his FM tuner, turns the level down to avoid going over zero and ends up with a noisy, low-level tape! So the next time he decides to record higher. It seems to work! So he tries it again, this time with live programming—a piano, say. Now his tape is overloaded and distorted. You see, the FM program was limited at the transmitter to prevent carrier overmodulation and our novice got used to recording pretty "far up" on the meter. But he couldn't get away with that on live programming.

How much easier it would have been had he had a peak reading indicator! It would have told him that he could turn up the recording level for the FM broadcast; it would have warned him that the piano was exceeding the capability of the tape, even though he recorded it at the same average level. The conventional meter responds with near-average values—actually somewhere between the average and the peaks, depending on the duration of the peaks. But tape is overloaded on peaks—not averages. It is the peak level that determines how high you can record. Thus the peak indicator is a much more useful device for the amateur. (As a matter of fact, professionals too are turning more and more to peak indicators as an adjunct to the VU meter.)

I rue the day that the "unprofessional" *magic-eye* tube, a true instantaneous peak indicator, lost out to those pseudo-VU toys. I only wish magic eyes could have been bigger.

E.J.F.

Are Ferrite Heads Better?

TO FIND OUT what head type is best, we must review what the head is supposed to achieve in its marriage to the tape and what characteristics are important. Then we can compare the properties of ferrite vis-à-vis metal alloys and see how they shape up.

Let's treat the recording head first. It is really a miniature electromagnet with a carefully designed break (the head gap) in the magnetic path. It generates a small magnetic field immediately in front of the gap to magnetize the tape as it passes by. If the field spreads too far or is irregular across the tape, you will not be able to capture

the higher frequencies; the gap must be mechanically straight with parallel edges, and the magnetic core must be capable of handling the signal (plus the bias) without becoming saturated. Moreover when we remove the signal and bias we want the residual magnetization in the core to drop to zero. That is, we don't want the head to act as a

permanent magnet and erase the tape when we are *not* recording. For good efficiency, we want the hysteresis and eddy current losses in the core to be low. Finally we want a smooth head surface to keep the tape close to the gap, and we want to maintain this contact even after many hours of use.

The playback head is similar, though its action is opposite. When the magnetized tape passes in front of the gap, the playback head "funnels" the flux through its core and winding to generate the output voltage. Again, for good high-frequency response we need a carefully defined, straight, parallel gap, and this time it must be very narrow—say 50 millionths of an inch in a high-quality cassette deck. A smooth surface is absolutely imperative. Even a separation of 10 millionths of an inch between the head and the tape will result in a loss of almost 3 dB in 10-kHz response on a cassette player. Further, this smoothness must be maintained after wear. As with the record head, we want a material that is easily magnetizable (for efficiency) but one that does not retain its magnetization. Ability to carry high flux levels is unimportant.

So how does ferrite stack up against the permalloy type heads? The latter have lower hysteresis losses and retain less magnetism, but ferrites have lower eddy current losses, which means you can use a higher bias frequency—an advantage. Permalloy can handle a higher flux level without saturation, but ferrites are at least adequate in this respect. Magnetically, ferrites probably have a slight advantage as record heads and permalloy as playback heads. But as we saw above, the magnetic characteristics do not tell the whole story. We need smooth, straight, narrow gaps and a smooth long-wearing surface. With the exception of the wear rate, this comes as much from manufacturing techniques as from the choice of material. It is probably easier to maintain a straight gap in ferrite than it is in permalloy because the latter must be laminated and so has irregularities. But I suspect it is more difficult to control the gap length in a ferrite head, again because of the manufacturing techniques used.

From a wear standpoint, ferrites are much harder than the metals and so should give longer life. But ferrites are brittle—like their relatives, the ceramics. They fracture easily and microscopic fissures can develop in the material. If they are at the surface, they pick up oxide and lift the tape away from the gap, impairing performance. If they are at the gap it no longer will be straight, impairing high-frequency response. And a fissure at the gap can start to erode as the ferrite about it crushes—and there goes ferrite's reputed longevity. (In this respect single-crystal ferrites are reported to be better than their old-style cousins.)

The bottom line is that you can have a good head made out of either metal or ferrite. Probably metal provides more quality per dollar but the long life (with care) of a top-quality ferrite is not to be ignored.

E.J.F.

What Ever Happened to Ampex?

ONCE UPON A TIME, before the heyday of the Japanese imports, there was a name in consumer tape recorders that towered above all others: Ampex. It wasn't that the Ampex models available to the consumer would do everything any recordist might want; but "everybody knew" that Ampexes were used by "all" professionals, and that Ampexes therefore had to be pretty hot stuff.

Now in case you hadn't noticed, the name is not among the numerous brands of home electronic gear available today. So what ever happened to Ampex?

What in fact did happen was that the Ampex Corporation experienced a combination of poor timing and bad luck and found itself outside the growing home-recording industry looking in.

First the poor timing. Ampex offered a line of top-quality (and top-price) machines at a time when the American electronics giants and then the Japanese manufacturers were offering less quality but selling at lower prices while concentrating on advertising and marketing skills. Ampex also was among the very first to bring the audio cassette and the helical-scan video-tape-recording technique to American buyers; but the latecomers, mostly Japanese manufacturers, followed up with the sales muscle and took most of the business.

In 1964 Ampex introduced a new recorder line. Not only was the timing bad (the big push toward American acceptance of many Japanese brands already was on) but the new models incorporated the results of some poor marketing decisions. They ignored the popular identification between the Ampex name and the so-called professional features in recorder design, opting instead for premium convenience features (automatic tape threading, automatic reverse, and the like) and—horror of horrors—a level-indicating system that abandoned “professional VU meters” [see the separate question this subject—Ed.] in favor of more accurate but less familiar-looking peak-reading neon lamps. What kind of Ampexes were these, American recordists wondered.

It wasn't until the later Sixties—when Don Hall, a young, mod-dressing wheeler-dealer, started making barrels of money for Ampex by producing popular albums on Ampex Stereo Tapes (AST)—that the company's pin-striped executives began learning how to get ahead in the competitive marketplace. As a result, the Ampex consumer equipment was totally revamped to meet user needs and preferences.

The company even offered two lines it had rather foolishly shunned before: portable cassette units for dictation and 8-track player/recorders. But that was in 1970 and 1971, when the company's timing had improved and its bad luck had begun.

The economic recession (causing a decline in the consumer business), stiffer competition, and the rise of the tape pirate (who sells unauthorized recordings for rock-bottom prices), were key factors that drove the stereo tape division into the red. And the recession was also taking its toll of the company's other businesses.

What followed at Ampex was a pretty thorough shake-up with many corporate officers, including both the company president and Don Hall, handing in their resignations. Lacking the capital to keep its entire ship afloat, the remaining management chose to discontinue its consumer equipment business.

The Ampex tape recorder became a thing of the past—except, of course, in the professional and educational fields—and the company's recorded-tape division struggled for survival. Meanwhile, Ampex's blank-tape operation enjoyed modest success and little attention.

But there's an important epilogue to this story: During the past several months, the company has demonstrated considerable skill at selling its line of blank and recorded audio tapes. And Ampex Stereo Tapes has been busy contracting out its production facilities in suburban Chicago to make tapes for other record companies, while emphasizing the long-neglected direct-to-consumer business with its own products. Selling classical, popular, and rock selections through its catalogue, the company is a leader in the fight to revive the ailing open-reel tape format. Hundreds of selections are currently available on Ampex reels, among them a number of Dolbyized and four-channel albums.

This is, in fact, where the meaning of the Ampex name lies in consumer products today. Its retrenchment has transformed its image from that of *the* recorder company, a generation ago, to that of a major tape supplier and probably *the* source of recorded tapes.

William Slatkin

Are Tapes Really Better than Records — Or Vice Versa?

JUST AS AN AMPLIFIER or a loudspeaker is a component part of your music playback system, so is the record, tape, or FM broadcast you listen to. Like the amplifier or speaker, it may be of poor quality or of good quality; like a tuner or tape deck, the program source may be in optimum or in less than topflight condition. All of these variables—plus things like psychoacoustics, the exact spot you're talking about on a record, the exact music frequency you're checking, and other factors—conspire to rule out an easy answer to the question, are tapes really better than records?

For example, a well-pressed record may have a signal-to-noise ratio of 70 dB in the outside groove, while the inside groove on the same record—particularly if the playing time is considerable—may be only 50 dB. An average for the entire record side might

Some infrequently-frequency response

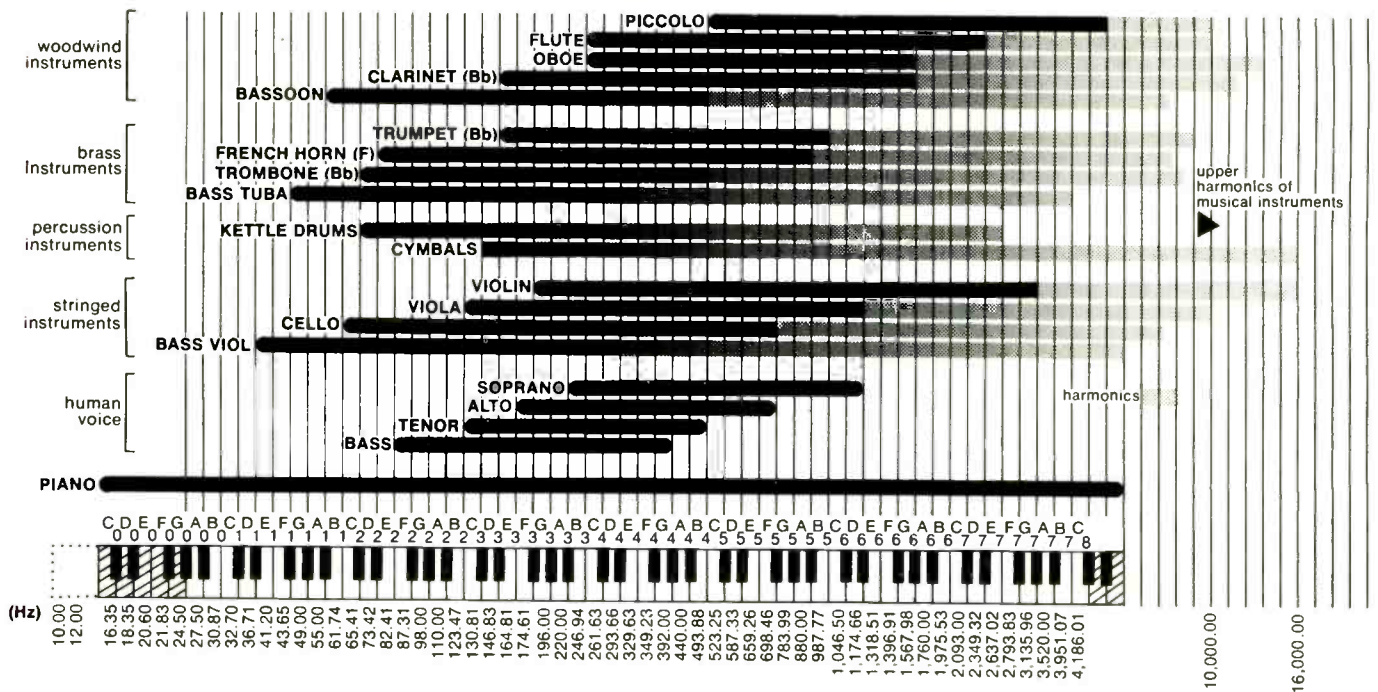


Chart 1. Frequency ranges of musical instruments and the human voice.

Chart 2.

An approximation of volume levels of various types of orchestral music.

(This is a guideline chart, naturally subject to variables of orchestration, micing and mastering equalization.)

1. Electronic music (rock, underground and synthesized)
2. Semi-electronic music (pop-rock, some country-western and contemporary jazz)
3. Average "normal" acoustic orchestra (classic, semi-classic, "easy-listening" and jazz)

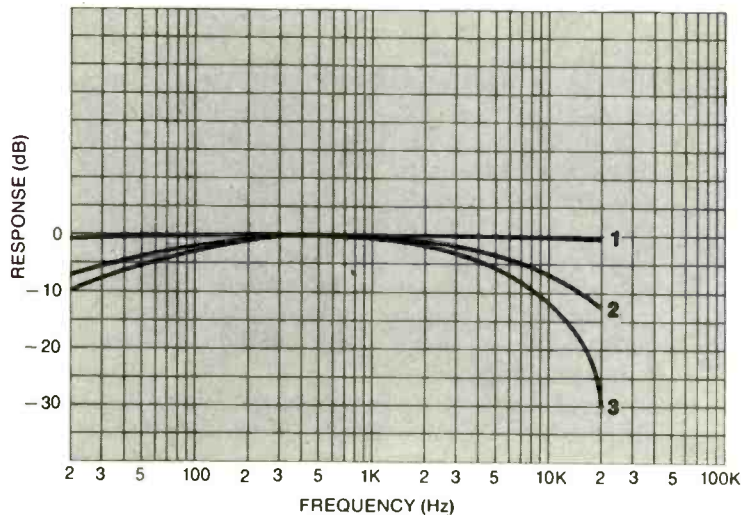
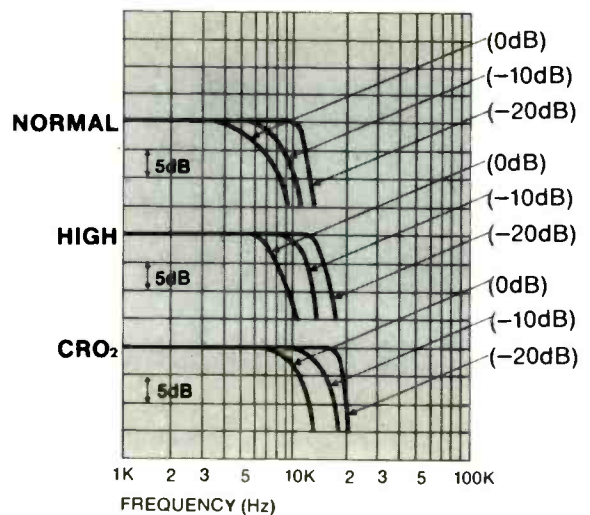


Chart 3.

Showing high-end frequency-response loss at various dynamic levels, and comparing this phenomenon for different tape formulations.

(Note: Tape response characteristics will vary somewhat from brand to brand, and machine to machine.)



Known facts about

Audio buffs are discovering that even with increasingly sophisticated equipment, their recordings sometimes lack high-end frequency response. Despite your careful attention to recording levels, as shown on the meters, this high-end roll-off can occur with all decks—reel-to-reel and cassette—and at all recording speeds. However, it is more evident in cassette recording. It results from a phenomenon of tape called “saturation.”

Once you understand the cause, the cure is simple.

High-end frequency-response losses occur when the head is unable to impress on, or retrieve from the tape's oxide particles the shorter wave lengths of the signal. In other words, when the wave length is actually shorter than the gap in the playback head, the head is simply unable to detect the signal. Increasing the record levels past this point demands more of the oxide particles than their magnetic properties permit, and distortion and saturation occur. However, this phenomenon, while somewhat due to the limitations of tape, is to a great extent a function of speed.

To put it another way: tape can only take so much high-end at high levels before losing response. Let's look at some reasons.

7½ is longer than 1⅞

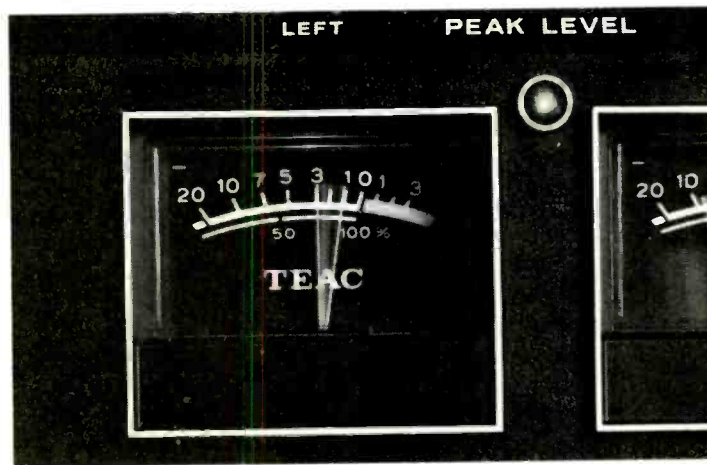
With reel-to-reel, all the information in one second of time is distributed over 7½ inches of oxide particles. In the case of cassettes, this identical amount of information must be contained within 1⅞ inches of oxide particles. Thus, cassette tape flowing slowly at 1⅞ is more vulnerable to revealing distortion and high-end saturation. Reel-to-reel tape flowing at 7½ ips is much more “forgiving”. The magnetic fields are longer, and these aberrations of the signal tend not to be revealed.

How music differs from music.

Most “normal” music—that is, classical and jazz recorded with acoustic instruments—is well within acceptable levels, and there is little danger of saturation. However, rock and the “new music” recorded with electronic instruments are loaded with high frequencies at excessively high levels. Look out. This is where a cassette

transfer made at a “normal” -4 to 0 VU will saturate. Back off to around -8 to -4.

Chart 2 shows the volume levels of various types of music. A normal acoustic orchestra shows normal



volume levels, with a “natural” rolloff at the high end. (Natural harmonics at 15 kHz are generally down over 20 dB). With this type of orchestra high-end loss will not be a problem.

However, look at the contours of pop and electronic music; these high-frequency, high-level signals will saturate quickly at 1⅞. So back off to a level that will give you a satisfactory compromise between frequency response and signal-to-noise. Remember, contemporary music puts extraordinary demands on cassette decks, so keep cassette limitations in mind. To help you avoid high-frequency loss, TEAC suggests you consider some not-so-evident facts:

Level meters and TEAC's LED: guides, not gods.

Any type of meter is a limited instrument. It cannot respond accurately to transient highs—those sharp, high-level sounds that last a fraction of a second, just long enough to saturate your tape. For this reason, TEAC has a Light Emitting Diode (LED) as featured on our top-of-the-line stereo cassette decks, to help you avoid tape saturation. TEAC's LED will supplement the meters by giving you an instantaneous peak-level indicator. When the LED flashes, you're saturating—regardless of what your meters

are telling you. The LED should be your overriding guide; if it is flickering and your music characteristically has high frequencies at high levels, back off 2 to 5 dB on your meters. However, with “normal” music an occasional

LED flicker is tolerable. Remember, your meters and LED are indicators, not controls. Look at Chart 3 showing high-end droppoff at various levels. You'll note that chromium dioxide tape resists saturation somewhat more than the new ferric oxides which saturate at a lower level, and normal ferric oxides saturate at a lower level yet.

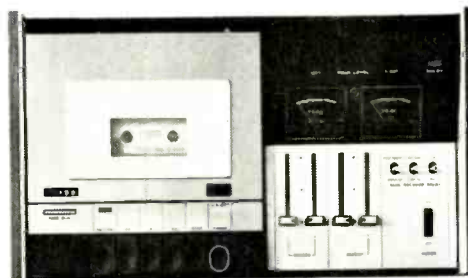
The ultimate input: your own creativity and judgement.

There are compromises to be made all down the line, and your personal taste is the final arbiter. If you're not getting good frequency response, analyze the elements we've discussed. Then experiment. Make a test recording, backing well off on your meters to keep your LED from flickering (but not so far that on playback level you bring up “hiss” and suffer signal-to-noise loss). Regardless of what the ads say, even the finest equipment has limitations. Learn them.

Remember, saturation isn't normally caused by your tape deck—it's caused by a combination of the music, the tape and your judgement.

To help you sharpen that judgment, we've prepared a handbook we'd like you to have. It's called, *TEAC White Paper on Tape Technology*. Drop us a line and ask for it. And if you have any questions about recording techniques, we'd be happy to discuss them

with you. Meanwhile enjoy your tape deck. And remember—use your wrist. It's good for your ear.



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be about 61 dB—or about what Ampex delivers on an EX + open-reel tape, duplicated with care on a low-noise blank tape. When you add Dolby noise reduction, you gain almost 10 dB more—but only on frequencies above 3 kHz.

In other words, there's little to choose statistically between the non-Dolby open-reel tape and the record in terms of signal-to-noise ratio. But actual tests show that listeners invariably choose records over tape when the signal-to-noise figures are identical. The reason: Tape's background noise is a constant hiss, while that on records consists of intermittent ticks and pops that the engineers say we tune out when we listen.

Even cassettes these days can match records' signal-to-noise statistics. Perhaps the quietest cassettes currently in commercial production are those from London Records of Canada. Provided the master is a good one, these Dolbyized cassettes boast a signal-to-noise ratio in excess of 50 dB from beginning to end.

It's in the area of frequency response where records surpass cassettes. London's and Ampex's best cassettes are more or less flat from 20 to 10,000 Hz, while open-reel tape is flat up to 16 kHz. A good disc version of the same music is essentially flat from 20 to 15,000 Hz. But records and open-reel tapes respond measurably up to 20 kHz, while cassettes have usable frequency response to about 12 kHz.

Channel separation on open-reel tape is virtually unlimited (a few recorders can manage more than 60 dB of separation), while that on a cassette is in the range from 37 to 40 dB (a good deck may make it to 50 dB), decreasing at the higher frequencies. A disc contains some 50 to 55 dB of channel separation up to 10 kHz; but 35 dB is considered good in a playback cartridge, so that you actually hear less separation than you get from a good cassette.

Finally, there's the matter of wear. Tape experts like to point out that records deteriorate by as much as 3 dB in signal level during the first playing—not to mention a loss of very high frequencies—with further deterioration on each subsequent playing. They note that records become scratched and dirty, and that a growing number of records arrive from the factory warped to the point where they won't play properly. Tape, they say, doesn't scratch or get dirty. The life expectancy of tape seems to be unlimited. One high-speed duplicator notes that his masters play 15,000 times without measurable deterioration, while few record collectors can boast more than a couple of dozen plays without noticeable loss of quality. But cassettes do jam, open-reel tapes break, and there is the possibility of accidental erasure.

Nonetheless, the tests remain inconclusive. And tests by at least two tape manufacturers show severe losses with repeated playings in some competing products. Tests can, in fact, provide ammunition for both sides in the records-vs.-tape controversy. What finally remains is the personal preference of the listener. So even assuming we are comparing only the finest of products—and ignoring such important but tangential considerations as the ready accessibility of any point on a disc—tapes (or records) may sound better to you because you *want* them to sound better. To compensate for the deterioration in quality as the playback stylus nears the center of the record, most of us may imagine we're still hearing the sound quality of the outer grooves; tape enthusiasts may similarly "tune out" background hiss.

Robert Angus

Is a Monitor Head Worth the Money?

FOR ANY SERIOUS WORK with open-reel recorders a monitor head is virtually a necessity. There are at least three reasons why. First, a separate playback head is designed specifically for that use, which requires an exceedingly narrow magnetic gap for best reproduction of high frequencies—so narrow that it would result in reduced efficiency if you tried to use it for recording. A combined record/play head is inevitably a compromise, though the quality can still be very good. Second, a separate playback head with separate electronics provides the ultimate in monitoring: You can listen to the signal *as*

already recorded on the tape while the recording goes on. Of course there is a lag of up to a second or so (depending on head spacing and transport speed) while the newly recorded portion of the tape travels from the record head to the playback head. Third,

a separate playback head permits special effects like artificial echo, in which a portion of the delayed playback signal is mixed with the incoming signal.

These advantages all apply to the few cassette recorders with separate playback heads, of course, especially if you are interested in using a cassette machine for high-quality original recordings—a prospect that no longer is laughable, as it was only a couple of years ago. But the situation is complicated by several factors. The most notable is that the only cassette machines with separate playback (or monitor) heads are very expensive—sometimes more expensive than open-reel machines of comparable quality. This is partly because an independent play head in a cassette machine must fight some severe limitations—and don't let the high prices fool you into thinking the problems have all been licked.

The cassette itself was designed with only a single record/play head in mind, doing its job through the center opening in the cassette, where there is a felt pressure pad behind the tape to aid good tape-to-head contact. With the cassette's straight-line tape path, good contact—essential for high-frequency response and no dropouts—is very difficult to get without a pressure pad. Therein lies one hurdle for designs that use a separate head working through one of the other little slots.

A second problem is that such a head must be very tiny if it is to fit into the slot in the cassette, and that raises difficulties in the design of the head itself. In one design, the head is described—in the fine print, so to speak—as a monitor head, as distinguished from a playback head, because its reproduction quality is not really up to even cassette standards. How useful is a monitor head if its fidelity isn't sufficiently high to allow monitoring for the finer points of signal quality?

Then there's the thinness and narrowness of the tape—and the fact that its motion is controlled partly by the cassette itself, which puts a premium on precision at a reasonable cassette price. Any "skew" in the tape (twisting or up-and-down motion) as it travels from the record head to the play (or monitor) head seriously impairs the usefulness of what you hear from the playback head: Are the dropouts or poor highs due to a failure in the recording process, or only to the failure of the tape to achieve good contact and alignment with the monitor head?

This is ironic in a way, because cassettes—being in general somewhat less trustworthy than ¼-inch tape on open reels—to that extent require the extra checking up on even more. Until cassette monitor heads can be relied on to do this job the medium will continue to be a limited one for purposes of the serious recordist. P.E.S.

What Are the Advantages of Adjustable Bias and Equalization?

PUT VERY SIMPLY, the advantages of adjustable bias and equalization are the ability to optimize your recorder for the wide variety of tapes presently available and, within reason, to be able to use the even more potent tapes of the future: improved performance today, wide latitude in choosing tapes, wide variety of tape, plus a degree of obsolescence protection. These are tremendous advantages.

Over the past several years, great strides have been made in tape formulations. The realization, in the Sixties, that the cassette could be turned into a high fidelity medium gave the strongest impetus to the research. The resulting new formulations—chromium dioxide, cobalt doping, high-potency gamma ferric oxides—are necessary for the cassette format, but they have benefits to offer the open-reel user too. Unfortunately not all the super tapes are available in quarter-inch format, but one can hope that they will be soon.

The bias and equalization requirements of these new tapes are different from those of a few years ago. The search for higher oxide potency has seemed to lead towards formulations with greater coercive force and, with that, to those needing extra bias. Further, to take full advantage of the added capability of the tape, the equalization must be changed. Let's take an example. Suppose your deck is set up for an old-style tape and you pop in a high-performance formulation. Instead of hearing an improvement, you may very well think the new formulation is worse. Since it will be under-

biased, the low-frequency distortion will be poorer than it should be, and there will be excessive highs—in short, a tape that sounds shrill and perhaps muddy.

But if you have a setting on your deck for that tape or if you can adjust the bias and equalization as you can on some of the semiprofessional open-reel decks, you can get the performance that was designed into the tape. When you flip that switch to the appropriate position, several things can happen. Usually the bias level is raised and the recording equalization is changed. Most likely the amount of high-frequency recording pre-emphasis will be reduced, meaning you can make a cleaner, louder tape. On cassette equipment with a position for chromium dioxide tape, the playback equalization may be altered as well to reduce the noise level. Finally the meter calibration might be changed so that you will naturally record at the higher level of which the tape is capable.

Where does obsolescence protection come in? Tape improvements have not come to an end. We can expect more strides in the future. Almost surely, the new tapes will require still other adjustments. Even if you don't have the front-panel adjustability of a semiprofessional open-reel deck, you may be able to have a qualified shop reset the internal controls of your machine and convert one of the older tape positions to suit the new product. There is no question about it, adjustable bias and equalization contribute to full performance and flexibility. E.J.F.

Will There Be Four-Channel Cassettes?

THE VERY QUESTION in the title provokes gales of laughter among executives of record companies who produce the music for four-channel discs, eight-track cartridges, and open-reel tapes. "We have enough trouble selling stereo on cassettes," quips a spokesman for RCA records. Officials at Columbia, Project 3, and other companies already involved in quadriphonics seem equally uninterested in providing four-channel music on cassettes.

One company that doesn't see anything funny about the quadriphonic cassette is JVC. It already has a deck to play the cassettes when they appear—the Model 4CD-1680, priced at about \$500. JVC's deck inscribes eight tiny tracks—four in each direction—on standard cassette tape, at the standard cassette speed of 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches per second. The cassette thus is compatible with all existing equipment—satisfying the stipulations of Philips, as inventor of the cassette, on this point—because a portable mono player reproduces the four tracks simultaneously with a single head half the width of the cassette tape, while stereo decks play quadriphonic cassettes as two pairs of tracks—front and back tracks on each side automatically add together to reproduce as stereo.

What bothers audio engineers about the four-channel cassette, however, is the extreme narrowness of each track and the hairline separations between one track and the next. Each tape track is less than 1/64 of an inch wide and is separated from its neighbors by a gap slightly wider than the thickness of this page. That presents two problems: a ratio of signal-to-noise vastly poorer than that found on the first (mono) recorded cassettes, and the difficulty of preventing the left-front channel from wobbling into the path of the left-back or right-front head element.

JVC says it has solved the noise problem by incorporating its Automatic Noise Reduction System as part of the quadriphonic recording and playback process to the sound quality of the four-channel cassette up to acceptable levels. And, say JVC's engineers, the problem of keeping the narrow tracks aligned to the head isn't as complicated as it seems.

Whether there will be four-channel cassettes for the JVC system remains to be seen at this writing. But at least three other manufacturers—Hitachi, Aiwa, and Panasonic—have expressed their intention to produce four-channel cassette decks. A fourth, Astrocom, has dropped plans for a consumer four-channel cassette system utilizing four tracks (each twice the width of the JVC tracks) recorded in one direction across the full width of a standard cassette.

But if you can't wait for cassettes to match the JVC system, you can buy Ovation

stereo cassettes that will play quadriphonically. All of Ovation's cassettes are QS matrix-encoded, which means that they can be played back in stereo or mono (again satisfying Philips' stipulation) or quadriphonically through any RM or QS decoder—whether a separate unit or built into a four-channel receiver or amplifier. But you presumably will need one of the better cassette decks as well. Cassette tapes being thin and narrow, their motion past the playback head can be somewhat unstable unless the transport is well designed. A concomitant of this instability can be changes in phase relationships between channels—relationships that are the key to matrix decoding.

The answer, then, is that some quadriphonic cassettes are available now, but that more may appear—using a different four-channel technology. R.A.

Is Overdub Better Than Sound-on-Sound?

OVERDUB is certainly the more useful of the two—if you need it and can afford it. In and of itself, overdub (or multidub or self-synchronization or whatever you want to call it) actually is simple and need not be expensive; it's just that the feature is usually found only in tape recorders that are costly for other reasons.

What is it? It's simply a means of switching the record head (in a so-called three-head machine) to act temporarily as a playback head. Why might you need that? Well consider the following. You have just recorded mixed voice and guitar in mono on one track of a two-channel recorder; now you and the musician decide it would be fun to add a bass. With the usual home recorder, a sensible way to do that would be to play the recording, feeding the playback signal simultaneously to the musician's headphones (so he can keep time with his previous take) and to the line input of the other channel. The musician can play a bass line into a microphone connected to the mike input. (This assumes the recorder has facilities for mixing a mike and a line input to each channel.) In this way, the new mix is recorded on the second channel. Any further additions or changes must be made by re-recording once again, either on the first track—thereby erasing the original voice/guitar track—or onto another machine. Each successive re-recording adds noise and distortion and exaggerates frequency response irregularities. This is a typical sound-on-sound application.

A potentially more enlightened approach is to have the musician hear his previous track as before and play along with it, but *not* to mix the old track with the new, live music (remember that the musician is using earphones) so that only the bass is recorded on the second track. By playing both tracks simultaneously you can tinker endlessly with balance, equalization, reverb, and so forth, without necessarily ever making a final mix onto another tape. But if you try it with an ordinary recorder equipped with a separate playback head, the two tracks will be out of sync by the amount of time it takes a point on the tape to travel from the record head to the playback head (typically $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ second at $7\frac{1}{2}$ ips).

Overdub solves this problem by playing the first track back via the record head instead of the playback head; since both recording and playback take place at the same point on the tape, no lag exists. In commercial studios this is routine, and all modern multitrack studio recorders are equipped with suitable switches. It is not uncommon to bring in a bass player, set him up in the studio with a mike and headphones, and have him listen to a rough mix of seven tracks of music while he records, in perfect time, on an eighth. Then the eight tracks are mixed down to two for release, adding equalization and reverb as required and positioning the various tracks electronically to create an acceptable stereo image. The musicians may never have been together in the studio; or one musician may have played several of the parts, recording each at a different time on a different track.

This synchronization arrangement really begins to pay off in convenience and versatility with home four-channel recorders—not when they are used for quadriphonics, but the multidub capability is applied as it would be in the studio: for taping four or more independent sound sources that must be synchronous.

Why not use combined record/play heads for the same purpose? Indeed they can

be, and the process is then known as sound-with-sound—usually on stereo, rather than four-channel decks. The fact that one head is used for both recording and playback prevents any time lag in adding a second track to one already recorded. But the lack of a separate (monitor) playback head inhibits the ultimate signal quality you can get out of the machine—a point I discuss elsewhere in this symposium—making sound-with-sound less than ideal for quality live recordings.

So although the problem solves itself with recorders that use the same head for recording and playback (two-head recorders), such machines, usually in the lower price brackets, don't offer the quality usually required for serious-music recording. Also, in many of them, the two channels can't be put into the record mode separately—essential for the kind of operation considered here. P.E.S.

When and How Should You Use Electronic Editing?

ELECTRONIC EDITING is simply a matter of stopping and starting a tape, preferably while leaving the machine in the record mode, in order to eliminate unwanted portions of program material. Unless you do this during the original recording, electronic editing involves re-recording (dubbing, in the jargon of the trade). And re-recording inevitably introduces additional tape hiss and distortion, and tends to emphasize peaks and dips in the frequency spectrum. This degradation may not always be bothersome.

Electronic editing often is necessary where different programs are recorded on different tracks of the same tape. If you cut the tape physically at the appropriate point for one track, you will normally cut something inappropriately on another track.

Electronic editing is also necessary with cassettes and cartridges. Cassette tape is narrow and thin; it must be pulled out of the cassette to be handled; and all but the most expert splices may jam. Cartridges can't be rewound; the tape must also be pulled out to be worked on, and its lubricated backing makes reliable splices difficult.

Electronic editing may be desirable with open-reel tape when you want to eliminate large chunks of material in a quick, economical way and need not be overly precise about it. An obvious example is when you wish to transfer only, say, two of four musical selections on a tape to another tape. You record the first selection, then put the recording machine in "pause" while you find the second selection you want, and release the pause control. (Don't jam the second selection up against the end of the first; a silence of about four seconds between selections usually sounds comfortable.)

Cutting and splicing is a better method for precise work—such as removing coughs, ticks, pops, words, or syllables, or joining two different "takes" of a musical selection somewhere in the midst of the piece. It is virtually a required technique for serious work in electronic music composition; often it is the only way to achieve abrupt transitions between sounds.

For an example that may help to contrast the two methods let's suppose you have just recorded, on cassette, a half-hour interview that you plan to edit for broadcast. The radio station wants the program on regular ¼-inch tape at 7½ ips, and insists that it be kept to under 15 minutes, so you must dub in any case. You want to eliminate awkward pauses, some noises, a couple of false starts, and a lot of excess verbiage where the speaker repeats himself. Perhaps you also want to cut out your questions, or some of them. Should you transfer the cassette all at once to ¼-inch tape and then cut and splice, or should you use electronic editing (selective dubbing)? Or both?

The answer depends on your work habits. You would normally want to listen to the interview once through and make notes, so while it's running you might as well be transferring it whole, and then edit with a razor blade from your notes. But then you'll be left with a floor full of scrap tape in bits too short to be worth saving. So you might decide instead to listen to the cassette with the ¼-inch machine connected and ready to roll, and transfer only those parts you feel you want to use, leaving the fine editing (eliminating pauses, throat-clearings, etc.) for later cutting and splicing.

But if whatever you are editing is for archival storage, remember that an unspliced tape will last longer than one that has been subjected to physical editing. Eventually

the adhesives in splicing tapes will dry out and the splices will part—or sometimes will stick on the tape guide or heads during playing. The longevity of the splice will depend both on the quality of the splicing tape and on your workmanship with it. But it will never be as good as that of uncut tape. P.E.S.

How Do You Fit Music Onto an 8-Track Cartridge?

THE BEST ANSWER to this question, perhaps, is: Don't try. The problems you'll encounter in recording your first cartridge are so different from those you may have experienced with cassettes or open reels that they require the patience of a saint and the persistence of an insurance salesman.

For example, cartridge recorders—unlike cassette or reel decks—don't rewind. If you make a mistake, you have to wait for the completion of the program you're recording (each cartridge is divided into four stereo programs with each program representing one-quarter of

the recording time specified on the package) and begin again. Of course you may have a fast forward—but instead of whipping through 30 minutes of tape in 60 seconds or so, on many cartridge recorders it runs at only about twice the normal playing speed. That means having to wait up to 7½ minutes for the end of a 15-minute program on a 60-minute cartridge before you can correct your error.

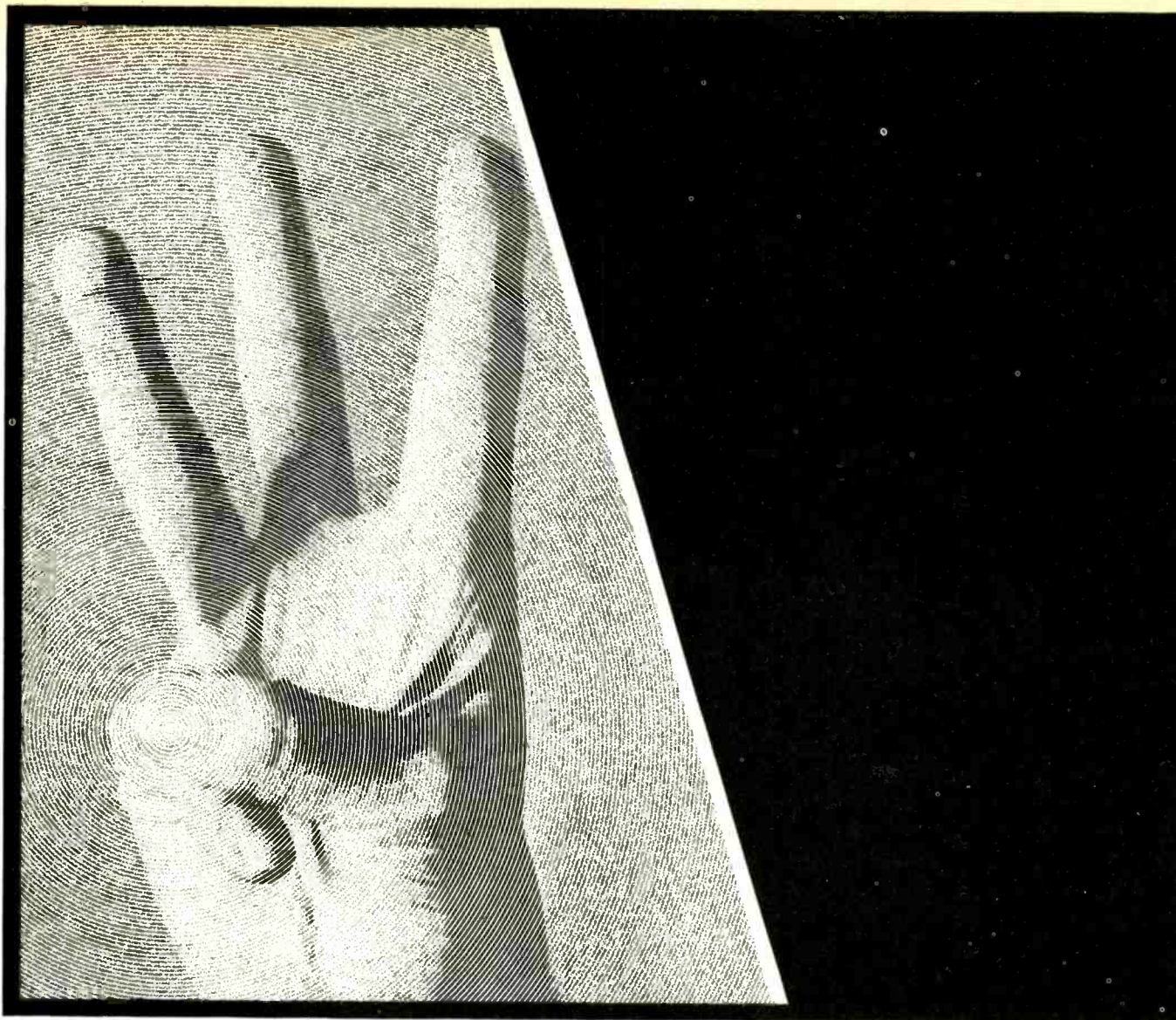
Even finding the beginning of the tape can be a nuisance. The cartridge consists of an endless loop with the two ends joined by a strip of metal foil. The foil triggers the mechanism that shifts recording and playback heads at the end of each program and most blank-tape manufacturers try to pack their cartridges so that it's exposed when you open the box. If it isn't, or if you're recording on a previously used cartridge, you'll have to hunt for the beginning. The easiest way, if your recorder has an automatic shutoff at the end of the last track, is to insert the cartridge, push the program selector to Program 4, and switch on the automatic shutoff. Then either play the cartridge or let it operate in fast forward until the mechanism shuts off.

Now comes the real problem of cartridge recording—timing. At the end of each program, there's a click and a loss of sound for a second or two while the recorder changes programs. If you include the tape ends, on which the recording quality can be less than ideal, this break can last up to six seconds. Many users of cartridge recorders, interested primarily in taping current hits, simply ignore this interruption and record right over it.

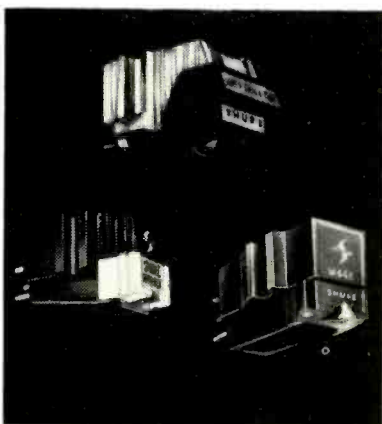
But if you're recording something like the Beethoven Ninth, you have a problem. Its four movements—14, 10, 18, and 22 minutes in length (more or less, depending on the performance)—don't arrange themselves neatly on the four tracks of a cartridge. You're going to have to break one or more movements at the end of a phrase so they'll fit comfortably. With lots of shorter selections—a program of opera arias, for example—the task is somewhat easier, but you still have to plan your timing in advance.

Before you actually start recording, make sure the auto eject switch, if you have one, is on. If you forget, you stand a good chance of erasing what you've already recorded on Program 1 when the deck completes Program 4. Two other things to bear in mind when recording cartridges: The counter on a cartridge machine, unlike those on consumer cassette or open-reel recorders, may actually measure time. Such a timer tells you how much of the time available on each program you have used up. And because of the internal construction of the cartridge, stops, starts, and pauses may not be nearly as instantaneous as those on twin-hub machines. Instead, the tape can take the better part of a minute to drift to a stop and about a quarter of a second to get up to playing speed. If you pause during recording while there's a signal coming in, you can get a rising whine during playback where the tape was slowing down during recording.

The introduction by Wollensak of a Dolby recorder and by blank-tape manufacturers of low-noise blank cartridges means that if you have enough patience and practice, you'll be able to turn out something resembling a high-fidelity recording. But don't expect the process to be easy. R.A.



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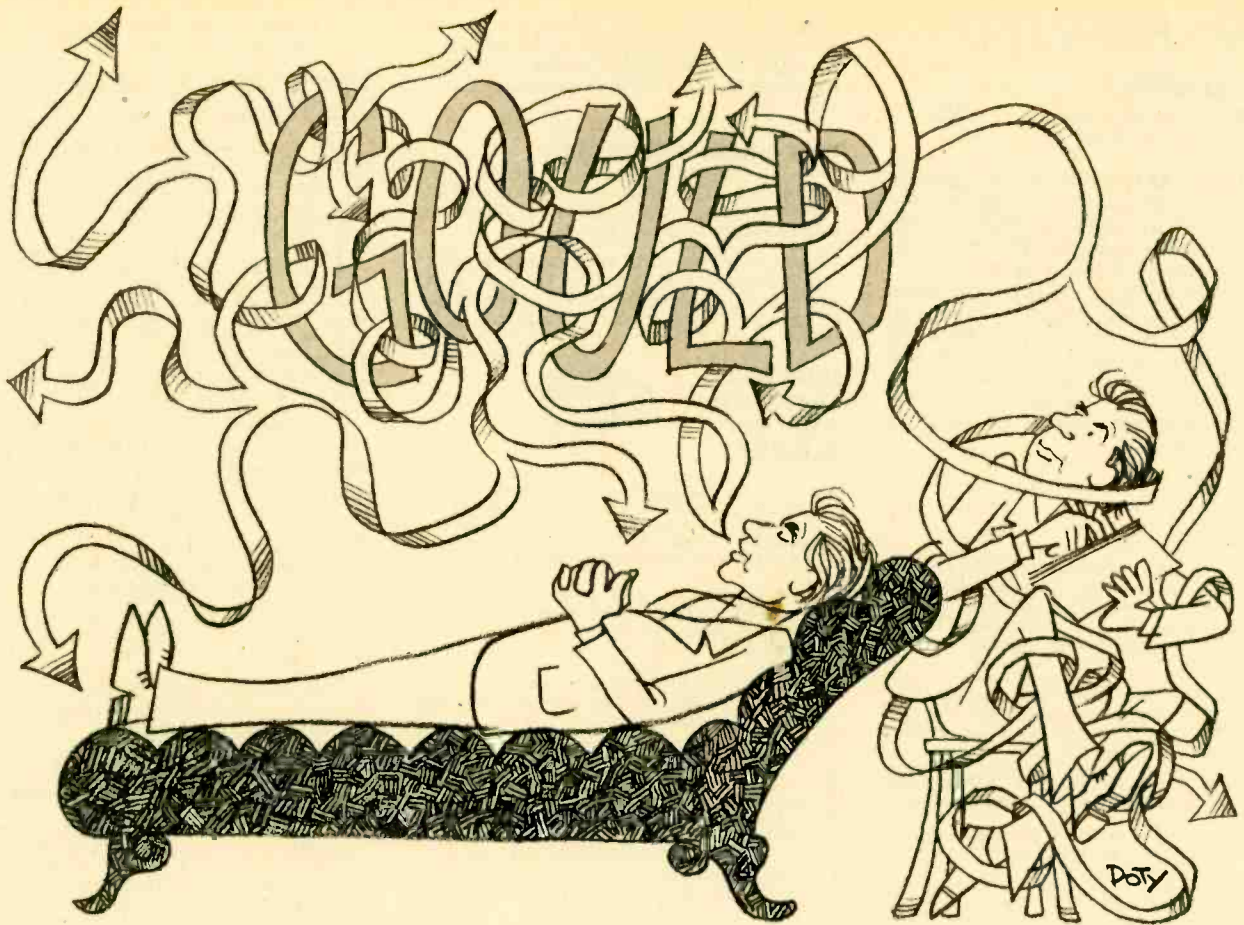
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Glenn Gould Interviews Glenn Gould about Glenn Gould

Being Volume One, Number One of the complete Gould-Gould conversations

When we learned that Columbia was about to unleash not one, not two, but *five* Glenn Gould records simultaneously (for a review of these recordings, see page 79), one of our staff wondered aloud, "Say, what's he up to when he's not recording?" We all knew that since his abandonment of the concert stage, his activities as a producer for CBC Radio had come to occupy more and more of his time and effort, ranging farther and farther afield from the musical world; for a fuller answer we decided to dispatch a crack interviewer to Toronto. The only candidate acceptable to both us and the interviewee was a local cub reporter of dubious qualifications who did at least boast reasonable familiarity with and unique accessibility to the subject. It's just possible that the resulting interview answers even more outrageous questions than our staffer's original one (we may have missed something).

glenn gould: Mr. Gould, I gather that you have a reputation as a—well, forgive me for being blunt, sir—but as a tough nut to crack, interview-wise?

Glenn Gould: Really. I've never heard that.

gg: Well, it's the sort of scuttlebutt that we mediatypes pick up from source to source, but I just want to assure you that I'm quite prepared to strike from the record any question you may feel is out of line.

GG: Oh, I can't conceive of any problems of that sort intruding upon our deliberations.

gg: Well then, just to clear the air, sir, let me ask straight-out: Are there any off-limit areas?

GG: I certainly can't think of any—apart from music of course.

gg: Well, Mr. Gould, I don't want to go back on my word. I realize that your participation in this interview was never contractually confirmed, but it was sealed with a handshake.

GG: Figuratively speaking of course.

gg: Of course, and I had rather assumed that we'd spend the bulk of this interview on musically related matters.

GG: Well, do you think it's essential? I mean, my

personal philosophy of interviewing—and I've done quite a bit of it on the air as you perhaps know—is that the most illuminating disclosures derive from areas only indirectly related to the interviewee's line of work.

gg: For example?

GG: Well, for example, in the course of preparing radio documentaries, I've interviewed a theologian about technology, a surveyor about William James, an economist about pacifism, and a housewife about acquisitiveness in the art market.

gg: But surely you've also interviewed musicians about music?

GG: Well, yes, I have, on occasion, in order to help put them at ease in front of the mike. But it's been far more instructive to talk with Pablo Casals, for example, about the concept of the *Zeitgeist* which, of course, is not unrelated to music—

gg: Yes, I was just going to venture that comment.

GG: —or to Leopold Stokowski about the prospect for interplanetary travel which is, I think you'll agree and Stanley Kubrick notwithstanding, a bit of a digression.

gg: Well, this does pose a problem, Mr. Gould, but let me try to frame the question more affirmatively. Is there a subject you'd particularly like to discuss?

GG: Well, I hadn't given it much thought really, but, just off the top, what about the political situation in Labrador?

gg: Well, I'm sure that could produce a stimulating dialogue, Mr. Gould, but I do feel that we have to keep in mind that *HIGH FIDELITY* is edited primarily for a U.S. constituency.

GG: Oh, quite. Well, in that case perhaps aboriginal rights in western Alaska would make good copy.

gg: Yes. Well, I certainly don't want to bypass any headline-grabbing areas of that sort, Mr. Gould, but since *HIGH FIDELITY* is oriented toward a musically literate readership, we should, I think, at least begin our discussion in the area of the arts.

GG: Oh, certainly. Perhaps we could examine the question of aboriginal rights as reflected in ethnomusicological field studies at Point Barrow.

gg: Well, I must confess I had a rather more conventional line of attack, so to speak, in mind, Mr. Gould. As I'm sure you're aware, the virtually obligatory question in regard to your career is the concert-vs.-media controversy, and I do feel we must at least touch upon it.

GG: Oh, well, I have no objections to fielding a few questions in that area. As far as I'm concerned, it primarily involves moral rather than musical considerations in any case, so be my guest.

gg: Well, that's very good of you. I'll try to make it brief and then, perhaps, we can move farther afield.

GG: Fair enough!

gg: Well now, you've been quoted as saying that your involvement with recording—with media in general, indeed—represents an involvement with the future.

GG: That's correct. I've even said so in the pages of this illustrious journal, as a matter of fact.

gg: Quite so, and you've also said that, conversely, the concert hall, the recital stage, the opera house, or whatever, represent the past—an aspect of your own past in particular perhaps as well as, in more general terms, music's past.

GG: That's true, although I must admit that my only past professional contact with opera was a touch of tracheitis I picked up while playing the old Festspielhaus in Salzburg. As you know, it was an exceedingly drafty edifice, and I—

gg: Perhaps we could discuss your state of health at a more opportune moment, Mr. Gould, but it does occur to me—and I hope you'll forgive me for saying so—that there is something inherently self-serving about pronouncements of this kind. After all, you elected to abandon all public platforms some—what was it?—ten years ago?

GG: Nine years and eleven months as of the date of this issue actually.

gg: And you will admit that most people who opt for radical career departures of any sort sustain themselves with the notion that, however reluctantly, the future is on their side?

GG: It's encouraging to think so, of course, but I must take exception to your use of the term "radical." It's certainly true that I did take the plunge out of a conviction that, given the state of the art, a total immersion in media represented a logical development—and I remain so convinced—but quite frankly, however much one likes to formulate past-future equations, the prime sponsors of such convictions, the strongest motivations behind such "departures," to borrow your term, are usually related to no more radical notion than an attempt to resolve the discomfort and inconvenience of the present.

gg: I'm not sure I've caught the drift of that, Mr. Gould.

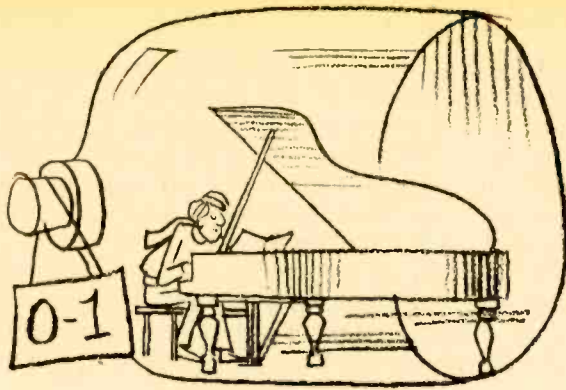
GG: Well, for instance, let me suggest to you that the strongest motivation for the invention of a lozenge would be a sore throat. Of course, having patented the lozenge, one would then be free to speculate that the invention represented the future and the sore throat the past, but I doubt that one would be inclined to think in those terms while the irritation was present. Needless to say, in the case of my tracheitis at Salzburg, medication of that sort was—

gg: Excuse me, Mr. Gould, I'm sure we will be apprised of your Salzburg misadventures in due course, but I must pursue this point a bit further. Am I to understand that your withdrawal from the concert stage, your subsequent involvement with media, was motivated by the musical equivalent of a—of a sore throat?

GG: Do you find that objectionable?

gg: Well, to be candid, I find it utterly narcissistic. And to my mind, it's also entirely at odds with your statement that moral objections played a major role in your decision.

Gould



The perfect audience-to-artist relationship.

GG: I don't see the contradiction there unless, of course, in your view discomfort, per se, ranks as a positive virtue.

gg: My views are not the subject of this interview, Mr. Gould, but I'll answer your question, regardless. Discomfort, per se, is not the issue; I simply believe that any artist worthy of the name must be prepared to sacrifice personal comfort.

GG: To what end?

gg: In the interests of preserving the great traditions of the musical/theatrical experience, of maintaining the noble tutorial and curatorial responsibilities of the artist in relation to his audience.

GG: You don't feel that a sense of discomfort, of unease, could be the sagest of counselors for both artist and audience?

gg: No, I simply feel that you, Mr. Gould, have either never permitted yourself to savor the—

GG: —ego-gratification?

gg: The privilege, as I was about to say, of communicating with an audience—

GG: —from a power-base?

gg: —from a proscenium setting in which the naked fact of your proscenium setting is on display, unedited and unadorned.

GG: Couldn't I at least be allowed to display the tuxedoed fallacy, perhaps?

gg: Mr. Gould, I don't feel we should allow this dialogue to degenerate into idle banter. It's obvious that you've never savored the joys of a one-to-one relationship with a listener.

GG: I always thought that, managerially speaking, a 2800-to-1 relationship was the concert-hall ideal.

gg: I don't want to split statistics with you. I've tried to pose the question with all candor and—

GG: Well then, I'll try to answer likewise. It seems to me that, if we're going to get waylaid by the numbers game, I'll have to plump for a zero-to-one relationship as between audience and artist, and that's where the moral objection comes in.

gg: I'm afraid I don't quite grasp that point, Mr. Gould. Do you want to run it through again?

GG: I simply feel that the artist should be granted, both for his sake and for that of his public—and let me get on record right now the fact that I'm not at all happy with words like "public" and "artist"; I'm not happy with the hierarchical implications of that kind of terminology—that he should be granted

anonymity. He should be permitted to operate in secret, as it were, unconcerned with—or better still, unaware of—the presumed demands of the marketplace—which demands, given sufficient indifference on the part of a sufficient number of artists, will simply disappear. And given their disappearance, the artist will then abandon his false sense of "public" responsibility, and his "public" will relinquish its role of servile dependency.

gg: And never the 'twain shall meet, I dare say!

GG: No, they'll make contact, but on an altogether more meaningful level than that which relates any stage to its apron.

gg: Mr. Gould, I'm well aware that this sort of idealistic role-swapping offers a satisfying rhetorical flourish, and it may even be that the "creative audience" concept to which you've devoted a lot of interview space elsewhere offers a kind of McLuhanesque fascination. But you conveniently forget that the artist, however hermetic his life style, is still in effect an autocratic figure. He's still, however benevolently, a social dictator. And his public, however generously enfranchised by gadgetry, however richly endowed with electronic options, is still on the receiving end of the experience, as of this late date at least, and all of your neomedieval anonymity quest on behalf of the artist-as-zero and all of your vertical panculturalism on behalf of his "public," isn't going to change that, or at least it hasn't done so thus far.

GG: May I speak now?

gg: Of course. I didn't mean to get carried away, but I do feel strongly about the—

GG: —about the artist as superman?

gg: That's not quite fair, Mr. Gould.

GG: —or about the interlocutor as comptroller of conversations, perhaps?

gg: There's certainly no need to be rude. I didn't really expect a conciliatory response from you—I realize that you've staked out certain philosophical claims in regard to these issues—but I did at least hope that just once you'd confess to a personal experience of the one-to-one, artist-to-listener relationship. I had hoped that you might confess to having personally been witness to the magnetic attraction of a great artist visibly at work before his public.

GG: Oh, I have had that experience.

gg: Really?

GG: Certainly, and I don't mind confessing to it. Many years ago, I happened to be in Berlin while Herbert von Karajan led the Philharmonic in their first-ever performance of Sibelius' Fifth. As you know, Karajan tends—in late-Romantic repertoire particularly—to conduct with eyes closed and to endow his stick-wielding with enormously persuasive choreographic contours, and the effect, quite frankly, contributed to one of the truly indelible musical/dramatic experiences of my life.

gg: You're supporting my contention very effectively indeed, Mr. Gould. I know of course that that performance, or at any rate one of its subsequent recorded incarnations, played a rather important role in your life.

GG: You mean because of its utilization in the epilogue of my radio documentary *The Idea of North*?

gg: Exactly, and you've just admitted that this "indelible" experience derived from a face-to-face confrontation, shared with an audience, and not simply from the disembodied predictability purveyed by even the best of phonograph records.

GG: Well, I suppose you could say that, but I wasn't actually a member of the audience. As a matter of fact, I took refuge in a glassed-in broadcast booth over the stage and, although I was in a position to see Karajan's face and to relate every ecstatic grimace to the emerging musical experience, the audience—except for the occasional profile shot as he might cue left or right—was not.

gg: I'm afraid you're splitting subdivided beats there, Mr. Gould.

GG: I'm not so sure. You see, the broadcast booth, in effect, represented a state of isolation, not only for me vis-à-vis my fellow auditors, but vis-à-vis the Berlin Philharmonic and its conductor as well.

gg: And now you're simply clutching at symbolic straws.

GG: Maybe so, but I must point out—*entre nous*, of course—that when it came time to incorporate Karajan's Sibelius Fifth into *The Idea of North*, I revised the dynamics of the recording to suit the mood of the text it accompanied, and that liberty, surely, is the product of—what shall I call it?—the enthusiastic irreverence of a zero-to-one relationship, wouldn't you say?

gg: I should rather think it's the product of unmitigated gall. I realize, of course, that *The Idea of North* was an experimental radio venture—as I recall, you treated the human voice in that work almost as one might a musical instrument—

GG: That's right.

gg:—and permitted two, three, or four individuals to speak at once upon occasion.

GG: True.

gg: But whereas those experiments with your own raw material, so to speak, seem perfectly legitimate to me, your use—or misuse—of Herr Von Karajan's material is another matter altogether. After all, you've confessed that your original experience of that performance was "indelible." And yet you blithely confess as well to tampering with what were, presumably, carefully controlled dynamic relationships—

GG: We did some equalizing, too.

gg:—and all in the interest of—

GG:—of my needs of the moment.

gg:—which, however, were at least unique to the project at hand.

GG: All right, I'll give you that, but every listener has a "project at hand" simply in terms of making his experience of music relate to his life style.

gg: And you're prepared to have similar unauthorized permutations practiced on your own recorded output by listener or listeners unknown?

GG: I should have failed in my purpose otherwise.

gg: Then you're obviously reconciled to the fact that no real aesthetic yardstick relates your performances as originally conceived to the manner in which they will be subsequently audited?

GG: Come to that, I have absolutely no idea as to the "aesthetic" merits of Karajan's Sibelius Fifth when I encountered it on that memorable occasion. In fact the beauty of the occasion was that, although I was aware of being witness to an intensely moving experience, I had no idea as to whether it was or was not a "good" performance. My aesthetic judgments were simply placed in cold storage—which is where I should like them to remain, at least when assessing the works of others. Perhaps, necessarily, and for entirely practical reasons, I apply a different set of criteria on my own behalf, but—

gg: Mr. Gould, are you saying that you do not make aesthetic judgments?

GG: No, I'm not saying that—though I wish I were able to make that statement—because it would attest to a degree of spiritual perfection that I have not attained. However, to rephrase the fashionable cliché, I do try as best I can to make only moral judgments and not aesthetic ones—except, as I said, in the case of my own work.

gg: I suppose, Mr. Gould, I'm compelled to give you the benefit of the doubt.

GG: That's very good of you.

gg:—and to assume that you are assessing your own motivations responsibly and accurately—

GG: One can only try.

gg:—and given that, what you have just confessed adds so many forks to the route of this interview, I simply don't know which trail to pursue.

GG: Why not pick the most likely signpost, and I'll just tag along.

gg: Well, I suppose the obvious question is: If you don't make aesthetic judgments on behalf of others, what about those who make aesthetic judgments in regard to your own work?

GG: Oh, some of my best friends are critics, although I'm not sure I'd want my piano to be played by one.

gg: But some minutes ago, you related the term "spiritual perfection" to a state in which aesthetic judgment is suspended.

GG: I didn't mean to give the impression that such a suspension would constitute the only criterion for such a state.

gg: I understand that. But would it be fair to say that in your view the critical mentality would necessarily lead to an imperiled state of grace?

GG: Well now, I think that would call for a very

presumptuous judgment on my part. As I said, some of my best friends are—

gg: —are critics, I know, but you're evading the question.

GG: Not intentionally. I just don't feel that one should generalize in matters where such distinguished reputations are at stake and—

gg: Mr. Gould, I think you owe us both, as well as our readers, an answer to that question.

GG: I do?

gg: That's my conviction; perhaps I should repeat the question.

GG: No, it's not necessary.

gg: So you do feel, in effect, that the critic represents a morally endangered species?

GG: Well now, the word "endangered" implies that—

gg: —please, Mr. Gould, answer the question; you do feel that, don't you?

GG: Well, as I've said, I—

gg: You do, don't you?

GG: (pause) Yes.

gg: Of course you do, and now I'm sure you also feel the better for confession.

GG: Hmm, not at the moment.

gg: But you will in due course.

GG: You really think so?

gg: No question of it. But now that you've stated your position so frankly, I do have to make mention of the fact that you yourself have by-lined critical dispatches from time to time. I even recall a piece on Petula Clark which you contributed some years back to these columns and which—

GG: —and which contained more aesthetic judgment per square page than I would presume to render nowadays. But it was essentially a moral critique, you know. It was a piece in which I used Miss Clark, so to speak, in order to comment on a social milieu.

gg: So you feel that you can successfully distinguish between an aesthetic critique of the individual—which you reject out of hand—and a setting down of moral imperatives for society as a whole.

GG: I think I can. Mind you, there are obviously areas in which overlaps are inevitable. Let's say, for example, that I had been privileged to reside in a town in which all the houses were painted battleship gray.

gg: Why battleship gray?

GG: It's my favorite color.

gg: It's a rather negative color, isn't it?

GG: That's why it's my favorite. Now then, let's suppose for the sake of argument that without warning one individual elected to paint his house fire-engine red—

gg: —thereby challenging the symmetry of the town-planning.

GG: Yes, it would probably do that too, but you're approaching the question from an aesthetic point of view. The real consequence of his action would be to foreshadow an outbreak of manic activity in

the town and almost inevitably—since other houses would be painted in similarly garish hues—to encourage a climate of competition and, as a corollary, of violence.

gg: I gather, then, that red in your color lexicon represents aggressive behavior.

GG: I should have thought there'd be general agreement on that. But as I said, there would be an aesthetic/moral overlap at this point. The man who painted the first house may have done so purely from an aesthetic preference and it would, to use an old-fashioned word, be "sinful" if I were to take him to account in respect of his taste. Such an accounting would conceivably inhibit all subsequent judgments on his part. But if I were able to persuade him that his particular aesthetic indulgence represented a moral danger to the community as a whole, and providing I could muster a vocabulary appropriate to the task—which would not be, obviously, a vocabulary of aesthetic standards—then that would, I think, be my responsibility.

gg: You do realize, of course, that you're beginning to talk like a character out of Orwell?

GG: Oh, the Orwellian world holds no particular terrors for me.

gg: And you also realize that you're defining and defending a type of censorship that contradicts the whole post-Renaissance tradition of Western thought?

GG: Certainly. It's the post-Renaissance tradition that has brought the Western world to the brink of destruction. You know, this odd attachment to freedom of movement, freedom of speech, and so on is a peculiarly occidental phenomenon. It's all part of the occidental notion that one can successfully separate word and deed.

gg: The sticks-and-stones syndrome, you mean?

GG: Precisely. There's some evidence for the fact that—well, as a matter of fact, McLuhan talks about just that in the *Gutenberg Galaxy*—that preliterate peoples or minimally literate peoples are much less willing to permit that distinction.

gg: I suppose there's also the biblical injunction that to will evil is to accomplish evil.

GG: Exactly. It's only cultures that, by accident or good management, bypassed the Renaissance which see art for the menace it really is.

gg: May I assume the U.S.S.R. would qualify?

GG: Absolutely. The Soviets are a bit roughhewn as to method, I'll admit, but their concerns are absolutely justified.

gg: What about your own concerns? Have any of your activities violated these personal strictures and, in your terms, "menaced" society?

GG: Yes.

gg: Want to talk about it?

GG: Not particularly.

gg: Not even a quick for-instance? What about the fact that you supplied music for *Slaughterhouse-Five*?

GG: What about it?

gg: Well, at least by Soviet standards, the film of Mr. Vonnegut's opus would probably qualify as a socially destructive piece of work, wouldn't you say?

GG: I'm afraid you're right. I even remember a young lady in Leningrad telling me once that Dostoyevsky, "though a very great writer, was unfortunately pessimistic."

gg: And pessimism, combined with a hedonistic cop-out, was the hallmark of *Slaughterhouse*, was it not?

GG: Yes, but it was the hedonistic properties rather than the pessimistic ones that gave me a lot of sleepless nights.

gg: So you didn't approve of the film?

GG: I admired its craftsmanship extravagantly.

gg: That's not the same as liking it.

GG: No, it isn't.

gg: Can we assume then that even an idealist has his price?

GG: I'd much prefer it said that even an idealist can misread the intentions of a shooting script.

gg: You would have preferred an uncompromised Billy Pilgrim, I assume?

GG: I would have preferred some redemptive element added to his persona, yes.

gg: So you wouldn't vouch for the art-as-technique-pure-and-simple theories of Stravinsky, for instance?

GG: Certainly not. That's quite literally the last thing art is.

gg: Then what about the art-as-violence-surrogate theory?

GG: I don't believe in surrogates; they're simply the playthings of minds resistant to the perfectability of man; besides, if you're looking for violence surrogates, genetic engineering is a better bet.

gg: How about the art-as-transcendental-experience theory?

GG: Of the three you've cited, that's the only one that attracts.

gg: Do you have a theory of your own then?

GG: Yes, but you're not going to like it.

gg: I'm braced.

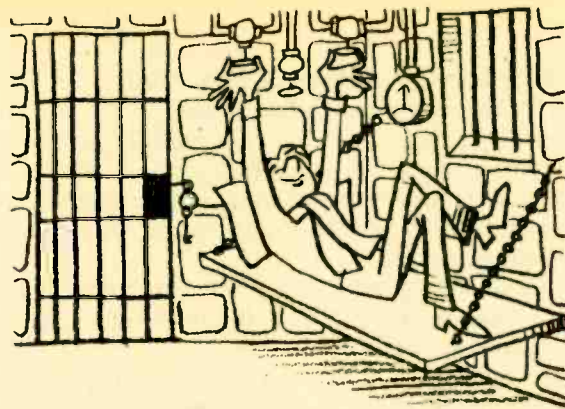
GG: Well, I feel that art should be given the chance to phase itself out. I think that we must accept the fact that art is not inevitably benign, that it is potentially destructive. We should analyze the areas where it tends to do least harm, use them as a guideline, and build into art a component that will enable it to preside over its own obsolescence.

gg: Hm.

GG: —because, you know, the present position, or positions, of art—some of which you've enumerated—are not without analogy to the ban-the-bomb movement of hallowed memory.

gg: You surely don't reject protest of that kind?

GG: No, but since I haven't noticed a single ban-the-child-who-pulls-wings-from-dragonflies movement, I can't join it either. You see, the Western world is consumed with notions of qualification;



A prison career with Gouldian modifications.

the threat of nuclear extinction fulfills those notions and the loss of a dragonfly's wing does not. And until the two phenomena are recognized as one, indivisible, until physical and verbal aggression are seen as simply a flip of the competitive coin, until every aesthetic decision can be equated with a moral correlative, I'll continue to listen to the Berlin Philharmonic from behind a glass partition.

gg: So you don't expect to see your death wish for art fulfilled in your lifetime.

GG: No, I couldn't live without the Sibelius Fifth.

gg: But you are nevertheless talking like a sixteenth-century reformer.

GG: Actually, I feel very close to that tradition. In fact, in one of my better lines I remarked that—

gg: —that's an aesthetic judgment if ever I heard one!

GG: A thousand pardons—let me try a second take on that. On a previous occasion, I remarked that I, rather than Mr. Santayana's hero, am "the last puritan."

gg: And you don't find any problem in reconciling the individual-conscience aspect of the Reformation and the collective censorship of the puritan tradition? Both motifs, it would seem to me, are curiously intermingled in your thesis and, from what I know of it, in your documentary work as well.

GG: Well, no, I don't think there's an inevitable inconsistency there because, at its best—which is to say at its purest—that tradition involved perpetual schismatic division. The best and purest—or at any rate the most ostracized—of individuals ended up in Alpine valleys as symbols of their rejection of the world of the plains. As a matter of fact, there is to this day a Mennonite sect in Switzerland that equates separation from the world with altitude.

gg: Would it be fair to suggest that you, on the other hand, equate it with latitude? After all, you did create *The Idea of North* as a metaphoric comment and not as a factual documentary.

GG: That's quite true. Of course, most of the documentaries have dealt with isolated situations—Arctic outposts, Newfoundland outposts, Mennonite enclaves, and so on.

gg: Yes, but they've dealt with a community in isolation.

GG: That's because my magnum opus is still several drawing boards away.

gg: So they are autobiographical drafts?

GG: That, sir, is not for me to say.

gg: Mr. Gould, there's a sort of grim, I might even say gray, consistency to what you've said, but it does seem to me that we have come a rather long way from the concert-versus-record theme with which we began.

GG: On the contrary, I think we've performed a set of variations on that theme and that, indeed, we've virtually come full circle.

gg: In any event, I have only a few more questions to put to you of which, I guess, the most pertinent would now be: Apart from being a frustrated member of the board of censors, is any other career of interest to you?

GG: I've often thought that I'd like to try my hand at being a prisoner.

gg: You regard *that* as a career?

GG: Oh certainly, on the understanding, of course, that I would be entirely innocent of all charges brought against me.

gg: Mr. Gould, has anyone suggested that you could be suffering from a Myshkin complex?

GG: No, and I can't accept the compliment. It's simply that, as I indicated, I've never understood the preoccupation with freedom as it's reckoned in the Western world. So far as I can see, freedom of movement usually has to do only with mobility, and freedom of speech most frequently with socially sanctioned verbal aggression, and to be incarcerated would be the perfect test of one's inner mobility and of the strength which would enable one to opt creatively out of the human situation.

gg: Mr. Gould, weary as I am, that feels like a contradiction in terms.

GG: I don't really think it is. I also think that there's a younger generation than ours—you are about my age, are you not?

gg: I should assume so.

GG:—a younger generation that doesn't have to struggle with that concept, to whom the competitive fact is not an inevitable component of life, and who do program their lives without making allowances for it.

gg: Are you trying to sell me on the neotribalism kick?

GG: Not really, no. I suspect that competitive tribes got us into this mess in the first place, but, as I said, I don't deserve the Myshkin-complex title.

gg: Well, your modesty is legendary of course, Mr. Gould, but what brings you to that conclusion?

GG: The fact that I would inevitably impose demands upon my keepers—demands that a genuinely free spirit could afford to overlook.

gg: Such as?

GG: The cell would have to be prepared in a battle-ship gray decor—

gg: I shouldn't think that would pose a problem.

GG: Well, I've heard that the new look in penal reform involves primary colors.

gg: Oh, I see.

GG:—and of course there would have to be some sort of understanding about the air-conditioning control. Overhead vents would be out—as I may have mentioned, I'm subject to tracheitis—and, assuming that a forced-air system was employed, the humidity regulator would have to be—

gg: Mr. Gould, excuse the interruption but it just occurs to me that, since you have attempted to point out on several occasions that you did suffer a traumatic experience in the Salzburg Festspielhaus—

GG: Oh, I didn't mean to leave the impression of a traumatic experience. On the contrary, my tracheitis was of such severity that I was able to cancel a month of concerts, withdraw into the Alps, and lead the most idyllic and isolated existence.

gg: I see. Well now, may I make a suggestion?

GG: Of course.

gg: As you know, the old Festspielhaus was originally a riding academy.

GG: Oh quite; I'd forgotten.

gg: And of course, the rear of the building is set against a mountainside.

GG: Yes, that's quite true.

gg: And since you're obviously a man addicted to symbols—I'm sure this prisoner fantasy of yours is precisely that—it would seem to me that the Festspielhaus—the Felsenreitschule—with its Kafka-like setting at the base of a cliff, with the memory of equestrian mobility haunting its past, and located moreover in the birthplace of a composer whose works you have frequently criticized, thereby compromising your own judgmental criteria—

GG: Ah, but I've criticized them primarily as evidence of a hedonistic life.

gg: Be that as it may. The Festspielhaus, Mr. Gould, is a place to which a man like yourself, a man in search of martyrdom, should return.

GG: Martyrdom? What ever gave you that impression? I couldn't possibly go back!

gg: Please, Mr. Gould, try to understand. There could be no more meaningful manner in which to scourge the flesh, in which to proclaim the ascendance of the spirit, and certainly no more meaningful metaphoric *mise en scène* against which to offset your own hermetic life style, through which to autobiographically define your quest for martyrdom, as I'm sure you will try to do, eventually.

GG: But you must believe me; I have no such quest in mind!

gg: Yes, I think you must go back, Mr. Gould. You must once again tread the boards of the Festspielhaus; you must willingly, even gleefully, subject yourself to the gales which rage upon that stage. For then and only then will you achieve the martyr's end you so obviously desire.

GG: Please don't misunderstand; I'm touched by your concern. It's just that, in the immortal words of Mr. Vonnegut's Billy Pilgrim, "I'm not ready yet."

gg: In that case, Mr. Gould, in the immortal words of Mr. Vonnegut himself, "so it goes." ●



Glenn Gould Performs Glenn Gould— and Others

Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart:
from “lovely” to “loathsome.”

by Harris Goldsmith

THOUGH GLENN GOULD departed from the active concert scene over a decade ago, he remains an “S.R.O.” (stereo recordings only) artist!

As a critic, teacher, and sometime music-competition jurist, I can heartily attest that Gould remains very much in our midst: He has—willingly or not—influenced more than a few of our talented younger pianists in much the way that budding virtuosos of the Forties were affected by Horowitz. The symptoms are not hard to recognize: low seating position (chances are the performer will bring his own stool), a penchant for dry staccato playing with all sorts of accentuations and peekaboo inner voices, a preference for tempos either twice too slow or twice too fast, and a tendency to arpeggiate chords that ought not to be arpeggiated. Add to these all sorts of fidgety, languishing gestures and (of course) an audible vocal obligato.

If I regard some of Gould’s “originalities” as baleful perversities, I must make it equally plain that I consider him unquestionably one of this century’s pianistic giants. No one put it more aptly than the late George Szell when he observed sarcastically, “That nut is a genius!”

Gould is no stranger to the music of Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart, although as often as not there are no stranger performances of their music than his. That applies least strongly to his new recording of the first four Bach *French Suites*. For one thing, Bach permits greater leeway vis-à-vis tempos, dynamic gradations, and embellishment. Performers are expected, indeed required, to employ their own “registrations” and ornaments; Gould meets these requirements with resourceful expertise. Moreover his spare linearity of touch and unflinching sense for rhythm are decidedly relevant to the matter at hand.

I also get the impression—and this is by no means true of all the music he has recorded—that Gould not only understands but *likes* this music! He frequently permits gracefulness and tenderness to temper the frowning austerity of his work. More than once, a ravishing bit of color humanizes the almost superhuman exactitude of his prodigious digits. These are gracious, aristocratic, thoroughly lovely readings—flowing, characterful, and organic. As in all of Gould’s playing, these presentations run the gamut from ecclesiastical rigor to swooning sensuality, but the departures from orthodoxy are always well within the context of the material. There is an astute sense of style here, a refreshing alternation of staccato and legato, an altogether elegant grace. In sum, this disc can be warmly and wholeheartedly recommended. I look forward to Gould’s presumably forthcoming rendition of the Fifth and Sixth Suites.

Gould’s treatment of the three Beethoven Op. 31 sonatas has much to recommend it. By his yardstick (or is it a distorting mirror?), these are relatively straightforward interpretations. The G major (No. 1) is given a hurtling, ultrabrisk statement. Though of course differing in its detail, Gould’s view of the piece makes me think of Schnabel. Both stress the rowdy, uncouth side of a sonata often played with an almost Schubertian fancifulness. The witty clarity of Gould’s trills in the second movement and his sharply drawn ostinato expunge the sunny, Bellini-like lyricism while substituting a caustic rambunctiousness hardly less winning. The final rondo, far less *grazioso* than it sometimes is, is an untrammelled delight in Gould’s gusty, sanguine, explosive restatement.

In contrast, the first movement of the *Tempest* (No. 2) is rather steady and four-square in its manic introversion. Gould brings out some interesting left-hand detail in the second theme but otherwise adheres pretty firmly to the text. He is, for example, most conscientious about holding down the pedal for the long recitatives in the recapitulation. The Adagio likewise is relatively straight, though there are some runs played in a precipitate, virtuoso manner that strikes me as inappropriate for so brooding and lyrical a section. (I also take issue with the way Gould treats the many gruppetto turns there.) The

Allegretto gallops off at a hefty clip, but others (Schnabel immediately comes to mind) have opted for a similar athleticism in that movement.

Gould evidently sees the opening motto of the E flat Sonata (No. 3) as a sort of musical sigh. That descending figuration does play an important—often overlooked—part in the movement's "working out," but I take issue with Gould's use of a slower tempo every time it comes around. It makes for a disjointed, unnatural effect. The scherzo goes with titanic vigor, though the bristling exactitude of the left-hand ostinato leaves little room for requisite lilt and humor. I continue to prefer a gentler treatment of this movement, such as Kempff's. Gould gives the minuet a throbbing quality; the trio, a bit coy in its detachment, fits well into his basic scheme. Recalling Schnabel's disastrous attempt to play the frolicsome finale at its specified Presto con fuoco, I anticipated eagerly what Gould's infallible equipment would make of that challenge. But he will have none of it: His version, while hardly slow, is surprisingly staid and unadventurous. All repeats save those in the minuet are eschewed. Gould's piano is well reproduced, though there is a monochromatic hardness in the tone—presumably the artist's choice.

Which brings us to Mozart. I could scarcely believe what I heard when I set the tone arm down for the first movement of the K. 331 Sonata. To call Gould's tempo "slow" would be to engage in misleading understatement. Let me say instead that, rather than give his audience a performance, he painstakingly provides them with the raw ingredients of the piece. In this theme-and-variations first movement he sneakily jacks up the tempo a few metronome notches with each successive variation and finally ends in a cloud of dust (his fingerwork, though, remains uncommonly transparent). The minuetto staggers, each and every note played in halting staccato, while the final *Turkish March* ambles along at an andante moderato gait. I admit that I rather liked that last movement, but surely it is far removed from Mozart's conception.

After five or six playings, I am frankly at a loss what to think of Gould's perversions: It *could*, after all, be a put-on.

The little C major "student" sonata, however, gets a splendid playing. Gould's more usual Mozartean penchant for fast, metronomic tempos hurts this basically insipid piece not at all. The first movement sounds fleet and energetic; the second gets a spiky sort of playing that drains it of its usual mincing sentimentality, and the rondo is delightfully fleet. Only Gieseking's equally unprecious and more conventional account (Seraphim) offers serious competition.

I take issue with Columbia's designation of the late F major Sonata as "Sonata in F major with Rondo, K. 533/494." Although Mozart did use the K. 494 Rondo as the sonata's last movement, he revised it thoroughly for K. 533—even adding a lengthy cadenza at the end. K. 533 is an altogether remarkable work, full of contrapuntal and chromatic complexity, replete with the brooding nostalgia, the ineffable sadness, if you will, familiar from other "late" Mozart. If I have left little space for comment on Gould's performance of this, possibly the greatest of Mozart's keyboard sonatas (certainly it is the least known of his great ones), so much the better. His helter-skelter, brutally rigid treatment negates all that the mu-

sic should stand for: This is truly a loathsome performance.

The D minor Fantasy is if anything even worse: Gould's transgressions are absurd in the extreme. Surely he is pulling our leg. I hope.

BACH: French Suites, Vol. 1. Glenn Gould, piano. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 32347, \$5.98. Tape: ●● MT 32347, \$6.98.

No. 1, in D minor, S. 812; No. 2, in C minor, S. 813; No. 3, in B minor, S. 814; No. 4, in E flat, S. 815.

BEETHOVEN: Sonatas for Piano, Nos. 16–18. Glenn Gould, piano. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 32349, \$5.98.

No. 16, in G, Op. 31, No. 1; No. 17, in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2 (*Tempo*); No. 18, in E flat, Op. 31, No. 3.

MOZART: Sonatas for Piano, Vol. 4. Glenn Gould, piano. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 32348, \$5.98.

Sonatas: in A, K. 331; in C, K. 545; in F, K. 533. Fantasy in D minor, K. 397.

The Hindemith sonatas: one win, one draw, one disaster.

by Royal S. Brown

IT IS DIFFICULT to say whether Hindemith's First Piano Sonata, written like the other two in 1936, is one of the dullest works of music ever written by a major composer or whether its performers simply make it sound that way. Certainly no interpreter could consciously succeed in scuttling a composer as well as Glenn Gould has in this work. In the first movement, for instance, he seems with infuriating slowness to be trying to capture some quintessential spirit lying in each and every vertical combination of notes. In the process, the typically Hindemithian themes on which the movement depends for formal coherence are distended—almost to the breaking point. The same happens in the second movement, whose opening section is supposed to be "in the tempo of a very slow march." Although Gould captures this spirit in the reprise, his performance of the opening of the movement, which he himself refers to in his liner notes as a "funeral march," has not the slightest iota of marchlike momentum to it.

Granted, the sonata itself is hardly an ingratiating work. Over its sprawling five movements (which Gould makes last over half an hour), Hindemith was apparently attempting to establish a series of inner relationships among various thematic, chordal, and rhythmic patterns. The fourth movement, for instance, repeats fairly literally material from the first movement, but in a different order. But too much of what goes on strikes me as pointless and rather uninspired elaboration of pointless and rather uninspired material, and Gould's static approach to much of the music does not help at all, even though there are moments, such as in the last movement, when the pianist makes the music soar as only he can do when he puts his soul (as opposed to his mind) to it.

Although he shows, among other things, a flagrant disregard for legato indications and overuses the *secco* style that is his trademark, Gould at least makes a much better case for his idiosyncracies in the Second Sonata than in the First. He does wax overly rhapsodic in the first movement; but at least he does not break down the cohesive

musical cement that, once destroyed, caused the opening movement of the First Sonata to collapse like a decrepit ruin. And the pianist's dryly ironic interpretation of the acid and somewhat parodic second movement, one of the best in any Hindemith work, could elicit pardon for many more sins than Gould commits.

Interestingly enough, Gould approaches the Third Sonata, which unlike the first two has become a staple of the contemporary piano repertoire, in a much more straightforward manner. With the exception of the scherzo, which he manages to distort (brilliantly) with a whirlwind tempo, he seems to concentrate more on the composer's intentions than on his own, with spectacular results. Gould particularly feasts on the triple fugue of the fourth movement, which seems to have been written for his patented brand of pianism.

What a shame, then, to be forced into reservations on the disc as a whole by what apparently amounts to a gargantuan vanity—the same vanity that shows up painfully in the pianist's liner notes, in spite of the extremely cogent remarks about Hindemith's music, and in his seemingly uncontrollable urge to hum, which I feel could be controlled if Gould really wanted to. The point is that he does not, any more than he seems to wish to stop imposing his weird desires on music he *could* perform with consistent perfection.

The tally for this disc: an excellent version of a work (the Third Sonata) that has had its share of outstanding performances (notably by Previn and Siegel, the latter still available on Orion ORS 7299), a good but unidiomatic rendition of a work (the Second Sonata) that still needs a definitive interpretation, and an absolutely awful manhandling of a work (the First Sonata) that might best remain neglected. The recorded sound is quite good, particularly considering the amount of music (over a half hour per side) squeezed onto the disc.

HINDEMITH: Sonatas for Piano, Nos. 1-3. Glenn Gould, piano. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 32350, \$5.98.

Wagner "de-orchestrated": a modest party game gone sour. by David Hamilton

WELL HERE, once again, is our champion piano-leg-puller, Mr. Glenn Gould, telling us that old Liszt was all wrong about transcribing Wagner for keyboard. By selecting almost entirely excerpts from the earlier Wagner operas, father-in-law got stuck with the most bombastic material: harmonically static, percussive in its accompanimental rhythms, and totally unsuited to the piano, which is percussive enough to begin with.

To avoid this presumptive hazard, Gould offers us a piano version of the *Siegfried Idyll*, "possibly the least bombastic work Wagner ever wrote." Possibly—but for much of its length the *Idyll* is also one of Wagner's most static works. In the orchestral original, all those sustained chords sound fine: Strings and winds can hold on practically forever without sacrificing fresh and vibrant tone quality. The *Idyll* is a slow piece, too, and Gould

opts for very spacious tempos. Consequently, in some of those meditative passages, successive sounds seem very far apart because the tone dies so quickly; one feels certain that entire Beethoven baguettes could be played during some of these blank spaces.

Such foolishness is not consistently indulged. Often, Gould "activates inner voices," elaborating Wagner's rather limited counterpoint. Good idea, in principle, but these "new" inner voices muddle the music's original argument—and especially its rhythmic sense: Toward the end, the middle of every measure is marked by a tolling note in the deep bass, which soon sounds like a downbeat and wipes out the carefully won repose of the coda (down in that crucial register, Wagner has only a thirteen-measure sustained note on the contrabass). In short, what is satisfyingly static and unpercussive on strings—unless you busy it up, which makes it unsatisfyingly percussive.

Words fail me with respect to Gould's Rhine Journey, except to note, for connoisseurs of such matters, that he embraces the Humperdinck concert ending. The *Meistersinger* Prelude works better, simply because it is pretty consistently busy throughout, and thereby needs no elaboration. But I fear Glenn Gould will be read out of the virtuoso transcribers' union when word gets around about what he has done in the recapitulation, where Wagner piles up his famous combination of three different themes at once. The Godowsky who combined two Chopin études simultaneously, the Horowitz who managed with two hands to reproduce piccolo obbligato, trombone tune, and accompaniment as well in Sousa's most celebrated march—they would have found a way to set forth all three of Wagner's tunes, and the harmony too. If not, they would have kept the news to themselves. When Gould used to play *Meistersinger* at parties, he would play two of the tunes and sing the other, which demonstrates a nice sense of the absurdity of it all. But on this record, he just overdubs the missing material (not that he doesn't sing elsewhere!). It's not any "moral imperatives" that bother me about this, but the loss of that earlier humorous perspective. In this day and age, surely the only point in transcribing, and playing on the piano—and listening to—something like the *Meistersinger* Prelude is for the fun of it, the challenge of it, the sheer animal display of virtuosity in accomplishing the absurd. Otherwise, it's not very interesting, and certainly not fun.

But that's the trouble with this whole record—it isn't fun, it's just pedantry (in my own pedantic way, I've tried to suggest that it isn't even good pedantry, either). And, aside from issues of transcription, the performances are mightily mannered, Gould characteristically pulling down his dynamics at Wagner's climaxes and insisting on all sorts of curious inner voices. Neither in the arranging nor the playing does one hear any real pianistic imagination, of the kind that gives Liszt's transcriptions a textural variety and virtuosic exuberance at least paralleling the spirit of Wagner's originals without slavishly reproducing the letter. I'm sorry, but Glenn Gould's Wagner is mainly a bore.

WAGNER-GOULD: Die Meistersinger: Prelude; Götterdämmerung: Dawn and Siegfried's Rhine Journey; Siegfried Idyll. Glenn Gould, piano. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 32351, \$5.98. Tape: ● M/A 32351, \$6.98; ●● MT 32351, \$6.98.

Symphonies for a Record Company's Birthday

Deutsche Grammophon celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary with limited-edition boxes of Haydn and Dvořák.



Kubelik's impassioned Dvořák—
and two more-orthodox Eighths.

by Harris Goldsmith

NOW HERE'S A SWITCH! Many musicians have pet projects that they just can't quite sell to any recording company: Kubelik, it seems, has the opposite problem: In the booklet for this limited-edition Dvořák symphony cycle, he indicates that he recorded the First Symphony (*The Bells of Zlonice*) only as a favor to his recording company. He considers this composer-rejected essay unworthy of Dvořák and rues that the editors of the Artia complete edition didn't respect Dvořák's "honorable decision to disown the work."

What, you might wonder, could a conductor possibly bring to a composition he frankly disapproves of? In this instance, believe it or not, quite a lot. Kubelik's rustic performance has a great deal of surging energy and a fine, red-blooded folklorish quality. The reading is a bit more impulsive, less sternly disciplined than Witold Rowicki's excellent recent Philips version (6500 122), and if you weren't told, you would suspect that the Czech expatriate conductor (now thoroughly Teutonized, artistically at any rate) had nothing but love for the score. And for all its faults, *The Bells of Zlonice* is an eminently likable work. I am at a loss to find the commonly cited Bee-

thovenian touches. On the other hand, this—and most other early Dvořák—has sundry Wagnerisms in its pages, and I am amazed that no one has caught the almost outright quotation from the end of Schumann's Second Symphony in the parallel pages of this finale. Kubelik's open, sunny rendition captures the surge and brawn of the orchestration (anticipatory, not reminiscent, of Bruckner).

Kubelik's is the third complete stereo traversal of the nine Dvořák symphonies. As Philips was releasing Rowicki's excellent versions piecemeal, I had ample opportunity to opt for his performances over the very capable ones (for London) conducted by the late Istvan Kertész. (The Kertész discs are available both singly and as a set, DVO S 1. The Rowicki series is available only as single discs, and his Nos. 5 and 6, originally released on the budget-price World Series label, have never been issued domestically at the premium import price.) Sonically the later Philips engineering held a slight advantage, and interpretively Rowicki's penetrating conducting held a more than slight advantage. He drew more characterization and local color from the London Symphony than Kertész managed from the same forces. As for the older Supraphon/Artia cycle—divided among several Czech conductors and orchestras—outmoded sonics vitiated but couldn't conceal the interpretive merits, indeed, greatness, of Talich's Eighth and *New World* or Sejna's No. 6. In addition to these complete versions, there were—and are—many outstanding individual editions of the later symphonies to contend with; e.g., the Beecham, Walter, Szell/Concertgebouw (see below), and Silvestri Eighths; the Toscanini (but *not* in the rechanneled edition), Anserl, and Klemperer (Angel S 36246) *New Worlds*.

A choice between Rowicki and Kubelik is more clear-cut, but paradoxically harder to make than one between Rowicki and Kertész. One might oversimplify and say that Rowicki is a classicist and Kubelik a Romantic; one might also call Rowicki "intellectual" and Kubelik "emotional." As with all generalities, such easy classifications are simply inadequate at times. For instance, is

And Don't Forget Mendelssohn, Schubert, and Sibelius

At the same time Deutsche Grammophon issued the two limited edition sets reviewed here, the company also released boxes of the five mature symphonies of Mendelssohn and the complete symphonies of Schubert and Sibelius. The Mendelssohn was reviewed last month; reviews of the Schubert and Sibelius will appear next month.

Rowicki's strong, assertive, sternly organized Symphony No. 7 any less "emotional" than Kubelik's merely because it eschews some of that reading's wild tempo shifts and whispered, *misterioso* colors? If anything, it is even *more* vibrant. And, on the other hand, who is going to claim that Kubelik's wildly exaggerated shifts of tempo and accent in the *New World* lack intellectual acumen?

Nonetheless, there *are* fundamental differences between the two versions that remain more or less consistent throughout the nine works. Kubelik's work tends toward the rustic, with big, burly contrasts, wide modifications of basic tempo, exuberant swashes of energy. Even when the phrasing is delicate and rhythmically straight, the music seems to generate itself freely on its own impetus.

Rowicki's patterns are always defined by a firmly established basic pulse. His leadership is tauter, more governed by analytical and formal considerations, and for all its weight and sonority the sound he draws from his forces tends to be leaner, more attentive to motivic detail. Kubelik makes his effects through sudden alternation of *tutti* and concertante detail; Rowicki is more attentive to line, less mass-oriented. The differing styles of engineering accentuate these dissimilarities: Rowicki, for all his impressive acoustical ambience, receives basically close-to sound with analytic coolness; Kubelik, leading a warmer-toned ensemble, benefits from a more remote, though still clean, microphone placement. Small details are there if you listen for them, but they do not command your attention unless you seek them out.

In the attractive three-movement Symphony No. 3, I find more immediate appeal in Kubelik's emotional (there I go again) reading, although Rowicki's (Philips 6500 286) is probably more carefully planned. In the finale-oriented Symphony No. 5, Kubelik's way tends to put even greater than usual stress on that last movement and thus throws the rest of the work somewhat off kilter structurally. Just the opposite happens in Symphony No. 6: After an attractively light, well-sprung first movement and a memorably pastoral Adagio, the furious and especially the last movement sound rather tentative rhythmically and *underpowered*. In this work, the modern exemplar is not Rowicki or Kertész but rather the magnificently taut, vibrantly reproduced Anceerl/Czech Philharmonic reading (now on Supraphon, once available—briefly—on the defunct Crossroads bargain label).

In Symphony No. 7, the Berlin Philharmonic follows Kubelik's idiosyncracies of tempo and phrasing more convincingly than the Vienna Philharmonic did on the same conductor's older London recording (now Stereo Treasury STS 15125). In its way, his is a marvelous performance, full of drama and inspired touches. However, I continue to find more satisfaction in a "straight" approach to this most serious of Dvořák's mature masterpieces: Rowicki (Philips 6500 287) and Monteux (Stereo Treasury STS 15157) are particularly recommended; Szell's Seventh (included in Columbia D3S 814)—while incomparably taut and disciplined—is a trifle over-refined and bloodless.

The reissue of Kubelik's 1966 Eighth Symphony does little to change my impression of the performance as tepid: It's a sound enough reading, but relatively shapeless and undetailed.

The new Neumann Eighth on Supraphon, part of yet another projected cycle of the nine symphonies, is highly reminiscent of the lovely old Talich LP. Neumann's view

is a stylized one: The opening movement is kept moving along with genial tautness; the slow movement is rather severe but with a vigorous climax at midpoint. The scherzo is slower, more angular than it sometimes is, with better than average woodwind detail and (again like Talich) a courageous slow-motion tempo for the coda. The theme-and-variations finale too goes with accented deliberation, very much as when Talich led it. But the Czech Philharmonic of today doesn't have quite the distinction of finesse it had twenty years ago. Supraphon's recorded sound is warm, but a bit drab. They have mastered the disc at too low a level and there is a curious "rain-on-a-wooden-shed" kind of background provided by Supraphon's less than ideal surfaces.

My pleasure at welcoming back the lovely Szell/Concertgebouw Eighth is diminished by Turnabout's insensitive processing of the still serviceable 1951 tape. Through the fizz of screaming highs and the wavery boom of muffled lows (assigned, of course, to separate pseudo-stereophonic channels), and through incessant ticks and crackle, the tenacious listener can perceive a reading of rare distinction. The Dutch orchestra's execution is remarkably delicate and volatile, and Szell's interpretation has more life and freshness than he was able to muster on either of his later Cleveland remakes (note, for example, the whirlwind coda to the third movement, as convincing in its extremity as the Talich/Neumann approach is in its opposite polarity). If you want this cherishable performance, try to find the now withdrawn Richmond version—an honest, undoctored, mono reissue with brighter highs than the murky London original. Or seek out the recent English Eclipse reissue (ECS 690).

As a long-time admirer of Kubelik's 1951 Chicago *New World* (now included in Mercury MG3 4501)—and a lesser devotee of his more wayward 1955 Vienna version (Stereo Treasury STS 15007)—I was particularly curious to hear Kubelik's present views. His newest account is a puzzler in every way: Tempos are excitingly flung about, held back, brought to lyrical and dramatic extremes. The flute theme in the first movement (the one that *everybody* but Toscanini slows down for) is brought to a near halt, and there are similar touches before and after this specific detail. But Kubelik and his Berliners play the Largo so hauntingly and with such depth of feeling that I can almost forgive the excesses elsewhere. As in the Seventh Symphony, the Berlin orchestra melts as lovingly as its Viennese counterpart does, but retains a boldness of attack and dashing virility. In its crazy way, this is a very great performance indeed—a new look at the old *New World*. Don't, however, expect a modern-sounding counterpart of the old Chicago version!

DVOŘÁK: Symphonies (9). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik, cond. [Hans Weber, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2720 066, \$49.41 (nine discs, limited edition).

Symphonies: No. 1, in C minor, Op. 3 (*The Bells of Zlonice*); No. 2, in B flat, Op. 4; No. 3, in E flat, Op. 10; No. 4, in D minor, Op. 13; No. 5, in F, Op. 76; No. 6, in D, Op. 60; No. 7, in D minor, Op. 70; No. 8, in G, Op. 88; No. 9, in E minor, Op. 95 (*From the New World*).

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 8, in G, Op. 88. Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Neumann, cond. SUPRAPHON 1 10 1203, \$5.98.

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 8, in G, Op. 88. Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, George Szell, cond. TURNABOUT TV-E 34525, \$2.98 (rechanneled) [from LONDON LL 488 and RICHMOND 19107, recorded in 1951].

Haydn's "London" symphonies: the crown of a glorious career.

by Paul Henry Lang

THE BOUNDARIES of what we call the "classical style" or the "Viennese school" are difficult to establish; but that after a nebulous beginning it was given its firm direction and final stamp by Haydn is an unquestionable fact. Born just about when Bach began his B minor Mass, Haydn grew up in the Rococo, witnessed the rise of the Mannheimers and of the Bach sons, was touched by and overcame the *Sturm und Drang*, to become in maturity the principal architect of what he himself proudly recognized as "an entirely new style" radiating from quartet and symphony. His symphonic thought dominated music all the way to Brahms, who once said that "it is no joke to try to compose quartets and symphonies after Haydn." It was a unique career, and Haydn's life work the unique achievement of a genius of such powerful individuality as to be able to amalgamate all styles encountered over a long lifetime into a personal musical language.

Yet even today this man—warmhearted, amiable, and blessed with a marvelous sense of humor—is often regarded as no more than a jovial, peasant-born innocent (Berlioz called him a composer for children), entertaining, but lightweight in comparison to the heaven stormers of the nineteenth century. They called him "Papa Haydn" because of his many attractively pointed musical jokes and the *gemütlich* popular tunes and flip-pant *opera buffa* melodies he often used, failing to notice the sophisticated contrapuntal elaboration to which these were subsequently subjected.

For this peasant-born musician, who took composition so seriously that he put on his Sunday best when sitting down to his desk or at the piano, studied Fux's great Latin treatise on counterpoint, and was familiar with a wide range of music, old and new. The popular tone and the engaging humor were only facets of a style governed by highly intellectual determination, and his development was steady, purposeful, never slackening to the very end. His architecturally complex and marvelously developed sonata structures, the majestic adagios, the andantes with witty and pensive variations, the thumping minuets, and the swift final rondos with their many capricious surprises never cease to evoke admiration and delight. Beethoven constantly returned to them for inspiration.

Haydn is called "the father of the symphony." Paternity in the arts is difficult to prove, and in this case too is questionable, because the symphony as a genre and the sonata as a formal principle were already established and flourishing when Haydn came on the scene. But what he made of both is one of the greatest achievements in the history of music. The chief mark of Haydn's mature style is the principle of thematic play with the smallest fragments of a symphonic subject. I say "subject" deliberately, because these are not themes in the nineteenth-century sense, but subjects to be elaborated; most of them come from the public domain.

The basic requirement of these symphonic subjects, in themselves insignificant, is their capacity for endless metamorphoses: they acquire significance in the manner



Eugen Jochum—a distinguished achievement.

of their use. The classic era did not understand by "invention" the creation of melodies (though in slow movements and of course in opera this was of prime importance); to them "invention" meant the old *ars combinatoria*, the ability to form ever new constellations and combinations of the initial subject, indeed of the smallest particles of that subject.

This is the essence of the symphonic style, and Haydn extended thematic consistency beyond the development section to the entire sonata structure. The book says that in a sonata movement there must be a principal theme and an opposing second or subsidiary theme, but the "book" was written long after Haydn's death. The eighteenth-century symphonist knew and followed certain broad *principles* but no formal pattern: he had as much freedom as any Romantic, but it was a disciplined and imaginative freedom.

What really mattered was not thematic but tonal dualism, the confrontation and reconciliation of tonic and dominant. Actually, Haydn's "opposing" themes are often related, and in his late style he tended toward monothematic processes, the more fully to exploit thematic logic. The variety is endless. Here he uses the beginning of the subject or a bit from the middle, then he settles on a snippet from a contrapuntal countersubject and develops it in every direction, or starts after the double bar with some bit from the closing cadence of the exposition. He is totally unpredictable but always logical, and his capriciousness is always delightful and convincing.

When Haydn's symphonies are discussed we usually think of the last dozen, the "London" symphonies recorded here. While undoubtedly the crown of his career as a symphonist, this is an unjust limitation, for there are masterpieces galore among the earlier works. There is however an element here that is new, and that is definitely traceable to the London visits. There is a certain pride and quiet dignity in these works that we do not feel to such a degree in the earlier symphonies. Though liked and appreciated in Esterháza, Haydn was still little more than a privileged and favored servant, whereas in London he was admired as a master and treated like a gentleman, honored by a great university, and received with respect by the highest aristocracy. Haydn was conscious of his artistic stature and of the inferiority of his social position at home; the recognition in London affected him deeply.

One might say that performing Haydn as he should be performed is one of the most difficult tasks a conductor can face. First of all there is the question of balance, infinitely delicate, which depends only partly on the proper ratio of strings and winds. When Haydn suddenly

doubles the first violins with solo bassoon or flute, this must be distinctly heard because it is not a reinforcement but a deliberate coloring. The *batteria* needs constant attention to see whether trumpets and timpani function as form-defining emphasis or as an integral part of the unfolding action. There are no "lazy parts" in these scores, the part-writing is often as individual and delicate as in a quartet, and there are many contrapuntal passages—in a word, clarity is the first requirement.

Both George Szell and Eugen Jochum are celebrated conductors, and both deliver first-class performances, though Szell has a slight edge. This is of course due to personality, but we must not forget that Szell conducts one of the world's greatest orchestras, which he trained for years in his image. Jochum also has an excellent orchestra in the London Philharmonic, though not so finely honed as the Clevelanders; however, he is a guest conductor who cannot in short order mold a strange orchestra to his entire satisfaction, though what he accomplishes with them is admirable.

Both conductors have excellent stylistic sense, know the literature inside-out, and both have aristocratic taste, but Szell's refinement in the details is somewhat superior to Jochum's. Take the remarkable distinction Szell makes between staccato and nonlegato, or portamento and legato; Jochum, though obviously aware of the distinction, does not achieve it to such a degree; his staccato can be a little too sharply whittled. In the *tutti* Szell cheats a little, as Jochum sometimes does as well, robbing horns and trumpets of small note values. This gentle fraud, introduced by Toscanini (whose whiplash *tutti* often went *too far*), is used for a worthy purpose: It prevents the blanketing effect that often ensues after a solid forte crash, especially likely in recordings.

The Londoners deliver the fast movements with remarkable virtuosity, but these prestos can be a little breathless, whereas Szell, a shade slower, gives the impression of speed without ever losing definition. In some of the slow movements Jochum's strings do not muster the warm melodic line of the Cleveland strings, and at times Szell's tempos in these movements are better. In all

these matters Jochum is right behind his late distinguished colleague, but when it comes to ornamental tones, so important in this style, he does not quite match Szell's accuracy and precision. The long *appoggiatura* is always correct, but the compound ones, the slides, he tends to slur, with the result that accents fall on the wrong note (i.e., the nineteenth-century way). However, unless an orchestra is consistently trained in such stylistic details until they become second nature, the players cannot be expected to have uniformly positive ways with them. Here Beecham's legacy of complete arbitrariness with ornamentation must weigh on some English orchestras.

The attractively priced Szell set is made up of earlier single releases gathered into an album. The sound is still remarkably bright, though since the individual recordings come from different periods the quality—while never less than good—is variable. The Deutsche Grammophon sound is also good, but not so crisp as on the older Columbia records; there is a slight echo and the meleys tend to be a little thick, though seldom obscuring the part-writing. This is again only partly the fault of the engineering: the Clevelanders attack and release more precisely than the English orchestra, there is daylight between the tones even in the fastest passages. All in all, Jochum's set is a distinguished contribution, especially since it offers all twelve "London" symphonies—Szell did not live to record the second half of the set—and will provide delectable music for hours on end.

HAYDN: Symphonies Nos. 93–104. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Eugen Jochum, cond. [Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2720 064, \$32.94 (six discs, limited edition).

B **HAYDN:** Symphonies Nos. 93–98. Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. [Paul Myers (in Nos. 93 and 94) and Andrew Kazdin (in Nos. 95–98), prod.] COLUMBIA D3M 32321, \$11.98 (three discs) [from MS 7006, 1968, M 30366, 1971, and M 30646, 1971].

R Symphonies: No. 93, in O; No. 94, in G (*Surprise*); No. 95, in C minor; No. 96, in D (*Miracle*); No. 97, in C; No. 98, in B flat; No. 99, in E flat; No. 100, in G (*Military*); No. 101, in D (*Clock*); No. 102, in B flat; No. 103, in E flat (*Drum Roll*); No. 104, in D (*London*).

Caruso

Murray Hill's "complete Caruso" box and an RCA set offer an in-depth look at the tenor whose "name is synonymous with the art of singing."

by Dale Harris

THE FACT that more than fifty years have elapsed since the death of Enrico Caruso has done little to diminish his fame. The passage of time has relegated the once immense renown of tenors like Alessandro Bonci, Giovanni Zenatello, Beniamino Gigli, Giacomo Lauri-Volpi, Tito Schipa, even Giovanni Martinelli, to the custody of specialists, those who care about the heritage of singing and cherish the past as well as the present. Ca-

ruso's achievement, on the other hand, is part of our general cultural inheritance. His name is universally known. As far as the world at large is concerned, he is not merely a historical figure, someone who was born in 1873 and after a glorious career, spent mainly at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, died in 1921. He is more than an individual, more than an especially great Italian tenor, he is an archetype. His name is synonymous with



the art of singing. He represents an entire field of artistic expression. There is no reason to believe he will ever cease to do so.

The basis of Caruso's invulnerable celebrity was the phonograph. In this case art and technology conspired to produce an irresistible force. Before Caruso's recordings of 1900-02 the phonograph seemed little more than a toy to most people. With those recordings it became a serious medium for the dissemination of music.

From the start Caruso's records were utterly successful. At a time when the recording process was unreliable, when certain voices, like certain musical instruments, simply failed to register effectively on disc, Caruso invariably came through with thrilling impact. The vibrancy of his sound, the spontaneity of his delivery, and the evenness of his scale, with its rich lower voice, expansive middle, and resounding top, were uniquely satisfying—not only aesthetically, but also because they minimized the shortcomings of the primitive phonograph. The generous outpouring of that particular voice vanquished surface noise and even triumphed over the limitations in frequency range.

For some twenty years more Caruso made records. And while he matured vocally, so did the technique of recording steadily improve. By 1907 he had made his third and definitive "*Vesti la giubba*," the first version

with orchestral accompaniment; in 1911 he recorded his sixth "*Celeste Aida*," and in 1917 his second "*M'appari*." These three discs sold prodigiously and carried his name to every part of the world. More than anybody else Caruso was responsible for the success of the entire phonograph industry. Victor, for whom he recorded exclusively from 1904 to the end (with the exception of a single side for the Gramophone and Typewriter Company, later HMV), owed its prosperity directly to his talent and to his loyalty. Other record companies could hardly help being inspired by his example and by Victor's success. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the easy availability of music by means of mechanical reproduction—a feature of life we have long since taken for granted—has its origins in the immediately appealing sound of Caruso's voice.

The artistic importance of Caruso's recorded legacy is no less significant than the historical consideration of its influence. On some 240 published sides, from Pini-Corsi's song *Tu non mi vuoi più ben*, recorded in Milan around 1900 (the date of Caruso's first discs is still a matter of conjecture), to the final "*Crucifixus*" from Rossini's *Petite Messe solennelle*, recorded in Camden in 1920, we can follow the progress of an entire career and by so doing learn something remarkably revealing about Caruso's development. From session to session we hear a voice that perceptibly moves on from carefree youthfulness to strong, pliant maturity, and then to tense, shadowed ripeness. As we listen to Caruso's collected *oeuvre* his tenor changes from lyric to spinto and at last to dramatic. As this happens we find ourselves inevitably swept up in the drama of his career. One of Caruso's greatest gifts was the personality that infused his singing. The glorious voice was the means whereby an intensely appealing human being revealed itself. The immediate success of his records was due in no small measure to the warmth and immediacy of his personality, and to this he gave expression whenever he sang. The timbre of his voice, especially in the lower and middle reaches, is not merely beautiful, it is uniquely sympathetic. As Henry Pleasants points out in *The Great Singers*, Caruso himself was aware of this feature of his art. When asked to name the requisites of greatness in singing he replied: "A big chest, a big mouth, ninety per cent memory, ten per cent intelligence, and something in the heart."

That something in the heart might be paraphrased as musicality. No more innately musical singing exists on records. Caruso's sense of attack, coloration, intensity, vibrato, placement, dynamics, and legato are awesome. Put on his first recording, *Tu non mi vuoi più ben*, and you immediately hear the transfiguration of personality into song, the use of the voice as an expressive instrument, the ability to convey commitment by means of vocal skill. All of Caruso's first recordings are marked by a certain impetuosity, a prodigality of temperament that is touchingly youthful. The Anglo-Italian Commerce Company/Pathé cylinders and discs and the Zonophone discs of roughly 1900-01 as well as the G&Ts of 1902-03 are effusions by someone who has not yet learned about the need to husband his resources, or to pay full attention to details of performance. His G&T "*E lucevan le stelle*," for example, finds him starting in the wrong place; the G&T *Luna fedel* has a similar fluff at the beginning of the second stanza. But the amplitude and the generosity of such things as the Zonophone *Un bacio ancora* and *Luna fedel*, or the two arias from *Germania* on

G&T are wonderfully thrilling. So is the silvery lightness of his voice then and the ease of its production.

By the time of his first American recordings Caruso was a more thoughtful artist, and because of his newfound restraint, even more thrilling to hear. His "*Recondita armonia*" balances passion and purity of style and does so with perfect judgment. Part of its effectiveness lies in the sense Caruso conveys of infinite vocal resources behind those he is actually employing. The combination here of vocal gorgeousness and judiciousness never ceases to astonish me. The "*Una furtiva lagrima*" from this session was spread over one ten-inch and one twelve-inch side. Though it has been censured as labored, the performance strikes me as masterful: slow, to be sure, but by no means leaden, Caruso's perfect legato delineating the melody with the absolute certainty of an Ingres drawing. The *Don Pasquale* serenade of 1906, "*Che gelida manina*," also of 1906, the excerpts from *Faust* with Farrar, Gilibert, and Journet of 1909-10, "*Donna non vidi mai*" of 1913, "*St. pel ciel*" with Titta Ruffo of 1914—all show increasing authority and a voice that grows steadily richer, more burnished, heavier.

It is with the first records of 1915 that the signs of vocal decline finally become unmistakable. The "*Ingemisco*" is magnificent but arduous. From now on, despite superb performances (among them, "*Come un bel dì*" and "*Vois ma misère*" of 1916, the magical "*M'appari*" of 1917, the infectious *L'Elisir* duet with De Luca of 1919), the voice is no longer easy. Singing is like a burden for Caruso. You hear the effort as he places the high notes; there are huge gasps for breath; the vocal muscles are strained to their limit—all of which may be the inevitable toll of *Samson*, *Prophète*, and *Juive*. Most of the final records are, by Caruso's standards, frankly inferior. In them you witness the effort of will, the heroic courage, but also, alas, the depredations of time.

It follows from all this that the complete recordings of Caruso should be in the hands of everyone who cares about singing. Murray Hill—whose product is normally sold in book rather than record stores—would therefore seem to have placed us in its debt—especially in offering its album at a budget price. However, a few words of warning are necessary. "Complete" in these circumstances turns out to be an ambiguous term. It seems to refer to the list of titles in Aida Favia-Artsay's invaluable *Caruso on Record* (available from The Historic Record, P.O. Box 185, Valhalla, N.Y. 10595, \$6.50, post free). Thus Murray Hill, following Favia-Artsay, offers the unpublished "*Celeste Aida*" of March 13, 1906; two takes of "*Deserto in terra*" of January 10, 1908; both the French and the Italian *Carmen* Flower Song of November 7, 1909; the published and the unpublished *Miserere* with Alda (the former with chorus, the latter without) of December 27, 1909; and the unpublished "*O soave fanciulla*" with Farrar of December 30, 1912. However, for reasons not vouchsafed, two of Caruso's most famous early recordings, though listed in Favia-Artsay, are omitted: the G&T "*Dai campi*" and the "*Celeste Aida*" of March 1902. (These, however, can be heard on Seraphim's "The Young Caruso," 60146.) Moreover, the unpublished *Rigoletto* quartet of February 3, 1908, and the Micaëla/Don José duet with Alda of December 10, 1914, unlisted by Favia-Artsay, are not included, but turn up on RCA's new four-record set. So to own a "complete" set of Caruso recordings one must have the

Murray Hill and RCA albums and also the Seraphim disc. In addition the RCA set includes five hitherto unpublished takes of otherwise familiar titles.

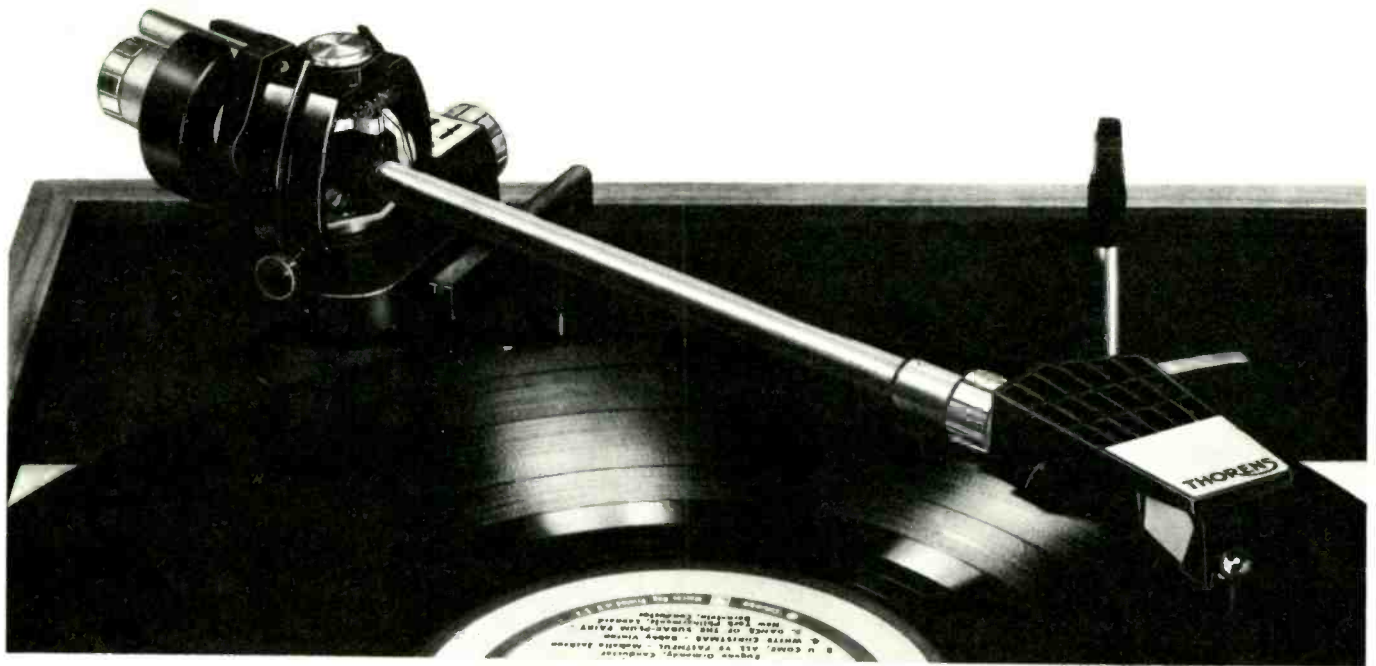
A further warning about the "complete" Caruso: Following Favia-Artsay, Murray Hill has presented the selections in the chronological order of recording sessions. However, within each session titles are arranged by Victor catalogue number, and not by matrix number (that is, in the actual order of recording). This sometimes leads to absurdities: For example, the two parts of the *Faust* love duet with Farrar are presented in reverse order even though they were recorded in correct sequence—simply because of Victor's numbering system.

An even more important reason for owning the RCA set than the rare items is the quality of the dubbing. The transfers have been made with real care; there is only minimal use of filters, yet Caruso's voice sounds wonderfully forward and vibrant. Most important of all, however, is the fact that the speeds seem to be correct, so that Caruso sounds himself from beginning to end.

RCA has been guided by Favia-Artsay's researches into the correct playing speeds of all Caruso's records. So, according to the accompanying brochure, has Murray Hill. Yet several titles are wrongly pitched. Of the G&Ts, "*Amor ti vieta*" and "*Mi par d'udir ancora*" are sharp, whereas the *Luna fedel* is flat. Nor are these distortions of Caruso's timbre confined to the early, often problematic records. "*Salut, demeure*," "*Solenne in quest'ora*," and *Triste ritorno* of 1906 are all sharp. The beautiful "*O soave fanciulla*" with Melba is a half-tone sharp. The 1909 "*Bianca alpar*" and both versions of the *Alda Miserere* are slightly flat. The 1911 *Core ngrato* and "*Celeste Aida*" are sharp. Three of the *Martha* ensembles sound sharp to me and the fourth, "*Dormi pur*," slightly flat. The 1913 Kahn *Ave Maria* is flat and so is the superb "*M'appari*" of 1917 and *Sei morta ne la vita mia* of 1918. A dismal track record, yet that leaves about four hundred titles in good shape. Still, for anyone who wishes to hear the genuine sound of Caruso's voice (as well as those of his colleagues), a variable-speed turntable, *Caruso on Record*, and a pitch pipe need to be added to the Murray Hill kit.

The brochure has a few misprints—it misattributes Toscanini's remark about Caruso's coming fame to 1908, whereas it dates from several years before—but is mercifully free of the show-biz irrelevances that obscure Francis Robinson's intentions on RCA's brochure. Robinson also seems not to have listened to several of Caruso's most famous recordings. He calls the final note in "*Magiche note*" from *The Queen of Sheba* Caruso's only use of falsetto on records, whereas the tenor can be heard singing falsetto high notes at least five times from the March 1902 "*Celeste Aida*" to the "*Cujus animam*" of 1913, and in any case takes the last two notes of "*Magiche note*" falsetto. No texts or translations on any of these records—a serious impediment in the case of the rarer items.

- B** THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS OF ENRICO CARUSO. Enrico Caruso, tenor; various singers. MURRAY HILL 920328, \$15.95 (fourteen discs, mono) [from ZONOPHONE, G&T, PATHÉ, and VICTOR originals, recorded 1900-20].
- H** CARUSO: The Tenor of the Century. Enrico Caruso, tenor; various singers. [John Pfeiffer, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARM 4-0302, \$23.98 (four discs, mono) [from VICTOR originals, recorded 1906-20].



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BACH: Christmas Oratorio, S. 248. Paul Esswood, countertenor; Kurt Equiluz, tenor; Siegmund Nimsgern, bass; Herbert Tachezi, organ; Vienna Choir Boys; Chorus Viennensis; Vienna Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond. TELEFUNKEN SKH 25, \$17.94 (three discs).

BACH: Christmas Oratorio, S. 248. Elly Ameling, soprano; Brigitte Fassbaender, mezzo; Horst Laubenthal, tenor; Hermann Prey, baritone; Hedwig Bilgram, harpsichord; Franz Lehnrdorfer, organ; Tölz Boys' Choir; Bavarian Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Eugen Jochum, cond. PHILIPS 6703 037, \$20.94 (three discs).

Comparisons:
Münchinger / Stuttgart Chamber Orch. Lon. OSA 1386
Richter / Munich Bach Orch. Arch. 2710 004

What makes the *Christmas Oratorio* especially endearing among the four surviving large-scale Bach choral works is the unabashed primacy of the musical invention. In the Passions, the major matter—the Gospel narrative—is in the continuo-accompanied recitatives; the concerted numbers are, formally, intrusions. The narration of the Christmas story is confined to occasional brief indications of situation (also by a tenor Evangelist); most of the work is devoted to musical commentary and reflection on those situations. Those commentaries—beginning with the festive opening chorus, perhaps the most jubilant exhortation in music—range through every possible mood, and needless to say Bach is master of them all.

To the two outstanding stereo recordings already in the catalogue we must now add two more. Jochum uses modern instruments (though in appropriately small numbers) and female choristers and solo singers; Harnoncourt here completes his traversal of the Bach Big Four using a chamber ensemble of period instruments and all male singers (boys' choir, boy soprano for the soprano solos, countertenor for the alto solos). Thus the Jochum—beautifully and incisively executed and well recorded—competes directly with the Richter (Archive) and Münchinger (London) versions, while the Harnoncourt has the

unique virtues of his "authentic" approach, though not in their most persuasive form here.

Harnoncourt doesn't seek authenticity for its own sake. His best Bach recordings—notably the landmark *St. Matthew Passion* (SAWT 9572/5)—have demonstrated the musical appropriateness of the strikingly different tone colors: the sweet, pure boys' voices, the soft-grained strings, the winds that blend rather than pierce. But the *sine qua non* for performing Bach—or anybody else—is musicality. The *St. Matthew* was a triumph not only of groundbreaking scholarship but of expressive music-making. Fine as this *Christmas Oratorio* is, it yields a good deal to the competition.

For one thing, the basically lyrical *Christmas Oratorio* requires from its conductor greater ability to control and shape phrases than do the Passions. Harnoncourt generally manages quite competently enough, and that fascinating sonic ambience does the rest. But especially when he does try to "interpret," the results can be bizarre. The opening chorus is singularly inauspicious (fortunately it is the worst thing in the performance): The striking timpani part—crucial rhythmically and melodically—is assaulted so savagely as to border on parody; and throughout the number each 3/8 measure has an oppressive downbeat followed by two throwaway beats.

Harnoncourt writes extensively in the booklet about his attempts to determine from Bach's original score and parts the correct articulation markings (distorted in the printed score). Yet too often the music breaks down into tiny motivic groupings instead of phrases: Notes that Harnoncourt believes should be slurred are—with a vengeance; otherwise individual notes or slurred groups are simply isolated from their neighbors. The ease and naturalness of Harnoncourt's recitatives are approached only by Richter. But elsewhere I find myself enjoying Harnoncourt—and then returning to Richter, Münchinger, and Jochum.

Jochum's tempos in the concerted numbers are fairly similar to Harnoncourt's (Münchinger, surprisingly, is generally quicker; Richter is sometimes as bracing as Münchinger, sometimes closer to the others), but listen to the difference in pulse. Richter, Münchinger, and Jochum all understand the baroque style admirably (except for the undue solemnity the latter two introduce into the recitatives)—we are not talking about Romantic inflation, but honest music-making.

Richter in particular nearly always blends scholarship and musicianship to an uncanny degree. The *Christmas Oratorio* is perfectly suited to his gifts; and he has an awesome solo quartet—Gundula Janowitz, Christa Ludwig, Fritz Wunderlich, and Franz Crass—that simply could not be bettered.

But neither Münchinger nor Jochum can be ruled out. On rehearing, I find Münchinger's crisp, vital pacing most winning. Both sets make a good case for using female soloists. Elly Ameling, the soprano on both, is her usual lovely, unaffected self—not in Janowitz' class, but admirable by almost any other standard. Helen Watts (London) matches even Ludwig, in her subdued way, but Brigitte Fassbaender's fresh mezzo (Philips) requires no apologies. The men are less good. Both Tom Krause (London) and Hermann Prey (Philips) cope remarkably well with the bass part (neither singer has a notoriously wide



The *Christmas Oratorio*—
the first page of the manuscript.

compass); still they lack the ease and solidity of their bass competitors. Neither Peter Pears (London) nor Horst Laubenthal (Philips) is wholly satisfactory; Laubenthal makes the more agreeable sounds, but neither is terribly ingratiating.

One of the chief sources of satisfaction in the Telefunken recording, as a matter of fact, is the solo singing. I am less convinced here than in the *St. Matthew* of the rightness of using a boy soprano (that may have to do with the competition of Janowitz and Ameling), but the anonymous Vienna chorister handles his part well. And the soprano/bass duet in Part III, "*Herr, dein Mitleid, dein Erbarmen*," makes a charming effect. (It is worth noting that "*Er ist auf Erden kommen arm*" in Part I, normally done as an alternation between solo bass and chorus sopranos, is here done by solo bass and soprano. Though the number is headed "choral" in the score, the parts are marked only "soprano" and "basso." Jochum uses a boys' choir in this number.) Paul Esswood's singing is, as always, clean and expressive. And Harnoncourt is strongest where Münchinger and Jochum are weakest. Kurt Equiluz is unsurpassed in the Evangelist's narrations, yet his ravishing lyric tenor is equally fine in the solos. Bass Siegmund Nimsgern,

Explanation of symbols

Classical:

- B** Budget
- H** Historical
- R** Reissue

Recorded tape:

- Open Reel
- 8-Track Cartridge
- Cassette

who first appeared with Harnoncourt in Vol. 7 of the cantatas (reviewed by Shirley Fleming in January 1973), is equally good: The voice is large and rich, yet capable of the greatest flexibility and shading. Equiluz and Nimsgerm come surprisingly close to Richter's Wunderlich and Crass.

The Richter *Christmas Oratorio* is one of the great recorded performances, and I wouldn't be without it. The very different Harnoncourt makes a valuable supplement to it. But I can see either the Münchinger or Joachim, for their respective distinctive qualities, as a sensible first choice. This is a rare case where you can't go wrong: Each is a winner. All four sets are superbly recorded, though the Philips soloists are miked uncomfortably closely. As with the Telefunken Bach cantata series, the Harnoncourt set includes a complete score. K.F.

BACH: French Suites Nos. 1-4. For a feature review of a recording of these works, see page 79.

BEETHOVEN: Sonatas for Piano, Nos. 16-18. For a feature review of a recording of these works, see page 79.

BEETHOVEN: Sonata for Violin and Piano, No. 8—See Recitals and Miscellany: The Complete Rachmaninoff.

BRITTEN: Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra—See Prokofiev: Peter and the Wolf.

B **CHERUBINI:** Medea: Excerpts.

Medea Eileen Farrell (s)
Giasone André Turp (t)
Creonte Ezio Flagello (bs)

Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Arnold Gamson, cond. ODYSSEY Y 32358, \$2.98 [from COLUMBIA MS 6032, recorded in 1959].

Cherubini's *Medée*, first produced in Paris in 1797, never really had much success until 1953, when Maria Callas galvanized the music into a semblance of life. Under Tullio Serafin's guidance Callas gave a performance of unforgettable intensity. Her Medea was a character in whom were united savage emotions and grandeur of manner, torment and dignity, fire and ice. Naturally enough, the opera (or at least the version—with Franz Lachner's recitatives in place of the original dialogue—Italianized by Carlo Zangarini in 1909 and further revised by Vito Frazzi and Tullio Serafin) suddenly became viable. Once again Callas' interpretive genius had extended the operatic repertory.

In 1955, at New York's Town Hall, Eileen Farrell scored a big success in a concert version of what was now familiar as *Medea*, and in 1959, at the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco, she finally sang it on the stage. These excerpts, recorded in the latter year, are a souvenir of Farrell's far too brief operatic career and, at the same time, a testimony, albeit indirect, to Callas' talents. For all her talent, Farrell cannot bring the music to life. A lot of beautiful singing is to be heard on this reissue, but the animating sense of character that needs to be infused into Medea's part is lacking.

Without the excitement conferred by a great



Eileen Farrell—the singing is fine but the part is wrong.

vocal actress the opera remains severe and unengaging. Farrell quite misses the bitterness that lies beneath Medea's pretense of humble submission when begging Jason for her children in Act II. Nor does she ever suggest the infernal strength that steels her resolution. Nor, again, does she project the full force of the conflict—between a mother's love and vengeance—that rages within her breast in the final scene. Everything that Farrell does on this disc is too generalized to be compelling. After a while interest flags.

There is, however, some lovely singing and, moreover, some strikingly effective enunciation of the text. At the time of the recording Farrell's voice was a splendid organ. The middle register was especially warm and full. It had a uniquely caressing quality and was rich with sensuous overtones. As the voice ascended it thinned out. Around F it became less ample, straighter in sound, turned tight and chilly. Unfortunately, a lot of Medea's torment is expressed at the top of the staff. As Callas' complete recording (Everest S 437/3) reveals, though she could never produce a beautiful or easy sound in that region, she knew how to create character and situation. Not only does she use her voice with dramatic expressiveness, she understands, as Farrell does not, how to bring variety to her singing.

André Turp is a throaty but competent Jason, and Ezio Flagello is reliable, though dull. The slowness and lack of variety in Arnold Gamson's conducting emphasizes the prevailing air of genteel monotony. The score is hacked about—even more than on the Callas recording. Farrell is denied the support of chorus or handmaiden and a lot of patching and pasting of the music is necessary to overcome their absence. There is neither a text nor a detailed list of the record's contents. D.S.H.

B **CHOPIN:** Mazurkas (51). Nikita Magaloff, piano. LONDON STEREO TREASURY STS 15146/8, \$8.94 (three discs) [from LONDON CSA 2303, 1958].

Comparison: Rubinstein RCA LSC 6177

The Polish-born Chopin transplanted himself to Paris at a tender age, and the two nations—

each with a valid claim—have made him the subject of an eternal tug-of-war. The mazurkas are—with the polonaises—Chopin's most innately Polish creations. Those who take to Nikita Magaloff's patrician, cooler-than-usual readings will call his playing "French"; those who do not will call it "neutral" (Magaloff, after all, is Swiss). I have always liked this set, and hearing it anew in this excellent reissue has not changed my views.

Magaloff, the son-in-law and one-time accompanist of the late, great Joseph Szigeti, is a thorough technician who rarely—if ever—makes a mistake of voicing or marksmanship. He is, however, much more than a mere craftsman, and you will find a great deal of light and shade in his playing, and tasteful, structured rubato. The mazurkas, the most subjective of all Chopin's utterances, admit an astonishing diversity of approaches, and no one man (no, not even Artur Schnabel) could possibly reveal their every facet. Indeed, Rubinstein's earlier versions of the pieces reveal a certain athletic snap that is missing from his more richly lyrical stereo edition, and no one has caught the wildness of some of these pieces as well as did Ignaz Friedman (on some rare Columbia 78s).

If you really want to know the mazurkas at all intimately, you will need several "complete" editions plus a diversity of individual readings. The latest Rubinstein set has a more beautiful, warmer tone than the slightly analytical London sound here, and the performances are more deeply searching. In the final mazurka, the F minor, Op. 68, No. 4, Rubinstein uses a new revision that restores a magnificently chromatic *maggiore* middle episode omitted from the original posthumously published text. Magaloff's 1958 recording uses the standard truncated version (ironically, London's annotator is the English scholar Arthur Hedley, whose research subsequently unearthed the source material for the restoration!).

In sum, Rubinstein's performances are undoubtedly more complete, but these very economically priced readings by Magaloff are nevertheless completely artistic and worthy. H.G.

DVOŘÁK: Six Slavonic Dances—See Mozart: Symphony No. 38.

DVOŘÁK: Symphonies (9). For a feature review of recordings of these works, see page 82.

ELGAR: Variations on an Original Theme (*Enigma*)—See Ives: Symphony No. 1.

EMMANUEL: Symphony No. 2—See Poulenc: Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra.

GRIEG: Sonata for Violin and Piano, No. 3—See Recitals and Miscellany: The Complete Rachmaninoff.

HAYDN: Symphonies Nos. 93-104. For a feature review of recordings of these works, see page 84.

HINDEMITH: Sonatas for Piano, Nos. 1-3. For

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CIRCLE 42 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Zubin Mehta—cutting and pasting an Ives pastiche.

a feature review of a recording of these works, see page 79.

IVES: Symphony No. 1, in D minor. **ELGAR:** Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 36 (*Enigma*). Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta, cond. [Ray Minshull, prod.] LONDON CS 6816, \$5.98.

Comparisons—Ives:
Gould/Chicago Sym.
Ormandy/Philadelphia Orch.

RCA LSC 2893
Col. MS 7111

IVES: The Celestial Country. Hazel Holt, soprano; Alfreda Hodgson, mezzo; John Elwes, tenor; John Noble, baritone; Heinrich Schütz Choir; London Symphony Orchestra. Harold Farberman, cond. [Carter Harman, prod.] COMPOSERS RECORDINGS SD 314, \$5.95.

The ever increasing importance attributed to Ives's work is reflected in the appearance of these performances of two extended works from the composer's student years, both of which were written (or at least begun) while Ives was still an undergraduate at Yale University. The First Symphony was completed in 1898, the year of Ives's graduation (although there is a note in the manuscript to the effect that the first movement was "finished . . . May 29, 1895," thus dating it from Ives's freshman year!). The symphony is in every sense a student work, yet its considerable interest is attested to by the fact that Mehta's version is the fourth to have appeared on record.

In many respects the work is a pastiche: There are passages that bring to mind the German symphonists (particularly Schumann), the Slavic symphonists (particularly Dvořák), and even Wagner (in the finale). One is very much aware that the young composer is still struggling with the problems of large-scale composition, and there are admittedly some awkward moments (for example, the beginning of the recapitulation in the first movement, which breaks in on the development section in such a way that the latter seems to be interrupted while still in full flight). But the work is a remarkable achievement for so young a composer, and there is a freshness about it that is irresistible.

Characteristically, some of the most striking moments are just those that betray its awkwardness (at least when measured against the conventions of the Germanic instrumental tradition, to which most of the piece remains faithful): e.g., the eight-measure theme that opens the slow movement, whose terminal ca-

dence occurs already in the sixth measure, so that the last two measures sound more like a melodic "tag" than an actual ending. The orchestration is accomplished throughout, and there is ample evidence of Ives's gift of inventiveness as a melodist. Also, despite the obvious academicisms, the work is surprisingly unpredictable; indeed, there are many aspects of the piece (not least of which is the pastiche quality itself) that point ahead to the Ives to come.

Of the three versions of the symphony on single discs (the Farberman version is available only in a set including all four symphonies), Mehta's is the most liberal in regard to cuts. All three omit a section in the first movement (from eleven measures after J to K, totaling thirty-one measures); but in addition, Mehta makes two extensive cuts in the finale: from eight after J to six before V (some 165 measures!) and from Z to the *largamente e poco ritenuto* (twenty measures). Although the liner notes quote Mehta as saying that this makes for "a much more compact and convincing finale," it actually completely upsets the balance of the movement. There are also problems of instrumental balance. The brass are too heavy throughout: for example, the melodic material in the oboe at R in the first movement is largely drowned out by the trombones and tuba. The ensemble playing is generally precise, however, a point that favors it over Ormandy's reading; but it lacks the latter's full, resonant sound and exuberant character. On the whole, I find Gould's version the best of the three: although it is a bit on the liberal side, the playing is clean throughout, and the character of the piece comes through very well.

The Celestial Country was written immediately after the First Symphony, yet in most respects it seems less successful than the earlier work. A religious cantata of extended proportions, I suspect that the main problem is its text, a hymn by Henry Alford of almost embarrassingly exaggerated sentiments and obvious imagery. Although the music is well written, it is compromised by its tendency toward sentimentality and the obvious. Particularly painful is the first appearance of the brass in the final section (up to this point only strings have been used) in conjunction with the words "To the eternal Father/Loudest anthems raise." Like the symphony, there is no trace of Ives's later Americana, but there is also little evidence of the youthful ebullience

so characteristic of the earlier piece. Everything seems deadly serious, self-conscious, and even pompous. The most notable exceptions to this are found in the short, mildly dissonant organ preludes featuring chords built up out of thirds piled on top of one another, which introduce some of the vocal sections. But for the most part the style is decidedly straightforward and safe.

The performance tends to accentuate the bad qualities of the work, the soloists seeming particularly determined to emphasize its pious tone. This is, I believe, the last major work by Ives to reach disc, and I suppose one should acknowledge the service this recording provides in filling out our picture of the composer. But it is just those qualities of Ives's work that make him unique—his vigor, quirkiness, and adventurousness—that are so lamentably missing in this piece.

Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, which accompany Mehta's performance of the First Symphony, make an odd coupling for the early Ives piece. The two works were written at approximately the same time, but the variations are a completely finished work, a masterpiece written when the English composer was at the height of his powers. As in the Ives symphony, one hears echoes of other composers, but here they are totally integrated into a consistent style that pervades the whole piece. Mehta's performance seems much more successful to me than his reading of the Ives, but here his competition is unusually strong. My own favorites are the versions by Sargent (*Seraphim*: S 60173) and Barbirolli (*Angel*: S 36120), the former for its extraordinary subtlety and sensuality and the latter for its warmth and dramatic intensity. For Elgar fans, the Barbirolli has the added advantage of including his fine account of the *Cockaigne Overture*, a lesser piece than the variations, to be sure, but an effective one nevertheless. R.P.M.

KHACHATURIAN: Spartacus: Excerpts—See Shostakovich: The Execution of Stepan Razin.

MONTEVERDI: Madrigals: Books III and IV (complete). Sheila Armstrong, Wendy Eathorne, and Lillian Watson, sopranos; Alfreda Hodgson, mezzo; Anne Collins and Helen Watts, altos; Bernard Dickerson, Gerald English, Ian Partridge, and Robert Tear, tenors; Stafford Dean and Christopher Keyte, basses; Glyndebourne Opera Chorus, Raymond Leppard, cond. PHILIPS 6703 035, \$20.94 (three discs).

MONTEVERDI: Madrigals. Monteverdi Choir of Hamburg, Jürgen Jürgens, cond. ARCHIVE 2533 146, \$6.98.

Book II: *Ecco mormorar l'onde; S'andasse amor a caccia*. Book IV: *Stogava con le stelle, Si ch'io vorrei morire; Non più guerra*. Book V: *Ch'io t'ami*. Book VII: *Lamento d'Arianna*. Book VIII: *Dolcissimo uscignolo*.

MONTEVERDI: Sacred Concertos. Dorothy Dorow and Birgit Nordin, sopranos; Nigel Rogers and Ian Partridge, tenors; Christopher Keyte and Freidheim Hessenbruch, basses; Monteverdi Choir of Hamburg, Jürgen Jürgens, cond. ARCHIVE 2533 137, \$6.98.

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cause for rejoicing among Monteverdi fans and general music lovers alike. These three discs offer a rich treasury of superb music and a fascinating glimpse into the composer's life.

When Claudio Monteverdi arrived in Mantua in 1590 to take up his first big position in the court of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga, the new assistant court composer was no novice, having already published two books of madrigals and two volumes of three-voice compositions. The madrigal was the serious musical form of its day. It was here that a young composer would be judged for his abilities to combine technical elegance with poetic expression. If he succeeded, he would be in the company of the great composers—Marenzio, Rore, Palestrina. Monteverdi's first volume had demonstrated his mastery of the common musical language; his second, clearly influenced by contact with music being written at Mantua and Ferrara, showed that the young man from Cremona was not afraid to experiment or to count himself among the avant-garde.

Despite Monteverdi's self-assurance, the Mantuan court must have looked impressive to the newcomer. The most famous performers and composers were regularly in residence; the splendid interior decoration was the work of Mantegna and Giulio Romano. Yet the apparent opulence of the internal establishment was contradicted outside by Mantua's steadily waning political power. The court itself had turned its back on the world and was a tense, ingrown society, a hotbed of erotic intrigue shared with a few neighbors, notably the Este court at Ferrara. Monteverdi had soon to prove himself by pleasing the tastes of the courtiers around him, men and women accustomed to the polished stylism of Gastoldi and the manneristic emotionalism of Giaches de Wert. How brilliantly the young madrigalist was to succeed in this task can be seen—and heard—in his Third Book of madrigals published in 1592, soon after he took up residence in Mantua. The chief poet of the collection is Giambattista Guarini, master of the conceit, a light, stylized versifier with a gift for turning the knife of sexuality in his short epigrammatic poems. The elegance of his images—the treacherous beauty that commands and betrays, the fiery passion that destroys yet refines love—calls forth some of Monteverdi's finest music. The stylized yet pungent emotion of *O perfidissimo volto*, *Ch'io t'ami*, and *Se per estremo ardore* must have delighted the Gonzagas as much as the exquisite roulades and delicate sadness of *O rossignol* and *Lumi miei cari lumi*, madrigals written expressly for the lovely and talented prima donnas borrowed from the neighboring court of Ferrara.

The most ambitious works in Monteverdi's Third Book are two cycles of three stanzas each taken from Torquato Tasso's epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata*. One, *Vattene pur crudel*, is one of the great laments and vengeance arias of all time. Armida the sorceress has failed in her attempt to enslave Rinaldo the Christian knight. Her first reaction is rage. "Go then cruel one . . . my angry soul will haunt thee ever," until spent with fury; she faints only to awaken to her loss. "And do I love him still . . . still mourn, still weeping stand?" Monteverdi's setting transcends the conventional forms, binding three madrigals into one dramatic whole foreshadowing the operatic composer he was to be. The second cycle in Monteverdi's Third Book also looks forward to his later works. *Vivrà fra i miei tormenti* is the passage immediately following the

combat of Tancred and Clorinda, which the composer was to portray so vividly in his Eighth Book of madrigals. Raising his visor after the battle, the knight sees that the victim he has slain is none other than his own true love, and his bitter remorse is movingly echoed in the stark motives, desperate leaps, and crunching dissonances of the musical setting.

Over ten years passed before the publication of Monteverdi's Fourth Book of madrigals, but many of the pieces in this and the following volume were familiar to audiences long before they appeared in print in 1603 and 1605. Erotic innuendo, which had been an underlying theme in Book III, becomes overpowering in Books IV and V. Monteverdi found the musical equivalent for love-death, the poetic conceit for sexual fulfillment, in the suspension, a device Wagner was to re-exploit some three hundred years later. If *Ohimè se tanto amato* and *Ah dolente partita* are effectively suggestive, *Si ch'io vorrei morire* with its kissing, squeezing, biting, frenetic climax must be the world's first X-rated madrigal. At the same time Monteverdi could be light and charming. *Io mi son giovinetta* is certainly one of the lyric jewels of all time, and nightingales may rival but surely not surpass *Quel augellin*



Monteverdi—music of extraordinary power.

che canta. Even such a comparatively ordinary madrigal as *Luci serene e chiari* (Monteverdi's "comparatively ordinary" would be extraordinary for anyone else) is transformed by the heart-stopping cry "*O miracol d'amor*," an unforgettable moment of musicopoetic collaboration.

It would be pointless to describe the extraordinary power of Monteverdi's music in these pages, however, if there were not a recording fine enough to convey the overwhelming beauty and drama of these madrigals to the listener at home today. Philips' release of Books III and IV directed by Raymond Leppard is one of the finest performances in this field that I have ever encountered. In a recent survey of prebaroque music ["Four Centuries of 'New' Music," HF, December 1973] I ignored the late Italian madrigal partly because many examples fell after my self-placed boundary of 1600, but more important, I felt so few recordings now on the market did full justice to this splendid music. Now happily that has changed and I can only urge you to go out and buy this wonderful album at once.

Leppard sticks with the fine full-voiced singing and the emotional involvement that

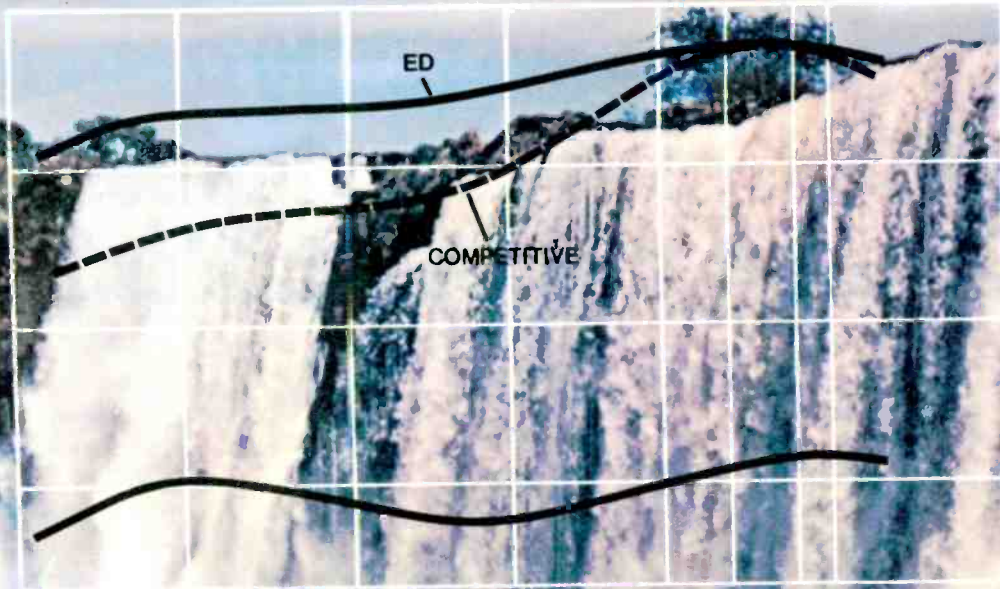
have lent such life and feeling to his recordings of early baroque vocal music. But Monteverdi's strict part-writing here doesn't allow any space for Leppard's unfortunate penchant toward excess, the superlush string tone that makes his Cavalli sound so anachronistic, for example. The restrictions imposed by the limitations of five unaccompanied voices actually seem to bring out the best of this conductor's genuine musical gifts.

Not unexpectedly Leppard is particularly fine in the extended dramatic fresco. The three madrigals that make up the cycle *Vattene pur crudel* are gripping in their intensity, and the bravura with which the ensemble launches into the opening of the second and third pieces as well as the considered balance of the whole work makes this an unusually exciting and convincing performance. *Non più guerra* is dramatic in another sense. The text uses images of battle to reflect a lover's suit, but Monteverdi, newly returned from the front himself, where he had accompanied the Mantuan entourage, brings the clamor and excitement of the struggle alive in his music. This kind of pictorialism is right up Leppard's alley, and the result is a brilliant evocation of a sixteenth-century battle.

Other styles fare equally well. The anacreontic elegance of *La giovinetta pianta* or *Sovra tenere herbe*, the delicious charm of the pretty shepherdess in *Io mi son giovinetta* whose rippling laugh makes the poet's heart sing "like a joyous bird," the lascivious suggestion of *Ohimè se tanto amato*, Guarini's clever conceits in *Perfidissimo volto* or *Ch'io non t'ami* are perfectly realized. Leppard finds just the right tempo and declamation to make the psalmodic recitation of *Sfogava con le stelle* convincing. He even succeeds in revivifying a few madrigals of the old school, which critics have usually written off as stilted exercises in an earlier form. Composers customarily concluded a book of madrigals with something particularly serious or spectacular. Monteverdi's choice was to return to the more complex poetic forms and formal diction of the previous generation, a sonnet in *Rimanti in pace* and an ottava rima in *Piange e sospira*. The vocal lines are longer, less sharply characterized; the music lacks the epigrammatic quality characteristic of most Monteverdi madrigals of the time. Leppard, however, doesn't let the tension flag, nor does he resort to tricks of tempo or dynamics to hold our interest. The music speaks for itself and clearly confounds its critics.

Not every one of these forty madrigals is perfect, although the percentage of success is remarkably high. Sometimes this is the composer's fault. *Stracciami pur il core* really is an uneven experiment, as historians have claimed, but occasionally the blame must be placed on the conductor. *Si ch'io vorrei morire* fails in its effect because the sections of the madrigal don't relate to one another. Even the singers don't seem to be agreed on a common goal, an uncommon fault on these discs but one that also plagues the usually charming song *Quel augellin che canta*.

The singing throughout is excellent, not surprising when one considers the stature of the soloists. The labeling does not make clear just who is singing in which piece, but the over-all standard is so high that everyone deserves abundant praise. Some pieces call for two sopranos and an alto, others emphasize the lower spectrum with a second tenor supplying the fifth voice. Leppard also juggles the singers



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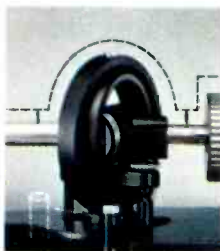
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about and frequently moves the whole composition up or down a tone from the original pitch. Nine of the twenty madrigals in Book IV are performed by a group from the Glyndebourne Opera Chorus. Ordinarily I am suspicious of choral performance of this repertoire, since the effect is usually too opaque and heavy-handed to convey any of the subtleties of the music or text, but the Glyndebourne ensemble sings with crystalline clarity. From the sustained suspensions of *Ah dolente partita* to the coloratura roudades of *Io mi son giovinetta* they are simply superb.

This set is, then, a worthy successor to Leppard's superb recording of Books VIII, IX, and X (Philips 6799 006, reviewed in September 1972).

To appreciate just how fine the Philips set is, compare it to the plodding performance of eight madrigals by the Hamburg Monteverdi Choir under the heavy-handed direction of Jürgen Jürgens. All the tempos are too slow; the massive choral sound is completely inappropriate for intensely personal works like *Si ch'io vorrei morire* and *Ch'io t'ami*. Why Jürgens ever tried to essay *Sfoga con le stelle* with these forces is incomprehensible, especially after one has heard the supple and flexible reading of the unmeasured rhythm by the Leppard ensemble. The remaining five works fare no better and would best go unmentioned.

Jürgens is more successful with Monteverdi's later music, the big choral and instrumental frescoes written for Venice. Three massive works dominate the Archive disc of sacred concertos: *Beatus vir*, *Laudate Dominum*, and a seven-voice Gloria. These are true concertos in the modern sense, in that they pit solo vocal and orchestral forces against one another with the appearance of familiar ritornellos from time to time. It would be a mistake to expect a fully developed baroque form in these pieces, however: the concerto elements are often secondary to Monteverdi's other concerns. His setting of *Beatus vir*, for example, is built on an astonishingly simple ground bass in which a few four-note patterns are combined and recombined in a powerful surging bass that impels great blocks of sound forward in an irresistible drive.

The big works are separated on this recording by three chamber pieces, a solo *Exulta filia* and a duet setting of the *Salve Regina*, both accompanied by continuo alone, and a sort of duet echo piece, *Audi caelum* for two tenors, two violins, and continuo. Ian Partridge is the virtuoso tenor who sings the operatic *Exulta filia* with such élan. He is joined by the reliable Nigel Rogers for the *Audi caelum* and the expressive and lovely *Salve Regina*. S.T.S.

MOZART: Sonatas for Piano, Vol. 4. For a feature review of this recording, see page 79.

MOZART: Symphony No. 38, in D, K. 504 (Prague). **DVOŘÁK:** Six Slavonic Dances. London Symphony Orchestra, Zdenek Kosler, cond. [E. Alan Silver, prod.] CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CSQ 2051, \$6.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

Slavonic Dances: No. 1, in C, Op. 46, No. 1; No. 6, in A flat, Op. 46, No. 6; No. 8, in G minor, Op. 46, No. 8; No. 10, in E minor, Op. 72, No. 2; No. 13, in B flat minor, Op. 72, No. 5; No. 15, in C, Op. 72, No. 7.

Quadriphony is clearly generating an essential aesthetic division between those who think it should be used to intensify in the home the effect of "concert-hall realism" and those who

believe it should be employed to achieve stronger, more vivid, more imaginative musical effects, even if they could not possibly be duplicated in the concert hall.

The truth of the matter, as I see it, is that excellent recordings can be made both ways, and the character of the music is the key to the most effective approach. Kosler and the London Symphony are heard on this disc in performances that sound pleasant, but not at all spectacular, in stereo playback. Turn on the back channels and everything opens up with the effect of a wonderfully warm, resonant, and spacious hall in which strings glow with color, percussion excites the pulse, and the winds and brasses speak with commanding force.

In a small, fairly dry room, this is the quadriphonic effect in its most seductive soft-

sell form, for the appeal is to the old "concert-hall realism" standard. Nothing seems in any way far-out, and yet your ears provide the illusion of an acoustical environment totally different from the one in which you actually find yourself. Even in a larger, more reverberant room, the big-hall effect remains without any loss of the clarity and presence of the orchestra.

The spaciousness provided by quadriphony can be quite different from that associated with older records employing the "big-boom" technique, and some of the initial failures of engineers in the new medium have been the result, I suspect, of attempting to produce "big-boom" sound on an even more grandiose scale. Something quite different is both possible and in order.

Kosler is very much in his element in both

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Perahia's Schumann: an Imposing Debut

by Harris Goldsmith



OVER DINNER one evening in 1965, my erstwhile piano teacher Robert Goldsand, who had just come from judging the semifinals of the Kosciusko Chopin competition held annually in New York, spoke glowingly of a boy the likes of whose talent he hadn't heard in years. Though Goldsand didn't know his name, the contestant (he won the next day) was Murray Perahia. At the same time young Perahia also placed in the auditions for Susan Wadsworth's Young Concert Artists, an organization that helps launch promising talents. One result was a Carnegie Recital Hall debut the following winter, which I had the privilege of covering for *Musical America*. In the following years Perahia continued his outstanding achievements, at the Marlboro Festival and elsewhere, culminating in 1972 when he made his New York Philharmonic debut and became the first American ever to win the prestigious Leeds Competition.

I mention this background only to emphasize that the newest addition to Columbia's classical roster is far from the novice their slightly overzealous publicity would make him appear. But even if it took the dramatic events of 1972 to convince the cautious American businessmen of Perahia's salability, the Columbia people have ample reason to be proud of their new acquisition—they have placed their confidence in a real winner!

Many listeners have been struck by

the astonishing maturity and poetry of Perahia's artistry. And these subdued musical values are undoubtedly unusual in an era of hard-bitten efficiency. But underneath this modest, lyrical exterior are the greatest fire and technical brilliance imaginable: Though he doesn't care to flaunt it, Perahia has the equipment of a brilliant virtuoso. Just about every phrase of these recorded performances has those telltale characteristics that mark the true keyboard aristocrat: beautifully weighted, solid chord playing; winged, even passagework; an innate metric vitality; and the ability to produce magical coloration and atmosphere. Whether in pianissimo or forte, the sonority is vibrant, deep, and centered—always as if arm and fingers were making just the right sort of relaxed contact with the keys.

The *Davidsbündlertänze* performance is rather stylized. I have heard some interpreters play these eighteen diverse but cumulative pieces with wilder, more abrupt changes of pace and mood. Perahia, though he shapes his phrases lovingly and uses plenty of incidental rubato, achieves a rather purified classicism. The first piece is less ardent than it can be, but it sets the stage ideally for this reading: The organic qualities of the music—e.g., the contrapuntal lines—emerge with telling though unobtrusive clarity.

Nos. 3 and 4 are rather deliberately played but full of character and virility.

No. 5 is ravishingly *semplice*. No. 12 is full of glint and sparkle. The bravura No. 13 gets a really swashbuckling, explosively virtuosic treatment, though I question Perahia's almost staccato clarification of the moving accompaniment to the trio (it sounds too angular). Perahia has uncommon success in No. 15, where he achieves a wide differentiation between the declamatory outer sections and the cascading middle part (which sounds so much like the *Chopin* section from Schumann's *Carnaval* and Chopin's own Op. 25, No. 12 Etude). And certainly the floating quality he achieves in such lyrical sections as Nos. 2, 14, and 18 has a haunting poetry that lingers in the mind's ear.

Perahia opts mostly for the revised edition, so strictly speaking what we have here is *Davidsbündler* (as Schumann titled the second version) rather than *Davidsbündlertänze*.

The *Fantasiestücke* finds Perahia in a more militant frame of mind. Tempos, with the exception of *Fabel*, are on the fast side. The opening *Des Abends* is cool, slightly detached, with each note sculpted with scrupulous, moonlit control. *Aufschwung* (which means "soaring") fully lives up to its name. The oft-abused *Warum?* is taut, intense, and flexibly modulated. *Grillen* has outstanding pulse and clarity: its trio section shows interesting expansiveness within a strict context. *In der Nacht* is highly civilized and could perhaps be more demonic; but I do like Perahia's delineation of inner voices in its middle episode. *Fabel* sounds deliciously puckish at its aforementioned deliberate tempo, and if the fleetly played *Traumewirren* doesn't achieve quite the dizzying altitude of Richter's incomparable reading (DG/Decca, deleted), *Ende vom Liede* is full of contrast and momentum.

I like the tight disc editing that makes the sections of each work follow one another with nary a breathing space. Reproduction is close up and warmly plush in the *Davidsbündler*, more distantly reverberant and glinting in the *Fantasiestücke*. Both are, in their different ways, good sounds.

This is a cherishable record.

SCHUMANN: *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6; *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12. Murray Perahia, piano. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 32299, \$5.98.

the *Slavonic Dances* and the noble lyricism of this late Mozart symphony. (Traditionally numbered 38, it probably comes around the fiftieth place in the composer's total work in symphonic form.) The London Symphony plays with crisp attacks and well-defined textures that reveal careful preparation and firm control from the baton, and the performances are notable for their warmth and spirit. The Dvořák, indeed, is so fine that one cannot but regret that we were not given all the dances instead of this selection, but most will agree that the top six of the series have been chosen.

Kosler's Mozart is Romantic without regrets but avoids Romantic excesses, and he can convince you that his is an acceptable approach to this music, especially when its lyric qualities are exploited so well. I add this to my short, select shelf of prime quad demonstration material.

R.C.M.

POULENC: Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra, in D minor. **EMMANUEL:** Symphony No. 2, in A (*Bretagne*). Billard-Azaïs piano duo; Orchestre National de l'ORTF, Maurice Suzan, cond. (in the Poulenc); Orchestre Philharmonique de l'ORTF, Jean Doussard, cond. (in the Emmanuel). INÉDITS ORTF 995 035, \$6.98.

FRENCH WORKS FOR TWO PIANOS. Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir, pianos. LONDON CS 6754, \$5.98.

POULENC: Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra, in D minor (with Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Sergiu Comissiona, cond.). **DEBUSSY:** Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune (arr. Ravel); Petite Suite. **SATIE:** Trois morceaux en forme de poire.

Comparisons—Poulenc: Gold, Fizdale, Bernstein/N.Y. Phil. Col. MS 6392
Poulenc, Février, Pretre/Paris Cons. Ang. S 35993

Poulenc's two-piano concerto is an absolute delight of shifting moods and styles, ranging from *perpetuum mobile* to Chopin and back again, with stops along the way for, among many other things, some nose-thumbing Latinisms and some more serious, almost folk-song lyricism. Much of the concerto involves the two performers in dazzling interplays of scintillating passagework, and it has received no small number of outstanding performances, from Poulenc himself with colleague Jacques Février (Angel) to Gold and Fizdale (Columbia). None of these, however, is more breathtaking than the rendition by the Billard-Azaïs duo. The two pianists accomplish the seemingly impossible: maintaining co-ordination and coherency while collectively going through some of the most enjoyable pianistic acrobatics you're apt to hear in some time. And they receive a beautifully crisp accompaniment from Suzan and the ORTF orchestra. Only the overly dry approach to the more Romantic passages seems a bit out of step with the composer's intentions; otherwise, it seems to me, they could not have been better realized.

In comparison, the Eden and Tamir rendition, although exceedingly well played, generally seems lacking in the wit and sparkle that so beautifully enliven the Billard-Azaïs collaboration. But Eden and Tamir do offer, on the same disc, a curiosity in Ravel's two-piano arrangement of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*. I admit to less than overwhelming excitement at the prospect of such an arrangement of a work that greatly depends on orchestral color for its character. Yet the Ravel reduction has surprising subtlety and depth, and Eden and Tamir play it in a highly listen-

able manner. At any rate, it represents the principal interest of the disc, since there are at least three or four better recordings of the Poulenc—especially the Billard-Azaïs version—and the same holds true for the Satie *Trois morceaux* and the Debussy *Petite Suite*.

The second side of the ORTF disc is filled up with one of the most clumsily put together and poorly orchestrated pieces of pastoral flimflam I have ever heard. Like almost every obscure individual who has ever put a note on music paper, Maurice Emmanuel seems to have a certain following. But how a work such as his *Bretagne* Symphony, composed in 1931, could elicit anything but utter disbelief at the sheer *gaucherie* of the work is beyond me.

R.S.B.

PROKOFIEV: Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67. **BRITTEN:** Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, Op. 34. Mia Farrow (in the Prokofiev) and André Previn (in the Britten), narrators; London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL SFO 36962, \$5.98. Tape: ● 8XS 36962, \$7.98. ●● 4XS 36962, \$7.98.

Comparison—same coupling: Connery, Dorati/Royal Phil. Lon. SPC21007
Comparison—Prokofiev: Lillie, Henderson/London Sym. Lon. CS 6187
Comparisons—Britten: Britten/London Sym. Lon. CS 6671
Chapin, Bernstein/N.Y. Phil. Col. MS 6368

This is a family-album souvenir of a BBC-TV presentation of the two most popular contemporary orchestra-cum-narration compositions. In their recorded versions, it's usually the personal appeal of the storyteller that determines—in *Peter and the Wolf* especially—listeners' preferences. And in this *Peter*, Miss Farrow is most likely to please, besides her own special fans, anyone thrown off by less *semplique*, more idiosyncratically mannered readings—of which that by the irrepressibly comic Miss Lillie is the supreme example. Previn's own verbal description of the Britten display piece's scoring details is similarly straightforward, and while I for one really prefer to hear the *Guide* played without any palaver at all (as it is so satisfactorily in the composer's own performance), I must admit that Previn's narration is more acceptable than most, although of course it can't compete directly with that by the twelve-year-old charmer, Henry Chapin, in the Bernstein/Columbia version.

Narrations apart, however, these latest recordings effortlessly win topmost ranking for their sheer excellence of both orchestral playing and gleamingly vibrant recorded sonics. Even the deservedly acclaimed technical merits of London's 1966 Connery/Dorati versions are surpassed here—in transparency and naturalness in particular. I'm not likely to be the only one who, once a doubter of Previn's conductorial gifts, has become convinced by the consistently admirable qualities of his recent achievements that he now must be ranked high among today's masters of the combined art and science of symphonic recording.

R.D.D.

B **PUCCINI:** La Fanciulla del West.
Mirnie Birgit Nilsson (s)
Ramerrez Joao Gibin (t)
Jack Rance Andrea Mongelli (b)
Jake Wallace Nicola Zaccaria (bs)
Nick Renato Ercolani (t)
Ashby Antonio Cassinelli (bs)

La Scala Orchestra and Chorus, Lovro von Matačić, cond. [Walter Legge, prod.] SERA-



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There has been no new recording of *La Fanciulla del West* since this one first appeared in 1959, hard on the heels of the London version. The Scala recording has been out of print for a good many years; at budget price it provides strong competition.

It's not hard to suggest why *Fanciulla* has never caught on despite the public's seemingly insatiable appetite for mature Puccini. The Wild West libretto is absurd to the point of comedy (especially for Americans); and in terms of sheer melodic inspiration, the opera is unmistakably from Puccini's second drawer. There are juicy roles for the soprano and tenor, but not of a terribly glamorous sort: The

durchkomponiert, almost arialess writing allows the leads precious little reward for a lot of hard work.

But I confess that I'm fond of *Fanciulla*: I'm more comfortable with Minnie and her motley cowboy crew than with most of Puccini's more "real" operas. Since the characters are unabashedly cut from cardboard, there is no appeal for the empathy I can't give Mimi or Butterfly. We can savor the harmonically rich high jinks of the noble bandit, the blackguard sheriff, and the girl they love. I'm not however suggesting that the opera be treated as high camp as the Met did a couple of seasons back when Tebaldi no longer had the role in her voice; the music deserves better than that. One can only guess what it must have sounded like at its 1910 Met world premiere, with Toscanini conducting a cast headed by Destinn, Caruso, and Anato.

Both stereo recordings give a decent, though far from definitive, representation. Price aside, the London wins by a hair on the strength of its slightly more sonorous and more "idiomatic" cast. Tebaldi in her prime was an ideal Minnie, and Del Monaco's lack of dramatic subtlety is no great drawback here (though musically there's more variety to the part than he's noticed). But the Seraphim cast holds its own: The young Nilsson may not have been a consummate Puccini stylist, but the voice cuts easily and thrillingly through this obstacle course. Gibin's Ramerrez is a more thoughtful creation (a poet bandit?) than Del Monaco's; there's no lack of power, but the voice in truth is not terribly appealing—rather a dry, leathery sound. (The late Fifties was not a happy time for Italianate tenors at EMI.) Zaccaria makes something memorable of the minstrel's brief appearance, outclassing Giorgio Tozzi on London, but then London has the better Nick in Piero de Palma.

The Seraphim set has one powerful advantage: the Scala orchestra. Matačić, with a good feel for the sweep of the score, draws a rich, blended sound that surpasses the efforts of London's Santa Cecilia forces, which however benefit from the capable, more colorful leadership of Franco Capuana.

Nor is there much to choose in the engineering: Both are excellently recorded. I find myself increasingly drawn to the well-balanced, unginmicked sound of the early stereo operas, and both of these sets are good examples. The orchestral playing and price would incline me toward the Seraphim, but you'll still have to shell out some money for a libretto, which is not included.

K.F.

RACHMANINOFF: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra (4); Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini; Symphony No. 3; The Isle of the Dead; Vocalise—See Recitals and Miscellany: The Complete Rachmaninoff.

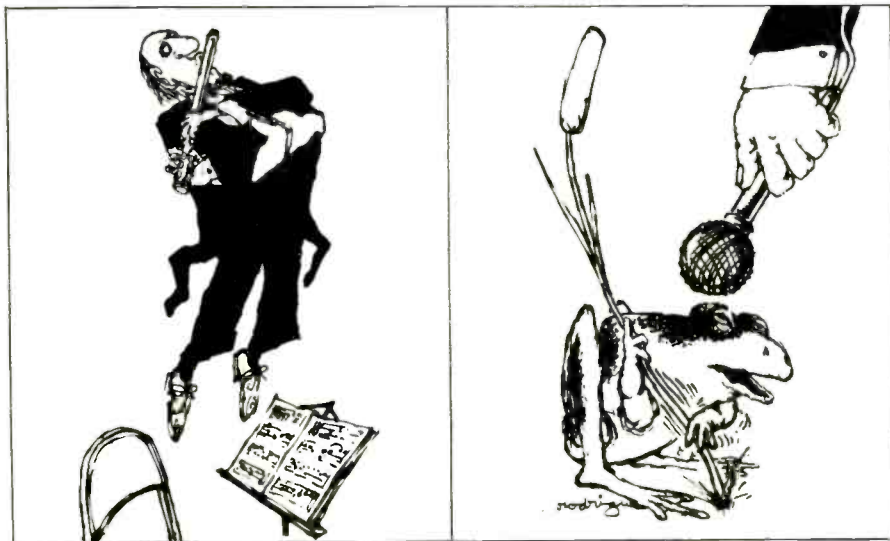
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: The Tsar's Bride.

Sobakin	Yevgeny Nesterenko (bs)
Marfa	Galina Vishnevskaya (s)
Lykov	Vladimir Atlantov (t)
Gryaznoi	Vladimir Valaiteis (b)
Lyubasha	Inna Arkhipova (ms)
Bomelius	Andrei Sokolov (t)
Malyuta	Boris Morozov (bs)
Saburova	Eleonora Andreyeva (s)
Dunyasha	Galina Borisova (a)
Petrovna	Veronika Borisenko (ms)

Bolshoi Theater Chorus and Orchestra, Fuat Mansurov, cond. [Georgy Braginsky, prod.] MELODIYA/ANGEL SRCL 4122, \$17.98 (three discs).

The Tsar's Bride, Rimsky-Korsakov's ninth opera, was first performed in Moscow at the end of 1899 by Mamontov's Opera Company, and met with an enthusiastic reception. As the composer laconically put it in his autobiography: "The opera was a success. Once more, curtain calls, wreaths, suppers, etc." With *The Tsar's Bride* Rimsky reacted against the influence of "melodic recitative." Dargomizhsky's attempt to make music an instrument of truth, by allowing the meaning and inflections of the text to dictate rhythm and melody.

Though Dargomizhsky's notions of realism in vocal writing were very influential (as Musorgsky's *Boris* bears eloquent testimony) Rimsky found himself less and less satisfied with the denial of realism implicit in them. At the same time he found himself dissatisfied



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with the precepts of Wagner. After *Mozart and Salieri* and *Boyarina Vera Sheloga*, both performed in 1898, *The Tsar's Bride* was a return to the principles of Glinka: formal numbers, ensembles, the primacy of voice over orchestra, and, more than anything else, what Rimsky called "cantilena par excellence."

Appropriately enough, the subject of *The Tsar's Bride* is the violence of human passion. The opera is, in fact, one of the few in Rimsky's oeuvre that does not deal with the supernatural. Even Bomelius, physician to the tsar, who effects so much of the mischief in *The Tsar's Bride* with his secret potions, is no necromancer. Significantly, he attributes his skill not to magic, but to science.

The opera's story reveals the destructive power of thwarted love. Gryaznoi loves Marfa. She, however, is betrothed to another, Lykov. Gryaznoi therefore obtains a love potion from Bomelius in order to win her affections. In revenge, Gryaznoi's mistress, Lyubasha, gives herself to Bomelius in exchange for a potion that will cause Marfa to sicken and fade. Lyubasha substitutes her potion for Gryaznoi's. Meanwhile, the tsar, having set eyes on Marfa, chooses her for his bride. Marfa, now tsarina-designate, sickens. Gryaznoi accuses Lykov of poisoning her and stabs him to death. Lyubasha denounces Gryaznoi, who stabs her to death as well. Gryaznoi is seized by the Imperial Guard. Marfa cries deliriously for her dead lover.

In synopsis this is a grisly, complicated tale, seemingly pitched too high for comfort. In the telling, however, it becomes enthrallingly convincing. The libretto fashioned by I. F. Tyumenev and the composer from a historical drama by Lev Mey is very skillful in its disposition of time: There is enough room for the calamitous events to erupt out of the characters' feelings. The authors avoid the dangers of allowing the violence to become arbitrary, and the work never lapses into melodrama. Rimsky's music allows for introspection and rumination as well as for swift action. A lot of suspense is created in Act III, where we find out that, along with all other impending matches, Marfa's betrothal to Lykov has been suspended while the tsar decides on a bride. The couple are led to believe that someone else is his choice; the company makes merry; at the height of the jubilation a message arrives from the tsar, naming Marfa as his bride.

The Melodiya performance is more than merely authentic (the only real virtue of the long-deleted Kiev recording on Westminster); it is also first-class. Mansurov is lively and emotionally direct. His orchestra plays splendidly; the violins and woodwinds, in particular, are very beautiful. Vladimir Valaitis sings well and characterizes Gryaznoi vividly. Galina Vishnevskaya, fine artist as she is, has no difficulty in making the misfortunes of Marfa convincing. For the most part she sings with great skill. However, the tessitura of the role is high and some of the repeated top As and Bs are hard-driven. Indeed, her top C in the Act II trio is ugly and the long-held A flat in the final phrase of her Act IV aria, though marked *dolce*, is unbeautiful.

Irina Arkhipova, on the other hand, is magnificent, both interpretively and vocally. Lyubasha is a wonderful role: In Act I she has a plaintive song, unaccompanied except for a brief passage of orchestral punctuation between the stanzas, and an impassioned duet with Gryaznoi. In Act II she has a brooding soliloquy as she watches Marfa, and there is a

tortuous encounter with Bomelius, during which jealousy finally overcomes her sense of honor. Arkhipova makes all of this so vibrant and sings with such beauty (her legato, for example, is beyond reproach) that she tends to dominate the entire opera. The rest of the cast, however, is very capable and the chorus is excellent.

The recording is generally good, ensembles being spacious and clear. The soloists, though, are often too close for comfort. Angel's pressings are pretty good, though in Lyubasha's unaccompanied song one hears a certain amount of rumble. A translation is provided, but no Russian text. The old Westminster recording gave the Cyrillic text, a transliteration, and an English translation.

Now we need new Bolshoi recordings of *Tsar Sultan*, *Kitezh*, *The Golden Cockerel*, and *Snow Maiden!*
D.S.H.

SCHUBERT: Sonata for Violin and Piano, D. 574—See Recitals and Miscellany: The Complete Rachmaninoff.

SCHUMANN: Sonata for Piano, in F sharp minor, Op. 11; Fantasy in C, Op. 17. Maurizio Pollini, piano. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 379, \$6.98.

SCHUMANN: Sonata for Piano, in G minor, Op. 22; Kinderszenen, Op. 15. Wilhelm Kempff, piano. [Cord Garbon, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 348, \$6.98.

SCHUMANN: Sonata for Piano, in G minor, Op. 22; Kreisleriana, Op. 16. Claudio Arrau, piano. PHILIPS 6500 394, \$6.98.

"I will fight my way through the great forms, cost what it may." The quotation is from Grieg, not Schumann, but no matter: It might be applied with equal justice to any of the great Romantic composers. The possible exception is Brahms—a neoclassicist rather than a Romantic, who really "fought" his way through the great forms with hard work.

Schumann's three piano sonatas clearly document his problems with a great form (he dealt with the task better in his later quartets, trios, symphonies, and violin sonatas). For all their inspired pages, the first and third sonatas tend to ramble a bit structurally. The G minor Sonata (generally called No. 2, though actually the third in sequence—it was composed over a long period of time stretching from 1833 to 1838) already shows Schumann's trend toward greater concision and formal integration. These works, never among the composer's most popular, have been coming back into favor.

Neither Arrau's nor Gilels' Op. 11 (Philips 802 793 and Monitor 2048 respectively) corresponded to my views of this glorious but uneven piece. Arrau, in an effort to project a grand, diversified, emotionally fraught texture, constantly interrupts the logical, if admittedly hard to follow, line with all sorts of rhythmically disruptive caesuras and gearshifts. Gilels is merely dull—hard-toned, literal; in his way, he too misses out on the structural aspects of the piece.

Pollini, though far from ideal, is more successful. He is a superlative executant with a sure-handed rhythmic grasp. The repetitive rhythms of the first movement proper are reproduced with a good deal of thrust and springy acumen, and yet without belaboring the point. The lyrical parts sing succinctly

without writhing about in a tangle of neurotic self-pity, and the drama is projected knowingly—albeit with a certain dry-eyed restraint. Pollini's performance is not a deeply committed one—his is a rather cerebral, "modern" style, with a resultant tendency toward tonal brittleness—but at least he makes the difficult writing viable with drama, texture, brilliance, and poetry, all in reasonable balance with each other.

The overside performance of the great C major Fantasy is technically one of the most remarkable ever put on disc. Pollini's way is a reserved, stylized one. One might say that his orientation is more "symphonic" than "pianistic." That is, the quest for inner voices and the like, while not exactly slighted, does tend to be subordinated to larger, more elemental contrasts. Instead of the usual dwelling on inner lines in the introspective parts, these are gently understressed so as to provide maximum contrast to the dramatic, fully scored passages later on. There is character in Pollini's playing, and also a certain distinguished proportion, although passion is in rather short supply. Sometimes I get the feeling that Pollini is scrupulously following every direction and agogic marking without fully comprehending the gist of what motivated them. To take one important specific example: There is, to be sure, a tempo increase marked for the treacherous leaps in the coda to the Alla marcia, but this passage—like its counterpart in the finale of *Carnaval*—should release in a burst of energy that has been building up. With Pollini, the passage sounds tacked on as an afterthought. Pollini is a marvelous pianist, but this disc should be acquired for the sonata. Arrau (Philips 802 746) and Kempff (DG 2530 185) both offer more absorbing fantasies. (When will Curzon re-record his incomparably lucid interpretation—one that has deepened and intensified immensely since his mid-Fifties mono version?)

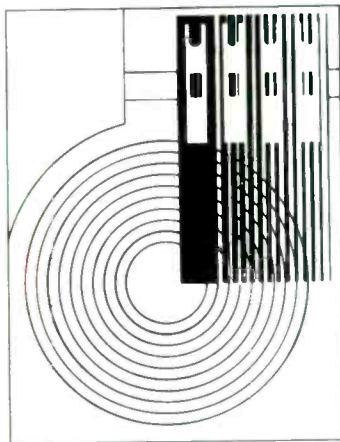
Kempff's new coupling of *Kinderszenen* and the G minor Sonata is one of the veteran pianist's finest discs. The *Kinderszenen* is deliciously pointed and witty. Some of the tempos will undoubtedly surprise. The middle part of *Furchienmachen* is much less agitated than usual. The title, though, does not mean "frightening" but rather "fright-making" (i.e., a child pretending to be a spook) and should thus be no more menacing than a trick-or-treater! Similarly, *Wichtige Begebenheit* is—at the end at least—more subdued than it sometimes is. *Träumerei* is played rather swiftly, even casually. The whole performance is full of warmth and style, and no matter how many editions of these famous pieces you might own (practically every great pianist has, at one time or another, recorded *Kinderszenen*), Kempff's is one of the truly memorable accounts.

So is his reading of the G minor Sonata. Schumann, in characteristic fashion, indicates that the first movement be played "So rasch wie möglich" (as fast as possible) and then indicates successive sections to go "faster" and "still faster." Kempff, in equally characteristic fashion, reads these markings with a grain of salt. At this phase of his career, the eighty-year-old master is not about to drag-race such hotshots as Argerich (DG 2530 193) and Weissenberg (Angel S 36552). Yet somehow, Kempff, like the proverbial tortoise, gets to that finish line before his colleagues (or is it simply that he makes the music so much more rewarding that one does not mind his taking a bit longer with it?). He gives a rock-steady de-

pendability to the rhythms and yet always manages to unearth bits of inner-voice detail and cross rhythms without upsetting the basic pulse. The second movement, played so softly and whimsically, is wonderfully affecting (and yet so seemingly simple), the scherzo boldly assertive. Perhaps the finale is a bit too sedate, but even this point is moot. DG, after years of giving Kempff overly topky, distant sound, has returned to the full-blooded style of the mono Beethoven sonata recordings.

Arrau's version of the G minor Sonata has one advantage over Kempff's (and, indeed, over every recording I know). Schumann wrote two finales for this work and the Philips disc includes, as an appendix, the original, discarded one later published individually as *Presto passionato*. The deleted Turini version

(RCA) used the Presto in lieu of the regular last movement, and Horowitz' recording of the Presto alone is available on a Seraphim reprint (60114). On its own merits, I like the Presto better than the second finale: It is a longer, more diversified composition. I feel, however, that the second finale works better as a last movement. In any event, listeners can have the best of both worlds with the Arrau recording. This is, however, far from Arrau's best work. He brings a sharper, more outwardly defined, virtuosic keyboard command than Kempff's solidly comfortable grasp, and textures are more detailed. But the rhythmic stress keeps dividing itself into isolated subsections and the Andantino, so tender in Kempff's performance, is here overly serious, almost prosaic in its near-adagio distention.



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The overly close recorded sound (hence no true pianissimo) may be partly to blame.

Arrau's *Kreiseriana* begins promisingly enough with a rhythmically tight-as-a-drum No. 1 delineated with usually covered detail. But even before the end of this preamble, one begins to notice that sometimes the inner lines overbalance the more important melodic voices. No. 2 is blocky and italicized, with a strange recording that gives boxy stress to the left hand over the right. Each time the chorale-like main theme returns it is stretched further and further until all semblance of genuine poetry is lost. No. 3 is crisp and splendidly articulated, but blemished among other things by a huge ritenuto at the end of the first section. No. 4 is more ponderous than the prescribed "pensive." No. 5 is clean but again suffers from the bass-heavy recorded balance. No. 6 is ruminative but not really mysterious. The recording may again be to blame, but why such a static pacing of the section so reminiscent of the Chopin A flat Ballade? No. 7, though, has an appropriately wild beginning, and the fugato section that follows is clean and strong, but a bit too sober. As for the piquant No. 8, Arrau—or his bass-heavy engineering—brings in all the puzzling bass tones accurately but with a decidedly pachydermous heaviness. Arrau is a supreme artist, but not when he is in so unspontaneous a mood. H.G.



Shostakovich—an electrifying *Razin*.

oration, Shostakovich's *Execution of Stepan Razin* remains, like his Thirteenth and Fourteenth Symphonies, a superlative fusion of text and music.

It would be difficult to improve on Kiril Kondrashin's premiere recording of the *Stepan Razin* work. Yet in many ways Herbert Kegel has done just that, in a taut, well-balanced, and electrifyingly dramatic performance that captures a bit more of the grandeur and sweep than Kondrashin's somewhat more quickly paced (and more closely miked) version. Furthermore, Siegfried Vogel's performance of the bass part, besides being somewhat less strained and more resonant than Vitaly Gromadsky's, excels in communicating the subtleties of both Yevtushenko's text and of Shostakovich's vocal writing. It has all been captured in a spacious, well-defined sonic atmosphere that could, perhaps, have a bit more thump, but definitely merits being called brilliant. Both Kegel's and Kondrashin's renditions are to be preferred to the one done by Ladislav Slovák on Supraphon, although the latter contains probably the best recording of the Shostakovich Second Symphony. Unfortunately, only the Kondrashin disc has a printed text, which should definitely be read either before or along with the listening.

All in all, Philips has come up with another gem to go along with Durjan's Shostakovich Twelfth (6580 012), and my only regret is that the producers couldn't have found something a little more substantial to fill out the second side than the two dreary excerpts from Khachaturian's *Spartacus* ballet. Khachaturian certainly deserves better representation than this. R.S.B.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphonies: No. 1, in F minor, Op. 10; No. 2, in B, Op. 14 (*To October*). R.S.F.S.R. Russian Chorus (in Op. 14); Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin, cond. [Vasily Antonenko (in Op. 10) and Alexander Grosman (in Op. 14), prod.] MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40236, \$5.98.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 8, in C minor, Op. 65. Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin, cond. [Alexander Grosman, prod.] MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40237, \$5.98 [from MK 221, 1965, and EVEREST 3250, 1969].

Once again, Angel's priorities are definitely to be questioned. With dozens of excellent works, both by Shostakovich and by other Soviet composers (including Prokofiev's *Ballad of the Unknown Boy*), already available on Russian stereo LPs, and with André Previn's absolutely stunning performance of the Shostakovich Eighth on EMI in England awaiting release in this country, Angel could find nothing better to give us than performances of Shostakovich's First and Second Symphonies in versions that, although decent enough, are outshone by interpretations already recorded on Melodiya/Angel (Aranovich for the First, on SR 40192; Blazhkov for the Second, on SR 40099).

As for the Eighth Symphony, even if the same performance had not already once been released here on MK and then pirated by Everest, from whom it is still available, Kondrashin's heavy-handed and programmatic approach to the music (in spite of the fact that absolutely no program has ever been indicated) represents a low point in this conductor's erratic career. The Eighth is without question one of Shostakovich's finest works, and when Angel sees fit to bring out the Previn version, as I hope they will soon do, then I will doubtless wax rhapsodic about one of the most searingly intense expressions of tragedy ever to be produced by an artistic mind. R.S.B.

STRAVINSKY: Piano Works. Marie-Françoise Bucquet, piano. PHILIPS 6500 385, \$6.98.

Serenade In A; Piano Rag Music; Circus Polka; Ragtime; Tango; Sonata; Four Etudes; Les cinq doigts; Valse pour les enfants.

Considering the fanfare that has accompanied Miss Bucquet's arrival on these shores, this record is a sizable disappointment. She gets the notes pretty well, but the music has escaped her almost completely. The neobaroque running passagework in the *Serenade* and *Sonata* just tumbles out, with minimal variation of attack or dynamics. The pseudo-ragtime material is thoroughly erratic in tempo and limp in rhythm. The cross-rhythms in the *Etudes* emerge without meaning, for the musical material simply hasn't been shaped.

A minor point of interest is contributed by the first recording of the brief *Valse pour les enfants*, composed around 1917 and published in *Le Figaro* in 1922. It is reproduced in Eric Walter White's *Stravinsky*, and I am sure you know a child who can play it quite well. For the rest, Beveridge Webster's two-disc set (Dover HCR ST 7288/9) costs less than this single disc, also includes the *Petrushka* piano transcription, and sounds like music. D.H.

WAGNER: Die Walküre: Act I (complete); Wotan's Farewell and Magic Fire Music.

Sieglinde	Helga Dernesch (s)
Siegmund	William Cochran (t)
Hunding	Hans Sotin (bs)
Wotan	Norman Bailey (b)

New Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond. [Süvi Raj Grubb, prod.] ANGEL SBLX 3797, \$12.98 (two discs).

WAGNER: Götterdämmerung: Act III, Scenes 2 and 3 (sung in English).

Brunnhilde	Rita Hunter (s)
Gutrune	Margaret Curphey (s)
Siegfried	Alberto Remedios (t)
Gunther	Norman Bailey (b)
Hagen	Clifford Grant (bs)

Sadler's Wells Opera Chorus and Orchestra.

SHOSTAKOVICH: The Execution of Stepan Razin, Op. 119. KHACHATURIAN: Spartacus: Dance of the Shields; Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia. Siegfried Vogel, bass; Leipzig Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Herbert Kegel, cond. (in the Shostakovich). Monte Carlo National Opera Orchestra, Edouard van Remoortel, cond. (in the Khachaturian). PHILIPS 6585 012, \$6.98.

Comparisons—Shostakovich:
Gromadsky, Kondrashin/Moscow Phil.
Mel./Ang. SR 40000
Hanák, Slovák/Slovak Phil. Supr. SUAST 50958

Shostakovich's poem for bass, chorus, and orchestra, *The Execution of Stepan Razin*, was his second large-scale composition inspired by the work of Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko. But it was heard in the West and recorded in Russia well before its predecessor, the Thirteenth Symphony, because of the latter work's well-known difficulties with the Soviet government.

Yet *The Execution of Stepan Razin* can in certain ways be seen as an even more abrasive work than the monumental and tragic fresco of the Thirteenth Symphony. The Yevtushenko poem stresses with brutal imagery the contrast between the pimple-picking tsar, along with the bloodthirsty crowd, and the folk-hero thief Stepan (or Sienka) Razin, who feels guilty only because he was "a rebel half-way—and should have been to the end." Shostakovich's score, while almost Mussorgskian in its handling of the bass soloist, chorus, and orchestra, drives forward with an intense, dramatic pulse characterized by a relentless insistence on the note D, around which many of the hollow, open chord structures are built. In stark contrast, the ominous death knolls that ring out as the crowd becomes aware that the decapitated thief's head still lives oppose a deep and incredibly resonant C sharp to the D-based harmonies. Both in its musical creation of the tensions of the Yevtushenko poem and in its masterful tonal and atmospheric col-

Reginald Goodall, cond. [John Snashall, prod.] UNICORN UNS 245/6, £2.86 (two discs, import only).

When Klemperer recorded Act I of *Walküre* several years back, it was hoped that the rest of the opera could be recorded. This was not to be—but a hearing of this set does rather put a quietus to possible regrets; by this time, alas, the great man's command of Wagnerian dimensions and orchestral balances, so evident in his complete *Flying Dutchman* (SCL 3730) and in the still earlier discs of orchestral excerpts, had sadly diminished. One would wish it otherwise, but wishing is not enough; this *Walküre* set does little to enhance the memory of Otto Klemperer.

Not surprisingly, the tempos are slow—very slow—but the crux of the matter has to do with character more than speed. That is, I'm not prepared to say the piece won't ever go at these tempos (although anybody electing them has got his work cut out for him!); both Knappertsbusch and Furtwängler make powerful effects with this act at speeds not enormously hastier. But Klemperer's performance is almost dead, from a rhythmic standpoint: The plodding accents ensure that four-beat measures break into twice as many two-beat measures ("Der erschlag'nen Sippen stürmten daher," in Siegmund's narrative), or—worse—three-beat measures into three duple measures (the orchestral passage preceding Hunding's entrance, where the syncopated chords for the horns entirely lose their off-the-beat character). Often there's so much air between the notes that each one sounds like an independent composition, and sloppy ensemble in the orchestra often does its bit further to obscure a clear sense of pulse.

The singers don't have an easy time of it. Norman Bailey sounds a creditable Wotan, but he has to operate in a sort of rhythmic vacuum. The effect is somewhat like that of a hiker crossing a brook on stones that are just a shade too far apart for comfort, so each step is chancy; he isn't sure where the beat will be, so he lurches—sometimes landing early, sometimes late. It can't have been easy, and all the singers have my sympathy, even when they are jumping beats all over the place.

To Hunding, Hans Sotin brings one of the day's great voices, along with an obvious feeling for the character—the communication of which is quite an achievement, since every slightest phrase of recitative, at these tempos, takes on the portent of "O Isis und Osiris." William Cochran has a firm tone for the final climax, but is less good in the softer material, while Helga Dernesch is on the threshold of flatness most of the time. The engineers have thrown a powerful lot of resonance on the voices, and there are several very conspicuous splices—not a happy affair, all told.

On the face of it, much less would seem likely to emerge from the Unicorn *Götterdämmerung* set—London's second opera company, a conductor only faintly known in America, and, on top of that, a performance in translation. In fact, this turns out to be an exciting, involving experience: The singers are more than competent. The orchestra is at least capable, and often more than that. Reginald Goodall conducts on a truly epic scale—a conception that I would gladly admire were the performance sung in Sanskrit.

Happily, it is sung not in Sanskrit, but in Andrew Porter's fluent and eminently sing-

able English translation. I think that even listeners thoroughly familiar with the significations of Wagner's original German words will be surprised at the impact, the emotional presence that Wagner's musical lines acquire when shaped with words in our native language, with all the richness of association that only the words we have known from childhood, the words of the literature we know best, can carry. Mr. Porter has succeeded in maintaining an elevated style without sounding stilted; he never jars us out of the world of epic tragedy with an unstylistic or inappropriate word.

A few lines read a bit oddly on the page, but this is a *singing* translation, and it sings very well indeed—often very free with the original words and wording, but always preserving the

essential sense and the spirit, in English phrases that fit the music like the proverbial glove. If you have never encountered Wagner in English, or only in one of the old versions full of archaisms, Teutonic word-order inversions, and awkward musical phrasings, by all means attend to these records: Wagner in English—good English—can be made to work. Sure, something is lost, but something is gained too. One of the advantages of recordings is having one's cake and eating it too—perhaps not simultaneously, but at least alternatively: In this case, we can experience this music both as Wagner wrote it (via some other recording) and in our own language.

In this particular case, we can also experience a remarkable performance, one that contrasts fascinatingly with Klemperer's. Goodall

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too proceeds with a measured tread, but never loses forward motion (at only one point, when Brünnhilde first addresses the Rhinemaidens in the Immolation Scene, did I feel things dragging). He takes his time building climaxes, but they are overwhelming when they come, resounding from the depths of the orchestra—no top-heavy trumpet-loaded chords, but massive sonorities, richly founded in the low strings and brass. The Funeral Music, with the recurrent motto rhythm strongly brought forward at every manifestation, has a memorable inevitability, and the final apotheosis is equally impressive.

Both Remedios and Hunter do themselves proud, with clear tone, accurate musicianship, forward diction, and impressive conviction—interestingly, they sound much more at home

here than on another recording of highlights, sung in German (Classics for Pleasure CFP 40008). A good recording job doesn't hurt, either.

The Unicorn set isn't officially available here as of this writing, but imported copies are floating around. I hope some local company will arrange to make it more readily available to the American market. (If necessary, it is well worth ordering from England.) On top of this, EMI plans to issue at least a complete *Siegfried*, and perhaps more, recorded "live" during the 1973 Sadler's Wells *Ring* cycle; it should be something to hear. D.H.

WAGNER: *Orchestral Excerpts*. New York Philharmonic, Pierre Boulez, cond. [Thomas

Z. Shepard and Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 32296, \$5.98. Tape: ● MA 32296, \$6.98; ●● MT 32296, \$6.98. Quadriphonic: MQ 32296 (SQ-encoded disc), \$6.98; MAQ 32296 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.98.

Die Meistersinger: Prelude; Tannhäuser: Overture; A Faust Overture; Tristan und Isolde: Prelude and Liebestod.


B **WAGNER:** *Orchestral Excerpts*. Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. [Thomas Frost, Paul Myers, and Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA D3M 32317, \$11.98 (three discs).

Tristan und Isolde: Prelude and Liebestod; Die Meistersinger: Prelude; Tannhäuser: Overture [from Epic BC 1245 and Columbia MS 6971, recorded January 1962]. Der fliegende Holländer: Overture; A Faust Overture; Lohengrin: Prelude to Act I; Rienzi: Overture [from Columbia MS 6884, recorded December 1965]. Das Rheingold: Entrance of the Gods; Die Walküre: Ride of the Valkyries; Magic Fire Music; Siegfried: Forest Murmurs; Götterdämmerung: Dawn and Siegfried's Rhine Journey; Funeral Music and Final Scene [from Columbia MS 7291, recorded October 1968].

Inasmuch as Tovey's celebrated and eminently sensible essay on "Wagner in the Concert Room" has now become readily available in paperback (Vol. VI of his *Essays in Musical Analysis*, Oxford University Press), I will forgo my wonted sermon on the idiocy of certain standard selections. We will merely pause here to note that one of the three discs assembled in the Szell package is devoted to unsatisfactory chunks from the *Ring*, and that both conductors opt for the incoherent Prelude-and-Love-Death sequence in preference to Wagner's perfectly conceived concert version of the Prelude alone (cf. Boult's beautiful recording on Angel S 36871). Everybody does this kind of thing, of course—Toscanini, Furtwängler, and Klemperer are all on record in similar excerpts, which we accept in lieu of complete recordings of the operas by these masters, as partial evidence of their mastery. But that historical justification does not create musical pleasure where none exists.

In other respects, the gathering of Szell's Wagner records into a three-for-the-price-of-two deal is a genuine benefaction. Except for some slightly obtrusive tape hiss from the earliest sessions, this is well recorded, justly directed, and brilliantly played. On occasion, the up-tempos combine with a certain rigidity of manner and an edge of blary trumpet tone to suggest jauntiness rather than solemnity (e.g., the climax of the *Lohengrin* Prelude, although the string playing here is particularly gorgeous). More often, though, the touch is sure; the *Meistersinger* Prelude is a particular tour de force of bounding energy and contrapuntal transparency. Not necessarily the best recordings of any of these pieces, Szell's are yet rarely to be faulted.

In the circumstances, Columbia has put Boulez at a disadvantage: For the price of one additional record, the Szell set gives you all of Boulez' selections, and two discs more. Those who can face up to this economic disadvantage will find the new disc well recorded, and surprisingly idiomatic. I particularly like the *Faust* Overture, perhaps not as dazzling in execution, but quite as forceful as Szell's. In *Meistersinger*, there is one uncomfortable tempo (a rather pedantic slow jog for the apprentices), which then doesn't flow smoothly into the return; at the end Boulez uses only two extra chords, rather than the four necessary to bring us to a real downbeat (as at the end of the opera), and thus concludes rather lamely. *Tannhäuser's* recapitulation, when the 3/4 pilgrims' tune is stretched to fit 4/4, sounds as square as ever. Most interesting is



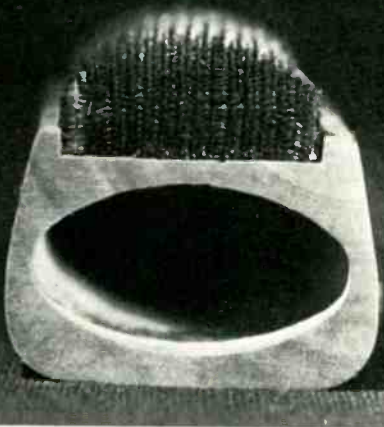
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the *Liebestod*, where the blend and consistency of the chording gives full value to the harmonic progression; the *Tristan* Prelude is less striking. [For an awed appraisal of the four-channel version, see this month's "Tape Deck."]

On both releases, the liner notes are riddled with misinformation about dates and other things—even the astounding "revelation" that Wagner never lived to hear a performance of *Götterdämmerung!* D.H.

WAGNER-GOULD: Die Meistersinger: Prelude; *Götterdämmerung*: Dawn and Siegfried's Rhein Journey; Siegfried Idyll. For a feature review of a recording of these works, see page 79.

recitals and miscellany

CARUSO. For a feature review of two Caruso albums, see page 85.

FRENCH WORKS FOR TWO PIANOS—See Poulenc: Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra.

GREAT OPERA DUETS. Renata Tebaldi, soprano; Franco Corelli, tenor; Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Anton Guadagno, cond. LONDON OS 26315, \$5.98.

PUCCINI: Manon Lescaut: Tu, tu, amore. **VERDI:** Aida: L'abborrita rivale. . . Già i sacerdoti adunansi. **CILEA:** Adriana Lecouvreur: Ma dunque è vero? **PONCHIELLI:** La Gioconda: Ma chi vien. . . Laggiu nelle nebbie remote. **ZANDONI:** Francesca da Rimini: No, Smaragdli, no! . . . Inghirlandata di violette.

"Gable's back and Garson's got him!" read the movie ads after World War II, and this record is being promoted in somewhat the same spirit: Tebaldi and Corelli "together for the first time on records." This may read well; it doesn't listen well. If only self-criticism were as common as self-esteem, if only record companies cared as much for their clients' reputations as for their pocketbooks. It is, surely, unfortunate that the now obsolescent system of exclusive contracts prevented commercial recordings by this duo in any of their celebrated partnerships—but that lacuna is hardly filled by the present collection of lame and mostly irrelevant snippets.

Irrelevant, because two of the duets are for mezzo and tenor: Tebaldi as Amneris (*Aida*) and Laura (*Gioconda*), clearly a concession to failing powers; presumably even the devotees who have been praying for this record didn't really expect "*Già i sacerdoti*" instead of "*Pur ti riveggo*." As it happens, the chest register, although hard in sound, is now the only secure part of the Tebaldi voice. Above that, the tone is forced, heavy, and usually below the note. Let us not remember her this way.

Corelli has never been my favorite tenor, but now and then he summoned (or was subjected to) sufficient discipline to channel his clarion tones for a reasonable effect. None of that here—he is at his unmusical worst, the world's champion of the shapeless phrase. There's that little premonitory bark before the first note of the phrase, the smeary portamento that turns melodic contours into roller-coaster rides, and the utter insensitivity of accent, phrase, rhythm, or tempo continuity. Not all

the golden tone in the world will make up for the musical irrelevance of this singing.

Furthermore, there isn't much conviction or hard work evident here. The ensemble in the *Gioconda* duet is plain incompetent: They just aren't together, and no attention has been paid to blending or balancing the voices. In the *Francesca* duet, these singers and their distantly recorded, somnolent orchestra make the Olivero/Del Monaco/Rescigno version (London OS 26121) sound like an "immortal performance" by comparison—it isn't, not by a long shot, but it does project the music and the drama. Not a phrase anywhere on this record comes across with the kind of essential conviction and rightness that on many occasions does justify, or at least compensate for, one or another sort of technical flaw. All I can hear is two once-fine voices self-indulgently

wallowing in a tonal swamp: the sad thing is that this will be taken to be "great singing" by many who do not realize that the "Royal Family of Opera" is now reduced to two-a-day vaudeville. D.H.

H THE COMPLETE RACHMANINOFF, VOL. 4. Fritz Kreisler, violin; Sergei Rachmaninoff (in the sonatas), Philadelphia Orchestra, Sergei Rachmaninoff, cond. (in the orchestral works). [John Pfeiffer, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARM 3-0295, \$17.98 (three discs, mono) [from various RCA VICTOR originals, recorded 1928-39].

BEETHOVEN: Sonata for Violin and Piano, No. 8, in G, Op. 30, No. 3 (1928) **GRIEG:** Sonata for Violin and Piano, No. 3, in C minor, Op. 45 (1928) **SCHUBERT:** Sonata for Violin and Piano, in A, D. 574 (1928) **RACHMANINOFF:** The Isle of



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the Dead, Op. 29 (1929); Symphony No. 3, In A minor, Op. 44 (1939); Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14 (1929).



THE COMPLETE RACHMANINOFF, VOL. 5. Sergei Rachmaninoff, piano; Philadelphia Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski (in Concerto No. 2 and *Paganini* Rhapsody) and Eugene Ormandy (in the remaining works), cond. [John Pfeiffer, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARM 3-0296, \$17.98 (three discs, mono) [from LM 6123, recorded 1929-41].

RACHMANINOFF: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 1, in F sharp minor, Op. 1 (1939-40); No. 2, in C minor, Op. 18 (1929); No. 3, in D minor, Op. 30 (1939-40); No. 4, in G minor, Op. 40 (1941). Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43 (1934).

RCA herewith completes its homage to Rachmaninoff on his hundredth anniversary—the most complete assemblage of the master pianist/composer's recorded legacy ever offered to

the public. If you haven't yet acquired the first three three-disc volumes (reviewed last month), documenting Rachmaninoff as solo pianist, don't delay: They are sure to be collector's items before long.

Vol. 4 is of particular interest, as it preserves the scant legacy of Rachmaninoff as conductor. He was active in that capacity in prerevolutionary Russia, and made enough of a mark to be twice offered the stewardship of the Boston Symphony. He declined both invitations: Unlike some other pianist/conductors who come to mind, Rachmaninoff resisted the temptation to spread himself too thin. The performance of the tone poem *Isle of the Dead* amply demonstrates Rachmaninoff's ability to mesmerize an orchestra into doing his bidding. Even with the dynamic compression dictated by the 1929 engineering, the grizzly,

menacing forward line of the performance makes one's hair stand on end. Maybe "vitality" is an unsuitable word to describe this work, but it most certainly applies to this awesome performance.

The Third Symphony, recorded a decade later, is ravishing in its delicacy and orchestral refinement. Rachmaninoff, in this work, gets his favorite orchestra to sound lithe and aristocratic. The gossamer lightness and precision of the string articulation, the wistful poignance of the woodwind solos, the sharply etched—but champagnelike—teamwork of the brass section take the breath away. Rachmaninoff's orchestral style is utterly committed and completely without bombast—a curt rebuke to the kind of mawkish, plebeian heaviness so often inflicted on his music today. The sound he draws from the Philadelphians is more akin to the Stokowski shimmer than to the burgher sturdiness of Ormandy, but with a sense for higher logic and order alien to either of those conductors.

The *Vocalise* in Rachmaninoff's own orchestral arrangement originally served as a filler for *Isle of the Dead*—and later for the symphony in its postwar reissue. Rachmaninoff gives the music full emotional head without ever letting it disintegrate into sentimentality. Once again, he proves himself as aristocratic on the podium as at the keyboard.

Unfortunately, the revamped sonics in the symphony reveal all the fuzzy brashness of the original 78s—this was a particularly bad vintage period for RCA's domestic orchestral reproduction.

The remaining three sides of Vol. 4 are devoted to the lovely recordings Rachmaninoff made with Fritz Kreisler. These have been available in previous LP transfers; the older pressings sounded fine, but these are even better. The presence is awesome for a forty-six-year-old recording, and the balance between instruments is well-nigh perfect. The immediacy of the sound and the splendor of the music-making make it easy to forget the prominent background hiss. Rachmaninoff's combination of feathery grace and gruff angularity make for unusual but absorbing Schubert, impeccable Beethoven, and completely idiomatic Grieg.

What a pleasure to hear Kreisler in his absolute prime! His tone is pure gold—sweet, pungent, almost baritone. Intonation is dead center, phrasing full of vibrancy and life. He too was a complete aristocrat. Naturally there are details in Kreisler's style that would raise eyebrows today (but not so much as ten years ago—his kind of portamento shifts are beginning to come back into style again after being shunned like the plague by purist "modern" string players). The only place where I find the slides bothersome is in the second movement of the Beethoven (I prefer Kreisler's later HMV version of this with Rupp); in the turbulent first movement of the Grieg, on the other hand, the pulsating scoops and heavy vibrato are just what the music needs (and so rarely gets).

Vol. 5 brings new transfers of the familiar Rachmaninoff performances of his own piano concertos. The new versions are certainly different from those we have known for so long in LM 6123, but I'm not sure they are necessarily better. The 1934 *Paganini* Rhapsody, remarkably vivid in the older dub, now comes forth sounding clean but drably unresonant. Maybe the older incarnation cheated a bit with that echo chamber, but (forgive my blasphemy!) I think it improved the end result.



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CIRCLE 19 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

The revamped Concerto No. 1 (from 1939-40) is mastered at a much lower level than before. The opening brass fanfares are less coarse, the following passage for strings less blowzily inflated. The piano, alas, sounds as it did before: hard and brittle.

The 1929 Concerto No. 2 apparently was too venerable to respond to therapy. The sound, basically solid and lush, is riddled through and through with horrid, hashy distortion. Loud passages, both in the orchestra and in solo piano, break up with husky congestion. (I'm afraid that the older pressing, which gave me immense pleasure for many years, is really not much better.) Rachmaninoff's interpretation—and Stokowski's too—is wonderfully authoritative: The resolute solidity of cadential chords, the tenutos on the first notes of those quasi-cadenzas in the third movement, the triumphant expansiveness of the brass fanfare announcing the first-movement development, the fast albeit perfectly maintained tempos, the elegant rubato and tapered phrasing—these and many more such felicities add substance and form to by far the best of the Rachmaninoff concertos. It's too bad the composer didn't record this just one more time, with reasonably modern engineering (the 1924 version is included in Vol. 1, with the other acoustical recordings).

The first movement of Concerto No. 3 brings the greatest improvement of the new album: The sound is louder, brighter, and much more immediate than before, with both piano and orchestral backdrop coming through more clearly. But I am afraid that the orchestra is a backdrop, for Ormandy's business-like support reveals little detail or imagination. Rachmaninoff's unusually fast, swirling tempo carries this movement admirably (a small cut just before the development is of little import). Thereafter, his concentration seems to wane: The piano entrance into the murk of the second movement is disappointingly (and inexplicably) feeble and disinvolved. There are more serious cuts here, though none of them inflict the damage of the disastrous one in the finale—where the important second theme is excised *the first time around*. How a composer could do such bodily harm to his own music is beyond me; this is as horrendous an excision as I've ever heard!

Curiously, Rachmaninoff takes all the technical dodges in this concerto—the lighter first-movement cadenza, the triplet rather than quadruplet octave cascades in the third movement's finale. Perhaps by 1939 he had lost interest in this 1909 piece (for all its present-day popularity, it cannot compare to No. 2 either in cogency or in fertility of the matic content).

Concerto No. 4 (played in the revised 1941 version) sounds much as it did before—a serviceable but not terribly attractive reproduction. Frankly, I prefer Michelangeli's 1958 recording of this least accessible Rachmaninoff concerto (Angel S 35567)—even drier, svelter, more caustic than the composer's own objective viewpoint. But the *Paganini* Rhapsody, the First Concerto, and—allowing for the sound—the Second Concerto are beyond comparison in Rachmaninoff's own interpretations. H.G.

SOLTI CHICAGO SHOWCASE. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. [David Harvey, prod.] LONDON CS 6800, \$5.98.

BEETHOVEN: Egmont Overture; Leonore Overture No. 3. **ROSSINI:** Il Barbiere di Siviglia; Overture. **R. STRAUSS:** Don Juan, Op. 20. **WAGNER:** Die Meistersinger; Prelude.

Since so many of Solti's records with the Chicago orchestra have been of such extended works as Mahler symphonies, this "showcase" offers shorter and more popular works that may well bring to a wider audience a collaboration that has come to be regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of the present-day symphonic world.

I find Solti more at home here in the Strauss and Wagner than in the Beethoven and Rossini. The latter seem to me to lack the poise and rhythmic control that reflect their roots in the eighteenth century. Like Solti's Beethoven symphony records, these overtures emphasize massive orchestral sonorities at the expense of structure and rhythmic line. The Rossini overture is rather heavy in texture, which I suspect is the conductor's intention.

These emphases, part and parcel of the Solti style, are more suited to Strauss and Wagner. For instance, the opening of the *Don Juan* is brilliantly played at a fast tempo; however, it sounds a bit rushed, not so much because of the tempo, but because of a certain lack of rhythmic definition. In short, the kind of excitement generated by Solti so effectively has its own special method, requiring certain differences in the relative importance of the musical components in his style. The *Meistersinger* Prelude is quite broad and beautifully detailed, making this listener, for one, look forward eagerly to the day when he will add the whole opera to his Wagnerian series.

Finally, there is the incredible glory of the orchestra itself. From long and affectionate acquaintance with it collectively and individually, I listened to these performances with special pleasure—the limpid beauty and elegance of Ray Still's oboe and Clark Brody's clarinet solos in *Don Juan*, the phenomenal musicality of Arnold Jacob's tuba trill and solid bass line in the *Meistersinger*, the gleaming trumpet of Adolph Herseth, and the superb ensemble and solo work of the horn section. But this orchestra is more than an aggregation of great soloists: Its *esprit de corps* and dedication to music create a whole that is far greater than the sum of the individual contributions. P.H.

HENRYK SZERYNG: Violin Recital. Henryk Szeryng, violin; Claude Maillols, piano. PHILIPS 6500 016, \$6.98.

FALLA: Danza española. **MOMPOU:** Canción y danza, No. 1. **HALFFTER:** Danza de la gitana. **SARASATE:** Romanza andaluza, Op. 22, No. 1; Zapateado, Op. 23 No. 2. **GUARNIERI:** Cantiga lá de longe. **MIGNONE:** Noturno sertanejo.



Jole Krosnik—energetic cellist.

CAMINHA: Preludio, Op. 16. **VALE:** Ao pé da fogueira. **GUASTAVINO:** Llanura. **SABRE-MARROUÍN:** De mi patria. **ROLÓN:** Danza mexicana. **CARRILLO:** Preludio for violin alone. **PONCE:** Sonata breve.

Don't for a moment pass this by as just another collection of lollipops. True enough, some of these vignettes from Spanish, Brazilian, Argentine, and Mexican composers are primarily virtuosic applause-getters—and they certainly get mine, thanks to the really superb style and technical finesse of the performer. But on Side 2 (starting with Alda Caminha's Preludio) we come upon some nonshowy items that are highly attractive in themselves: Miss Caminha's work, dedicated to Szeryng, is a viable small essay in neoclassicism; Vale's piece is pleasantly folksy; Guastavino's "Prairies" song approaches a simplicity worthy of Stephen Foster; Carrillo's Preludio for violin alone rather suggests a curtailed Bach chaconne; and the Ponce sonata is strong, colorful, and well-crafted.

Szeryng is to the manner born, and does wonderful things with all these Latin rhythms. This recital points up not only his capacity to dazzle but subtler qualities as well—one of them being his knack of connecting a series of legato phrases without ever seeming to lift the bow from the strings. Listen to the Guastavino and you will see what I mean. Pianist Maillols is both discreet and helpful. S.F.

THE VIRTUOSO CELLO. Joel Krosnick, cello; Cameron Grant, piano. ORION ORS 7291, \$5.98.

CHOPIN: Introduction and Polonaise, in C, Op. 3 (arr. Feuermann); Nocturne in E flat, Op. 9, No. 2 (arr. Popper). **DAVIDOFF:** At the Fountain, Op. 20, No. 2. **FAURÉ:** Après un rêve (arr. Casals); Elegie, Op. 24. **MACDOWELL:** Romanze, Op. 35. **MENDELSSOHN:** Spinning Song, Op. 67, No. 4 (arr. Silva). **POPPER:** Spinning Song, Op. 55, No. 1. **SAINT-SAËNS:** Carnival of the Animals: The Swan. **WEBER:** Sonata for Violin and Piano, in D, Op. 10, No. 3; Rondo (arr. Piatigorsky).

Joel Krosnick has been known for some time in musical circles as one of the outstanding young cellists in this country. His leadership of the Group for Contemporary Music at Columbia University, his work in the Iowa String Quartet, his more recent activities at the California Institute of the Arts, and now his prospective membership, effective next summer, in the Juilliard String Quartet have spread his renown solidly.

This is his second record, and neither really does him artistic justice. This one is a collection of short pieces, most of them transcriptions and none of major artistic stature. In them, Krosnick shows full technical command and fundamental musicianship that deserve greater artistic challenge. The one thing that seems to come through on this record is the artist's energy and engaging personality. (I say "seems" because I find it hard to dissociate what I hear on this record from recent encounters with Krosnick in concert.) He plays with a big style and an infectious enthusiasm, even for the most trivial music.

Many may wonder whether this strong and exuberant personality can be harnessed in the teamwork of a long-established string quartet. Though there is little on this record to answer that question, I can report, from having heard him last summer in a varied (nonstring-quartet) repertory of chamber music that he is a consummate artist in this respect: His self-effacing, yet vital contributions in Schubert, Mozart, and Ravel make me look forward to hearing him with his new colleagues next season. P.H.

the lighter side

reviewed by

MORGAN AMES

ROYAL S. BROWN

R.D. DARRELL

HENRY EDWARDS

KENNETH FURIE

MIKE JAHN

JOHN S. WILSON



CARL REINER AND MEL BROOKS: 2,000 and Thirteen. Conceived and performed by Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks. [Joe Smith, Carl Reiner, and Mel Brooks, prod.] WARNER BROS. BS 2741, \$5.98.

Carl Reiner is one of the most inventive people around, but playing straight man to Mel Brooks is like giving a guided tour of a live volcano.

Brooks is one of the few authentic geniuses. His command of every possible verbal and visual nuance is absolutely complete—whether in the broadest low comedy (you haven't heard anything till you've heard the 2,013-year-old man do Jolson) or the most rarefied satire. (As a matter of fact, his range goes well beyond that, as anyone who's seen his last film, *The Twelve Chairs*, can testify—it's screamingly funny, grimly soul-searching, and ultimately rather uplifting in a chilling way. His new film, *Black Bart*, due shortly, should set the Western genre on its ear.) But as usual the comic genius is regarded as inherently inferior to the "serious." Hemingway and Fitzgerald are lionized, while such writers as Lardner, Benchley, Thurber, and Perelman—despite their vastly superior technical skill and sympathetic understanding of the human condition—are applauded as gifted clowns. No wonder every clown wants to play Hamlet.

So we seldom appreciate adequately the sustained flights of inspired madness Brooks can deliver given the proper vehicle. (Perhaps his most extraordinary public performance was a couple of years ago on a David Susskind panel on "How to Be a Jewish Son"; the group, which included the likes of David Steinberg, Dan Greenburg, and George Segal, immediately turned into Mel Brooks and Friends.) And packaging such genius for general consumption is a problem.

One neat container was the series of records with Reiner, begun in 1960, built around their 2,000-year-old-man routines. After a ten-year hiatus, Warner Bros. Records president Joe Smith lured Reiner and Brooks back into the studio, and "2,000 and Thirteen" is the result. If the disc is mildly disappointing on first hearing, it's only because it captures such a small slice of Brooks. But that small slice is treasure, and thanks to the subtlety of his inflections this is one comedy LP that actually gets better on repeated hearing.

Here we have the medically certified 2,013-year-old man, a man who has seen everything and known everyone. A man who can say with authority that the greatest medical discovery



Mel Brooks and Carl Reiner—packaging inspired madness.

in 2,000 years is not transplants, not the heart-lung machine ("that's good"), but liquid Prell. ("The heart-lung machine is in your medicine cabinet: it falls out. It's gonna *break*.") A man who remembers the time, before men believed in the Almighty, when they worshipped "a guy, Phil." (Phil's reign, alas, was short-lived: His worshippers, having seen him struck by lightning, realized "there's something bigger than Phi-il.") A man who remembers Jesus affectionately. ("He came in the store: He never bought anything. . . . If I knew it was gonna be *Him*, I'd have made Him a partner in the store. Who knew He was gonna be a hit?") A man with 42,000 children ("and not one comes to visit me"). A man so up to date that he's an expert on natural foods. ("Did you know that pussywillows make a lovely dessert?")

I could go on and on. But I'd rather listen to the record again. I'll just leave you with the 2,013-year-old man's suggestion for an appropriate song celebrating war: "Let's go out and lose an eye, let's lose a foot: let's go to war and lose our brains." K.F.

B. W. STEVENSON: My Maria. B. W. Stevenson, vocals and acoustic guitar; rhythm and vocal accompaniment; Larry Muhoberrac and Larry Carlton, arr. *Sunset Woman: I Got to Boogie; Remember Me*; seven more. [David M. Kershenbaum, prod.] RCA APL 1-0088, \$5.98. Tape: ● APS 1-0088, \$6.95; ●● APK 1-0088, \$6.95.

B. W. Stevenson is a rare one who seems to come from nowhere directly into not just one hit but two in a row (*Shambala: My Maria*). He has a strong, sunny voice and, obviously, a sense of himself. The album is as tight, knowing, and pleasant as are the two single hits (both included). It would be no surprise if RCA pulled even more singles from this set before passing on.

I love to see things done well. I won't deny a lucky touch. Stevenson even wrote a song here called *Lucky Touch*. But the only people who think things like this are all happy accidents are those who don't perceive the real workings of the recording business. What one can really see behind this project are clearheadedness, experience, and taste, real talk about real ac-

tion (music), and respect between producer (David Kershenbaum) and artist.

One way or another B. W. Stevenson came up with a sound, without which no new artist gets off the ground. It was no accident. It came through intuition or discussion or both, but it came. The sound has to do with Stevenson's gift as a singer/writer, simple and real. He has backed himself with the best available musicians. Both arrangers are themselves top players as well (Muhoberrac plays keyboards and Carlton is a guitarist) and have been involved with quality hit music for years. Ironically, these are the same musicians who appear on endless heaps of pointless or worse records. A hit band needs a hit leader. It sure found one.

M.A.

THE WHO: Quadrophenia. Peter Townshend, guitar and keyboards; Keith Moon, drums; Roger Daltry, vocals; John Entwistle, bass, horns, and vocals. *I Am the Sea: Quadrophenia: Love, Reign o'er Me*; thirteen more. [The Who, prod.] MCA 2-10004, \$11.98 (two discs). Tape: ● T 2-10004, \$12.98; ●● C 2-10004; \$12.98.

"Quadrophenia" is the second "rock opera" or "concept album" by the Who. The first was of course "Tommy," released in 1968. "Tommy" had a clear plot and is one of the masterpieces of rock. "Quadrophenia" has no plot at all, or one that is hidden well enough to qualify the piece for the appellation "plotless." The two-disc set traces a slice from the life of a young man named Jimmy who has doubts, fears, adventures, and misadventures.

Jimmy is professedly an amalgam of the personalities of the four members of the Who.

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and if you think being four people is tough on Jimmy, think of what it means for the audience. It's impossible to follow, so one is advised to give up trying and enjoy the music. Instrumentally, "Quadrophenia" is a lot like "Tommy," so much so that it could be its sister ship. It's exotic, exciting, and a real joy. If it were accompanied by words one could follow, "Quadrophenia" would be a masterpiece like its predecessor. As it is, this newest recording is a fashionably obscure substitute. One might use the term *nouvelle vague*. M.J.

CASS ELLIOT: Don't Call Me Mama Anymore. Cass Elliot, vocals; J. Hill, Jack Daugherty, and Bob Florence, arr.; Lenny Stack, cond. *Extraordinary: Mean to Me; I Think a Lot About You*; thirteen more [Jack Daugherty, prod.] RCA APL 1-303, \$5.98. Tape: ♦ APS 1-0303, \$6.95; ●● APK 1-0303, \$6.95.

There has long been something curious about Cass Elliot's career. Who is the real Cass, the earthy yet innocent belter of the Mamas and Papas or the almost matronly lady who relates to Mike Douglas' audience? Is she the dutifully funny fat lady, friend of fags, defender of Janis Joplin, or the straight establishment guest of the Dean Martin show? Of course she is all of these, but somewhere in the blend is a definition problem, and it shows in her singing.

The freewheeling shouter of the Mamas and Papas disappeared the moment the group dissolved, replaced by a strangely static ballad singer, heavy and impersonal. Her repertoire changed too. No more pop stuff as such. She leaned toward very old standards or lesser new ballads written in old molds. Underlining what? An audience feels no more defined than the artist it receives. Thus they hesitate. You can bet that Barbra Streisand has no such ambivalence, though she may have a thousand other problems.

For all of this, Cass Elliot is so warm and naturally likable that most of us are willing to wait until she really decides what to bring us. Her new album has more life than I've heard from her in a long time. This has to do with the fact that some of it was recorded live. Miss Elliot is too careful in the studio, combatting a strong tendency to sing flat. On stage at Mister Kelly's she has no time to worry about such things, and the result is easier, more fun. I'll take a flat, lively Cass over an in-tune, drab Cass any day.

Miss Elliot does her best singing on a fine piece of special material by Earl Brown called *I Came Here to Sing a Torch Song*. She does a medley of torch songs but none touches the opener.

If Helen Reddy is the sharpest chooser of current material, Cass Elliot is one of the least sharp. *The Night Before* is a good song by Al Kasha and Joel Hirschhorn, but a good song is not always a good choice and something about it goes down wrong. Miss Elliot is strong on Bruce Wheaton's *I Like What I Like*, aided by producer Jack Daugherty's interesting big-band arrangement. But the song is only average. Miss Elliot never finds Paul McCartney's *My Love*, while *I'm Coming to the Best Part of My Life* is another lovely tune by Roger Nichols (Paul Williams' ex-partner) and another hack lyric by John Bettis. As for the standards, *I'll Be Seeing You* drops dead and the others

are right behind it. Rare is the artist who can pin himself perfectly, but the wiser performer at least finds someone foxy to help and then listens closely.

Despite flaws, the album is likable. Much credit goes to producer Daugherty, who originally gave us the Carpenters.

A little voice keeps telling me that we haven't heard the best from Cass Elliot yet. But who's in a hurry? M.A.

10 C.C. Graham Gouldman, bass and acoustic guitar, dobro guitar, and electric guitar; Kevin Godley, drums, percussion, and vocals; Eric Stewart, lead electric guitar, slide guitar, Moog, and vocals; Lol Creme, acoustic and electric guitar, grand and electric piano, Moog, mellotron, percussion, and vocals. *Johnny, Don't Do It, Sand in my Face, Donna*; seven more. UK RECORDS UKS 53105, \$4.98.

10 C.C.'s London hit *Rubber Bullets* has definitely found a friend in American radio. The song is being continually played on both AM and FM radio stations across the country heralding the fact that 10 C.C. just may be another supergroup. This debut disc not only includes *Rubber Bullets* but also features the band's other monster English hits: *Donna, Johnny, Don't Do It*, and *The Dean and I*.

This four-man ensemble, derived from members of the Mindbenders and Hot Legs—groups known only to the most knowledgeable chroniclers of British rock—contains members who have written hits for the Yardbirds, the Hollies, Herman's Hermits, and Jeff Beck. Obviously, there's enough writing, singing, and playing talent here to produce an infectious musical result, and 10 C.C. does make infectious-sounding music. The group writes and performs expert parodies of golden oldies and other classic-rock song forms. In their less campy moods, they are reminiscent of the Beach Boys and the Beatles in their most melodic phases.

Because 10 C.C. is so highly competent, the band is already being subjected to overpraise. While this disc is true entertainment—slick, professional, clever, and witty—10 C.C.'s material is essentially thin, disguised by delicious harmony and crafty intelligence. That intelligence must be harnessed so that inspired rock-musical comedy is eventually created. If 10

C.C. does not buckle down to this essential task, it will merely be one of this season's daffier musical novelties. H.E.

YEHUDI MENUHIN AND STÉPHANE GRAPPELLI: *Jalousie: Music of the Thirties*. Yehudi Menuhin and Stéphane Grappelli, violins; Alan Clare Trio; Max Harris and Stéphane Grappelli, arr. *A Fine Romance: Jalousie: Night and Day; Oh, Lady Be Good!; Cheek to Cheek, The Lady Is a Tramp*; nine more. [Ronald Kinloch Anderson, prod.] ANGEL SFO 36968, \$5.98. Tape: ♦ 8XS 36968, \$7.98; ●● 4XS 36968, \$7.98.

Angel is really into party records these days. There was Gunther Schuller's disc of Joplin-for-band arrangements from *The Red Back Book* (a great change of pace from your favorite polka band). Then there was the record of Bach on the harmonica. And now... this...

Unlike Alexander the Great, Yehudi ("East Meets West") Menuhin neither weeps nor conquers new worlds, but rather does something in between. Now he's teamed up with that fine jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli to play (in the words of a sticker on the album's shrinkwrap) "Pop Standards & Jazz in the nostalgic idiom of the '30s." There is a backup jazz trio for rhythm. The eleven solid tunes and four original Grappelli cuts all sound as you'd expect—only even funnier.

Perhaps I should defer to Menuhin's description of this collaboration, as quoted in the liner notes: "I would call it a conversation. The music we play may not seem important to everyone—but surely it is not necessary when two friends meet that they have to say weighty things all the time, as long as they express themselves with elegance, and have a certain style, and are friendly." Makes you feel like a gatecrasher.

I'll send my copy of this record to the reader who—in twenty-five words or less—gives me the best reason why he wants it. I don't give (or go to) that kind of party. K.F.

THE BLUES PROJECT: *Reunion in Central Park*. Danny Kalb, lead guitar and vocals; Steve Katz, rhythm guitar, harmonica, and vocals; Al Kooper, keyboards and vocals; Andy Kulberg, bass; Roy Blumenfeld, drums. *Catch the Wind; Wake Me, Shake Me; Two Trains Running*; six more. [Al Kooper and



10. C.C.—the season's daffiest musical novelty?

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CIRCLE 39 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Andy Kulberg, prod.] MCA 2-8003, \$9.98 (two discs). Tape: ● T 2-8003, \$10.98; ●● C 2-8003, \$10.98.

The Blues Project is the group that initiated the blues revival that so changed the face of rock during the late 1960s. The group also led to the founding of two other important efforts, Sea Train and Blood, Sweat & Tears. The Blues Project was also the first rock band to become popular without ever having a hit record, thus denting seriously the old Top 40 system of star-making.

With credentials of this caliber, it was no surprise that a shouting, dancing crowd turned out in New York's Central Park for the first Blues Project concert in more than five years. It is even less surprising that the recording made of the event should be a success. The two-disc set contains all of the familiar Blues Project material, from the Steve Katz-sung ballads like *Catch the Wind* to the up-tempo blues-rockers like *Wake Me, Shake Me*. It's raw and exciting, as was the concert, and much recommended. M.J.

BARRY WHITE: Stone Gon'. Barry White, vocals, piano, and songs; Love Unlimited, background vocals; Barry White and Gene Page, arr. *You're My Baby; Honey Please, Can't Ya See*; three more. [Barry White, prod.] 20TH CENTURY T 423, \$5.98.

Why can't everyone who records be easy to love like Stevie Wonder, a man as divinely gifted as a musician as he is a self-promoter. Why can't everyone be Carole King or Quincy Jones or Marvin Gaye? The crushing truth is that these are the minority members of a business that functions more smoothly on a level that suppresses serious talent. Those few who slide through become Our Heroes.

But the record business is really made up of the Rod McKuens and Barry Whites. They are easy to grasp, shallow, symmetrical, steady, mediocre. They are easily perceived in the car, in bed, in thought, in trouble, for all I know even at conventions for the deaf.

I do place high value on communicativeness, accessibility, and a knowing commercial eye. Barry White has all these and they count for something. He found a crevice in the well-occupied wall of commercial output. He deserves a Grammy for business prowess, persistence, hustle, and public-pulse perception.

But on a musical level, Barry White deserves a fine. He plays a little piano, sings a little in a heavy bass-baritone, strings a few notes over a few chords, and calls it a song. Yet he has pivoted these fragile accomplishments into enormous public acceptance. His secret? He aims to please the young ladies in the audience. There are no other men, and no woman in the world but the one who listens to his voice. Each song is like a trite Hallmark card, with long narrative passages. "Baby believe me, I do love you . . . and I want you to be sure at all times . . . we're gonna make it, baby, just you and me. . . ." Ad interminabile finitum. Songs get no deeper than their titles: *Girl It's True, Yes, I'll Always Love You; Hard to Believe That I Found You; Never Never Gonna Give You Up*. They are indistinguishable. White also spends a lot of album time making myth-love through the myth-mike. Things get incredibly narcissistic, and one wonders who would care to be so friendly with such an ego.

But White saves himself through sheer sincerity. He really seems to want the best for everyone.

I support simplicity. Anyone who has spent much time in the unfulfilling tangles of own-sake complexity must agree. One of the most heartening things about current pop music is a rediscovery of what is simple and real and honest.

But there is a clear if fine line between simplicity and shallowness. Barry White falls in the puddle. I could stand the platitudes if he would throw in a new chord or tempo or sentence, if he would apply that sincerity to a fresh idea, or any idea at all.

White has employed the considerable talents of Gene Page, and it is a shame that Page is allowed to do nothing but tag along writing boring unison string lines over endlessly dull two-chord riffs, most of them between seven and nine minutes long.

Barry White's success has to do with his strong personality and his ability to know exactly what he wants on a track. *Mazel tov*. He may be for lovers, but not music lovers.

M.A.

RICK DERRINGER: All American Boy. Rick Derringer, vocals, guitar, bass, and tambourine; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Rock and Roll Hoochie Koo; Slide On Over, Slinky; Joy Ride*; eight more. [Rick Derringer and Bill Szymczyk, prod.] BLUE SKY KZ 32481, \$5.98. Tape: ● ZA 32481, \$6.98; ●● ZT 32481, \$6.98.

Rick Derringer is the diminutive former guitarist for the McCoys and recently the backup guitarist for Johnny Winter. In this, his debut solo album, he has produced an impressive recording, varied in its content from melodic ballads to blasting hard rock. The latter style is Derringer's best. *Rock and Roll Hoochie Koo* is a good example, a hard-rock tune in the classic manner. Derringer is not a great singer, but he is an adequate one, and at any rate it is the instrumental music that counts in this recording. "All American Boy" is a good beginning for Derringer's solo career. M.J.

theater and film

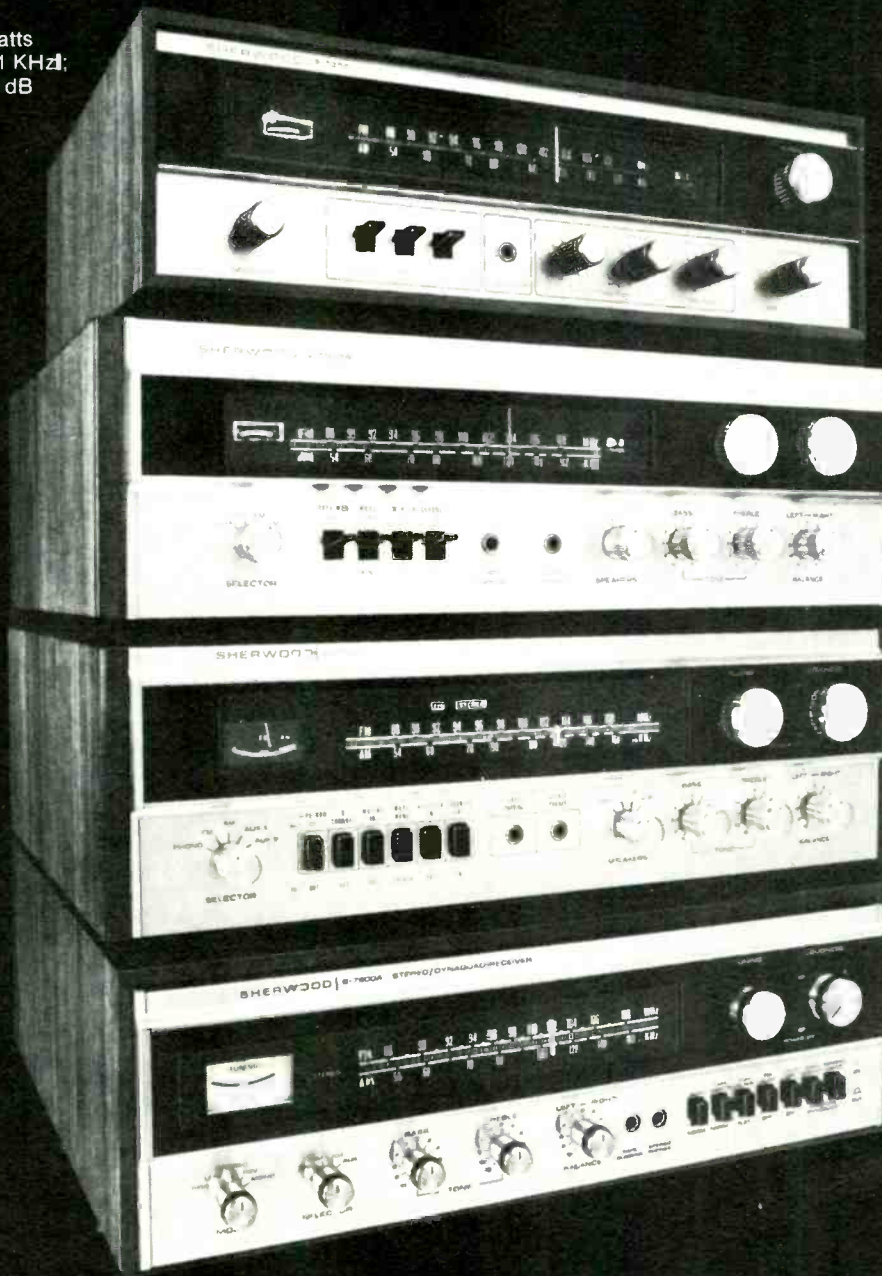
* **ELIZABETH AND ESSEX:** The Classic Film Scores of Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Vol. 2. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Gerhardt, cond. [George Korngold, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0185, \$5.98. Tape: ● ARS 1-0185, \$6.95; ●● ARK 1-0185, \$6.95.

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, In C, Op. 37 (from Deception); with Francisco Gabarro, cello); *The Prince and the Pauper; The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex; Anthony Adverse; The Sea Wolf; Another Dawn; Of Human Bondage*.

If anything, this Vol. 2 of Korngold film music even outshines its predecessor ("The Sea Hawk," LSC 3330), the first release in RCA's highly successful series of "classic film scores." *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*, for instance, offers not only a brilliant fanfare and a spirited, Mahleresque march, it

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closes with a love theme that will bring tears to your eyes even if you have never seen the film. And nothing could be more quintessentially Korngoldian than the three-note, rising-and-falling theme of the "In the Forest" sequence from *Anthony Adverse*. In the *Sea Wolf* score, even the clichéd sea-music techniques take on a new force and vitality; and in this somber score, even the love theme has sinister overtones. I was also very much struck by the verve and sparkle of the "Christmas" scherzo, with its Respighian fluorescence, from *Of Human Bondage*.

But probably the main attraction of the disc is the cello concerto written as an integral part of the plot of the Bette Davis/Paul Henreid/Claude Rains film, *Deception* (1946). Expanded by the composer from the original film version, Korngold's one-movement concerto opens with an extremely energetic and occasionally frenetic section in which much of the material seems to almost explode in sonorous flashes—rarely have I heard a work in which the orchestration complements in such a perfectly endemic fashion the thematic, rhythmic, and harmonic character of the music. The ensuing adagio section was obviously written with the film's emotional content in mind. But, as is always the case, Korngold's marvelously subtle lyricism never imposes itself as the heavenly-choir bombast that has slushed up so many screen romances, and Korngold inevitably leads the listener toward the emotional climaxes, rather than throwing them out immediately like a heart-shaped custard pie. The final section brings back the opening cello theme and also includes a short but exceedingly difficult cadenza. All in all, the concerto affords the enormous pleasure of following Korngold's amazingly creative musical imagination throughout an extended composition that was conceived from the beginning as a coherent, cohesive whole.

In his performances of the Korngold scores, conductor Charles Gerhardt rises once again to the heights he has not quite reached since the initial Korngold release. It would be hard to imagine interpretations bringing out the excitement, vigor, and poignancy of the music better than these. I must admit being somewhat disappointed by Francisco Gabarro's cello-playing (an opinion not shared by others I have spoken with about this record). In spite of his impassioned approach to the music, Gabarro has some grim intonation problems, and to my ears he plays the whole concerto somewhat flat. But Gabarro is superbly backed by Gerhardt and the National Philharmonic, and this first recording of the concerto is so completely welcome that much much more could be forgiven. And again, the recorded sound most definitely *is* something to write home about. R.S.B.

* **A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE.** Original motion picture soundtrack by Alex North. **MAX STEINER CONDUCTS HIS GREAT FILM MUSIC.** Ray Heindorf (in the North) and Max Steiner (in the Steiner), cond. ANGEL S 36068, \$5.98 (rechanneled) [from CAPITOL P 387, recorded in the early 1950s].

STEINER: Since You Went Away; Now, Voyager; The Informer.

This is the second film-music reissue that Angel's producers have introduced, in the liner notes, with a smoothly scandalized reaction to

the black-market value—as mentioned in HIGH FIDELITY's July 1972 film-music issue—of the long-deleted original releases. Apparently this is what it takes to bring the recording-industry czars to some kind of realization of the market value—I won't even mention the musical and documentary values—of certain musical commodities.

Oh well. As it happens, *Streetcar Named Desire* is one of Alex North's best scores, and that is saying quite a bit (when, by the way, will we get a chance to hear North's music, never used by Stanley Kubrick, for *2001*?). The *Streetcar* music opens in an ominous, ta-tu jazz style that perfectly establishes the mood for both the sensuality and the ultimate tragedy of the film. And the Gershwin-esque blues style of the *Four Deuces* number languidly captures the deep-South atmosphere that pervades much of Tennessee Williams' drama. But the score is by no means dominated by the jazz idiom; the *Belle rêve* cut, for instance, is marked by a slow, lean, dissonant lyricism that came to characterize some of the best American film music of the 1950s (scores by both Leonard and Elmer Bernstein immediately come to mind). And the piece entitled *Flores para los muertos* offers a striking example of the chilling emotional intensity that has enhanced almost every North-scored picture I have seen.

In spite of RCA's new recordings of a number of Steiner score excerpts, Angel's reissue of the three suites offered here is most welcome. In all three cases, the score selections conducted by Max Steiner are not only more extended than those to be found on RCA's "Now, Voyager" album (ARL 1-0136), they hold together extremely well as suites and offer infinitely more variety than the RCA disc. The *Now, Voyager* suite, for instance, offers a diverse sampling of the score's themes and moods, whereas the RCA version is simply inundated by the *It Can't Be Wrong* theme. And the breadth of the *Since You Went Away* suite, from the typically Steineresque waltz to the delightful blues style of Fidelia's theme, is not even hinted at in RCA's title-only selection.

Obviously, the rechanneled stereo of the Angel re-release is no match for the brilliant sonics offered by RCA's new series, and I must say that Charles Gerhardt and his orchestra hold their own pretty well against Steiner's own interpretations. But the sound for the Steiner selections has been considerably improved over the original release. The *Streetcar* recording, on the other hand, is a good deal worse than the original, and I rather suspect the North reissue, unlike the Steiner, is a disc dub—has something happened to the original tape?

Although pleasantly extensive, Rory Guy's program booklet for the Angel album contains some whopping generalities—Blanche Dubois in *Streetcar*, for instance, has certainly not lost "her last vestiges of sanity" by the end of the play, and the tragedy is all the more poignant because her "insanity" is at least halfway imposed on her by her family and by a society that cannot tolerate the latent forces she represents. R.S.B.

ENTER THE DRAGON. Original motion picture soundtrack recording. Composed and conducted by Lalo Schifrin. WARNER BROS. BS 2727, \$5.98.

When I think about it, I find myself forced to admit that each phase in the evolution of American cinema has tended to produce soundtrack scores coated with a veneer of sameness from which even the major composers have not always been exempt. But it does seem to me that an inordinate amount of the film music being churned out these days—particularly the stuff reaching disc—has been carefully programmed by nonmusicians to have enough Manciniesque themes and pabulum-rock rhythmic backgrounds and instrumentation to be digestible by every member of the profit-margin public.

What a shame, for instance, to see a composer such as Lalo Schiffrin, who has written at least one of the finest film scores of the last ten years (*The Fox*, which Warner Bros. should definitely reissue), glossed over by the slick-as-oil sounds that can just as easily be heard behind a good (or bad) fifty per cent of all TV commercials—sounds one might naively think out of place in a “martial-arts” film. Not that *Enter the Dragon*, even with its mod façade and its pseudo-orientalisms, is a bad score. The title theme, with its karate shouts (honest) and its foreboding themes, packs a certain . . . um . . . punch. And the cut entitled *The Monk* contains an inviting number of Schiffrinisms, and ends up, in spite of its title, with some classy action music. But Schiffrin is capable of ever so much more, and it seems obvious that Warner Bros. has condescended to offer us a Schiffrin score (all of which, by the way, lasts under a half hour) only to create as much hoopla as possible for the first American-produced martial-arts film. Congratulations.

R. S. B.

jazz

✳ **ROY ELDRIDGE SEXTET:** *The Nifty Cat Strikes West*. Roy Eldridge, trumpet; Grover Mitchell, trombone; Eric Dixon, tenor saxophone; Bill Bell, piano; Norman Keenan, bass; Louis Bellson, drums. *I'm Beginning to See the Light*; *Blue 'n' Boogie*; *Satin Doll*; four more. MJR 8121, \$5.50 (Master Jazz Recordings, Box 579, Lenox Hill Station, New York, N. Y. 10021).

There is a strong Ellington feeling on this set, not only because it includes three Ellington tunes but because the combo, which is more Basie than Duke (three to one), plays with the tight, grooving feeling of an Ellington small group.

Eldridge rides above it all, inimitably himself with that drilling, penetrating tone that could be very much at home in the Ellington milieu even though Roy has always gone his own way musically. Eric Dixon has the chance, which he rarely had with Basie, to relax in a warm, dark, rich-toned attack that suggests a lighter-voiced Ben Webster.

The ensemble routines are unusually imaginative for what was presumably a pickup date—breaking up of solos, backing of solos, things that don't occur on most contemporary free-wheeling jazz dates. But these are musicians who are used to being supportive, to listen, to respond, and to contribute even when they are not in the spotlight. This feeling pervades the whole set, even when Eldridge or

Bill Bell is ostensibly off by himself soloing on *Willow Weep for Me*. Bell, incidentally, is a California-based pianist who teaches at the College of Alameda and does not record much; on the evidence of this set, he should be heard more often.

J. S. W.

✳ **JACK WILKINS:** *Windows*. Jack Wilkins, guitar; Mike Moore, bass; Bill Goodwin, drums. *Canzona*; *Red Clay*; *Pinocchio*; three more. MAINSTREAM 396, \$5.98.

Despite the proliferation of guitarists during the past fifteen years—or possibly because of it—an appalling number of competent but banal guitarists have been inflicted on us. From the commonplace copyists of Charlie Christian in the Fifties, we moved to the commonplace rock guitarists of the Sixties. But in the past few years, the instrument is being rediscovered. A guitarist such as Jim Hall, who has always been there, can now command attention. A Bucky Pizzarelli can emerge from the anonymity of studio work.

And now here comes a younger guitarist—Jack Wilkins, not yet thirty—with a sense of tone and style and a feeling for real guitar sound. Although he plays an electric guitar, he approaches an acoustic sound (by keeping his amplifier volume low and letting the control board raise the level).

On his debut album as a leader, Wilkins has the invaluable help of bassist Mike Moore who, in addition to being one of the most consistently brilliant jazz bassists to appear in the past few years (he and Stanley Clarke stand alone in this respect), has worked frequently with Wilkins so that they have developed a close duo rapport, exemplified here on *Naima*. Between them, they make this a gently lyrical, melodic set, filled with colors, warmth, a sense of inventive community, and, when the occasion calls for it, an infectious rhythmic interplay.

J. S. W.

✳ **ANDY KIRK AND HIS 12 CLOUDS OF JOY:** *March 1936*. Paul King, Earl Thompson, and Harry Lawson, trumpets; Ted Donnelly, trombone; John Harrington, John Williams, Dick Wilson, and Andy Kirk, saxophones; Claude Williams, violin; Mary Lou Williams, piano; Ted Robinson, guitar; Booker Collins, bass; Ben Thigpen, drums; Pha Terrell, vocals. *Walkin' and Swingin'*; *Froggy Bottom*; *Overhand*; fifteen more. MAINSTREAM 399, \$5.98 (mono) [recorded March 1936].

Andy Kirk's band might have been the third great band to come out of Kansas City, falling chronologically in between Bennie Moten and his successor, Count Basie. But Kirk had the misfortune to have a hit record in 1936—*Until the Real Thing Comes Along*, with a pallid vocal by Pha Terrell—which turned the band, for recording purposes, from its basic rhythmic drive (built into the arrangements by Mary Lou Williams, the band's pianist) to futile attempts to follow up on the success of *Until the Real Thing*.

This set shows the band on its arrival in New York in 1936 (almost a year before Basie) and covers its first month of recording. March

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1936. It documents the direction in which the band was moving then, the power of Miss Williams' arrangements, the solo vitality that both she and tenor saxophonist Dick Wilson brought to the band, as well as the dire and fateful *Until the Real Thing* (which, in view of later dreary developments in the ballad field, does not really sound too bad in retrospect).

The collection also includes five piano solos recorded by Mary Lou Williams during this eventful month. The dominant sound all through the collection is Mary Lou's timeless piano, which seems to grow in swinging quality as the years go by. But the set also serves as a reminder that the Kirk band was a tight, together ensemble and, in addition to Miss Williams and Wilson, had a good assortment of capable soloists. J.S.W.

in brief

DAVID BOWIE: Pin Ups. RCA APL 1-0291, \$5.98. Tape: ♫ APS 1-0291, \$6.95; ♫ APK 1-0291, \$6.95.

Taking a respite from his own eccentric fantasies, space-ikon Bowie presents a "nostalgia" disc featuring his favorite British rock songs circa 1964-67. Bowie sings songs by the Kinks, the Who, Pink Floyd, the Pretty Things, the Yardbirds, and the Easybeats, among others. Some of the songs are worth reprising; some aren't. On occasion, Bowie's performances surpass the originals; many times, they do not. This recording is almost as eccentric as a "Bowie Sings Bowie" LP. H.E.

MOTHER MAYBELLE CARTER. COLUMBIA KG 32436, \$6.98 (two discs).

A trip through the history of the founder of one of America's best-known musical families. M.J.

RUFUS. ABC ABCX 783, \$5.98.

Rufus consists of five white male musicians and one female black lead singer. Mating rock and rhythm and blues, the band shows ability but not enough imagination to make this particular combination truly enthralling. H.E.

MAIN INGREDIENT: Greatest Hits. RCA APL 1-0314, \$5.98.

The Main Ingredient has made it the hard way—slow, album by album, hit by hit. Despite the death of lead singer Donald McPherson, the group continues to have one of the sweetest vocal sounds in town, heard on such hits as *Everybody Plays the Fool*, included in this set. Beautiful arrangements are by Bert De Coteaux. M.A.

PETE SEEGER: The World of Pete Seeger. COLUMBIA KG 31949, \$6.98 (two discs). Tape: ♫ GA 31949, \$7.98.

A two-disc set containing twenty of Seeger's best-known songs. It partially duplicates Columbia's earlier "Pete Seeger's Greatest Hits" (CS 9416). M.J.

MANDRILL: Just Outside of Town. POLYDOR PD 5059, \$5.98.

These seven musicians create a subtle, insinuating brand of rock-jazz that can be thrilling in concert but is ultimately wearisome on disc. H.E.

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the tape deck

BY R.D. DARRELL

"Surrender! You're Surrounded!" seems to be the gunpoint demand of quadriphony's *Blitzkrieg* commanders—at least in the apprehensive minds of audiologically conservative home listeners. Among many handicaps the four-channel medium has to overcome (the suspicion that it's only a commercial gimmick, the cost and effort of home sound-system conversions, the existence of incompatible competing matrix/discrete disc types, etc.), not the least is the combined resentment and fear of exposing oneself to an entirely new and seemingly highly unnatural kind of musical experience. And even those willing at least to consider the use of rear speakers confined strictly to auditorium-ambience enhancements may shrink away from the claustrophobic threat of what is frankly billed as "Surround Sound."

My own first home encounters with quadriphony (via Q-8 cartridge tapes, as reported in this column for October 1972) dispelled many of my own general fears of the medium and in particular my doubts of its suitability for certain inherently appropriate types of music. From the very first, the new sonic dimensions struck me as ideal for works like the Berlioz Requiem, Bernstein's *Mass* (composed with quadriphony specifically in mind), and indeed most multiple-source-element scores like those for orchestra with one or more choruses and soloists. But I retained a stubborn skepticism about the aesthetic desirability of hearing standard symphonic works from an orchestra completely wrapped around me. And that skepticism was shaken but not shattered by the singular fascination exerted by the Q-8 versions of Anthony Newman's Bach *Brandenburgs* and Bernstein's Stravinsky *Sacre* (Columbia QMA 31398 and MAQ 31520 respectively), both of which are very different from standard symphonies by Beethoven, Brahms, et al. So it's been an enlightening as well as challenging problem to deal with a whole batch of more recent exemplars of Columbia's "surround-sound" approach—in what should better be considered reports of my own subjective reactions than objective evaluations of the recordings themselves. (Later on I hope to report similarly on a representative batch of Q-8s exemplifying the different technological approach—ambience-enhancement only—preferred by RCA's classical producers.)

Another Maybe . . . and Two Noes. . . The most highly publicized exploitation so far of Columbia's "surround" tech-

niques. Pierre Boulez' New York Philharmonic version of Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* (MAQ 32132) is closely akin to Bernstein's *Sacre* in its intensely intriguing—yet at the same time highly distracting—temptations to pinpoint exact locations of instrumental soloists and sections. Even when I deliberately resist these temptations and concentrate on the music itself, I'm still more aware of front/rear and left/right differentiations than I should be. So, while Boulez' rather coldly literal and humorless reading is extremely exciting at times and while quadriphony reveals the composer's scoring details with exceptional clarity, I'm still not completely convinced. Verdict: *Non liquet*—i.e., no clear-cut decision despite a slight tilt to the pro side.

The tilt is decidedly the other way, however, for Bernstein's Holst *Planets* (MAQ 31125) and Haydn *Mass in Time of War* (MAQ 32196). Reviewing the disc edition of the former last December I tried to moderate some of my objections to the sonic qualities in the expectation that the coarseness would disappear in quadriphony. It doesn't. Indeed there is surprisingly little difference even in the expected intensification of atmosphere evocation, and there is a jarring hold-your-breath cartridge "break" in the *Jupiter* movement. The best thing here is the Dolbyization of all four channels as part of Columbia's new policy for all its cartridge tapes. Right now, with only one separate Dolby-B unit, I can take advantage of this noise-reduction feature only in my front speakers, but even that is a decided and welcome help.

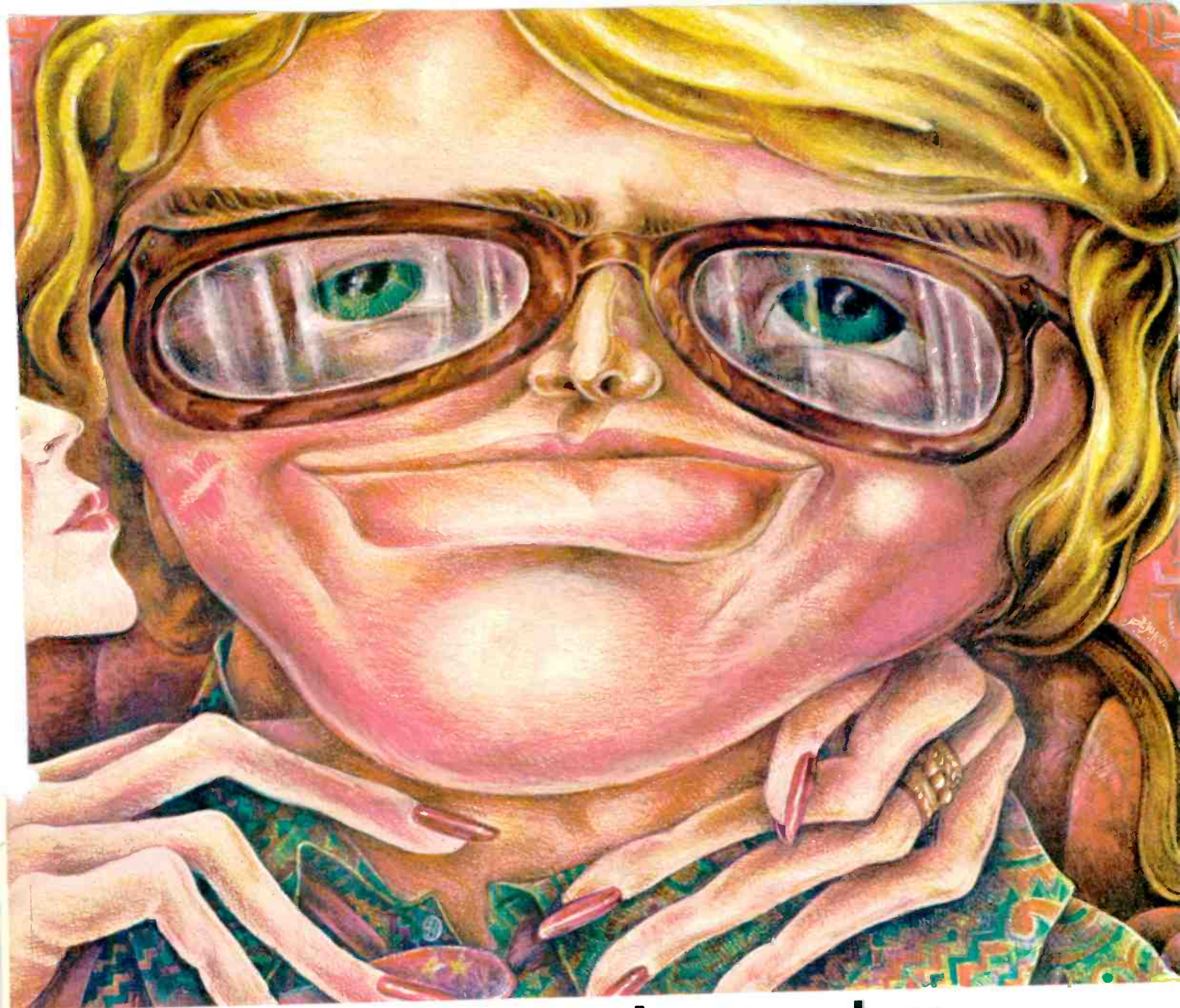
The Haydn *Mass*, recorded in the Washington National Cathedral after its "Concert for Peace" presentation in early 1973, is in front (orchestra and soloists) and rear (chorus) rather than true "surround" sound. Even so, there is impressive depth, expansiveness, and effective exploitation of the cathedral's reverberation characteristics. But neither these attractions nor those of the fine choral singing can overcome, for me at least, the disadvantages of Bernstein's too often hard-driven or over-romanticized reading and the shaky shrillness of the soprano soloist. Whatever else quadriphony may be, it is no substitute or cure for an unsatisfactory performance.

One Mild and One Emphatic Yes! The Boulez/New York Philharmonic Berlioz program (MAQ 31799) differs from all the foregoing in that it consistently leaves me much less aware of disparate sound sources (although individual timbre distinctions are no less vivid). The floating over-all sound is more seamlessly spread around one to good dramatic effect in the bigger moments of

the *Benvenuto Cellini*, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, and *Roman Carnival Overtures*, to magnificent scene-pictorial effect in the Royal Hunt and Storm from *Les Troyens*. This whole tape strikes me as a disarmingly engaging introduction to "surround sound" that is likely to be particularly persuasive with home listeners of conservative sonic tastes. And in this edition I'm not aware of any of the tubbiness and shrillness reviewers have found in the stereo-disc edition.

But it has remained for a program much more orthodox and familiar than any of these to shatter all one's preconceptions and traditional aural-experience prejudices. Would you believe that the new medium could find its most spellbinding propagandist yet in the superannuated, long-ago deflated Sorcerer of Bayreuth? I could only when I incredulously heard and reheard—again and again—the brand-new Boulez/New York Philharmonic Wagnerian program (MAQ 32296, Dolbyized). Here the *Tristan* Prelude and *Liebeshod* and the *Tannhäuser* Overture (the disc edition's *Faust* Overture is omitted) are as monumentally dramatic and satisfying as anything I've heard before in quadriphony, while the opening *Meistersinger* Prelude simply overwhelms one with both an incomparable lucidity of part intricacies and a no less incomparably equable flooding of a surging sea of sound all around. Nothing I can say can possibly prepare you for this unique experience! The best I can do is to class this tape right beside such milestone achievements as Albert Coates's early electrical Wagnerian 78s of almost half a century ago and Georg Solti's *Rheingold* of the early stereo era. Certainly this electrifying technological revitalization of familiar, even hackneyed, music is a sonic miracle quite impossible to believe until one becomes a personal participant.

Reiner's (Verdi) Requiem Returns. One probably unexpected virtue of quadriphony is that even at its best it doesn't supersede anything—it doesn't spoil, or even diminish, one's continuing relish of well-loved stereo (or for that matter mono) masterpieces. Witness, for example, Reiner's memorable 1960 version of the Verdi Requiem with the Vienna Philharmonic and Singverein Chorus, first released on the RCA label, although it was actually recorded by British Decca engineers. Now it reappears on the London label (two cassette set, Ampex-processed D 31215, \$14.95; also double-play 7½-ips reel, K 90215, \$11.95). Its fabulous dynamic range, superbly dramatic reading, and matchless singing by soloists Price, Bjoerling, Elias, and Tozzi are more thrilling than ever—even to ears stretched every which way by quadriphony. ●



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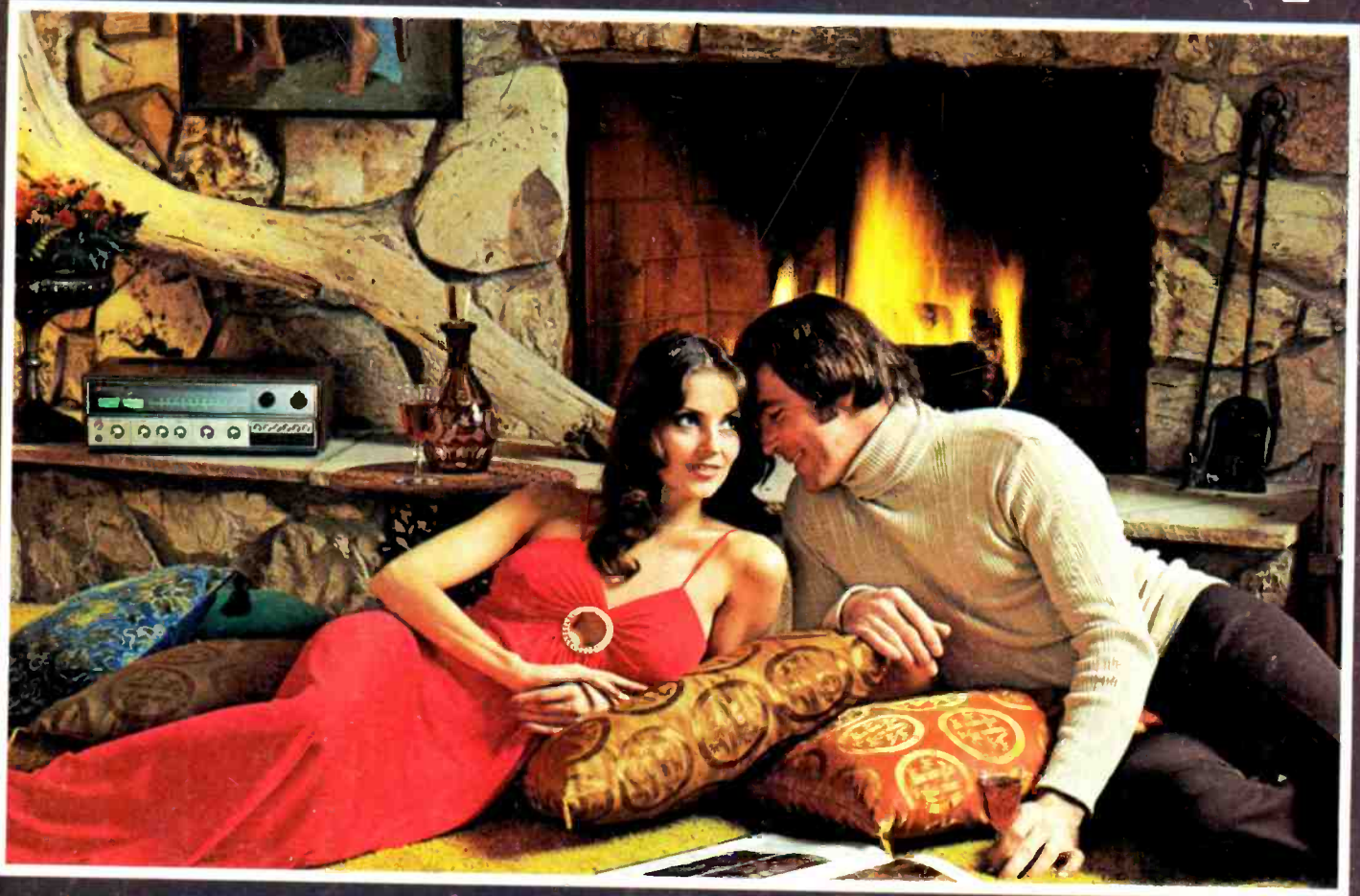
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