

AUGUST 1982 • \$1.25

# Stereo Review®

• **SPECIAL SPEAKER ISSUE** •

How to train your ears for  
**SPEAKER BUYING**

**SEVEN WAYS  
TO CONNECT YOUR  
EXTENSION SPEAKERS**

## EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

- Quad ESL-63 Speaker System
- Koss KSP Sound Partner Headphones
- Realistic STA-2290 AM/FM Receiver
- Hafler DH-110 Preamplifier
- Soundcraftsmen A2502 Power Amplifier

## DISC SPECIALS

Dolly Parton • Freeman and Marsalis  
 Peabo Bryson • Haircut One Hundred  
 Art Tatum • Return of Doo-wop

GAY: *The Beggar's Opera*

WEINBERGER: *Schwanda the Bagpiper*

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphonies 13 and 14



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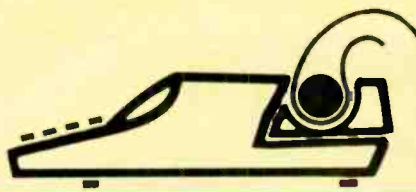
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Stereo Review

# BULLETIN

Edited by William Livingstone

- THE LONDON-CAST ALBUM OF CATS, a hit British musical, is being released this summer in the United States by Geffen Records. Based on poems by T.S. Eliot, Cats has a score by Andrew Lloyd Webber, the composer of Jesus Christ Superstar and Evita, and demand for the original-cast album has been so great here that an estimated 50,000 copies of the English album on Polydor have already been sold in this country. A New York production of Cats opens on Broadway on October 7, and Geffen will record and release an album by that American cast in the fall. Lloyd Webber, now represented on Broadway by both Evita and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, has agreed to take over London's Old Vic theater and make it a home for the British musical.
- RETIREMENTS: The June 13 concert in Concord, California, was the final "family" performance for Lawrence Welk of champagne-music fame, who had promised his wife to retire at age sixty-five. Happily for his fans, he was fourteen years late in fulfilling the promise. Also retiring at any moment are Inner City, Classic Jazz, City Lights, and Music Minus One, all record labels, all divisions of MMO Music Group, Inc., which is filing for a Chapter XI reorganization in bankruptcy court.
- CLASSICAL AWARDS: Violinist Yehudi Menuhin received the first American Eagle Award given by the National Music Council for unique contributions to classical music....Thomas Riebl, who was born in Vienna and lives in London, has won the Naumburg International Viola Competition. The prize includes \$5,000, engagements for concerts, and a recording with the Musical Heritage Society....Honorary degrees of Doctor of Music have been conferred on soprano Birgit Nilsson by the Manhattan School of Music, on pianist Van Cliburn by Texas Christian University, on composer Virgil Thomson by Harvard University, and on mezzo-soprano Rosalind Elias and record-catalog publisher William Schwann by the New England Conservatory of Music.
- THE KOOL JAZZ FESTIVAL has now become a series of festivals in twenty cities across the nation. Once limited to Newport, R.I. (where it was founded in 1954), and later to New York (where it was moved in 1972), the Festival now includes such cities as Atlanta, San Diego, and Pittsburgh. This month Festival events are scheduled for Seattle (July 30-August 6), Milwaukee (August 11-15), Newport (August 21-22), and Chicago (August 30-September 5).
- TECH NOTES: Producers of compact digital audio discs (CD) appear to be facing the same types of production problems that have hindered the supply of laser videodiscs. High reject rates are threatening to push the disc price above acceptable levels, and CD player manufacturers, many of whom have production lines ready to roll, are holding back until software is generally available....Dual, the West German hi-fi manufacturer, has been sold to the French conglomerate Thomson-Brandt. The company's products will continue to be available in the U.S. under the Dual brand name and serviced by the same distributors.... The battle over AM stereo is heating up with Magnavox, Kahn/Hazeltine, and Harris working hard to line up support from broadcasters and hi-fi companies. Most companies are being very careful not to act in any way that might be construed as a violation of restraint-of-trade laws....With the video industry making serious inroads into audio's share of consumer disposable income, many video manufacturers are beginning to boost their sales by promoting the high-fidelity aspects of their products....The Electronics Industries Association's (EIA) stereo TV sound committee has finished its study of the various proposed stereo TV systems (see "Stereo TV," July 1982 Stereo Review) and is working with manufacturers and broadcasters to decide which system to propose to the FCC this October. The TV committee has been unable to identify the best noise-reduction (compander) system and has revised the operating parameters for further tests.

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# Stereo Review®

AUGUST 1982 • VOLUME 47 • NUMBER 8

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# Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



## A LITTLE TRAVELING MUSIC

**T**HE delight we take in coincidence springs, I suppose, partly from surprise and partly from satisfaction—the reassuring evidence it offers that, whatever the bad news of the moment, the world goes right on working in its amiably accidental, blindly haphazard way. And so I was tickled to discover, on a recent bus trip, that my seat companion and I were both about to plug into identical Toshiba personal cassette players. After briefly comparing repertoires and agreeing that the machines are the greatest boon to travelers since the inflatable horsecollar neck pillow, we settled back to enjoy our music.

I've been carrying my little radio/cassette recorder/player on trips for close to a year now, and I've gotten the drill down to something like a science. Since my earphones are of the perch-on-the-ears "supra-aural" type that permits the intrusion of the

outside world, I have learned not to ride in the rear of the bus (where the motor is) nor over the wheels (where the tires roar). But I have learned to ride the gain carefully. If the sound level is too high, I sometimes hear the buzz of the bus' electrical system, and I am still a bit nervous about how much of this close-contact sonic input the ears can take without injury. (There have not, to my knowledge, been any studies in the area yet, but they are bound to come.)

For convenience, status ostentation be damned, I wear the phones around my neck when not in use, the cord and plug coiled and tucked into my shirt pocket. The player and cassettes (usually four to six to give me a bit of choice in what to listen to) go into a small zipper bag with a neck/shoulder strap. There's an extra set of batteries in the bag too. If you use your machine a lot, you'll discover that it eats batteries like

popcorn. That's why I use nickel/cadmium with a recharger; I put in fresh batteries just before I go out, at the same time I select my music.

Since I am one of those troubled with "in-the-head" imaging with all earphones, I avoid the larger works—operas and symphonies—in favor of piano, violin, and chamber music. I have had good times with Rubinstein's Chopin, Shlomo Mintz's Kreisler, Ivan Davis' Gottschalk, and quartets by Haydn, Schubert (*Death and the Maiden*), and Juan Crisostomo Arriaga, the last drawn from a treasured collector's-item disc by the Guilet Quartet. Oh, yes, I dub from my disc collection shamelessly. I like to do my own "bonbon" programming, C-90 cassettes are much more efficient than the C-60s of most cassette releases, and after a half-dozen or so listenings I use the tape over again for some other program anyway.

**T**HE arrival of this new wrinkle in music listening is particularly timely for me since I am about to undergo that rite of passage known as retirement. If you wish to make of your life a poem, the last stanzas are important; I intend to devote mine to the indulgence of a long-suppressed passion for travel, and I can now do so without leaving my music behind. This editor's chair will be assumed by Executive Editor William Livingstone, whose hand has been everywhere evident in these pages almost as long as mine. I am sure you will quickly have reason to trust his stewardship. For myself, I will find it difficult to surrender, after eighteen years, my long-suffering audience—or perhaps I should say audiences, for about a third of our 540,000 readers are new each year. As many readers know, my approach to editing has been primarily didactic and often deliberately provocative; a teacher's time is best spent in challenging his students to think. I've enjoyed it a lot, and I hope you have too. Class dismissed. □

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**1958:** The year of the first stereo recordings also brings the release of our first stereo amplifier.

**1965:** As hi-fi widens its appeal, we introduce our first stereo receiver, the TR 707A.

**1966:** Sansui's U.S. subsidiary, destined to be outgrown in little more than a decade by our new headquarters in Lyndhurst, N.J., begins operation.

**1970:** QS, Sansui's patented 4-channel system, gains worldwide recognition.

**1976:** No less a leader in broadcast than in consumer audio technology, Sansui introduces two stereo AM systems at the Audio Engineering Society convention.

**1978:** Psychoacoustic research into the subtle but very real deficiencies in bass and in transient response in music reproduction results in Sansui's introduction of DC amplifiers, the renowned G-series receivers, and our patented DD/DC circuitry. These advanced technologies reduce distortions whose very existence had been questioned until we developed a straightforward measurement technique to verify on a meter what listeners' ears had long told them.

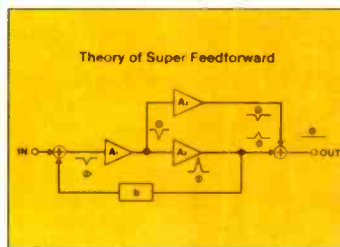


7900Z RECEIVER

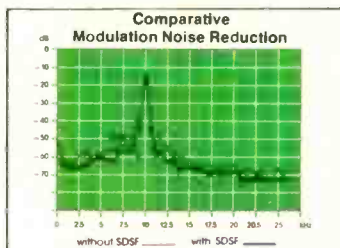
**1979:** Sansui's patent-pending D-O-B (Dynaoptimum Balanced) method of optimally locating the pivot point results in significantly lower tonearm susceptibility to unwanted vibrations. The same year Sansui introduces the first member of our trend-setting system approach to hi-fi componentry, the Super Compo series.

**1980:** Developing a theory first suggested in 1928, Sansui presents

the first Super Feedforward amplifiers, the realization of a design that eliminates even the last vestiges of distortion that not even negative feedback could combat. This development inaugurates a new era in the reduction of amplifier distortion and firmly establishes Sansui as a world leader in this important work. Eager to maintain its technological leadership, now also in video, in the same year Sansui develops an ultra-compact gas laser-optical pickup, some 40 times smaller than conventional detector systems, that promises to play a vital role in future compact digital audio disc players.



**1981:** Modulation noise, long a problem in cassette recorders, is reduced to virtual inaudibility by Sansui's patent-pending Dyna-Scrape Filter. Equalization that's simple enough for practical home use is realized with Sansui's computerized SE-9 equalizer, which not only achieves professional results in record or playback, but also permits storing up to four instantly-selectable equalization curves.



At the 1981 NY AES, we presented four major papers outlining breakthroughs in both audio and video engineering, each of which will lead to products to enrich all our lives.

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G-RECEIVERS.  
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**1976**  
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**1970**  
QS 4-CHANNEL.

**1966**  
U.S. OPERATION  
BEGINS.

**1965**  
STEREO RECEIVER.

**1958**  
STEREO AMPLIFIER.

TU-S9  
TUNER

AU-D11  
AMPLIFIER

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Classical Marketing

● James Goodfriend's June column, "Buying Frustration," was right on the mark. Here's how it works for rural classical-record fans like me. Two years ago I decided to buy the only available recording of the Richard Strauss opera *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Schwann showed the Richmond set as in print at the time, but, as I expected, my local record stores didn't have it. Unexpectedly, they also refused to special order it. A trip to St. Louis involved me in several maddening encounters with adolescent record-shop clerks before finding a merchant who knew her business. While she didn't have the album either, she did explain that Richmond sets were very difficult to obtain since the parent company, London Records, had recently been bought out. A letter to them explaining my situation brought the reply, "Check your local dealers." Evidently they couldn't read.

It's been years since I could find a record I wanted when I wanted it and free of defects. The classical-record industry is by no means alone, however. I'd estimate that at least half of my purchases of *any* kind involve surly, ignorant, or inattentive salespeople, shoddy or defective merchandise, long delays, unmet deadlines, incomplete or incomprehensible owners' manuals, or other familiar foul-ups. Where is the white knight who will answer Mr. Goodfriend's challenge to reform the industry and make it possible for customers to buy the product?

WENDY A. BIE  
 Rolla, Mo.

### Paul McCartney

● Mark Peel's observation that "if you don't use it, you lose it" is quite right. However, it appears from his June review of Paul McCartney's "Tug of War" that it is Mr. Peel's own cerebral cortex that is suffering from disuse atrophy. The review failed to mention the theme of the album, embodied in the title song, which is conflict on social, political, and interpersonal levels. One would think that a critical review of this album would have discerned Mr. McCartney's intent and discussed it in some

detail, but the theme seems to have been missed and the song dismissed as "... a ride down the Blue Danube..."

That is a minor error compared with Mr. Peel's ridiculous assertion that "Songs such as *Here Today*... are just about impossible to figure out, since they are mainly strings of images apparently picked at random for the way they sound more than for what they mean." It boggles the mind to think that anyone could misunderstand this song. The lyrics are not esoteric or random images; the song is clearly about John Lennon, his recent death, and Mr. McCartney's relationship (conflict) with his fellow Beatle.

The debacle continued with Mr. Peel's comments on the two songs that Mr. McCartney performed with Stevie Wonder. Here again there wasn't a scintilla of erudition applied to them. Mr. Peel's vapid and inane comments bolstered by his misconceptions and misperceptions were the worst I have read in *STEREO REVIEW* in the past decade.

TERRENCE F. CAHILL  
 Providence, R.I.

● I know you print things like Mark Peel's sneer at "Tug of War" (June issue) to get us forever fans of Paul McCartney up in arms. But I'm not angry. In fact, it's perversely gratifying to see at least one critic hold his ground even as others sway to Big Macca's latest.

CATHERINE CELLA  
 Cookeville, Tenn.

● How many unreconstructed Beatlemaniaics took Mark Peel to task for daring to be less than awestruck by Paul McCartney's "Tug of War"?

CHARLES WARREN  
 Chicago, Ill.

*A gratifying number.*

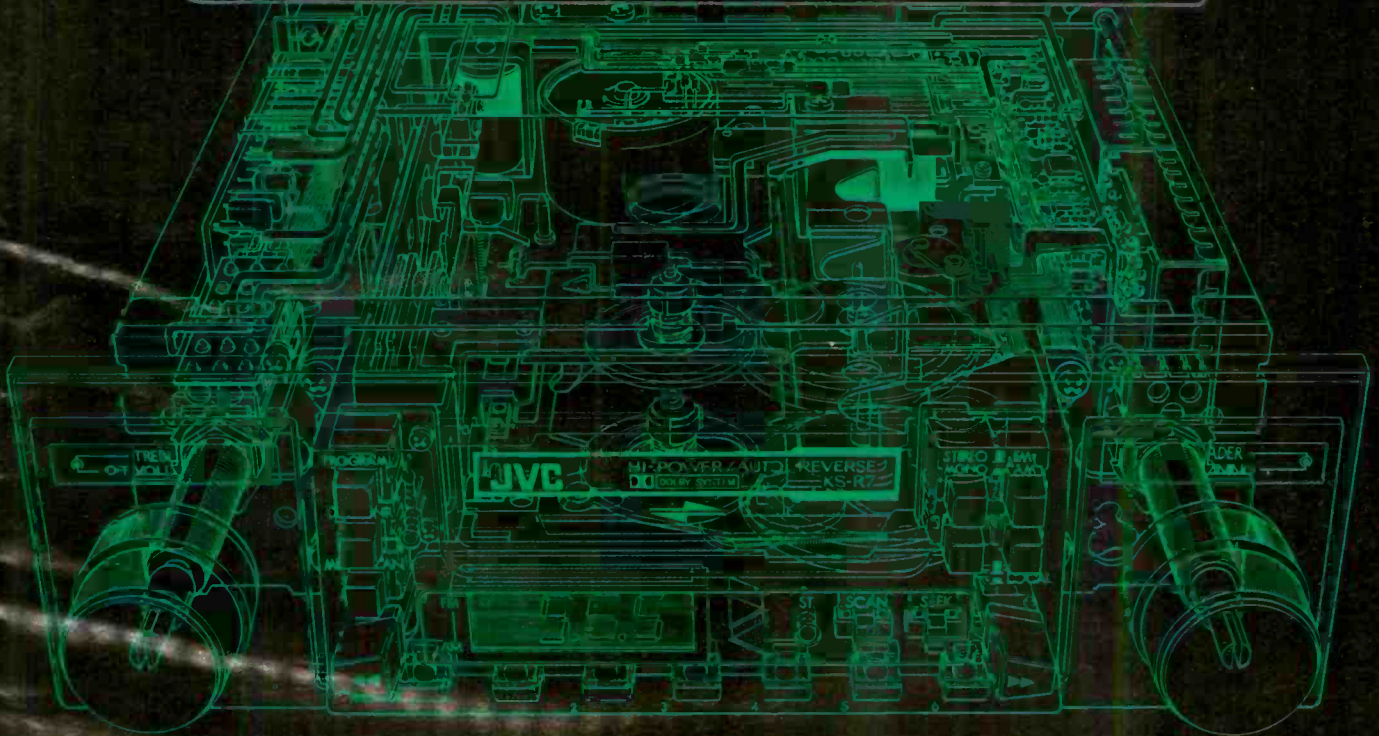
### Gordon Lightfoot

● I want to commend *STEREO REVIEW* and Noel Coppage for some excellent writing and opinions in June's "Best of the Month" review of Gordon Lightfoot's "Shadows." I

*(Continued on page 9)*



# WE'RE BREAKING INTO CARS.



After breaking ground in so many other areas, we thought it was about time.

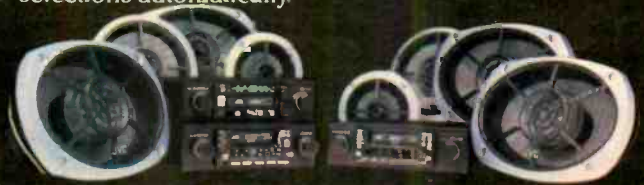
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The number one selling audiophile loudspeaker in Japan isn't Japanese.

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Over the years, Japan has introduced some of the most innovative audio products in the world. So it's not surprising that the Japanese are highly critical when it comes to selecting components for their own homes. What might surprise you, however, is that the number one selling audiophile loudspeaker in Japan isn't Japanese. It's made in the U.S.A. by JBL.

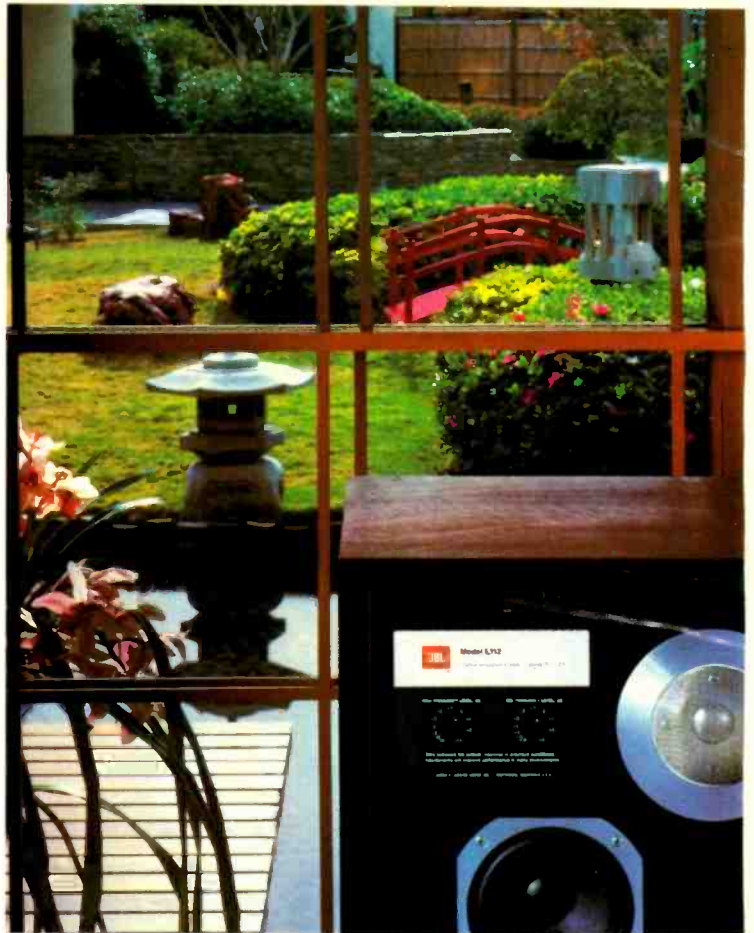
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In fact, in a recent survey conducted by one of that country's most highly regarded audio magazines,\* JBL was voted the most desired loudspeaker by an amazing 44% of those surveyed. The closest competitor received only 11.9%. Even more importantly, over 25% indicated that they already owned JBL speakers.

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To find out a few more surprising facts about JBL, visit the audio specialists at your local JBL dealer.

\**Stereo Sound*, Summer 1981 Speaker Systems Market Research



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First with the pros.

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JBL/harman international

CIRCLE NO. 22 ON READER SERVICE CARD



couldn't agree more! Gordon Lightfoot is undoubtedly the most consistently original yet basic performer around in terms of musical styles, melodies, chord changes, instrumentation, etc. I am seventeen years old and have grown up with his music. I sincerely appreciate and applaud the attention that you have given him, which he so richly deserves.

BOB SPECTOR  
Eugene, Ore.

● I've been had! I fell prey to Noel Coppage's "critique" of Gordon Lightfoot's new "Shadows" album. After reading Mr. Coppage's glowing review, I decided it was time to give fuller audience to the music of a venerable Canadian musical institution, so I rushed right out and bought the album.

In retrospect, I must confess that although Mr. Coppage's review is little more than promotional ballyhoo, I was obviously ripe for the hype. Having listened to the album I am convinced that Mr. Lightfoot is a master of well-crafted, post-folk Muzak and that Mr. Coppage is a brilliant, optimistic exponent of the dubious doctrine that black is white.

LEE LEGBAND  
Greenbelt, Md.

## Paul Whiteman

● The November 15, 1924, Paul Whiteman Carnegie Hall concert described by reader Norman P. Gentieu in June "Let-

ters" is still not the earliest jazz concert held in that hall, nor was it even Whiteman's Carnegie Hall debut. The Whiteman Orchestra appeared in Carnegie Hall earlier that same year, on April 21. The November date was yet another reprise of Whiteman's Aeolian Hall concert on February 12, which introduced George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. It was repeated in Aeolian Hall on March 7. Gershwin performed in the two Aeolian Hall concerts and the April Carnegie Hall concert.

The Editor's reply to Ken Darby's April letter, which first brought up the subject of Whiteman's Carnegie Hall jazz concerts, noted a lack of references in "jazz histories and reference books." One reason for this might be that they were mostly just repetitions of the first Aeolian Hall concert, which is quite famous; with no further startling revelations such as *Rhapsody in Blue*, there is no real need to note the later concerts. But there is another reason for these omissions in the reference books: many jazz historians and critics feel that it is beneath their dignity even to consider that Paul Whiteman, the self-proclaimed "King of Jazz," was really a jazz performer. Whiteman committed the two sins of being popular and being white, and that bothered the emerging jazz intelligentsia of the Thirties. If it is felt that Whiteman kept his musicians too close to the score to be considered a jazzman, it must be remembered that this was his way of keeping the non-jazz-oriented musicians in the group from making fools of themselves. The true jazzmen in

his band were allowed the freedom to lead the rest of the group into immortality.

MICHAEL BIEL  
Morehead, Ky.

For more on Whiteman, see page 86.

## For the Record

● According to the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, the venerable story of Charles Alkan's being crushed to death beneath a bookcase after reaching for a volume of the Talmud—repeated in Richard Freed's June "Best of the Month" review of "The Alkan Project"—"seems to have no basis in truth." So another bizarre tale of a composer's death joins the ranks of apocrypha. Also, David Hall was mistaken in stating that Karl Böhm was nearly seventy-seven when he died (review of Böhm's Beethoven Ninth, June, page 98). Böhm was born on August 28, 1894, which made him nearly eighty-seven at the time of his death.

Finally, June's "Popular Music Briefs" referred to Andrew Lloyd Webber, composer of the musical *Cats*, by using Webber as his surname. After recently checking in the *New Grove* and the ninth edition of the *International Who's Who in Music*, we had to correct our files and use the compound surname Lloyd Webber for both Andrew and his cello-playing brother Julian. Their father, William Southcombe Lloyd Webber, is also listed in various reference sources as

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the director of the London College of Music. Quite a musical family!

FRED M. BINDMAN  
Head, Music Cataloging Section  
The Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C.

● As chief technical editor for a "high-tech" company, I have in the last twenty years seen the term "state of the art" misused in what I thought must be all possible ways. But Ivan Berger added a new dimension of misunderstanding to this much-maligned cliché when he announced in his June "Car Stereo" column that "Proton's car stereo... is said to provide better than state-of-the-art specs."

The "state of the art" means simply the point of achievement at which some technology finds itself at a given time. The product of a given technology that achieves the best performance (specifications) defines the state of the art of that technology at that time. A later product with better performance advances the state of the art. Ideally, the state of the art implies a movement toward perfection. People (not only audiophiles) seem to want products that better the state of the art, but *no* product can be *better* than the state of the art.

ROBERT C. BORDEN  
Andover, Mass.

*Apologies to reader Borden and others. We promise to be more perfect in future.*

### Sugar Babies

● Would someone please tell me why the music industry seems to release the soundtrack of every two-bit movie and an original-cast recording of every stage show that comes down the pike, yet after two years the smash Broadway musical *Sugar Babies* has not, to my knowledge, been issued on records or tapes? Besides the visual impact of the show, there is a heck of a lot of good music in it.

WILLIAM DAVIES  
Absecon, N.J.

*But apparently not, in the estimation of the record companies, much sugar.*

### Digital

● E. Brad Meyer is probably correct when he suggests in his April "Digital" article that most critics of this recording method are either in love with analog noise or are hearing only what they want or expect to hear—a "listening test" consists of someone playing a digitally recorded but analog-pressed disc prefaced with the remark, "Doesn't this digital disc sound awful!" Such built-in bias can be very effective, particularly when the general public still rejects almost instinctively the whole idea of sampling ("How can you possibly know what a million people think by asking only a few thousand?"). I doubt that sampling or "quantization" can ever be sold to the skeptical public, so the industry should soft-pedal the technical descriptions and stick to glowing adjectives.

JOE GOMEZ  
East Quogue, N.Y.

STEREO REVIEW



## Space-contoured Sound.

Introducing the finest listening instruments Acoustic Research has ever built. The AR9LS and 98LS. Two speakers that reach such shimmering highs and thundering lows they evoke a new experience in high fidelity. An intensified sonic experience in which listener, living space and speakers form an integrated relationship. Where optimum sound is achieved within the natural acoustics of the living space—not just in a scientific test chamber. This experience we call Space-contoured Sound.

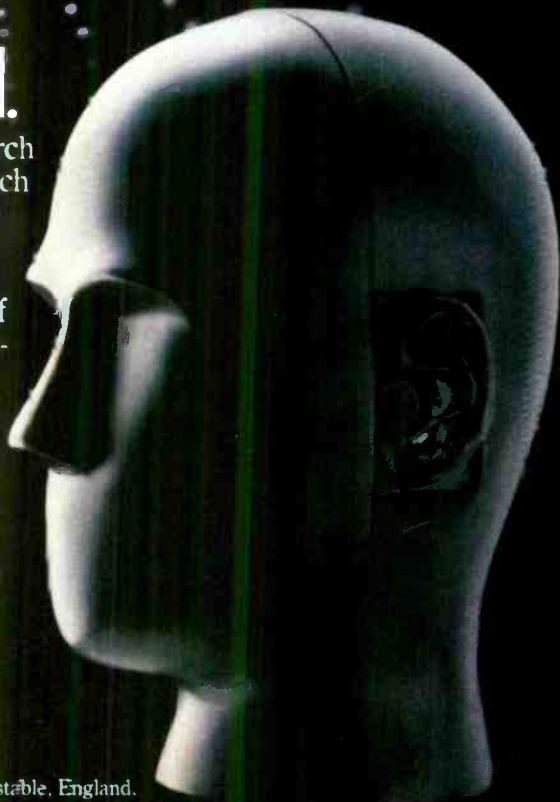
To contour sound to human living spaces, both the 9LS and 98LS feature a revolutionary Lambda driver. A Dual Dome™ mic-highrange configuration that eliminates crossover interference and achieves totally coherent dispersion. In the 9LS, we've introduced a down-firing woofer coupled with a Bass Contour Chamber. When you hear it, you'll know why Acoustic Research is more than our name. For details and local dealer names call

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\*In California call 1-800-852-7777. In Alaska and Hawaii call 1-800-824-7919.



From the Driving Force:

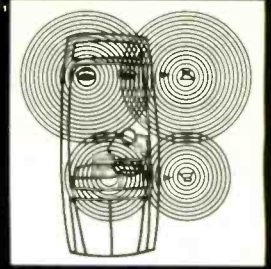
**Only Panasonic has  
Ambience circuitry  
to create a stereo  
image beyond  
the capability of  
conventional car stereo.**

Only the Panasonic Supreme Series has Ambience to take your music where it's never been. With the push of a button, conventional car stereo ceases to be. Your music seems to wrap itself around you, surround you. You don't just hear it, you live it.

But the Panasonic Supreme Series with Ambience doesn't stop there. There's pushbutton tuning. There's FM Optimizer for improved fringe area reception. INQ circuitry reduces noise and interference caused by passing traffic. The adaptive front end reduces FM fade and drift. There's Radio Monitor that lets you listen to the radio without ejecting the cassette. There's locking fast forward/rewind and more.

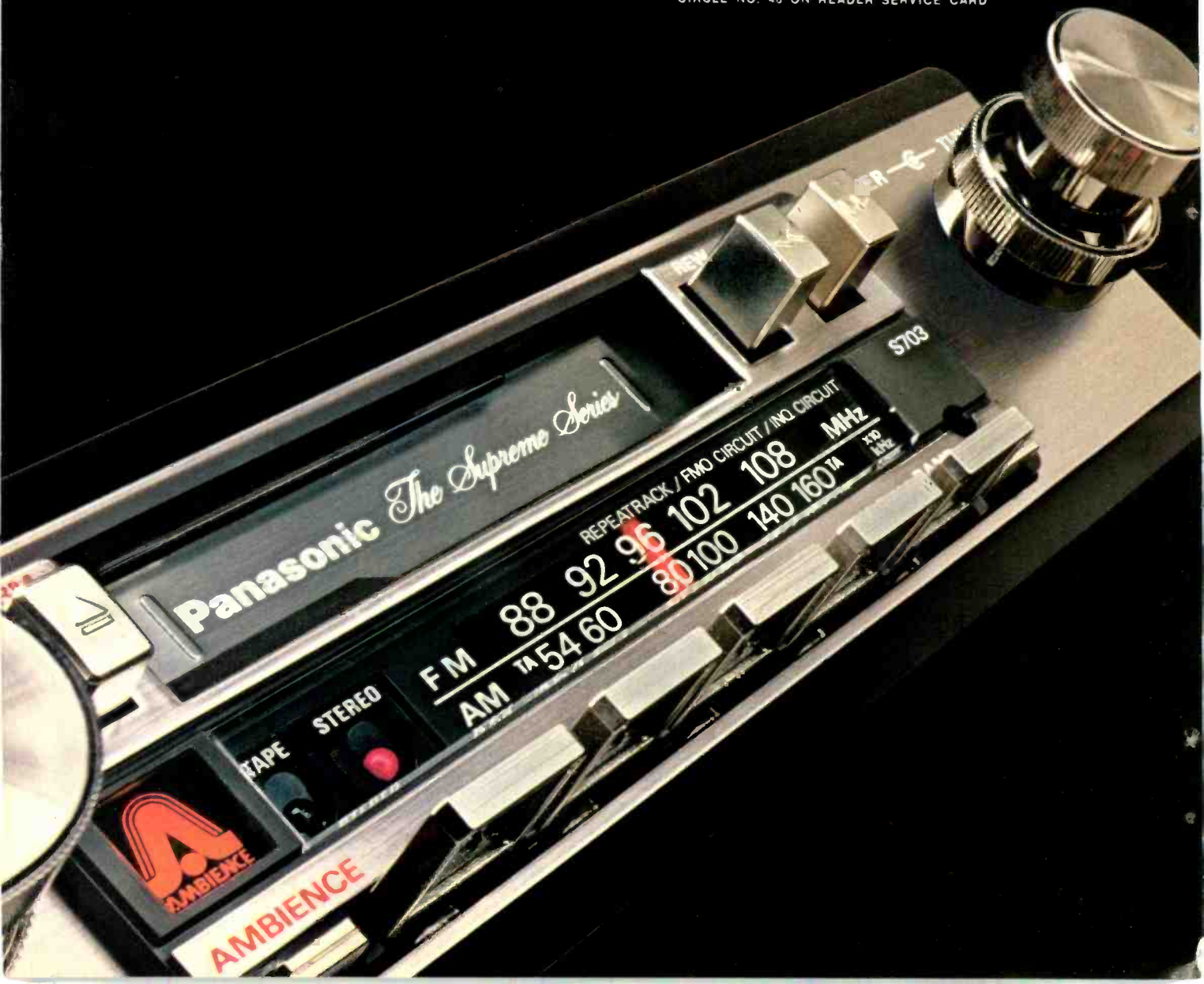
And nothing enhances the sound of Ambience like Panasonic high performance car speakers.

Experience the magic of Ambience. Only from Panasonic.

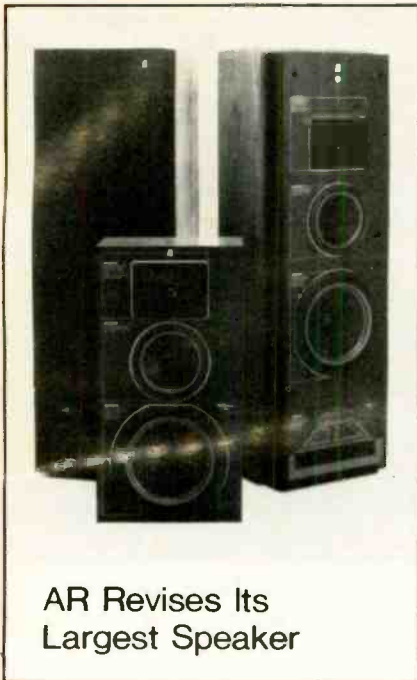


## **Panasonic car audio** *The driving force*

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# New Products latest audio equipment and accessories



## AR Revises Its Largest Speaker

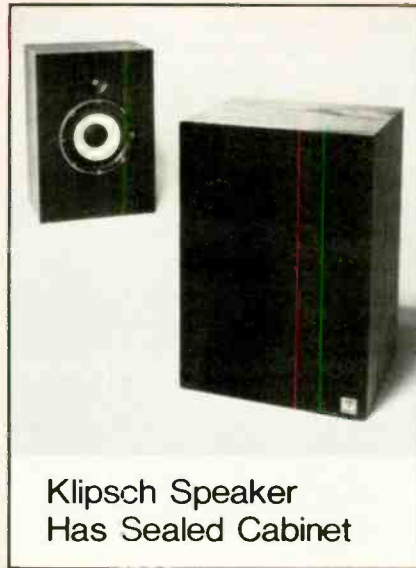
□ The AR9LS (rear in photo), which replaces the AR9 in Acoustic Research's product line, is also a floor-standing, four-way system. A new Dual-Dome high/mid-range driver unit utilizes a shared magnet structure for the two diaphragms, allowing for closer placement of these drivers, which is said to result in a more even dispersion pattern. Like the AR9, the AR9LS has two woofers, but they are of different sizes and in different positions. One is a 12-inch front-mounted unit, and the other is a 10-inch driver that fires downward in the base of the unit through a front vent. The bottom woofer is intended to compensate for the dip in frequency response caused by the front mounting of the other woofer and produces a system said to be more free of room-boundary-interaction response aberrations.

Besides the two woofers and the Dual-Dome unit (1½ inches for the upper-mid-range driver and ¾ inch for the tweeter), the AR9LS has an 8-inch lower-midrange driver. Crossover frequencies are 200, 1,100, and 5,500 Hz. Rated sensitivity is 87 dB sound-pressure level measured at 1 meter with a 2.83-volt input. Impedance is nominally 4 ohms with a minimum value of 3.2 ohms. Half-power (-3dB) points are 28 and 32,000 Hz. Dimensions are 51½ x 18½ x 14½ inches; weight is 118 pounds.

The AR98LS (foreground) is also a new four-way system. A Dual-Dome driver unit is combined with an 8-inch lower-midrange and a front-mounted 12-inch woofer in a shallow cabinet (29½ x 15½ x 10⅞ inches). Values for the crossover frequencies, impedance, and sensitivity are the same as for the AR9LS. A switch optimizes the AR98LS' frequency response for either floor or shelf placement. Half-power frequencies are 39 and 32,000 Hz. Weight is

63 pounds. The finish of both speakers is oiled-walnut veneer. Prices: AR9LS, \$750; AR98LS, \$450.

Circle 120 on reader service card



## Klipsch Speaker Has Sealed Cabinet

□ The two-way Klipsch kg2 speaker system has a Klipsch-made 8-inch polymer-cone woofer operating in a sealed cabinet and crossing over at 3,000 Hz to a "dhorn" (dome/horn) tweeter. The unit's rated frequency response is 55 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB. The system is designed for a 100-degree polar response both vertically and horizontally for versatility in placement. Nominal impedance is 8 ohms; sensitivity is 90 dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. Finish is either oiled oak or oiled walnut veneer. The kg2 is sold only in pairs with matched-grain cabinets. Dimensions are 18⅞ x 11½ x 13¼ inches; weight is 28 pounds. Price: \$400 per pair.

Circle 121 on reader service card



## Bose's Smallest Direct / Reflecting Loudspeaker

□ Enclosed in an injection-molded polystyrene cabinet, the Bose Model 201 speaker system incorporates a contoured vent said to reduce distortion and low-frequency

noise by up to 20 dB over conventional port designs. The tweeter panels of the Model 201 are angled to encourage reflections off side walls, and a "Direct Energy Control" vane can be moved to direct the high-frequency energy for optimum results in specific locations. The woofer panels are angled inward "to create a strong center image, and establish directionality and presence." The specially designed 6-inch woofer in the Model 201 features a robust 1-inch, four-layer voice coil. The 2-inch high-sensitivity tweeter has an extended low-end response to enable it to work with the dual-frequency crossover network, which allows both drivers to operate simultaneously over a one-octave range (transition frequencies are 1,500 and 2,500 Hz).

A fast-acting thermal protection system guards the tweeter from high-frequency overload. Nominal impedance is 8 ohms. Minimum amplifier power required is 10 watts per channel. Dimensions are 7⅞ x 14⅞ x 6¾ inches. Weight is 6¼ pounds. Sold only in matched pairs for horizontal mounting on shelves, tables, or walls. Price: \$262 per pair.

Circle 122 on reader service card



## Three New Allison Loudspeaker Systems

□ The Allison:Seven, Eight, and Nine from Allison Acoustics are all acoustic-suspension speakers designed to be used with their backs close to a room wall. The mid-range drivers and tweeters are all ferro-fluid-cooled, and the contemporary-looking enclosures are finished in oak veneers.

The Allison:Seven (center) is a two-way floor-standing system with an 8-inch long-excursion woofer. Dimensions are approximately 9¾ x 9¾ x 27¼ inches. The three-way Allison:Eight (left) also has an 8-inch woofer and is designed to sit on an open shelf. Two sets of linked input terminals provide the options of single or bi-amplified operation. Dimensions are 20 x 10 x 12¼ inches.

The largest of the new systems is the Allison:Nine (right), measuring 12½ x 10¾ x 37¼ inches. It is supported on a nickel-

# New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

plated brushed-steel base. A three-way system, the Allison:Nine has a 10-inch long-excursion woofer, a 3 1/2-inch convex-diaphragm midrange driver, and a 1-inch convex-diaphragm tweeter. The midrange and tweeter have two-position level controls to give a choice of four subtly different power-response characteristics. Crossover frequencies are 350 and 3,750 Hz. Bass-resonance frequency is 45 Hz. Nominal impedance is 4 ohms; sensitivity is 87 dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. The low-frequency -3-dB point is 35.5 Hz. Recommended amplifier power is 20 to 200 watts. Prices: Allison:Seven, \$225 each (sold only in pairs); Allison:Eight, \$345; Allison:Nine, \$495.

Circle 123 on reader service card



Sanyo's High-fidelity Video Components

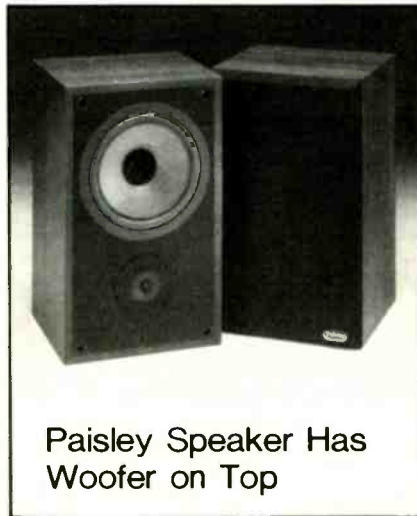
□ Sanyo's AVM195 19-inch (diagonal) color TV monitor and AVM95 video control unit, part of the company's Pro-Ponent series of modular audio and video components, are said to offer ultra-high-resolution picture quality along with the capability of using a wide range of signal sources. The video control unit is designed to be connected to a hi-fi system.

The AVM195 monitor is specified to have a 360-line horizontal resolution. Other features include a black-matrix picture tube, automatic contrast limiter, black-level comparator, automatic beam-limiter circuitry, comb-filter circuits for improved resolution, direct video input, a 5-watt audio amplifier, and connections for external speakers.

The AVT95 video control system (at top in photo) comes with a full-function infrared digital-keyboard remote-control unit. The system provides access to one hundred and five TV channels (broadcast

and cable frequencies) and can switch between signals from VCRs, videodiscs, video games, and personal computers. A "Sound Expander" circuit creates a stereo effect from a mono signal source, and a headphone amplifier with tone controls allows the user to watch TV while listening with headphones. The control system also has facilities to shut itself off after 30, 60 or 90 minutes of viewing. Prices: AVM195, \$599.95; AVT95, \$399.95.

Circle 124 on reader service card



Paisley Speaker Has Woofer on Top

□ The Paisley Model 5 speaker system uses "Passive Electronic Suspension" bass loading, which is said to provide extended low-frequency reproduction in a cabinet of modest internal volume while maintaining system efficiency and greatly reducing sensitivity to infrasonic signals. The two-way Model 5 has an 8-inch polypropylene-cone bass/midrange driver and a 1 3/4-inch flared-dome tweeter placed below the woofer. Crossover frequency is 3,000 Hz. Nominal impedance is 6 ohms. With a 1-watt drive level, the system produces a 90.3-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter. Frequency response is given as 45 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB. Dimensions are 16 1/2 x 9 7/8 x 9 5/8 inches; finish is Alagash birch. Price: \$124.50. Paisley Research, Ltd., Dept. SR, 135 Torbay Road, Markham, Ontario, Canada L3R 1G7.

Circle 125 on reader service card

## Electronic-products Catalog from DAK

□ Besides name-brand stereo components—receivers, equalizers, single-brand systems, cassette decks, etc.—DAK Industries' free 48-page catalog lists dozens of

consumer electronic convenience items available by mail. Included are portable cassette players and FM radios, telephone-answering machines, portable telephones, electronic phone controllers, video components, and calculators. Send catalog requests to DAK Industries, Inc., Dept. SR, 10845 Vanowen Street, North Hollywood, Calif. 91605.



"Micro" Headphones From Kenwood

□ The foam-covered earpieces of Kenwood's KH-M5 stereo "micro" headphones fit directly and comfortably into the ear and have no connecting headband or ear clips. The earpieces each weigh 2.5 grams; the 48-inch cord and mini phone plug weigh an additional 10 grams. (The entire assembly can fit inside a 35-mm film can.) The dynamic drivers in the earpieces use samarium-cobalt magnets and 9-micrometer-thick high-polymer film diaphragms 1 7/32 inch in diameter. Impedance is specified as 32 ohms. Sensitivity is 102 dB sound-pressure level with a 1-milliwatt (mW) input. Maximum power-handling capability is 50 mW per earpiece. Stated frequency response is 20 to 20,000 Hz. A 1/4-inch phone-plug adaptor and two extra foam earpads are supplied. Price: \$25.

Circle 126 on reader service card



Fultron's Car Radio/Cassette Unit Has Noise Reduction

□ Fultron's Model 16-6700 AM/FM stereo radio with auto-reverse cassette player features Dynamic Noise Reduction (DNR), a single-ended, variable-high-frequency

(Continued on page 16)



# NOW FOR THE PRICE OF A GREAT RECORDING TAPE



## YOU GET A PHENOMENAL ONE.



If you're familiar with Maxell UD-XL tapes, you probably find it hard to believe that any tape could give you higher performance.

But now Maxell has gone one step farther to deliver exceptional high fidelity. And it's called XL-S.

XL-S tape is so phenomenal it moved Audio Video Magazine to say, "Those who thought it was impossible to improve on Maxell's UD-XL II were mistaken. The 1981 tape of the year award goes to Maxell XLII-S."

How does high bias XLII-S give you such high performance? With

our new High Epitaxial formulation we improved the crystallization process that produces magnetic particles. As a result, the high frequency response, sensitivity and MOL of XLII-S has been increased by as much as 2 dB over our UD-XL II tapes.

And since hearing is believing, we invite you to compare our two best tapes at no extra charge. Because now you can pick up a MAXELL TEST PACK and get a UD-XL II C90 cassette and our slightly more expensive XLII-S 90 cassette for the cost of two UD-XL II tapes.

After you hear the difference, you'll seriously consider switching from a great tape to a phenomenal one.



### maxell® IT'S WORTH IT.

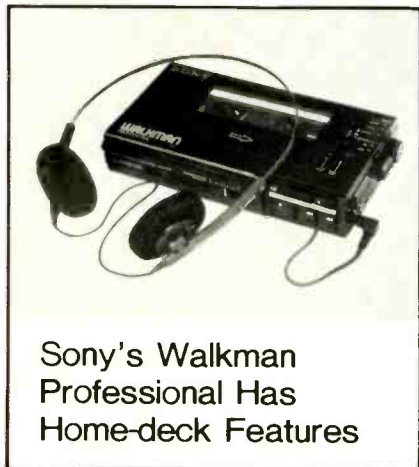
Maxell Corporation, 60 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074

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# New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

quency-filter noise-reduction system. Other features include separate bass and treble controls, mono/stereo and AM/FM switches, pushbutton tuning, separate preamp output for feeding external power amplifiers or accessories, and locking fast-forward and rewind controls. Output power is 4 watts per channel into 4 ohms at 1,000 Hz with less than 3 per cent total harmonic distortion. Frequency response for FM is given as 100 to 14,000 Hz  $\pm$  3 dB. Chassis dimensions are 7 x 1 $\frac{5}{8}$  x 4 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches. Price: \$199.95. Arthur Fulmer, Electronics Division, Dept. SR, P.O. Box 177, 122 Gayoso at 2nd Street, Memphis, Tenn. 38101.

Circle 127 on reader service card

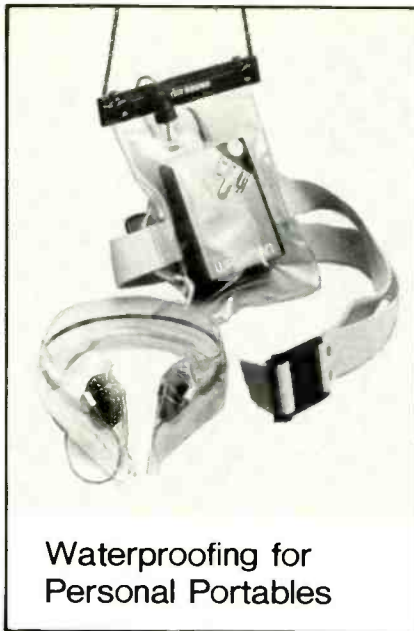


**Sony's Walkman Professional Has Home-deck Features**

□ Sony's WM-D6 "Walkman Professional" is a small, portable, battery-powered stereo cassette recorder with features normally found only in home decks. The tape transport uses a quartz-locked capstan servo system to maintain correct tape speed even if the unit is jogged or shaken (the servo signal is taken directly from the rotating capstan). The WM-D6 has a sendust-and-ferrite record/play head and Dolby-B noise reduction. Other features include a record-level control, line and microphone inputs, a five-segment LED peak-level meter that can be switched to show battery condition, a tape-selector switch (ferric, chrome, or metal), a three-digit tape counter, and a variable playback-speed control. There are line-level outputs for connection to a hi-fi system. The unit operates from four AA cells or from an a.c. adaptor, car-battery cord, or rechargeable battery pack (all available as options). A Sony MDR-50L lightweight stereo headphone set is supplied.

Specified frequency response is 40 to 15,000 Hz  $\pm$  3 dB. Wow-and-flutter is given as 0.04 per cent (wrms), speed accuracy as  $\pm$  0.3 per cent. With metal tape, the signal-to-noise ratio is greater than 58 dB (Dolby circuits off). Dimensions are 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches; weight is 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  pounds with batteries. Price: \$349.95.

Circle 128 on reader service card



**Waterproofing for Personal Portables**

□ The "Water Sound" flexible protective housing for portable cassette players and FM radios is made of double-laminated plastic of a high tensile strength. The flexibility of the Water Sound jacket lets the user press the player controls without removing the player. The housing is said to protect its contents from water, sand, dirt, snow, and ice. It is locked closed by two stainless steel rails and screws that are water- and rust-proof. A watertight cable housing leads to the separate headphone cover. A webbed carrying belt is supplied. Maximum outer measurements of the enclosed player are 6 x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Water Sound is made in Germany by EWA, which also makes waterproof camera housings. Price: \$49.95. Distributed by Pioneer & Co., Dept. SR, 216 Haddon Avenue, Westmont, N.J. 08108.



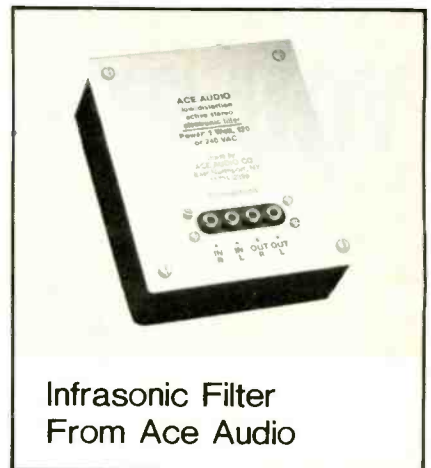
**Adcom Markets Hegeman Preamp**

□ Adcom is marketing the Hegeman Hapi 2 preamplifier in both kit and assembled form. The unit's phono stage has a flat-response, fixed-gain, low-noise amplifier with a 47,000-ohm input impedance and radio-frequency filtering. RIAA de-emphasis is accomplished by a passive network between the first-stage amplifier and the flat-response output amplifier, an approach said to assure maximum circuit stability with

optimum transient response and minimum phase shifts. Each preamp circuit is adjusted for correct frequency response and gain balance by the insertion of trimming components (this applies to both kit and assembled versions). Emitter-follower circuits isolate the phono stages from the control section.

The Hapi 2's control circuitry provides selection of phono and three high-level inputs, gain and balance controls, switchable loudness compensation, a switchable infrasonic filter, and left, right, and stereo switching. Monitoring connections and switching are provided for one tape recorder. Price: \$650 assembled, \$479 in kit form.

Circle 129 on reader service card



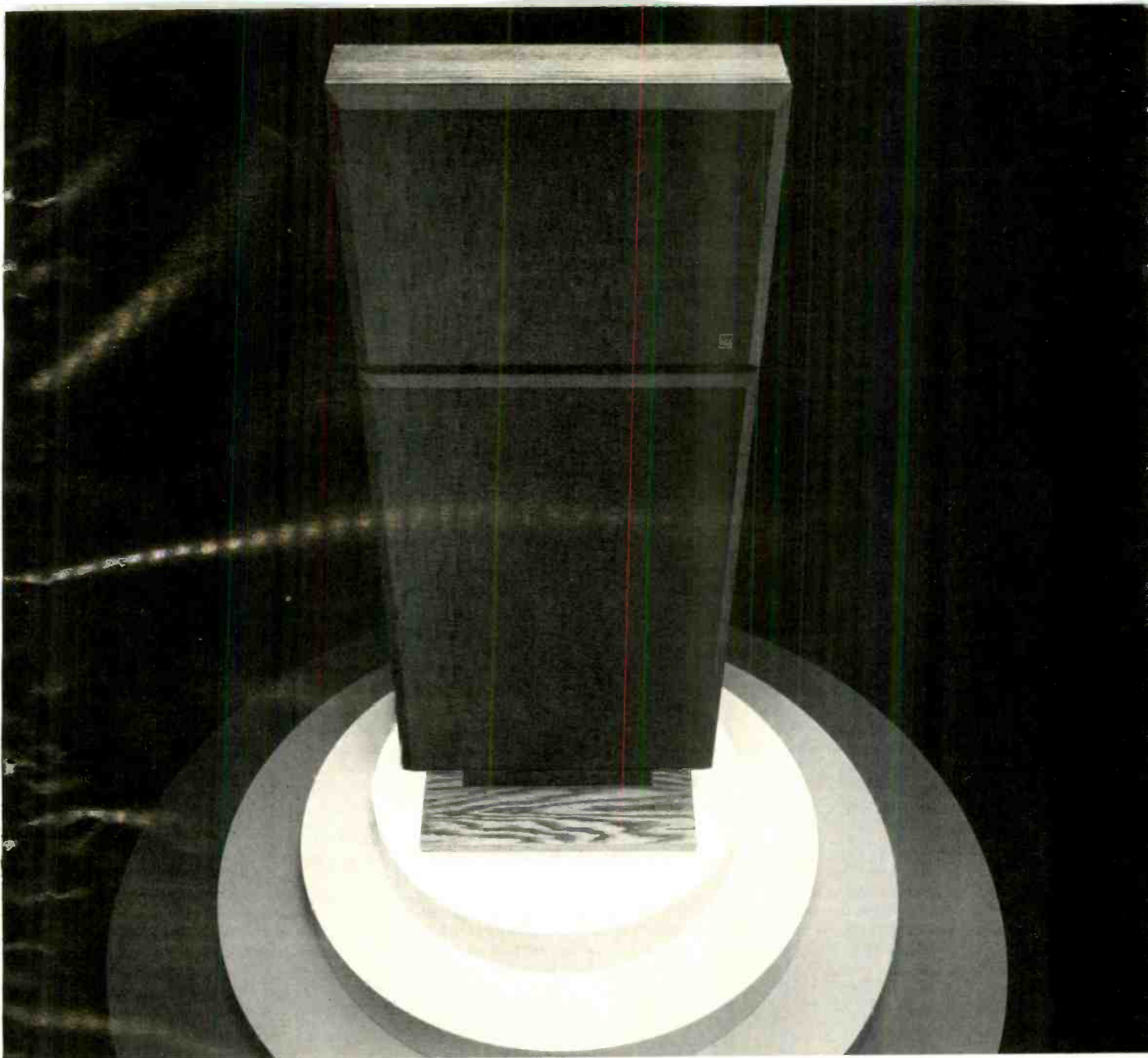
**Infrasonic Filter From Ace Audio**

□ The completely redesigned Model 4000b filter from Ace Audio prevents infrasonic signals from reaching a system's power amplifier. Such signals can be caused by record warps, acoustical feedback, off-center record holes, turntable rumble, arm/cartridge resonance, and accidental stylus drops. Filtering out these signals inhibits excessive woofer-cone motion and saves power. The 4000b can be connected in a tape-monitor loop or between pre- and power amplifiers. The unit's response drops at 18 dB per octave below 20 Hz. Intermodulation distortion is 0.002 per cent. Price: \$98.50. Ace Audio Co., Dept. SR, 525 5th Street, East Northport, N.Y. 11731.

Circle 130 on reader service card

NOTE: All product descriptions and specifications quoted in these columns are based on materials supplied by the manufacturers, who will respond directly to reader requests for further information.

Domestic inflation and fluctuations in the value of the dollar overseas affect the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that prices quoted in this issue are therefore subject to change.



## Music in the round. With BES speakers, center stage is everywhere.

The unique technology of BES speakers propagates a 360° spherical wavefront uniformly in all planes—horizontal and vertical. So no matter where you sit, no matter where the speakers are placed, the stereo image remains 3-dimensional and lifelike.

Everything about them is unique.

Their elegant, sleek contours tell you this immediately. Over 20 patents confirm it.

Because there is no enclosure, there is no enclosure resonant frequency. BES speakers are bipolar, generating energy equally front and back. With the same accuracy at low as well as high levels. And with the same perception of frequency range no matter where you are in the listening

environment.

Because the large radiating area of the diaphragm moves a relatively small distance, high pressure levels can be generated. And because voice coil excursion is less, distortion is less.

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CIRCLE NO. 4 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# Car Stereo

By Ivan Berger



## GETTING IT RIGHT

LOOKING through one company's big, fat manual on car-stereo "application information and installation procedures" for U.S. and imported cars has given me further insight into what it takes to make an installation really right. The manual in question happens to have been prepared by Alpine, but many other major companies provide similar manuals for their dealers.

Most of the manual consists of individual pages on where and how to install in-dash "front-end" units, amplifiers, and speakers in about a hundred and fifty different makes, models, and series of cars. But that by no means exhausts what installers need to know about the cars they work on. For one thing, not every car is listed (there's a page for my 1975 Saab, but none for the Fiat 128 coupe I used to have). For another, car manufacturers make running changes in the model year; an installer once showed me a car whose right and left doors were so different that they might have come from different cars.

A professional installer may need to know all that, or have it on tap, but you don't. If you're installing your own car stereo, you need know only one car—your own. But the Alpine manual does have some information of use to those doing their own installations or evaluating those done for them.

In the acoustics section the manual points out that tweeter and midrange speaker components should be located as close together as possible to create a more definite image. So far, so good. But don't forget that at the crossover frequencies used in most car-stereo speaker systems (1,000 to 2,000 Hz), the "woofer" is actually a midrange speaker too. I've seen and heard a lot of installations with a midrange and tweeter in the front and a 6 x 9-inch "woofer" on the parcel shelf for better bass. Such systems do get better bass than most in-door installations do, but, if imaging is important to you, it's not the way to go. The effect won't be quite as bad as purists might expect, since directionality is related not just to frequency but to the relationship between the cone size and the wavelength being reproduced. Car speakers tend to have small cones, so they can handle higher frequencies before they get directional. Putting subwoofers on

the rear deck is another story; with crossover points of 100 to 200 Hz, all they handle is deep bass—too low and nondirectional for you to spot its source.

The manual also points out that tweeter and midrange components should be within the listening axis of the ear, but not on a direct line with the ear or too close to it. I'd add that one should figure listening axes on the assumption that the car is full of passengers. I didn't do that on one installation I did for myself, and I found that every time I had a front-seat passenger I lost the highs from the car's right-side door speaker—the passenger's body blocked them.

THERE'S also an explanation of why, in systems with both front and rear speakers, the main image so frequently comes from the back, with only ambiance originating from the front. The reason is that the exigencies of automobile installation usually dictate a location for the rear tweeter and midrange where the ear can hear them clearly, while the front ones, in the door or dash, are usually off-axis to the listener. If that problem bothers you (some listeners are perfectly happy with all the sound coming from the rear, while it drives others crazy), here are some possible cures:

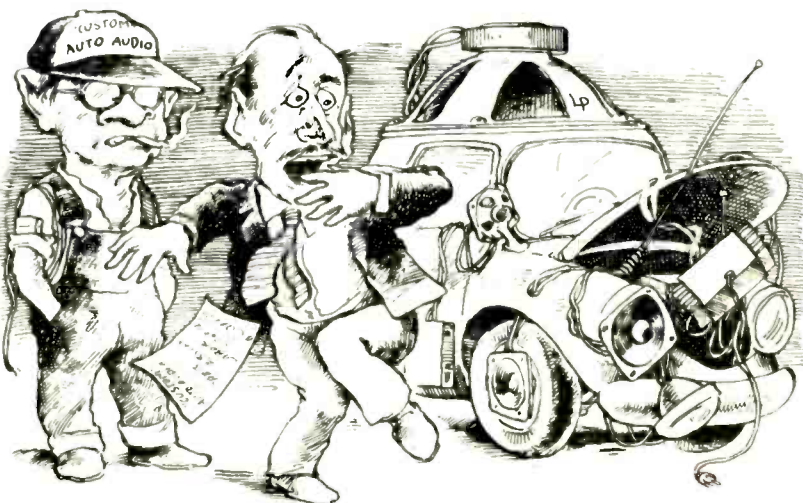
- Turn down the rear speakers when there are no listeners in back.
- Use a delay system in the rear channels so the front sound reaches you first.
- Add supplementary, surface-mounting tweeters (such as Pioneer's TS-M2 and -M6, the Philips EN-8320, or similar units from Alpine and others). This is probably the most satisfactory solution sonically—as long as you can mount the tweeters reasonably close to your midrange units.

UNDER the heading of "cosmetic principles," the manual has still more advice to offer. Some is about impressing the customer by cleaning and vacuuming after the installation, but it's mostly about not compromising sound for looks. For instance:

- Don't mount speakers where they'll be overly exposed to damage, such as in tail gates or the rear side panels of a wagon.
- Don't put tweeters below perforated panels.
- Don't cover amplifiers with rugs or bury them where they won't get enough air circulation.
- Don't mount components where the heater vent will blow on them.
- Don't mount amplifiers near the fuse box or high-voltage circuits lest they pick up excess noise.

When the installation's done, the system should be road-tested to see how it performs. Make sure there are no rattles, buzzes, hums, or other extraneous noises, even when accessories like the wipers or air-conditioner are on. Do these noise checks with all music sources too—tape, FM, and AM. At the same time, road-test the car to make sure that none of the installation tinkering has left the dashboard loose or interfered with any of the electrical circuits. (My last installation, a professional one, resulted in a shorted-out rear-window heater switch and a loose dashboard cowl.)

If all these checks reveal shortcomings, don't just grumble and bad-mouth the installer to your friends. You're more familiar with your car and therefore more likely to catch some things than even the most careful installer. So, if you have a problem, go back and get it fixed; presumably you paid to have it done right. If the dealer can't or won't set things right, then you can start complaining in good conscience. □



Lincoln Perry

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Sensitivity:	30dB Quieting
	1.0 Microvolts 11.2 dBf
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Frequency responses:	± 2dB
	30-16,000 Hz

#### Tape Section

Frequency response:	± 2dB
Standard tape:	30-15,000 Hz
Metal tape:	30-20,000 Hz
Wow & flutter:	0.08% WRMS

#### Amplifier Section

Maximum power:	25 watts/Ch
High fidelity power:	12 watts min. RMS
	per ch into
	4 ohms, 30-20,000 Hz with
	0.8% THD max

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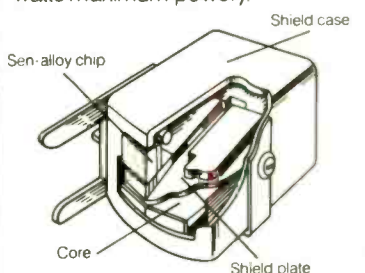
Take the tuner; it's a quartz digital four gang unit which offers significantly improved selectivity and performance over the three gang tuners used by our competitors, plus automatic scan and a 10-station preset memory.

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# Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



## Level Indicators

**Q.** Most recent cassette decks use fluorescent displays as level indicators, though some still use meters. Which type is better?

JEROME FISH  
Painesville, Ohio

**A.** Fluorescent displays (or a row of LED indicators) are almost always designed to indicate the peak value of a signal. Moreover, they can respond essentially instantaneously and are very easy to read. On the other hand, such indicators are limited in precision by the number of segments they contain, usually twelve to sixteen per channel. Meters have far greater resolution and can be designed to register either peak levels (dB) or average levels (VU). Most people find meters harder to interpret with rapidly varying signals, however, and there is always some time lag introduced by the mechanical inertia of a meter pointer.

For measurement purposes using steady test tones, meters are preferable as indicators, but for most home recordists dealing with rapidly varying music signals the fast-responding fluorescent or LED displays are much more convenient.

## TTL

**Q.** What do the letters "TTL" stand for in a tape-deck specification sheet, and do they have any real significance?

PAUL GRIFFITHS  
Austin, Tex.

**A.** "TTL" stands for "transistor-[to]-transistor logic" and is used to describe a tape deck whose mechanical actions (normal forward, fast forward, rewind, pause) are controlled by a logic system that automatically prevents potentially destructive operations. With an open-reel deck, for example, you might be rewinding a 10½-inch reel at an almost terrifying speed and accidentally touch the "play" button. Without a logic circuit that automatically inserts a "stop" command between "rewind" and "play," the likelihood is that you'd either snap or stretch the tape or perhaps merely spill it all over the floor.

Mechanical brakes on the tape hubs could cause similar disasters when going directly from fast winding to stop (years ago they often did), but the TTL circuitry prevents any destructive transitions. In many of today's decks, you'll find microprocessor-controlled logic systems used for the same purpose as a TTL system.

## Test-tape Accuracy

**Q.** For tape-deck tests, STEREO REVIEW formerly used either a TDK or a Teac calibrated playback tape, but recently you have switched to a BASF tape. Does this new calibration cassette change the playback test results, or are the test tapes standardized?

GARY OUDEIS ROSSINO  
Urbana, Ill.

**A.** As you may have noted in the graphs accompanying previous reports, the frequency range of the older test tapes used to check playback responses was much narrower than the 31.5 Hz to 18 kHz covered by the newer BASF tapes. Since the record-playback specifications of many of today's cassette decks extend to at least 18 kHz, there was good reason to switch to the wider-range tape.

Test-tape frequency range is not the whole story, however; test-tape accuracy is a subject of recurring despair to anyone involved in tape-machine testing. Twenty years ago I was trying to get Ampex to admit, as they finally did, that their 7½-ips open-reel test tapes had a slightly "hot" treble response. Why? Because the useful life of a test tape is limited (at least one company I know won't use a test tape more than thirty times). The high-frequency performance tends to deteriorate a bit with each use. (This happens to frequently played music cassettes as well, but unless you have calibrated ears the effect is so small and so gradual that you won't notice it.)

When the original cassette 120-microsecond playback-equalization standard was set by Philips years ago, engineers used the very best playback heads available at the time to help determine the frequency response of the original DIN-standard cali-

(Continued on page 22)



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bration tapes. Heads have improved over the years, however, so that today they have less high-frequency loss. With top-quality heads and a fresh test tape made to the original DIN standard, therefore, you get a naturally rising treble response that hits +2 dB or so at 10 kHz and continues to rise from there. If the test-tape manufacturer has *additionally* boosted the high frequencies to increase the useful lifetime of the tape, the aggregate high-end lift may become audibly significant—comparable to turning up the treble control on your amplifier. (This is, incidentally, the root of the questions sometimes raised about the equalization of Nakamichi decks. The company's heads are so good and the decks' compensation for such losses as they do have is so precise that manufacturers of less expensive machines prefer slightly "hot" test tapes because it makes their playback response look better.)

In designing the new official playback test tapes for 70- and 120-microsecond equalization, the IEC was confronted with a delicate situation. Modern playback heads showed that the original DIN 120-microsecond calibrated tapes were clearly inaccurate, probably (there is some dispute on this point) by about 2.5 dB at 10 kHz—not counting any additional "sweetening" a given test-tape manufacturer may have added. On the other hand, millions of cassette decks and prerecorded cassettes had already been manufactured using those same standard playback test tapes as a reference. Suddenly to impose all the changes that today's best playback heads indicate are necessary to achieve a *true* 120-microsecond standard would make an audibly significant difference with the older cassette decks.

The IEC compromised and "split the difference." At 10 kHz the new BASF IEC-standard test tapes are 1.2 dB "hotter" than the older DIN-standard tapes, though some previous test tapes may have incorporated about the same degree of "correction" with a view toward extending their useful life. Exact comparisons are next to impossible, however, for additional factors come into play, such as the azimuth accuracy of a given tape in a given cassette shell—which affects the high-end response you get even more than the specific tape you're using!

As an answer to reader Rossino's question this rather candid discussion of test-tape deficiencies may be disquieting. But all a test lab or a tape-deck manufacturer can do is to employ the most accurate tools available, which is why I use IEC-standard BASF calibrated playback tapes for my test reports. Yes, the frequency response will be slightly down on the high end if you play tapes recorded using the old DIN standard on a deck whose playback frequency response is flat according to the new IEC standard. However, the changes are so subtle you are unlikely to notice them. And if you do, that's why you have a treble control on your preamplifier. □

*Because the number of questions we receive each month is greater than we can reply to individually, only those letters selected for use in this column can be answered. Sorry!*



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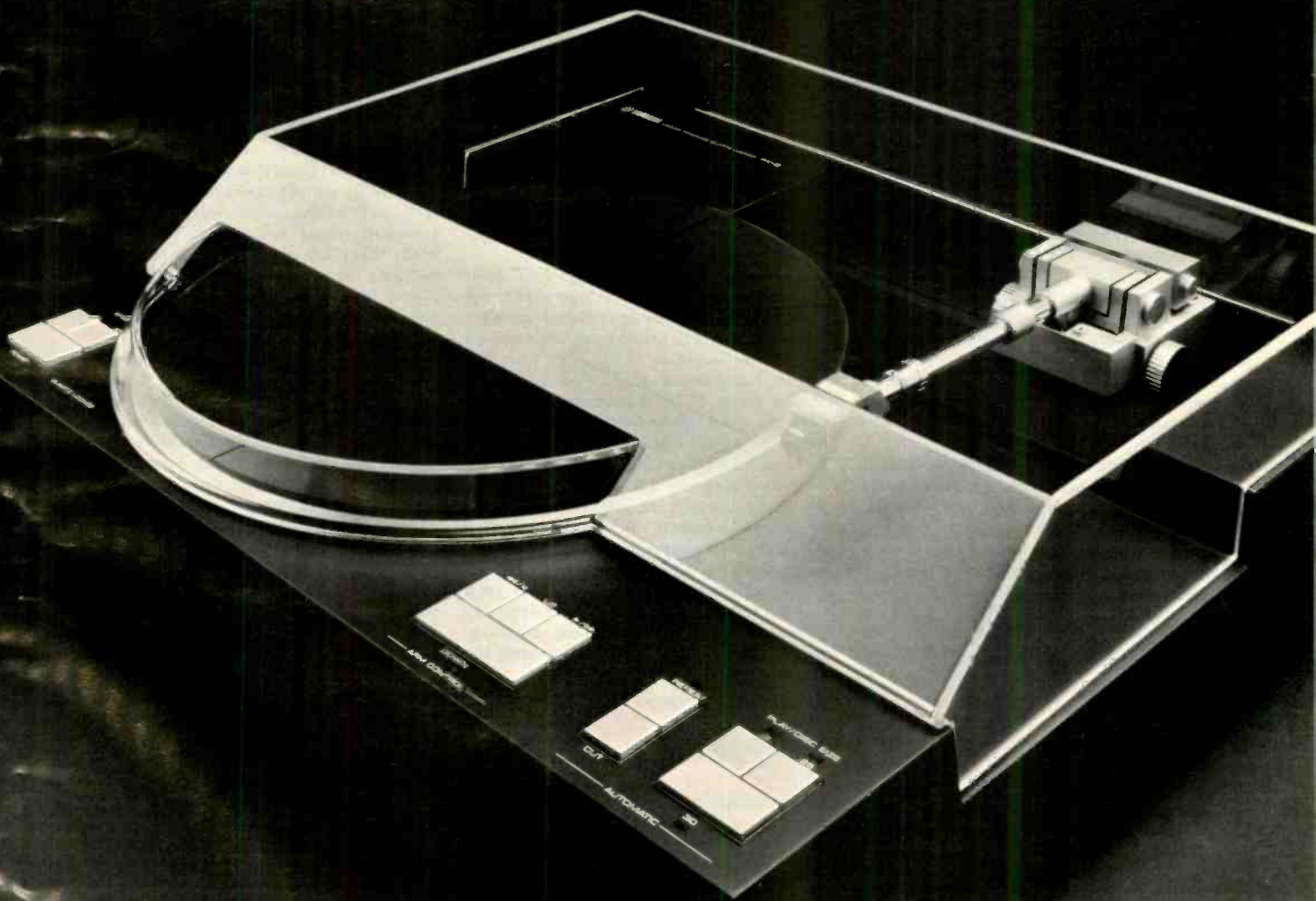
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# YAMAHA



# Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



## • Testing Speakers •

**T**ESTING speakers is a frustrating process because of the inability of measurements to describe the sound of a speaker totally. Furthermore, because the sound of any speaker can be radically altered by its surroundings, there is no substitute for actually hearing it in a normal listening environment. Nevertheless, we do make measurements at H-H Labs, both for background support and for guidance in our listening evaluations.

Only a few aspects of a speaker's performance that are known to affect its sound quality can be measured readily. Frequency response is an obvious example, although it is easy to forget that (unlike an amplifier, for example) a speaker does not have a single frequency response available at a pair of output terminals. The frequency response of a speaker will normally vary with the position of the measurement microphone. No single response measurement taken at a particular point in space can be totally descriptive of the performance of a speaker (in theory, no finite number of measurements would be sufficient), although one can draw reasonable conclusions from only a few sets of data.

Because of the effects of sound reflections from the room boundaries, it is necessary to measure speaker response in an anechoic (echo-free) environment. Usually this is a room lined on all sides with sound-absorbing wedges of fiberglass or similar material. Such a room absorbs nearly all the sound that reaches its walls, at least at middle and high frequencies (an anechoic chamber effective in the bass range has to be very large

and is therefore too costly for all but the largest organizations).

One can make measurements outdoors (God's own anechoic chamber), but this method has obvious limitations in respect to ambient noise and weather conditions. In recent years the availability of moderate-price computers has provided a most appealing solution in the form of the "Fast Fourier Transform," or FFT. This is a mathematical process that transforms a transient time-domain waveform (such as the acoustic output of a speaker driven by a very short-duration pulse) into the equivalent frequency response. The process involves a large number of mathematical operations and would be totally impractical without a suitably programmed computer.

**L**AST year we acquired an IQS FFT analysis system for an Apple II computer, and we have since been using it for our speaker measurements. (For further information on this system, write to IQS, 5719 Corso di Napoli, Long Beach, Calif. 90803.) It provides a series of 18-microsecond pulses to drive the speaker; the sound of the pulses is picked up by our regular B&K 4133 measurement microphone and processed by the computer to generate a frequency-response graph in a matter of seconds. Since the computer can limit the material analyzed to that of the first couple of milliseconds of direct sound arriving from the speaker (thereby excluding almost all later arrivals such as room reflections), the result is effectively an anechoic frequency-response measurement made in a "live" room. By rotating the

speaker we can measure its output along different axes and determine its directivity.

The IQS program provides other information about a speaker's performance, including its phase response, group delay, and a three-dimensional (isometric) portrayal of its spectral decay over a period of time (the simultaneous display of frequency, time, and amplitude information). These added capabilities have been acquired only recently, and we expect to comment further on them in the future.

Another form of response measurement is of the speaker's total acoustic-power output vs. frequency. Even though the speaker does not emit its sound equally in all directions, a large part of the output will in most cases eventually reach the listener's ears. Normally this takes place after one or more reflections from the room boundaries (walls, floors, ceilings), and some absorption (principally by those boundaries and the room furnishings).

What we hear from a speaker in a room is a composite of its direct and (partially absorbed) reflected sound. The direct sound (the "first arrival" at the listener's ears) apparently has much to do with stereo localization, but the total sound output of the speaker as modified by the room plays a large part in determining its basic sound character (heavy, nasal, shrill, etc).

The ideal way to measure total acoustic power output is in a reverberant chamber (the opposite of an anechoic chamber) in which the sound is completely reflected from the boundaries and homogenized with

*(Continued on page 26)*

## Tested This Month

Quad ESL-63 Speaker System • Koss KSP Sound Partner Headphones  
Realistic STA-2290 AM/FM Stereo Receiver • Hafler DH-110 Preamplifier  
Soundcraftsmen A2502 Power Amplifier

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virtually no absorption before its level is finally measured. Unfortunately, a large reverberant chamber is also fairly costly and therefore rarely found outside the facilities of the larger speaker manufacturers. Another method too cumbersome for widespread use is to measure the speaker's power response at a great many points around it, either in a half space or around an imaginary spherical surface enclosing the speaker. Computer processing of the data can then define the acoustic power response of the speaker system.

We approximate a reverberant measurement by placing a microphone in the rear of our laboratory/listening room, where the sound-pressure level varies only slightly with changes in position. This is close to being a "far-field" environment, and it enables us to plot a frequency response that comes fairly close to the true power response of a speaker. We are not concerned with the actual power levels developed but rather their variation with frequency. Since the high frequencies (principally above 9,000 Hz) are partially absorbed by the surroundings, we have calibrated the room using speakers whose acoustic power response was measured for us. A room-correction curve is then applied to measurements of other speakers in the same room. While this type of measurement does not show any of the "fine details" of a speaker's response, it gives us a rather good idea of its overall smoothness and, in particular, whether there is any specific emphasis or de-emphasis in any part of the middle and high-frequency range.

So far, we have not mentioned the bass range. Since it is impractical to measure it either anechoically or in a reverberant environment, we place the microphone as close as possible to the woofer cone and run a response curve from 20 to 1,000 Hz. In the case of a ported speaker, output is also measured at the port opening, since at some low frequency the output from the port begins to exceed that from the cone. The port-response curve must be modified in amplitude to account for the relative areas of the port and cone, and the two are then combined to form a single bass-response curve.

With most speakers the close-in measurements above a few hundred hertz are not entirely valid, since the dimensions of the woofer become comparable to the wavelength of the sound. Also, the room-response measurement becomes ragged and questionable below a few hundred hertz because of room-resonance modes. Nevertheless, we extend each measurement well beyond its valid limits so that, when we splice the two by overlaying them, it is easier to make a good match. They are not necessarily *wrong* in the overlap range, but their accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

The single composite response curve we derive is admittedly somewhat idiosyncratic, but it shows the major response variations in output over much of the audible range, corrected as much as possible for known room effects as well as the true anechoic response of the woofer. Even though this curve is not "real" for any specific environment, it is not too atypical, and it permits comparisons between speakers meas-

ured in the same way. This applies equally to all our speaker tests.

There are two speaker measurements that are fairly well standardized and easily duplicated. Sensitivity (sometimes referred to incorrectly as "efficiency") is a measure of the acoustic sound-pressure level (SPL) measured at a distance of 1 meter from a speaker driven by a 2.83-volt test signal. That corresponds to a 1-watt input to an 8-ohm load. If the speaker does not have an 8-ohm impedance, the same voltage is used since it is intended to show how loud the speaker will sound with a given drive voltage from the amplifier (which cannot know what the speaker impedance is). We use an octave-wide band of pink noise centered at 1,000 Hz. We chose our signal frequency because it measures the output of the speaker in a range where the human ear is most sensitive, excluding other much lower or higher frequencies that are less audible.

The impedance characteristic is measured as a function of frequency by driving the speaker with a sweeping sine wave, through a series resistance, and measuring the voltage across the speaker. This is plotted automatically, as are all our frequency-dependent measurements except distortion.

considerable. Sometimes the true minimum impedance occurs at a much higher frequency; if it is undesirably low (3 ohms or less) it is noted in our report.

FINALLY, there is the matter of distortion. The equipment needed to plot distortion automatically over a range of frequencies is available, but it is very expensive. Without it, measurements in the middle and high-frequency ranges are impractical because the variations of output and distortion are so large and unpredictable that the quotation of any number is meaningless without a full sweeping plot. The best we can do is to measure bass distortion below 100 Hz using the same close microphone spacing we use for the low-frequency-response measurement. The microphone output is processed by a spectrum analyzer and the significant distortion components (usually no higher than the second or third) are plotted manually as the frequency is changed in discrete steps of 10 Hz or so.

The drive level we use is either 2.83 or 8.94 volts (1 or 10 watts into 8 ohms), except that with 4-ohm speakers we try to use 2 and 6.32 volts (the same power levels into 4 ohms). The actual drive level is not too



"... And watch this, sir—this baby even plays upside down!"

The impedance of a speaker usually varies widely with frequency, but the only value of practical importance is the minimum reading. The manufacturer's nominal rated impedance is usually taken from the first minimum reading above the bass-resonance frequency. This is usually in the range of 100 to 300 Hz and is interpreted loosely to establish a rated impedance. The actual minimum impedance of a speaker is often somewhat less than its rated value, but this is of little importance unless the difference is

important for our purposes, however. We go down in frequency until the distortion becomes severe (about 20 per cent). The shape of the distortion curve tells us where the speaker loses its effective coupling to the room, since the distortion rises rapidly below that point. Regardless of the low-frequency response of the speaker, its useful lower limit is in that case set by distortion rather than by output. □

Test reports begin on page 28

# NEW VANTAGE ULTRA LIGHTS

**New richer taste.  
New tobacco blend.  
Still only 5 mg.**



**YOUR BEST DECISION IN ULTRA LOW TAR.**

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined  
That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Not available in States of Oklahoma, Colorado

5 mg. "tar", 0.5 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

# Equipment Test Reports

By Julian D. Hirsch  
Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



By Craig Stark  
Starksonic Studio

## Quad ESL-63 Speaker System



Bruce Pandleton

- Quad ESL-63 Speaker System
- Size: 36 x 26 x 6 inches
- Weight: 41 pounds
- Price: \$3,310 per pair

**T**HE ESL-63 is the first new Quad speaker to appear since the company's classic full-range electrostatic unit of some twenty-seven years ago (which is still in production, with only minor modifications). Like the original Quad, the ESL-63 is a full-range electrostatic speaker, but there are significant design differences.

The ESL-63 has a single thin-plastic diaphragm suspended between two sets of concentric annular electrodes. The electrodes, which resemble large circuit boards, are formed by an etching process and are perforated so that they are transparent to the sound generated by the movement of the sandwiched diaphragm. The diaphragm motion results from the electrostatic forces developed when the electrodes are driven by the audio signal voltage. The diaphragm carries a fixed "polarizing" electrical charge from a 5,000-volt low-current power supply in the speaker base.

The audio signal is unmodified as it drives the center portion of the electrode system, but it is progressively delayed in time and slightly modified in its frequency response as it passes to the outer portions of

the diaphragm. This signal modification shapes the polar response of the speaker at high frequencies, making it more directive along its front-rear axis compared with the normal dipole pattern—in other words, it is shaped like a narrowed rather than a broadened "figure 8." This polar pattern, which Quad derived empirically, is meant to give improved stereo imaging from a pair of the speakers. The signal-delay process causes the sound to be propagated as a spherical wavefront with an apparent origin some 30 centimeters behind the diaphragm.

The Quad ESL-63 is a fairly large, upright system with a base that extends slightly to the rear of the speaker and gives it a total depth of about 10½ inches. The speaker must be powered from a 120- or 240-volt a.c. line, but since it consumes only 5 watts it can be left on continuously.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Low-frequency response and distortion measurements of the ESL-63 are complicated by the fact that a large surface area is radiating and only a small portion of it can be measured at one time by a single close-spaced microphone. The tight microphone spacing also produces a rising bass response similar to that produced by a velocity microphone placed too close to the sound source, and for the same reason.

At the higher frequencies, internal reflections from the thin plastic sheet that protects the electrode system and prevents the attraction of dust to it cause a number of sharp peaks and dips in the anechoic response, none of which are audible or detectable in the averaged room-response measurement. Splicing the two curves to form a single composite frequency-response curve can give a misleading impression of the speaker's response due to the bass rise.

In spite of these measurement problems, the tested performance of the Quad ESL-63 was truly excellent. The output was very uniform from 200 to 5,000 Hz, rising at lower frequencies because of the proximity effect and shelving at a slightly lower level in the 8,000- to 20,000-Hz range (a portion of the spectrum in which the room-response measurement is least accurate).

The anechoic response, measured with the IQS digital-analysis (FFT) system, showed variations of  $\pm 6$  dB over the measurement range of 180 to 18,000 Hz. The phase response of the speaker was quite linear, a fact further emphasized by its group-delay characteristic, which was between 0 and 0.5 millisecond over the full audio range. We measured both speakers at microphone distances of 1, 2, and 3 meters. In every case, the two gave identical results. It

(Continued on page 30)

# HEAR THE BEAUTY THAT IS MCS

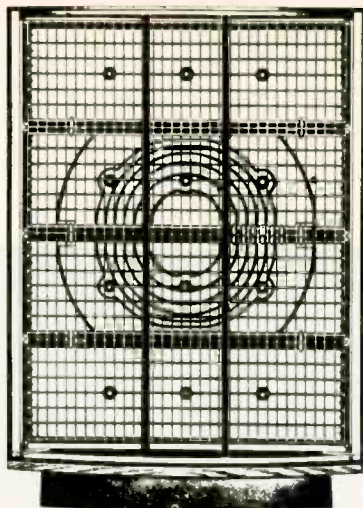
Come close. Fill your ears with clear, enticing sound. Feel the precise beauty of our MCS® cassette decks. Shown here, model 3555 cassette deck with Dolby® Noise Reduction System and fluorescent record level meters, 219<sup>95</sup>. Model 3554 cassette deck with Dolby® Noise Reduction and soft touch transport buttons, 189<sup>95</sup>. Model 3575 computer-controlled cassette deck with electronic touch controls, preset playback and random-search programming, 299<sup>95</sup>. All feature metal tape capabilities.



Trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.  
MCS® Series Audio Components sold exclusively at JCPenney.  
Prices higher in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.  
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**MCS® STEREO  
FOR THE SENSES**  
Sold only at JCPenney  
CIRCLE NO. 34 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Quad ESL-63 is designed so that its sound will appear to emanate from a single point source about 1 foot behind the speaker plane. The response of the concentric electrodes (white areas in the drawing) is sequentially delayed from the center to the outside to create a spherical wavefront (analogous to waves radiating from a stone thrown into a pond). This provides the speaker with its excellent phase characteristics.



is interesting to note that one of the manufacturer's key final acceptance tests is to drive a newly completed ESL-63 and a standard-reference one with identical square waves of opposite polarity. At a point midway between the two speakers, the two square waves cancel each other to produce a null in the output of a measurement microphone. This is possible only when there is an extremely close amplitude and phase-response match between the two speakers.

During a recent visit to the Quad factory in Huntingdon, England, I witnessed this test and was sufficiently impressed to attempt to repeat it in my laboratory. The two test speakers were connected in parallel, but out of phase, and driven from the same amplifier with a 1,000-Hz square wave. I made no attempt to trim the levels, but merely moved the microphone slightly for the best null; I was able to cancel the square wave almost completely except for some minor room reflections.

Another notable quality of the Quad ESL-63 is its extremely low distortion. Lacking the nonlinear cone suspensions and magnetic circuits of dynamic speakers, it is also free of most of their inherent distortions. At a nominal 1-watt drive level, the measured distortion was in the range of 0.1 to 0.5 per cent at 30 Hz. At a 10-watt drive level, the distortion began to increase appreciably at the lowest frequencies, although it was still lower than we measure from the best dynamic speakers. The 10-watt distortion was under 1 per cent down to 70 Hz and only 3 per cent at 32 Hz. According to Quad founder and designer Peter Walker, this is actually the result of saturation in the components external to the speaker diaphragm itself, which is capable of very large excursions without becoming physically nonlinear.

The ESL-63 has an electrical impedance which (unlike that of earlier Quad speakers) should present no problem to any modern amplifier. It was 4 ohms at 20 Hz and also between 7,000 and 15,000 Hz. Over the rest of the audio range the impedance was at least 7 ohms, with the maximum of between 20 and 30 ohms occurring at 90 Hz (the specific impedance varying with signal level). In our test/listening room, the sound-pressure level at a 1-meter distance, with an input of 2.83 volts of pink noise in an octave band centered at 1,000 Hz, was 85 dB.

Circle 141 on reader service card

### Quad ESL-63 Speaker System

● *Comment.* It is difficult to describe the sound of the Quad ESL-63 to someone who has not lived with, or at least heard a proper demonstration of, a fine electrostatic speaker. I well remember my original Quad speaker, which I used for several years in pre-stereo days. That single speaker succeeded in making me dissatisfied with every other speaker of its time. It was expensive, far from beautiful, had limited low-bass range, could not play very loud, produced instability in many amplifiers, and was somewhat unreliable. But its sound quality overcame these disadvantages, for it transcended any speaker of its time (and most of those that followed) in clarity, transparency, and sheer musicality. Eventually I disposed of it (not without regret) in favor of more reliable, though sonically inferior, speakers.

Recalling that early Quad's "ethereal high-end" response, I was hardly prepared for my first impression of the ESL-63. Compared with good dynamic speaker systems, the Quad had a warm and almost subdued sound quality. Although the sound was good, it was very different from what I had expected.

On the other hand, the dipole radiation of the ESL-63 lived up to its promise. The stereo stage in front of the room was broadly distributed, with little evidence that the sound originated in those

two highly visible panels. As I walked toward the speakers from the rear of the room, the sound did not become louder, nor did it change its spatial properties. Since the sound appeared to originate about a foot behind the speakers (or about 3 feet in front of the wall behind them) it remained fixed until I was almost in the plane of the speakers. Then, almost imperceptibly, the apparent sound source receded, finally appearing to be a few feet *behind* the wall (which was reflecting the speakers' rear radiation into the room). This effect is typical of dipole radiators, and I find it most appealing, especially in a moderate-size room.

The sound I heard at the Quad factory was not at all bass-heavy, and the stereo imaging (a quality to which Peter Walker has devoted much effort in his design of the ESL-63) was superb. Upon returning from my visit to Quad, I placed the speakers on 16-inch stands, and the sound was immediately transformed into exactly what I had expected to hear. The bottom-heaviness was gone, and the overall sound quality was as close to ideal as I have ever heard on my own premises. Acoustically, the Quad ESL-63 is quite at home in rooms of moderate size (mine is 15 x 20 feet), although it probably would have no difficulty filling a much larger space.

Having heard of the unpleasant effect of the Quad protective circuits on some amplifiers (it shorts their outputs during an overload!), I listened to the speakers

at progressively higher levels via a Phase Linear 400 amplifier. Eventually the speakers' peak voltage limits were exceeded, as evidenced by the blowing of one of the amplifier's power-supply fuses. There was no damage to speakers or amplifier, although the program levels undoubtedly exceeded the speaker's ratings. However, it would not be wise to drive the ESL-63 with an amplifier lacking short-circuit protection for its output devices unless its maximum output is less than the speaker's 55-volt peak rating (40 volts continuous). When we used a good 125-watt amplifier, we were not able to activate the speakers' protective systems.

**T**HE original Quad speaker was so far ahead of its time that it could be said (without hyperbole) to be in a class by itself with respect to sound quality. The ESL-63, a much improved speaker, appears at a time when dynamic reproducers have evolved to an impressive level of refinement at all price levels. Aesthetic and economic factors (neither of which can be ignored) may keep the ESL-63 from being everyone's cup of tea, but its demonstrable superiority in such matters as phase and amplitude uniformity and low-frequency distortion cannot be argued. Everyone may not agree that the ESL-63 is the world's finest speaker (a claim which Quad, with exemplary modesty, does *not* make), but few would deny that it is a major contender for that honor.

—Julian D. Hirsch





**NOW YOU CAN HAVE DIGITAL RECORDING WHERE YOU WANT IT MOST: AT HOME.**

There are moments when a musician is so inspired he stops making music and starts making magic. And, as most artists agree, these peak periods of supreme inspiration don't always occur in the clinical conditions of the recording studio.

Which explains why Sony, the inventor of digital audio processing, has just created the world's smallest, lightest and most compact digital audio processor — the PCM-F1.

Already touted by every major audio magazine, the PCM-F1 leaves one awestruck by its vital statistics.\* Its level of performance surpasses that of even the most sophisticated analog recording studio. Its unique 3-way power supply allows you to use it anytime, anyplace.

And because Sony consciously designed it without a built-in VCR, it can be used with any VCR — 1/2 or 3/4 inch.

But perhaps its greatest feature is its price.

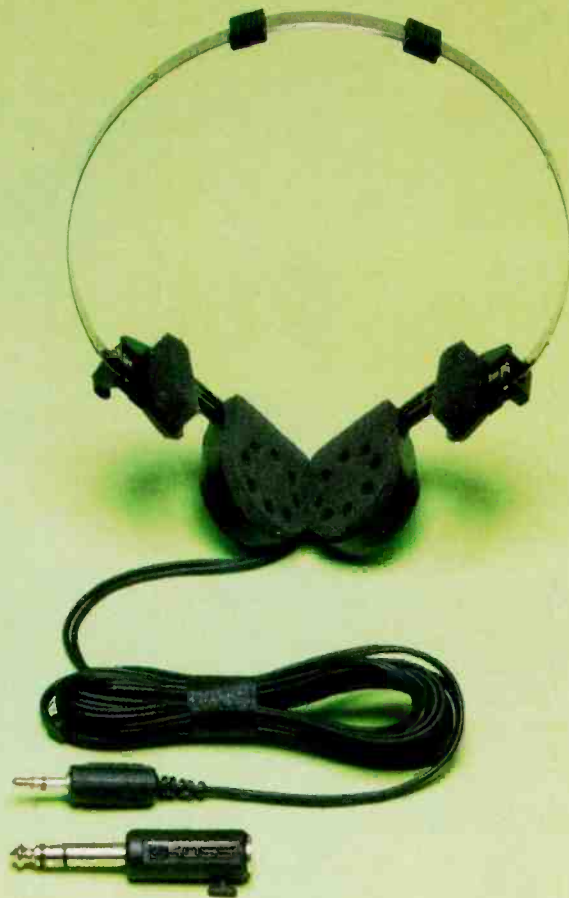
Obviously, we can go on and on about the brilliance of this new machine, but by now we figure you've heard enough about it and you're ready to go to your Sony dealer and hear it for yourself.



**SONY** The one and only.

\*Features and Specifications: Wow and flutter — unmeasurable; dynamic range — greater than 90dB; distortion — less than 0.005%; frequency response — 10-20,000 Hz, ± 0.5 dB. Weight — 9 lbs.; height — 3 3/4"; depth — 12"; width — 8 1/2" 14- and 16-bit quantization. © 1982 Sony Corp. of America. Sony is a registered trademark of the Sony Corp.

## Koss KSP Sound Partner Headphones



- Koss KSP Sound Partner Headphones
- Weight: 3½ ounces
- Price: \$34.95

THE Koss KSP Sound Partner headphones are of the supra-aural (non-isolating) type suitable for use with almost any program source, from personal Walkman-type radios or cassette players to deluxe home music systems. The KSP is fitted with a miniature (3.5-mm) stereo phone plug at the end of its slender 9-foot straight cord. Separate adaptors are furnished for use with a mono source having the same jack diameter and for a standard ¼-inch stereo phone jack.

The KSP phones have a light spring-steel headband adjustable for size. The earpieces themselves are about 1 inch in diameter and have perforated foam-plastic cushions that rest on the ears. Unlike most phones, however, they are *not* supported directly by the wearer's ears. Small foam blocks contact the head just above the ears and reduce the pressure on the ears and head to negligible values. The hinged earpieces and a built-in locking system enable the phones to be folded into a circle about 3 or 4 inches in diameter; a squeeze on the circle releases the phones for wearing. The folded phones, together with the cord and adaptors, store in a brushed-denim drawstring carrying bag.

The Koss KSP phones have a rated impedance of 43 ohms, a frequency response

from 20 to 17,000 Hz, and a sensitivity of 0.18 volt rms of pink noise for a sound-pressure level of 100 dB. The distortion is rated at less than 1 per cent at 100 dB and 1,000 Hz, and the maximum drive level is 3 volts (corresponding to a SPL of 124 dB).

- **Laboratory Measurements.** On a standard headphone coupler, the frequency response of the Koss KSP phones was within 5

dB overall from 110 to 3,200 Hz. At higher frequencies the output increased, averaging about 7 dB higher than the midrange level between 3.5 and 12.5 kHz. As with similar supra-aural (velocity-type) phones, the bass output of the KSP dropped smoothly, at a rate of about 7 to 8 dB per octave, below 150 Hz. The actual low-frequency output was strongly affected by the tightness of the

*(Continued on page 34)*

### Koss KSP Sound Partner Headphones

- **Comment.** Our previous experience with velocity-type phones such as these (most of the lightweight, non-isolating phones used with personal portable players are of similar design) has shown that they have much more apparent bass than their measured response curves would suggest. Most of them have a fully balanced sound, with any actual deficiencies in the lowest octaves being more than compensated for by their wearing comfort. The Koss KSP phones are no exception to this rule. In fact, they are unusually smooth and clean sounding, with an open, airy quality and no obvious peaks or holes in their response. Like many of the currently popular

lightweight phones, they are very comfortable to wear and do not block out external sounds from the ears (an important safety consideration if they are to be worn while the user is bicycling or even jogging).

High sensitivity is important for a headphone meant to be used with personal portable equipment in which power output is very limited. The ability of the KSP to deliver a sound-pressure level well over 100 dB (which is *very* loud) with a mere 25 milliwatts of input power is a further indication of their suitability for this application. We used them principally with conventional home stereo equipment and judged them to be among the more comfortable phones we have used as well as being above average in overall sound quality.

—Julian D. Hirsch

# Here's how we kiss the hiss goodbye.

## **BASF Chrome.** **The world's quietest tape.**

With BASF Chrome, you hear only what you want to hear — because we "kissed the hiss goodbye."

In fact, among all high bias tapes on the market today, only PRO II combines the world's lowest background noise with outstanding sensitivity in the critical high frequency range for superior dynamic range (signal-to-noise ratio).

PRO II is unlike any other tape because it's made like no other tape.

While ordinary high bias tapes are

Magnified  
15,000 X

Perfectly shaped and uniformly sized particles of pure chromium dioxide provide a magnetic medium like no other tape in the world.

made from modified particles of ferric oxide, only PRO II is made of pure chromium dioxide. These perfectly shaped and uniformly sized particles provide a magnetic medium that's truly superior — so superior that PRO II was chosen by Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab for their Original Master Recording™ High Fidelity Cassettes — the finest prerecorded cassettes in the world.

PRO II — a tape so superior, a cassette so reliable, that it was the one chosen by Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab for their Original Master Recording™ High Fidelity Cassettes.

For the best recordings you'll ever make.

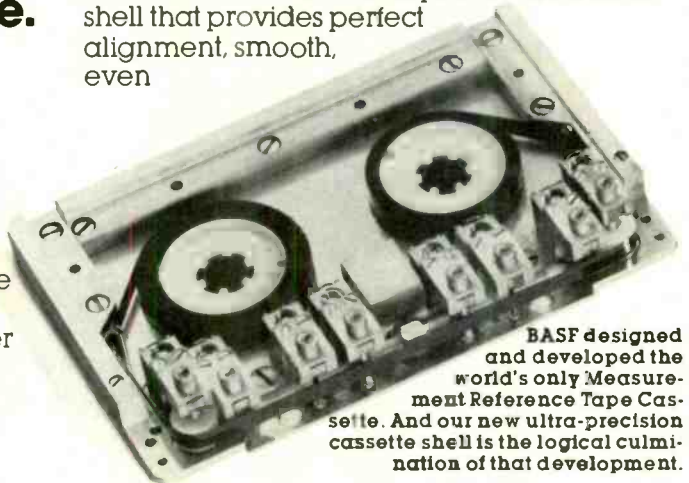


# BASF

Audio/Video Tapes

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And like all BASF tapes, PRO II comes encased in our new ultra-precision cassette shell that provides perfect alignment, smooth, even



BASF designed and developed the world's only Measurement Reference Tape Cassette. And our new ultra-precision cassette shell is the logical culmination of that development.

tape movement, and consistent high fidelity reproduction.

So when you want to hear all of the music and none of the tape, turn on to BASF Chrome. It's the one tape that kissed the hiss goodbye.



## test reports

contact between the ear cushion and the coupler (or the wearer's ears), but we feel that our measured response was typical of what would be achieved in actual use.

The SPL at a 1-volt input to the phones was 107.5 dB at 1,000 Hz and close to that

over the entire midrange band. Although this cannot be correlated closely with the Koss specification (which is based on measurements using pink noise), it appears to be close to that figure. The measured impedance of the phones was 38 to 40 ohms

over most of the audio range, with a broad maximum of 48 ohms around 180 Hz. This makes the phones totally compatible with available headphone outputs.

Circle 142 on reader service card



Realistic STA-2290 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

- Realistic STA-2290 AM/FM Stereo Receiver
- Power Rating: 90 watts per channel
- Size: 19½ x 16½ x 5¼ inches
- Weight: 33 pounds
- Price: \$599.95

**T**HE STA-2290 is the top stereo receiver in Radio Shack's current line of hi-fi components. It combines a frequency-synthesis AM/FM stereo tuner with an audio amplifier rated to deliver its power into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.05 per cent total harmonic distortion, and it is laden with features, as might be expected from a top-of-the-line receiver. Its microprocessor-controlled tuner covers the FM and AM bands in steps of 200 and 10 kHz, respectively. It can search for a signal and stop when one is received, or it can be tuned manually.

Pushbutton station memories are provided for instant recall of up to six AM and six FM stations. Large (½-inch) blue numerals show the tuner frequency, and LEDs indicate signal strength and the instantaneous power output of each channel as well as the selected program source. The power-display sensitivity can be increased one hundred times by a pushbutton to indicate normal listening levels in the order of milliwatts. The front panel contains the usual ancillary controls of a full-feature receiver, most of them operated by light-touch pushbuttons. The balance and the three tone controls (bass, midrange, treble) are operated by small knobs, and the large volume knob is a prominent feature of the front

panel. Small knob switches control the tape-monitoring and dubbing functions for two tape decks as well as the outputs for one or two pairs of speakers.

The rear of the STA-2290 contains insulated spring-loaded speaker connectors, phono-jack and DIN tape-recorder connectors for the two decks, a hinged ferrite-rod AM antenna, and separate PRE OUT and MAIN IN jacks. One of the two a.c. outlets is switched.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The conservative power ratings of the Realistic STA-2290 are emphasized by our measured clipping power output of 120 watts per channel when driving 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz with both channels driven. Although the STA-2290 is not rated specifically for driving impedances lower than 8 ohms, it has considerable current-output capability and was able to deliver 162 watts per channel to either 4- or 2-ohm loads (with 2 ohms, a protective relay shut the amplifier down before clipping occurred). No fuses were blown, nor did the amplifier become unusually hot in our high-power, low-impedance test.

With the pulsed test signal of the IHF dynamic-power measurement, the output clipped at 130 watts into 8 ohms, 222 watts into 4 ohms, and 185 watts into 2 ohms. Relative to the rated 90-watt output of the receiver, the IHF clipping-headroom rating was 1.23 dB and the dynamic-headroom rating was 1.58 dB.

At 1,000 Hz (8-ohm loads) the distortion was below the noise level up to several watts output, reaching 0.004 per cent at 10 watts

and 0.025 per cent at 110 watts. When driving 4 ohms the distortion was very nearly the same, and even 2-ohm operation resulted in distortion readings of only 0.006 per cent at 1 watt to 0.056 per cent at 140 watts, just below the point where the protective system cut in.

Using the rated 8-ohm loads, the distortion at rated power output was typically in the range of 0.01 to 0.02 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz. At reduced power outputs it was even lower (typically 0.003 to 0.01 per cent over the full frequency range at 9 watts). The IHF intermodulation distortion was measured with two input signals of 18 to 19 kHz, their combined peak value equal to that of a 90-watt sine wave. The second-order component at 1,000 Hz was -88 dB (relative to 90 watts) and the third-order distortion products at 17 and 20 kHz were down about 85 dB.

The amplifier sensitivity through the aux inputs was 17 millivolts (mV) for a reference 1-watt output, and the phono sensitivity was 0.19 mV. The corresponding A-weighted noise levels were -76.6 and -75 dB, referred to 1 watt. The phono input overloaded at a very high 220 mV at 1,000 Hz and at levels equivalent to 277 and 209 mV at 20 and 20,000 Hz, respectively. The phono-input impedance was 50 kilohms in parallel with 100 picofarads. The amplifier's slew factor was greater than 25, and its rise time was 6 microseconds (through the aux input).

The tone-control characteristics were typical of today's good receivers and ampli-  
(Continued on page 40)



# Marlboro

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined  
That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

16 mg "tar," 1.0 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Dec. '81

*The Franklin Mint Record Society,  
in collaboration with Count Basie, Les Brown, Lionel Hampton, Woody Herman,  
Harry James, Sammy Kaye and a panel of distinguished music authorities,  
is proud to present . . .*

# THE GREATEST RECORDINGS OF THE BIG BAND ERA

ARCHIVE COLLECTION

*The most comprehensive collection of  
original big band recordings ever assembled.  
And the first ever issued on superior proof-quality records.*

© 1982 FMRS



*"We wanted this collection to have it all! The great bands, the soloists and the singers. It's good to know this music is all here . . . all together . . . for now and the future."*

—Count Basie

**T**he greatest authorities on the music of America's big band era—musicians and music critics alike—have joined together, for the first time, to assemble *the definitive collection of big band recordings*.

This is a collection unlike any issued before. For the bandleaders, writers and critics who comprise this panel are the very same ones who shaped the big band era.

These experts enlisted the cooperation of the record companies which now hold the *original master recordings* of the big name bands. Thus, the panel was able to make its selections from virtually every big band performance ever recorded—*making this the first such collection ever assembled from all the big band record labels*.

As a result, this will be the most complete, comprehensive and authoritative collection ever devoted to big band music. And it will be the first ever available on *proof-quality* records of exceptional fidelity.

*All the great bands, singers and soloists in their greatest recorded performances*

The Archive Collection of *The Greatest Recordings of the Big Band Era* will be all-encompassing. A collection which reflects the musical diversity of the era. The crisp swing of Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, the relaxed rhythm of Count Basie and Jimmie Lunceford, the bright dixieland of Bob Crosby, the sophisticated stylings of Duke Ellington, the dreamy delicate sounds of Ray Noble, the soft, sweet music of Guy Lombardo and Sammy Kaye. It will also include:

*The musical forerunners of the era*—Paul Whiteman, with Bing Crosby and Bix Beiderbecke; Fletcher Henderson, who influenced Benny Goodman and many others; the early sounds of Glen Gray and Fred Waring.

*The nostalgic themes of the big bands*—Glenn Miller's "Moonlight Serenade" . . . Tommy Dorsey's "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" . . . Louis Armstrong's "When It's Sleepy Time Down South" . . . Vaughn Monroe's "Racing with the Moon."

*The greatest hits of an entire generation*—Charlie Barnet's "Cherokee," Duke Ellington's "Take the 'A' Train," Artie Shaw's "Frenesi," Frankie Carles' "Sunrise Serenade," Tommy Dorsey's "Opus One," Eddy Duchin's "Stormy Weather," and Benny Goodman's "Sing, Sing, Sing," with Gene Krupa.

*The big band vocalists that audiences loved . . . and still remember*. Frank Sinatra with Tommy Dorsey, Peggy Lee with Benny Goodman, Doris Day with Les Brown, Anita O'Day with Gene Krupa, Bob Eberly and Helen O'Connell with Jimmy Dorsey. And many more, including Perry Como, Lena Horne and Ella Fitzgerald.

*The ultimate collection of original big band recordings*

This is a collection that would be difficult—or impossible—for any individual to assemble. For these selections have been drawn from the archives of all the major record companies . . . and such vintage labels as Brunswick, OKeh, Vocalion, Bluebird and Perfect.

Many of these recordings—like Wayne King's "Melody of Love"—have been *unavailable for years*. Others are *hard to find recordings* of early radio broadcasts . . . such as Frank Sinatra's emotional farewell to the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, doing his spectacular rendition of "The Song Is You." Still others were only released on 78s—and *never re-issued*: Bob Crosby's "Black Zephyr" and Gus Arnheim's "A Peach of a Pair" with Russ Columbo.

In many cases, the panel considered several *different versions of the same song*, before selecting a particular recording for the collection. Thus, *every selection will be a classic performance*. An original recording of the era . . . recaptured on records of superior listening quality.

*Superb quality for today's audio systems*

These records will be produced to the highest standards possible by The Franklin Mint Record Society—judged by audio experts to produce some of the finest records available today.

Each recording will first undergo a painstaking restoration process—electronically "cleaned" groove-by-groove to eliminate extraneous surface noise and preserve the original brilliance of the music.

The records will be pressed in a dust-free "clean room" using a special vinyl that contains its own anti-static element. This meticulous pressing technique, together with the special record vinyl, results in a more rigid, durable and dust-resistant record. A *proof quality* record that actually *sounds better* than the original—and may be played through any audio system.

*Hardbound albums and big band histories provided*

In keeping with the importance of this collection, special hardbound albums have been designed to house and protect all one hundred proof-quality records.

Each album holds four long-playing records, with an expertly written commentary—prepared by members of the advisory panel, and illustrated with photographs of the bands. A complete reference index to bandleaders, songs and solo artists will also be provided.

*Available by subscription only*

If you remember the big bands . . . if you've ever

CIRCLE NO. 15 ON READER SERVICE CARD



*Strict record pressing standards, and audio and visual inspection, assure high quality. Ordinary records (left) have static charges that attract dust, causing surface noise. But the special anti-static vinyl used in Franklin Mint records (right) assures clearer sound. Electrostatic meter tests show that the Franklin Mint record has only one-fifth the static charge of ordinary records.*

wished to relive the music of that period . . . or if you've only just discovered this unique sound in American popular music . . . *this is your opportunity*. An opportunity to share and enjoy—with all the members of your family—the unforgettable sound of the big bands.

The collection may be acquired only by direct subscription. It will not be sold in record stores. To subscribe now, mail the attached application to The Franklin Mint Record Society, Franklin Center, Pennsylvania 19091. Please do so by August 31, 1982.

**The Advisory Panel**

**COUNT BASIE** for more than 40 years, leader of one of the most consistently swinging bands in history.

**LES BROWN** outstanding writer, arranger and leader of one of the era's most popular dance bands.

**DAVE DEXTER, JR.** a record producer for 31 years, former *Down Beat* editor and author of *The Jazz Story and Playback*.

**LIONEL HAMPTON** a leader whose exuberance has inspired musicians and audiences alike for more than five decades.

**WOODY HERMAN** who continues to be one of the most popular and successful of all leaders—discoverer of many talented musicians.

**HARRY JAMES** a brilliant trumpeter of both beautiful ballads and rip-roaring swing.

**SAMMY KAYE** "Mister Swing and Sway," master of the sweet sound—always popular, always danceable.

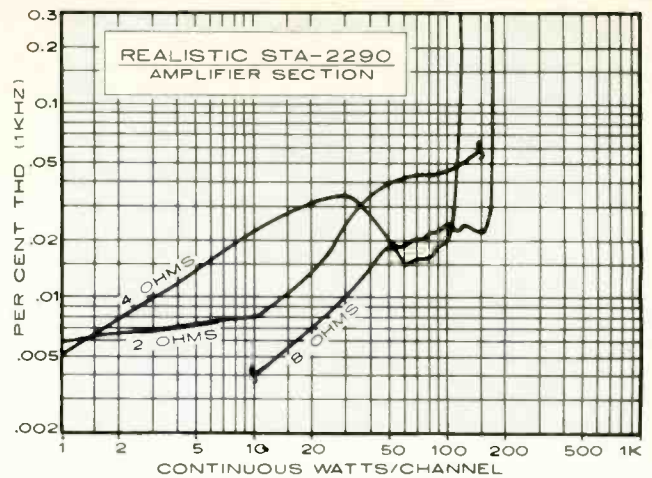
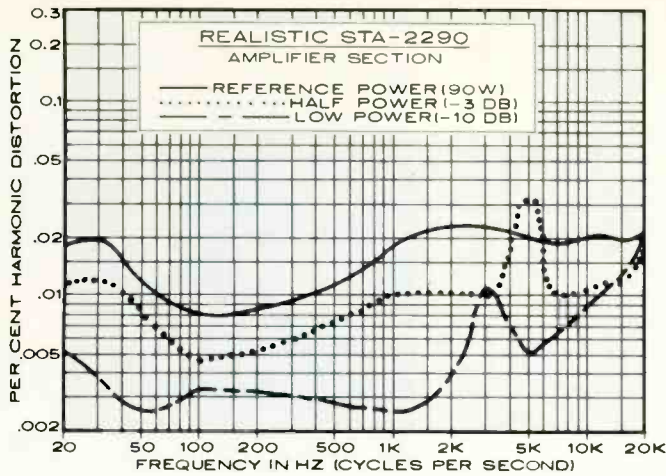
**NEIL McCAFFREY** music critic and editor of *American Dance Band Discography* and *The Complete Encyclopedia of Popular Music and Jazz*.

**GEORGE T. SIMON** music critic, record producer, author of the definitive work on dance bands—*The Big Bands*—and *The Best of the Music Makers*.

**RICHARD SUDHALTER** jazz critic of *The New York Post*, author of *Bix: Man and Legend*, and a widely respected jazz columnist.

**JOHN S. WILSON** jazz and popular music critic of *The New York Times*, author of *Jazz: The Transition Years*, *The Collector's Jazz: Traditional and Swing*, *The Collector's Jazz: Modern*.





fiers. The bass and treble controls had little effect on the midrange response, and the midrange control covered roughly 500 to 5,000 Hz. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies as the volume setting was reduced, and the high-filter response was down 3 dB at 4,000 Hz with a not very effective 6-dB-per-octave slope at higher frequencies. The RIAA phono equalization was perfectly accurate (within 0.1 dB overall) from 40 to 20,000 Hz and down 1.5 dB at 20 Hz. It was unaffected by cartridge inductance.

The FM tuner section had a usable sensitivity of 11 dBf (2 microvolts, or  $\mu\text{V}$ ) and a 50-dB-quieting sensitivity (mono) of 13 dBf (2.4  $\mu\text{V}$ ). The stereo 50-dB-quieting sensitivity was 35 dBf (30  $\mu\text{V}$ ). At a 65-dBf (1,000- $\mu\text{V}$ ) input the distortion in mono and stereo was 0.1 and 0.28 per cent, respectively, with noise levels of -75 and -69 dB. The IHF intermodulation distortion was measured with modulating frequencies of 14 and 15 kHz at a 65-dBf input and with 100 per cent modulation. The third-order distortion (13- and 16-kHz components) was -53 dB in either mono or stereo, and the second-order (1,000-Hz) distortion was -74 dB in mono and -59 dB in stereo. As is usual for a stereo tuner, there were a number of additional distortion and beat products visible in the spectrum analysis of the output, but most were around -65 dB relative to 100 per cent modulation.

The stereo frequency response was flat within  $\pm 0.8$  dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. The channel separation was between 34 and 44 dB over the same frequency range. The FM capture ratio was 1.16 dB at a 65-dBf input, and the AM rejection was 60 dB at 45 dBf (100  $\mu\text{V}$ ). The image rejection was a good 82 dB. Alternate-channel selectivity was 82 dB and adjacent-channel selectivity was 5.5 dB. The stereo and muting thresholds were identical at 20 dBf (5.5  $\mu\text{V}$ ), and the pilot-carrier (19-kHz) leakage into the audio output was -68 dB referred to 100 per cent modulation at 1,000 Hz. The power-line hum in the tuner output was -67 dB. The frequency response of the AM tuner section was down 6 dB at 23 and 3,500 Hz.

Circle 143 on reader service card

(Continued on page 42)

### Realistic STA-2290 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

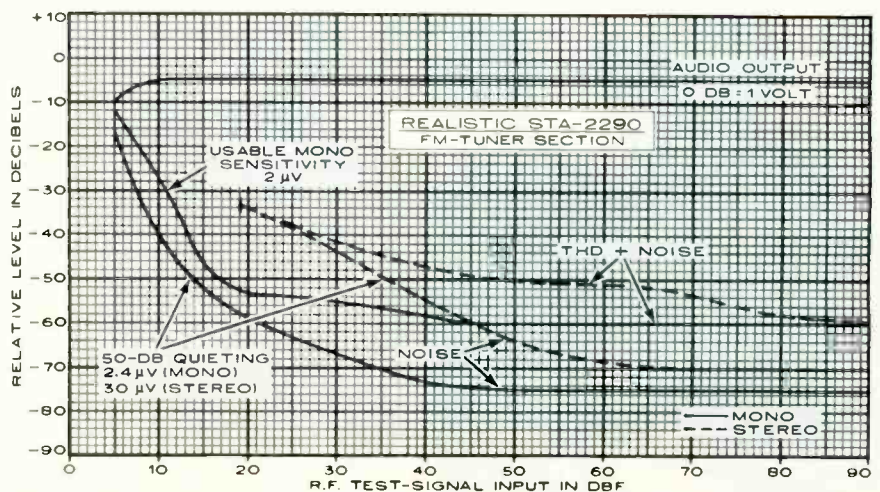
● **Comment.** The Realistic STA-2290 proved to be a more than competent performer in every respect. It is a much more powerful receiver than its 90-watt rating would imply, especially when driving low-impedance loads or more than one pair of parallel-connected low-impedance speakers. We appreciated the ruggedness of its amplifier section, which never showed any signs of distress as we pushed it to its limits and beyond and always shut itself off before any mishaps could occur. That has not always been our experience with expensive, high-power amplifiers, many of which can be easily destroyed (or at least blow fuses) when driven or loaded in certain ways.

Similarly, the FM tuner was good or better in every one of its measured performance characteristics. Probably more significant to most users, it had no operating peculiarities and tuned with the smoothness and silence that are among the major subjective advantages of digital-synthesis tuning. Our test

sample was also aligned accurately, so minimum distortion was obtained on every received station (this is atypical for digital-synthesis tuners, although the tuning errors are rarely audibly significant). Our only criticism of the tuner operation concerned the memory buttons: they worked very well, but there are no indicators to show the user which memory channel has been selected. We think the user should be able to see which memory button is in operation at any time. Even when a receiver possesses such a feature, it rarely identifies the button with its frequency.

That small objection aside, the STA-2290 impresses us as being one of the better receivers we have seen in its price class. It is not inexpensive, but your dollar buys not only a first-rate product but one with some of the most honest—not to say conservative—ratings to be found in this competitive marketplace. Its controls operate with a satisfying feel of precision, and they combine with the excellent sound quality to project an image (and a reality) that are completely consistent with its place at the top of the Realistic product line.

—Julian D. Hirsch





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CIRCLE NO 40 ON READER SERVICE CARD



## Hafler DH-110 Preamplifier

- **Hafler DH-110 Preamplifier**
- **Size:** 17 x 8½ x 3 inches
- **Weight:** 10 pounds
- **Price:** \$299.95 in kit form

**T**HE Hafler DH-110 is a high-quality stereo preamplifier embodying many of the basic design and circuit features of the company's highly regarded "no-frills" DH-101 preamplifier, but with an overall level of mechanical and electrical refinement that rivals that of the best of today's stereo components. Like the DH-101, the DH-110 is available either as a kit or factory wired and tested.

The DH-110 is attractively finished in charcoal grey. Adaptors are furnished for rack mounting the DH-110, whose width is increased to 19 inches by their use. The front-panel controls include knob-operated switches for the input selector and tape monitor and smoothly operating potentiometers for volume, balance, bass, and treble controls. The tone and balance controls are center-detented. Depressing a TONE button bypasses the tone-control circuits, and the EPL (external processing loop) button inserts an external signal-processing accessory (connected to jacks in the rear of the DH-110) into the signal path; MONO and POWER are switched by similar buttons.

The switchable program sources include AUX, PHONO, TUNER, TAPE 1, and TAPE 2. There are two separate phono inputs selected by a pushbutton next to the SELECTOR knob. They are essentially identical but can have different input capacitance values to suit specific cartridges. If an optional moving-coil-cartridge head amplifier (DH-112) is installed in the DH-110, it is used with one of the phono inputs.

The MONITOR switch has positions marked OFF (for normal listening), TAPE 1, and TAPE 2. Red LEDs show which control is in use and also serve as power pilot lights. The front-panel phone jack can drive high-impedance phones, and plugging in a head-phone disconnects one of the two parallel sets of preamplifier outputs.

The many phono jacks on the rear of the Hafler DH-110 are mounted on one of its two major circuit boards and are rigidly supported to withstand the insertion of phono plugs without flexing. Separate ground binding posts are located next to the two sets of phono inputs. Three of the four a.c. outlets are switched, with a total rating of 5 amperes continuous and 72 amperes of

surge current, permitting use with the largest Hafler power amplifier (the DH-500) as well as most other high-power amps.

The Hafler DH-110 specifications are exceptionally complete, following the current IHF (now EIA) amplifier-measurement standard and referencing its applicable paragraphs. Some of the key ratings include a maximum output of 14 volts (the rated output is 3 volts), distortion of less than 0.001 per cent, and a phono-overload limit of 300 millivolts at 1,000 Hz. The factory-wired version of the DH-110 is \$399, \$499.95 with the optional DH-112 pre-preamplifier installed. The DH-112 as a separate add-on is \$74.95. (David Hafler Co., Dept. SR, 5910 Crescent Boulevard, Pennsauken, N.J. 08109.)

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We tested a Hafler DH-110 preamplifier that had been assembled from a kit by an experienced kit builder in about 4 hours. Input sensitivity

(for a reference output of 0.5 volt) through a high-level input was 50 millivolts (mV) and 1 mV through a phono input (both exactly as rated). The A-weighted output noise was less than our measurement limit of 100 microvolts through the high-level input, and it was 187 microvolts through the phono input (corresponding to -68 dB referred to 0.5 volt).

The overload limits of the phono preamplifier were exactly as rated: 300 mV at 1,000 Hz and virtually the same at the limits of 20 and 20,000 Hz (295 and 304 mV, respectively, after conversion to equivalent 1,000-Hz values). The phono-input impedance was 47,000 ohms in parallel with 150 picofarads (pF) at input 1 and 260 pF at input 2. The basic input capacitance of the phono preamplifier is rated at 30 pF, the rest coming from the added capacitors, whose values can be changed as desired by the user. RIAA equalization error was less  
(Continued on page 44)

### Hafler DH-110 Preamplifier

● **Comment.** Although one could pay considerably more for a preamplifier than the price of the Hafler DH-110, it would be very difficult to find one that is better in any meaningful way. Certainly no other is likely to have significantly lower distortion or a greater dynamic range, whether based on its noise level, maximum output, or phono-overload point. To a considerable degree, the same could have been (and was) said about the earlier DH-101. However, we (among others) were not so highly impressed with the latter's construction, which conveyed an unavoidable impression of scrimping on mechanical detail. Since we have been using a DH-101 for some years, we know that it is an excellent and reliable product, especially in view of its modest price.

The DH-110, on the other hand, is second to none in its "feel" as well as its performance. Anyone who wonders whether this impression of quality is only skin deep need only remove the preamplifier's cover. Most of its active circuitry is on a single large circuit

board (largely factory assembled and pretested), and high-quality parts are used throughout.

The schematic diagram of the Hafler DH-110 shows that the basic Hafler philosophy has been effectively applied to its design. As we see it, that is to use the simplest circuit that will do the job, since complexity tends to increase cost and reduce reliability faster than it improves performance. Except for the phono preamplifier, the active part of the DH-110 consists of a complementary-symmetry "op-amp" with the tone controls and filter in its feedback loop. This not only supplies the necessary gain and frequency-response control, but delivers a very high output with a low enough impedance to drive most headphones to a very comfortable listening level. The phono-preamplifier configuration is similar, with the RIAA equalization components in its feedback loop.

The Hafler DH-110 ranks with the best preamplifiers on the market today. It is also attractively styled, moderately priced, and (judging from the instruction manual) not very difficult to build. It should hardly be necessary to point out that it sounds as good as it looks and measures!

—Julian D. Hirsch

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Ranger XLT model shown

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**BUILT LIKE THE BIG ONES,  
SAVES LIKE THE SMALL ONES.**

than  $\pm 0.5$  dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz.

The basic amplifier frequency response was literally "as flat as a ruler," producing a perfectly straight line on our Urei automatic plotting equipment. The FILTER is a low-cut type with a nominal 25-Hz cutoff and a 12-dB-per-octave slope. We measured it as 3 dB down at 30 Hz.

The tone controls were able to modify the bass response in the most subtle manner, yet they had a total range more than adequate for any practical requirement. The turnover frequency of the bass boost or cut varied from lower than 40 Hz to almost 200

Hz over the range of the control. The treble curves, at partial control settings, produced a shelved response shape and in general hinged at approximately 2,000 Hz. The rise time of the entire preamplifier through the AUX input was 4 microseconds.

In the past, we have found that Hafler amplifiers tend to have virtually no measurable distortion. The DH-110 continues in that tradition. At 1,000 Hz the distortion rose from 0.00022 per cent (our lower measurement limit) at 1 volt output to 0.00045 per cent at 7 volts and 0.13 per cent at the clipping output of 14 volts. At 20 Hz

the distortion was only slightly higher, from 0.001 per cent at 1 volt to 0.0014 per cent at 7 volts. The 20,000-Hz distortion included the noise content (THD + N) since our spectrum analyzer's frequency range is not wide enough to measure the third harmonic of a 20,000-Hz signal. It was in the range of 0.004 to 0.005 per cent from 2 to 7 volts output. All these measurements used the IHF standard load of 10,000 ohms in parallel with 1,000 pF, which is also how Hafler specifies the DH-110's performance.

Circle 144 on reader service card



Soundcraftsmen A2502 Power Amplifier

- Soundcraftsmen A2502 Power Amplifier
- Power Rating: 125 watts per channel
- Size: 19 x 5 1/4 x 10 1/2 inches
- Weight: 27 pounds
- Price: \$649

**T**HE Soundcraftsmen A2502 power amplifier, which uses power-MOSFET (metal-oxide semiconductor field-effect transistor) output devices, is rated to deliver 125 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads between 20 and 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.05 per cent total harmonic or intermodulation distortion. Unlike most amplifiers, it is also fully rated for driving 4-ohm loads: 190 watts per channel at the same 0.05 per cent distortion. The A2502 is a relatively compact amplifier and has handles that extend 1 5/8 inches in front of the panel, which is slotted for rack mounting. Optional walnut-finish wood side panels are also supplied for shelf-mount installations.

On the panel are two horizontal rows of LEDs that display the instantaneous power output of each channel, with separate scales for 8- and 4-ohm loads. The lights are calibrated for power outputs between 0.01 and 250 watts into 8 ohms (and double those values into 4 ohms), with green indicators being used up to 125 watts and red for the +1-, +2-, and +3-dB output lights. Each channel also has a TRUE CLIPPING red LED

driven by a circuit that compares the input and output waveforms and turns on the light only when there is a difference, thus indicating the actual onset of clipping.

Front-panel knobs control the input sensitivity of each channel. Pushbuttons control a.c. power and the two sets of speaker outputs. If the internal protection circuit operates, the a.c. power shuts off and a red PROTECT light appears on the panel. When the transistors have cooled sufficiently, operation is restored automatically.

In the rear of the A2502 there are external heat-sink fins and heavy-duty five-way binding posts for the speaker outputs (on standard 3/4-inch centers for dual banana-plug connectors). The signal inputs are standard phono jacks, and there is a holder for the 5-ampere line fuse. The A2501 amplifier, identical to the A2502 except that it lacks gain controls, power meters, and speaker switching, is available for \$549.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Soundcraftsmen A2502 became warm enough during its preconditioning stress period to operate the protective thermal cutoff several times. However, this did not occur during most of the high-power lab tests that followed. At the rated output of 125 watts per channel into 8 ohms, the midrange distortion was typically about 0.01 per cent, increasing slightly at the frequency ex-

trêmes to 0.02 per cent at 20 Hz and 0.028 per cent at 20,000 Hz. It was slightly lower at reduced power outputs, with readings typically in the range of 0.005 to 0.01 per cent over much of the audio range and at power outputs from a few watts to more than 60 watts.

At 1,000 Hz, the distortion into 8 ohms rose smoothly from less than 0.004 per cent at 1 watt to 0.011 per cent at 150 watts, with clipping occurring at 153 watts per channel (clipping-headroom rating of 0.88 dB). The MOSFET output stages of the A2502 do not require current-limiting protection, so they can drive very low load impedances at high power levels without side effects other than increased heating of the transistors. The clipping output into 4-ohm loads was 210 watts per channel (clipping headroom of 0.43 dB), and the line fuse blew just above that power level. High-power 2-ohm measurements were not possible with both channels operating, but only because of fuse limitations (we chose not to substitute a larger fuse for this test, which would have risked amplifier damage). Therefore, we drove only one channel for the 2-ohm measurements and also repeated the 4- and 8-ohm clipping-power measurements with one channel operating.

The 4-ohm (single-channel) clipping output was 277 watts per channel, and the 2-

(Continued on page 46)

11 mg. "tar", 0.9 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report DEC. '81.

# Winston

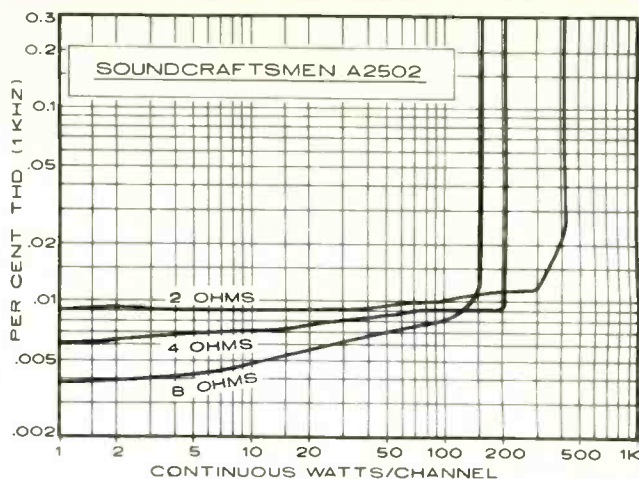
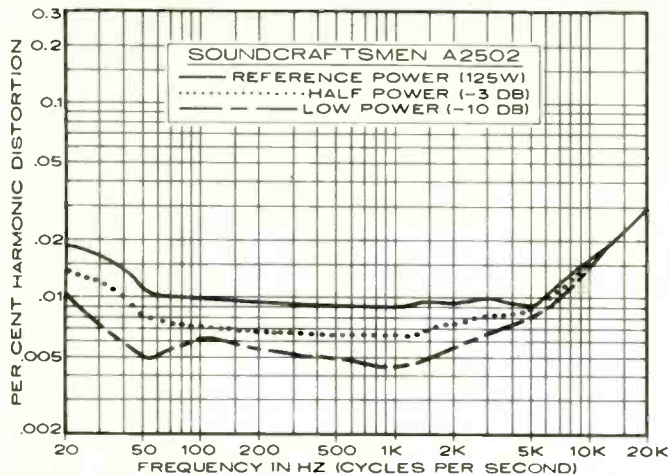
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ohm output was an imposing 420 watts per channel! The power at clipping with 8-ohm loads and one channel driven increased only moderately, to 185 watts. The 4-ohm distortion was an almost constant 0.005 to 0.009 per cent for power outputs from 1 to 200 watts. Even 2-ohm operation did not degrade the performance significantly, producing distortion readings of 0.009 per cent from 1 to 100 watts and only 0.022 per cent at 400 watts.

The large current reserve of the Soundcraftsmen A2502 suggested to us that it might have an exceptional dynamic headroom, and so it did. Using a pulsed test signal made it possible to push the amplifier to its true limits without blown fuses or overheating. The 8- and 4-ohm maximum outputs were, respectively, 225 and 370 watts (dynamic-headroom ratings of 2.55 and 2.9 dB, respectively), and the output into 2 ohms was 468 watts.

The high-frequency linearity of the A2502 was measured with the double signal of the IHF IM test. With 18- and 19-kHz signals of equal amplitude and a peak output equal to that of a 125-watt sine wave, the third-order distortion products at 17 and 20 kHz were at -78 dB, and there was absolutely no detectable second-order distortion at 1,000 Hz (down to the -100-dB "noise floor" of the test setup). Rise time was 2 microseconds, and slew factor was in the range of 15 to 20.

The low-level frequency response of the A2502 was down 0.1 dB at 20 and 20,000 Hz relative to the 1,000-Hz level. It was down 0.3 dB at 5 Hz, 1 dB at 68 kHz, and 3 dB at 120 kHz. The amplifier sensitivity for a 1-watt reference output was 0.11 volt, and the A-weighted output noise was -83.5 dB referred to 1 watt. The calibration of the LED power meters was quite accurate (especially when compared with many we have seen whose readings bore little relationship to the actual output level). More important to the user was the validity of the clipping lights, which lit as soon as even slight waveform clipping took place. Since these lights are independent of the power meters, they are a most useful indication that the maximum power capability of the amplifier has been reached or exceeded.

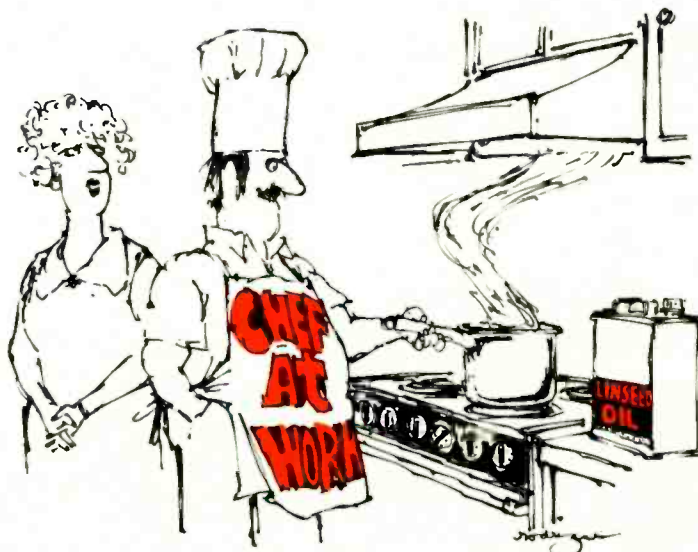
### Soundcraftsmen A2502 Power Amplifier

● **Comment.** Electrically (and audibly) there was nothing about the Soundcraftsmen A2502 that we could criticize. There are a number of fine amplifiers on the market in the general power and price range of the A2502. Nevertheless, all things considered, this amplifier impresses us as one of the better values in the field. We were especially aware of the conservatism of its ratings and the absence of ambiguity or qualifying statements in its performance specifications. This reflects Soundcraftsmen's policy that their amplifiers will develop their rated power, or better, under any operating conditions one might envision in a home environment.

Given our extensive experience with amplifiers that failed to survive the more severe parts of our test program, we

were also impressed by the ruggedness of the A2502 and its freedom from the all-too-common self-destructive tendencies of high-power amplifiers. All of these comments, by the way, apply with equal validity to other, higher-power Soundcraftsmen amplifiers we have tested over the years. The A2502 brings their excellent qualities to a more affordable price range.

The bottom line, as we see it, is that the Soundcraftsmen A2502 is a superior power amplifier, far more powerful in real (that is to say, *audible*) terms than its modest 125-watt rating would imply. Aside from sheer power, which it has in abundance, the A2502 is stable, electrically rugged, free of unpleasant surprises or idiosyncrasies, and priced most attractively. Its near-twin, the A2501, is a fine buy at its \$100 lower price for anyone willing to forgo the handsome (and admittedly useful) front-panel light display. —*Julian D. Hirsch*



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## Going on Record

By James  
Goodfriend



### ANNIVERSARIES

**S**TUDENTS of numerology would have their work cut out for them attempting to draw any meaningful relationships among composers born in the same year or numerically related years. But one might even go so far as to say that students of *music* would encounter similar difficulty. This year of 1982 is the centenary of the birth of Percy Grainger, Zoltan Kodály, Manuel Ponce, John Powell, Igor Stravinsky, Karol Szymanowski, and Joaquín Turina. Not only is that a distribution around the globe in national origin, but to anyone familiar with the respective musics of these composers it doesn't even seem quite plausible that they were all born in the same century, much less the same year.

Going further back in history, we find that 1982 is also the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the American songwriter Henry Clay Work and the two-hundredth anniversary of Daniel François Auber, John Field, and Niccolò Paganini. It is also the two-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach, Franz Xaver Bixi, and Franz Joseph Haydn (no less); the three-hundredth of Jean-François Dandrieu and Jean-Joseph Mouret; the three-hundred-fiftieth of Jean-Baptiste Lully; the four-hundredth of Marco da Gagliano; and the four-hundred-fiftieth of Orlandus Lassus.

What do all these examples show? Well, if nothing else, variety. But, for the sake of a game, suppose that through some quirk of fate (like a power failure in the master computer) the names and works of these men were all that survived of music before 1982. What *then* do these examples show?

A new history of music: The first known composer (Lassus) was a great master of contrapuntal styles obviously developed earlier by lesser figures who remain unknown to us. His universality is shown not only through his composition of both sacred and secular music, but through the variety of Latin, French, Italian, and German texts he set. He was succeeded by Marco da Gagliano, a lesser composer who worked exclusively in Italy and who, accepting his forebear's accomplishment as the summing up of a style, wisely chose to begin something new rather than attempting to build on the

old. This something new was dramatic solo declamation which developed into a new theatrical form called opera and which forever changed the nature of music.

Gagliano in turn was succeeded by a great master who built on these earlier operatic developments. Lully created a French Baroque style that incorporated in the theatrical form opera, ballet, and instrumental music, and he also composed religious and court works. The following generation produced two minor composers, Mouret and Dandrieu, who exhibited stylistic command but not much originality.

All the composers of the following group came from German-speaking countries, and they include one very great composer, Haydn, whose long career encompassed both the creation of a style (Viennese Classicism) and its culmination. Haydn was succeeded by disparate composers from disparate countries, one (Auber) specializing in comic opera and the other two (Field and Paganini) in solo piano music and solo violin music, respectively. Although the influence of the great predecessor was there, all three placed their musical emphasis on a new kind of expressive content and, in general, a lighter kind of music. They, in turn, were followed by almost a dark age, in which one man, Work, made rather unsophisticated songs from highly sophisticated models.

**T**HE last generation with which we deal is both the largest and the most disparate in style. If those composers born in 1882 had anything in common (some of them), it must be the attempt to rescue folk song and to build upon it to create new directions in serious music. Apart from that, they produced such a variety of music as to make one despair of defining the period.

Polyphony to accompanied song; vocal music to instrumental music; heavier to lighter; form to content; major, minor, major, minor; creation, culmination, creation, culmination; and then explosion in all directions. It sounds familiar. Despite the absence of so many familiar names, it sounds almost the way things actually happened. Maybe there's a kind of truth in numbers after all. □



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CIRCLE NO. 13 ON READER SERVICE CARD

**Mustang GT**



# LOUDSPEAKER BUYING: A MINI-FORUM

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problem of speaker evaluation



Lincoln Perry

**N**EWCOMERS may find it strange that so much speaker-buying advice is addressed to the question of "how to listen," despite the fact that most of us come factory-equipped with two working ears. However, it should come as no surprise that a "sonically trained" ear is needed to appreciate audio nuances, in the same way that a *musically* trained ear is needed to analyze subtleties of interpretation and performance. If someone is not sensitive to either musical or sonic nuances, music arrives at his ears as a more or less homogenized auditory event. Special musical interpretations or subtleties of arrangement may go by as unnoticed as overemphasized lows, peaked mid frequencies, or a lack of highs. Incidentally, a musically trained ear is not necessarily any more sensitive to sonic qualities than a sonically trained one is to musical qualities.

So how does one *get* ear training? For those interested in music, there are numerous conservatories teaching appropriate courses; if you are an aspiring audiophile, the best I can suggest is that you go find an expert—possibly through an audio club or dealer—whose ears and equipment setup you trust and see if you can schedule some ear-training sessions.

A quarter-century and more of concentrated listening has given me confidence in the accuracy of my own ears. Essentially I listen for what's *wrong* with a speaker system, rather than what's right. I apparently have imbedded in my mind's ear a fairly accurate construct of what the world really sounds like, and I don't need to refresh this inner reference by frequent live-music experiences to keep it properly attuned to sonic reality.

I don't immediately focus on any particular aspect of the program but take the music as it comes. However, for the sake of this discussion, let's start at the bottom. The bass end is problematic because it varies widely from recording to recording and is tremendously affected by the room and the speakers' locations in it. I can make only educated guesses as to what is really happening in the bass, and I bear in mind that what I'm hearing may not be truly typical of a particular speaker.

Those speaker systems that unduly emphasize the midrange frequencies tend to project vocalists into the room. As a side effect, they also inject into the sound a sort of nasal, hollow quality, something like what you might hear if you were to talk into your cupped hands. If, on the other hand, the mid

frequencies are depressed, there will be a remote quality and a loss of "liveness" in the sound.

The higher frequencies provide sparkle, shimmer, definition, and "air" to the music, although if you were to bring your ear close to a tweeter it would be evident that it makes only a small contribution to the total acoustic energy put out by the system.

It's important to appreciate that the majority of defects you might hear in a speaker system arise from deficiencies in the octave-to-octave *balance* in the sound, not from anything terribly wrong with the drivers themselves. Over the years, many fine systems have been based on the same drivers that other manufacturers used improperly to produce some very mediocre-sounding products. So, while listening for the specific characteristics in the lows, mids, and highs, I also listen for overall balance, and you should too.

The contributors to this little forum have been limited by the available space to a once-over-lightly approach. Those readers who would like to dig deeper into background theory and want further advice on selecting speakers should check out the books listed in the box on page 54.

—Larry Klein, Technical Director



**Hans Fantel**

"I check the specs for partial confirmation of what I hear, but I leave the final judgment to my ears."

**I**N a sense, loudspeakers themselves are musical instruments—alternately or simultaneously sounding off as violins, trumpets, drums, flutes, or whatever musical fare is fed to them in the form of electricity. They must impersonate Luciano Pavarotti one moment, Diana Ross the next. Given such a challenge, it is hardly surprising that speakers persist in being problematic. Purely electronic items, such as amplifiers and tuners, can be designed and tested by conventional methods and principles of engineering. But there are many intangibles in speaker design, and the only test instrument to assess a speaker's ultimate merit is the ear. Granted, physically measurable factors

are helpful in describing a speaker's basic capabilities, and valid conclusions can be drawn from numerical specs. Figures presumably don't lie. But when it comes to loudspeakers, they don't tell you much truth either. So, in choosing a speaker, I check the specs for partial confirmation of what I hear, but I leave the final judgment to my ears.

However, I do not use my ears "as is." If I am to employ them as test instruments, they must be calibrated to a standard—like all other test instruments. For me, this calibration routine consists of going to a concert, and since I live within driving distance of both the New York Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony, I may have an unfair advantage.

The orchestra is no absolute standard either. For one thing, not all orchestras sound alike, even when playing the same piece, and the same orchestra may not sound the same under different conductors. Hall acoustics and seat location are additional variables. Even so, I find listening to live concerts the indispensable touchstone for the evaluation of speakers. It is the remembrance of a live performance—unblemished by any electronic sound enhancement—against which a loudspeaker must be compared.

But exposure to live music is only part of the job of ear calibration. The real trick is to know just what to listen for—to single out those aspects of orchestral sound that are distinctive and critically important for loudspeaker evaluation. What's more, one must learn to *remember* those sounds, so that they can later be used for comparison when one is confronted by a strange speaker.

When I tried to teach myself to listen—either to orchestras or to loudspeakers—I discovered that this learning process is rather like drawing a portrait from memory. It is difficult to remember the details of the image. With sound, sensory "forgetfulness" is even worse. Within an hour or so after walking out of the concert hall, I often couldn't recall the exact character of certain sounds. I couldn't reconstruct them in my mind's ear. In short, if I was going to use my ears as test instruments, I had to find ways to make them hold their calibration.

Luckily, there are telltale factors in the tone of various instruments that can be mentally isolated from the general sonic mélange. Later, when you are evaluating a loudspeaker, they can then be called upon to serve as indicators of quality. In my own critical listening

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evaluations I rely on five such tonal criteria: strings, brass, percussion, organ, and full orchestra with piano. Each of these reveals a particular performance factor in a speaker, and if some of these tests partially overlap, it does no harm. On the contrary, it allows one test to corroborate another.

My first and most important step in approaching a strange speaker is to listen to its reproduction of massed strings. The string serenades by Dvořák and Tchaikovsky are excellent for this test. I listen for the silky sheen in the violins, the somber gutsiness of the violas, and the solidity and weight in the sound of cellos and contrabass. There should be no harshness. The strings of a good orchestra should come across with a clear, smooth brilliance, yet without any trace of stridency. Of course, I pick a record that is not too closely miked, for close miking (much in vogue these days) imparts a piercing hardness to almost any sound. With tone controls and the speaker's tweeter-level controls in their neutral positions—whatever that might be—I watch for any rough or harsh aspect in the overall sound. A peak as small as 3 dB in the critical range between 3,000 and 12,000 Hz can roughen the texture of sound. If a particular speaker has this roughness and it cannot be corrected with a slight downward nudge of the tweeter-level control or a change of speaker location in the room, I would not consider buying that speaker.

I also listen carefully to the balance between highs and lows, especially in passages where cellos and basses play the bottom line in octaves. The natural richness of such lower sounds should emerge with a proper sense of sonority and depth, yet without the boominess characteristic of speakers in which the lower range is hyped up by false emphasis in the region between 80 and 150 Hz. If, on the other hand, the sound is thin and unconvincing, with an unnatural predominance of the higher-pitched instruments, chances are the speaker is inherently deficient in the range below 100 Hz (as are many of the so-called minispeakers), which would render it unfit for serious listening.

I usually follow the massed strings with some chamber music—preferably a Haydn quartet—to check the same factors in addition to one other. Aside from liking Haydn, I find that his fairly uncomplicated style makes it easy for me to single out the sound of the viola. This instrument, more than the others,

occupies that crucial region of the sonic spectrum in which crossover networks do their shifting and shunting of musical frequencies. Spurious dips or rises in the overall response of the speaker because of improperly designed crossover networks sometimes reveal themselves in unnatural changes of timbre in various segments of the viola range. The viola sonatas by Brahms also serve as excellent indicators of this.

The conclusions I draw from the sound of brass instruments are corroborative of those obtained from listening to the higher strings. Essentially, it is a check for smoothness in the upper range. A well-recorded trumpet (played back by a phono cartridge without mistacking) should combine metallic brightness with a certain sweetness of sound. A poor speaker is likely to obscure that sweetness by making the sound too harsh. Such harshness should never be confused with brilliance, and a tinny and grating trumpet sound is usually the sign of a ragged tweeter.

Percussion provides the most palpable index to a speaker's transient response, which, in turn, is a good clue to its ability to maintain clarity even in complex sound textures. I listen for the clearly defined impact of the stick against the drumskin and for sharpness in the sound of woodblocks. The low pedal notes of the pipe organ alert me to the speaker's competence in the region below 40 Hz. Only the best speakers do justice to low bass, and only the best discs contain much sonic information in that range. But I have a few organ recordings with an honest 32-Hz low C—a truly awesome note that is felt through the skin as much as heard through the ear. A speaker that can convey this sensation without falsely transforming most of the radiated energy to the octave above (frequency doubling) will lend a feeling of richness and solidity to the sound of any music.

When evaluating a speaker, I invariably play a full-blown Romantic piano concerto—the Brahms No. 2 being my favorite in this genre. It combines all the factors I have pointed out so far as elements of musical sound (with the piano providing the transients) and blends them into the sonority of a large ensemble. I watch for the speaker's ability to present the aggregate aura of the ensemble while leaving sonic detail and the character of the various instruments properly defined. In particular, I observe the speaker's ability to distinguish the piano clearly from the orchestral mass when they all play together. A good speaker must resolve such complex aural textures without blurring their constituent details into a glob of homogenized sound. Of course, the re-

ording itself partly determines the resolution of sonic detail. But when playing the identical recording on several different speakers, the factors inherent in the recording remain constant, leaving the speaker's acoustical resolution to be judged as a variable.

I have left one of the most important aspects to the last. In all these listening tests I walk in front of the speaker from one side of the room to the other to get an idea of its treble dispersion. If the timbres remain fairly constant regardless of my position relative to the speaker, I would consider this aspect of speaker performance satisfactory. As a rule, uniform treble dispersion over a broad angle correlates with the open and airy sound I happen to prefer. My taste in this matter is not universally shared, but my liking for very-wide-dispersion or multidirectional speakers correlates with my preference for balcony seats at concerts. This is not surprising since it is in those seats that I calibrate my ears, which, as I told you, remain my final test instrument.



**Peter W. Mitchell**

**"Offhand, I can readily count at least twenty speaker models that I could live comfortably with. . . ."**

**C**HOOSING a pair of first-class loudspeakers is harder than picking a good amplifier or tuner. Speakers are much more variable in quality, their audible performance depends a great deal on the environment you are auditioning them in, and measured specifications don't provide as much help in sorting out the differences between speakers as they do in comparisons of other components.

When I'm shopping for speakers I like to begin by making my own measurements. Using a pink-noise generator to feed each speaker under consideration and standing about three feet in front of the grille cloth with an Ivie handheld real-time spectrum analyzer, I can obtain a very fast indication of the overall frequency response of each speaker under consideration. This measurement absolutely does *not* define the difference between merely good speakers and great ones. Its value is that it rapidly identifies speakers

with major response errors, so that they can immediately be eliminated from further consideration and your listening tests can be concentrated on speakers that show up as reasonably accurate. Of course, flat response is not the only ingredient of a good speaker, but it is a *necessary* ingredient; a speaker that is inaccurate can't be first-rate, no matter how good it seems in other respects.

The spectrum analyzer is also a remarkable educational tool. By correlating what it measures with what your ears hear, you can learn a lot about the frequency distribution of sound. It's worth the effort that it may take to arrange to borrow or rent a spectrum analyzer, or even to get together with a few other audiophiles to buy and share one.

But if this is just wishful thinking, if getting temporary use of a spectrum analyzer is just not practicable for you, then you'll have to rely on listening tests alone. Even with an analyzer, of course, you still have to turn to listening tests to make your selection from among the speakers that measure well; the analyzer only provides quick identification of obviously faulty designs. How, then, do you pick out a superior loudspeaker using your ears, if those ears haven't been trained by many years of analytical listening?

The traditional answer is that you begin by going to a concert to familiarize yourself with the sound of live music, then use that as a mental reference while listening to speakers in the showroom. Unfortunately, while I enthusiastically applaud any motivation that will get attentive listeners into concert halls, I don't believe that is very helpful advice for the speaker shopper. Aural memory is usually too short to survive a night's sleep or exposure to loud traffic noises while traveling to the store. Besides, microphones—even those used in the best recordings—don't "hear" the way people do, and no two-channel stereo system can faithfully reproduce the experience of hearing live music in the same acoustic environment with the musicians.

The practical answer is that you need a sonic reference in the store. No loudspeaker is good enough to be an "absolute" reference for sound quality, of course, but it is useful to educate your ears by listening to the finest systems available in the store. Learn to recognize some of their characteristics: solid deep-bass sound without thick mid-bass boom; an airy, spacious stereo image; solo voices that stand out clearly from the background; clear reproduction of the inner details in complex sounds, without the harshness that comes from exaggerated or peaky treble output.

Then, when you start listening to speakers at the price you want to pay, try to identify those models that have comparable excellence in the areas that matter most to you. This is where personal preference comes in: obviously you are not going to find a pair of \$200 speakers that match a \$2,000 pair in *every* way. But in a universe of speakers that reflect differing sets of design objectives and practical compromises, you *can* find a pair whose strengths match your preferences and whose weaknesses don't bother you much.

While your final choice will ultimately depend on how the loudspeakers sound when reproducing a variety of well-made recordings in stereo, there are a few simple diagnostic tests that can help to narrow down the choices. To check the dispersion of the tweeter, tune to a blank spot between FM stations (with the interstation muting off) or play a blank cassette tape with the Dolby off and the volume turned up; rotate the balance control so that only one speaker in a pair is playing, and move around while listening to the hiss. Even with very good tweeters the hiss will be somewhat duller off to the side (off-axis) than directly in front of the speaker, but if the sound changes radically over an angle of 45 degrees or so, that speaker loses points in my book.

Equally important, in my judgment, is a test for uniform midrange dispersion. Play a recording that features a closely miked solo voice singing pop ballads or folk songs, and again listen to just one speaker, noting how the vocal timbre changes as you move off-axis. Any coloration that you hear in the speaker's off-axis sound is likely to become a part of its tonal character when you get the speakers home because in typically semi-reflective living rooms the off-axis output contributes much more to a speaker's sound than it does in the acoustically absorptive environment of the average dealer showroom.

Some dispersion problems can be predicted from a simple formula: the highest frequency at which a driver can have wide dispersion is approximately 12,000 Hz divided by the diameter of the diaphragm (cone or dome) in inches. Thus a "10-inch" woofer with an actual cone diameter of 7.5 inches can work well up to about 1,600 Hz.

Another test requires moving the two speakers of a pair together to eliminate any disparities in room acoustics. Switch the amplifier into mono and rotate the balance control back and forth while you listen for any differences in sound between the two speakers in the pair. The better the matching of the two speakers in a pair, the better their stereo imaging is likely to be.

Finally, and perhaps most important, even before you go to the store to begin listening to speakers you should think about *where* in your room you want to place the speakers, and you should choose speakers designed for that location. As speaker manufacturer Roy Allison pointed out in the June issue of *STEREO REVIEW*, the bass and lower-midrange output of any speaker is substantially affected by its location relative to major reflecting surfaces (walls, floor, etc.), and this will be true in the store's showroom as well as in your living room. It is silly to undo a speaker designer's best work by stuffing into a corner a speaker that was designed to be free-standing, or vice versa. If you are comparing two bookshelf speakers and one is closer to the floor, its midrange tonality will unavoidably be affected by that proximity; ask your dealer to place them at the same height before you compare them.

One last word: if you find it difficult to determine with certainty which speaker is the absolute "best," don't worry about it. Speaker design and manufacturing have improved a lot in recent years, and there are many fine models to choose from. Offhand, I can readily count at least twenty speaker models that I could live comfortably with—and I'm not easily satisfied.



Ralph Hodges

"... the most accurate speaker you encounter is likely to be the one that varies most ... from one recording to another."

**T**HE goal of all high-fidelity equipment is the accurate reproduction of sound, and the accuracy of equipment is often measured in "live-vs.-recorded" tests. With only a little advance preparation you too can make such tests while shopping for speakers.

Collar a friend (preferably an adult male), take him to some outdoor site that is very quiet, and record his speaking voice at length onto an ordinary cassette. Use *only* an omnidirectional microphone, never a cardioid, and position it a foot or so in front of his face. (The microphones built into portable cassette recorders are generally omnidirectional, and most of them should serve nicely.) Insist that your friend

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speak conversationally, without declaiming, and that he keep his voice at a normal level comfortable for indoor discourse. Avoid speaking yourself. Then pocket the tape and take it and your friend with you when you go shopping.

When your tape is played through the speakers you are auditioning, they will attempt to mimic the voice of your friend who is standing right there for comparison purposes. Of course, this primitive "live-vs.-recorded" test will be misleading unless your tape recording is reasonably accurate. However, within certain limitations, today's hand-held recorders and their tiddly-wink electret microphones can do a reasonable job. In fact, don't be surprised if they perform with more accuracy than many of the speakers you listen to. But be prepared to accept the fact that if most of the speakers in the store fail to provide a reasonable facsimile of your friend's voice, the tape is suspect.

Even though the voice recording is mono, have it played back on one of the store's better stereo decks set up so that its output can be switched from speaker to speaker. It's instructive to hear it both from stereo pairs of speakers and from just one speaker at a time. Begin with two-speaker reproduction and then rotate the balance control so as to hear each speaker individually, noting any sonic differences between them. This will begin to familiarize you with the influence of local acoustical environments on speakers. That influence will hamper your judgments all along, but you'll have to try to make allowances for it.

As you listen, the things you'll want to be alert for are (1) any spurious fullness or chestiness in the recorded voice and (2) any roughness or raggedness imparted to the vocal timbre. Overfullness is built into the response of some speakers because it makes music sound warm and rich and therefore more agreeable to many people. But that doesn't make it right. Roughness in the handling of voice timbre, indicative of irregularities in midrange response, will be somewhat tougher to evaluate. Whether the reproduced voice sounds a bit brighter or duller than the actual voice is not the issue here. That could easily be on the tape, as could a mild emphasis of vocal sibilance. What you should listen for (and reject) is anything that sounds distinctly grating and falsifying and which, in extreme cases, will affect speech intelligibility. Learning to distinguish between relative de-

grees of rough and smooth takes some practice, but it will pay off.

If your budget allows for investment in some truly extended deep-bass response, I know of no test material, given the vagaries of room acoustics, that will enable you to evaluate it infallibly. However, a well-recorded orchestral bass drum is probably as good as any and better than most. The drum, while

### FURTHER READING

**T**HERE have been many books written on the subject of speaker selection, but you will not often see them in your neighborhood book store. We have listed three below, all of which cover the basics of loudspeaker construction and design theory. You can order the books directly from the publishers by mail or telephone using a credit card for payment. Also be sure to ask for their catalogs, since all three companies publish many books about hi-fi and consumer electronics.

□ *How to Select and Use Loudspeakers and Enclosures*, by Murray P. Rosenthal (Catalog Number 0831-7), \$5.50, Hayden Book Company, Rochelle Park, N.J. 07662. Books can be ordered by mail or by phone; the number is (800) 631-0856 for all except New Jersey and overseas customers, who can call (201) 843-0550. Prepaid mail orders will not be charged for shipping.

□ *Stereo High-Fidelity Speaker Systems*, by Art Zukerman (Catalog Number 21514), \$6.95, Howard W. Sams & Company, 4300 West 62nd Street, Indianapolis, Ind. 46268. Order by mail or telephone (800) 428-3696; Indiana and overseas customers should call (317) 298-5400. Add \$2 for postage and handling.

□ *How to Select and Install your own Speakers*, by Norman Crowhurst (Catalog Number 1034), \$6.95, Tab Books, Blue Ridge Summit, Pa. 17214. Order by mail or phone (717) 794-2191. No shipping charge on prepaid mail orders.

not seeming especially loud to the ears, should make your viscera vibrate a little. Its sound, a heavy "BUMmmn" that is more of a throb than a note, should have a quality of tautness to it. This is often lacking on multimicrophone recordings, but is well represented on a number of available audiophile recordings made with fewer microphones. See what the store has on hand. If a speaker that sounds natural on your friend's voice recording can also shake you up with the big drum, its

credentials as a reasonably accurate low-frequency reproducer are probably in order. (Do not confuse the orchestral bass drum with the "kick drum" of dance bands. The two instruments differ in character and are usually recorded differently too.)

Sophistication in extreme-high-frequency performance is probably the most difficult loudspeaker attribute to pin down. It is affected by the competence of your tape recorder or phono cartridge as well as by occasional faults in other associated equipment and in the program material itself. To start, it's necessary to learn to recognize the presence of extreme highs. They are not musical when heard alone because the ear does not distinguish pitch at such high registers. But when properly balanced with the rest of the audio spectrum, they contribute a sense of openness that is essential to realism.

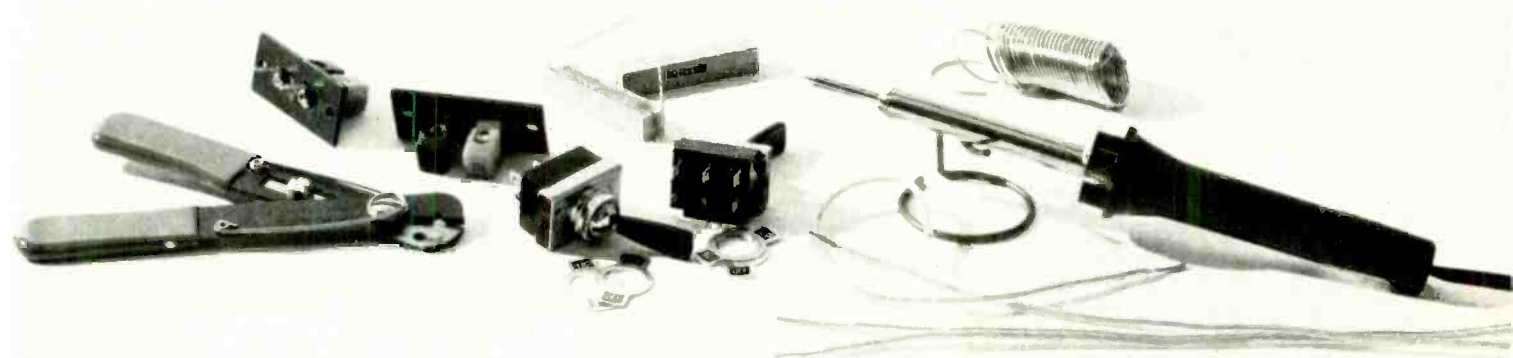
Paradoxically, a slightly dirty record can be a great tip-off to whether a speaker system has very clean highs. The tick of each dust particle as it encounters the stylus is an impulse lavishly endowed with extreme-high-frequency content, and it should sound crisp, dry, and sharply delineated from the music. Each tick should be clearly distinct from the others virtually to the point of seeming to be countable. And while the ticks should be plainly audible, they should also sound somewhat delicate in character, never sharp or hashy. Above all, they should not interfere with your perception of the music, but seem to stand a bit apart from it. (Remember, however, that these are the desired results with a *slightly* dirty record, not one coated with grime.)

**A**s a general rule, the most accurate speaker that you encounter is likely to be the one that varies most in sound quality from one recording to another. The reason is that an inaccurate speaker tints everything played through it with its own fixed, built-in colorations, while a perfectly accurate speaker has no colorations to tint with and consequently all you hear is the record and its differences from other records.

Finally, do not assume that there is any necessary correlation between accuracy and price. There are lots of good inexpensive speakers. And even the best, such as full-range electrostatics, can be made to sound extremely colored by a room with very poor acoustic qualities or if their placement within a room happens to be unfortunate. Particularly if you are considering a high-ticket system, I would press for an at-home trial before making a final decision, just in case the speakers and your listening room cannot get along. □

# Seven simple circuits for **SPEAKER SWITCHING**

by speaker specialist Roy Allison



**C**ONNECTING additional pairs of speakers to a stereo system is an inexpensive way to increase the system's utility—rather like having extension telephones installed in several rooms. To that end, nearly every integrated amplifier and receiver is equipped with a speaker-selector switch and output-connection terminals for two (or more) pairs of speakers. These switching circuits are arranged so that either pair of speakers can be played alone or both pairs can be played together.

Although built-in speaker-selector circuits are certainly convenient and useful, they have some limitations. First, only two sets of speakers can usually be accommodated. Second, each of the two pairs of speakers should have a rated impedance of at least 8 ohms. This second limitation needs further explanation. With very few exceptions, receivers (and amplifiers) do not like a total speaker load in each channel with an impedance of much less than 4 ohms. A load of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ohms is generally tolerated well, but if the load is appreciably less the receiver may overheat and shut itself off when driven hard, or it may misbehave in more unfortunate ways—damaging itself, the speakers, or both. Note that speakers labeled 8 ohms may actually present less than that impedance over much of the audio-frequency range. If the amp runs espe-

cially hot when driving two sets of speakers, it is not happy with the load they present.

In the "A + B" setting of a receiver's speaker selector the speakers on each channel are connected in parallel; the total impedance is then lower than that of *either* speaker alone. If a pair of 8-ohm and a pair of 4-ohm speakers are connected to the receiver, their impedance together in the "A + B" setting is  $2\frac{2}{3}$  ohms, which is too low. The impedance of two 4-ohm speakers in parallel is even lower (2 ohms). Only if each of the two speakers is at least 8 ohms does the combined impedance (4 ohms) meet the required minimum value.

**I**T might be asked why loudspeaker systems of less than 8 ohms impedance are made at all in view of the awkward amplifier load they present when used with another speaker on the same channel. The answer is that *when used alone*, a 4-ohm speaker has a significant advantage: it can extract considerably more power from a receiver or an amplifier than an 8-ohm speaker can. Typically, a receiver rated at, say, 20 watts per channel into 8 ohms can deliver 30 watts per channel into 4 ohms. In any case, there are many good 4- or 6-ohm speakers that people would like to use with other speakers in the same stereo system. Also, some people would

like to connect three or more pairs of speakers to one system. What can they do? There are two options.

One option is to use a universal multiple-speaker switch box, such as the Adcom GFS-1, Niles SPS-1, Phase Linear 190, or Russound SWG-3. These provide very convenient connect-or terminals and switching facilities for three or four pairs of speakers at a price of less than \$100. But because they are meant to be used with any combination of speaker pairs of any impedance, the *user* must decide when the total impedance of the speakers he wishes to connect is less than 4 ohms and in that case switch in a protective resistor. The resistor is then inserted in series with the speaker combination. Its resistance is large enough (3 ohms) to maintain a 4-ohm impedance for the worst-case combination of speakers, but for any other combination it is higher than necessary. In most cases, therefore, more amplifier power is wasted in the resistor than there would be if its value were optimized for the speaker combination being used.

These disadvantages are eliminated with the other option: building, or having someone build for you, a switching circuit tailored specifically for *your* combination of speaker pairs. No series resistance is added when it isn't needed;

*(Continued overleaf and on page 58)*

# SPEAKER SWITCHING...

Figure 1. Switch connections for two pairs of 8-ohm speakers. Switches: two double-pole, double-throw (DPDT) toggle switches (Radio Shack 275-652 or the equivalent).

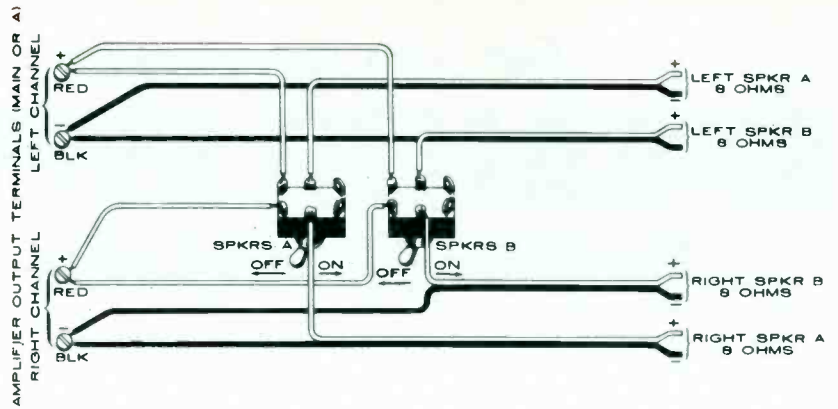


Figure 2. For one pair of 8-ohm and one pair of 4-ohm speakers. Switches: two four-pole, double-throw (4PDT) toggle switches (Alco MTA-406N or equivalent), or four DPDT toggle switches. Resistors: R1 and R2, 2 ohms; R3 and R4, 3.3 ohms. All resistors 5 per cent wirewound with minimum wattage rating equal to 10 per cent of the amplifier power rating.

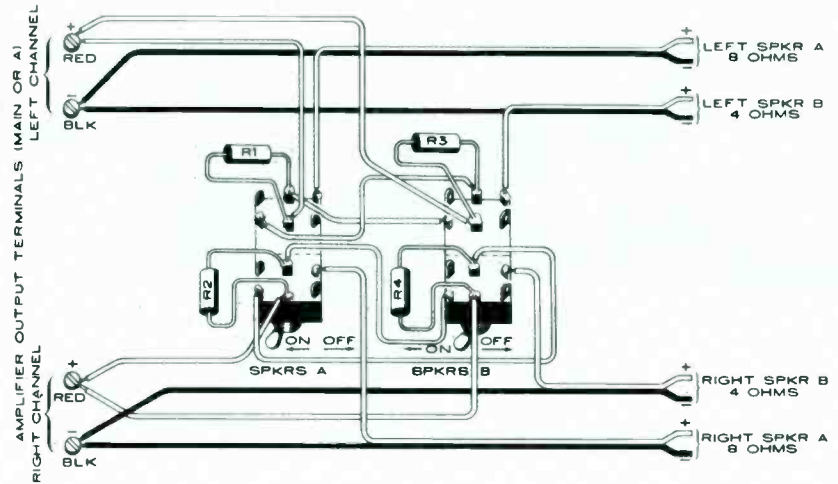


Figure 3. For two non-identical pairs of 4-ohm speakers. Switches: two four-pole, double-throw (4PDT) toggle switches (Alco MTA-406N or equivalent), or four DPDT toggle switches. Resistors: R1, R2, R3, and R4, 3.3 ohms. All resistors 5 per cent wirewound with minimum wattage rating equal to 10 per cent of the amplifier power rating.

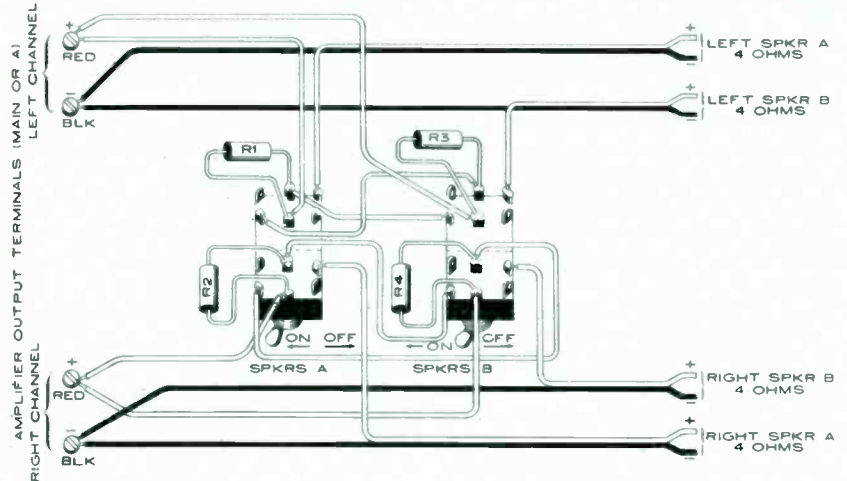
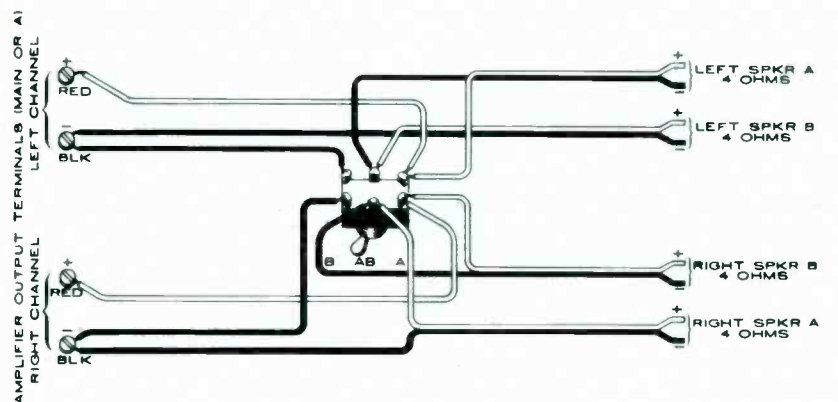


Figure 4. For two pairs of identical 4-ohm speakers. Switch: one double-pole, double-throw center-off-type toggle switch (Radio Shack 275-653 or 275-1533 or the equivalent).





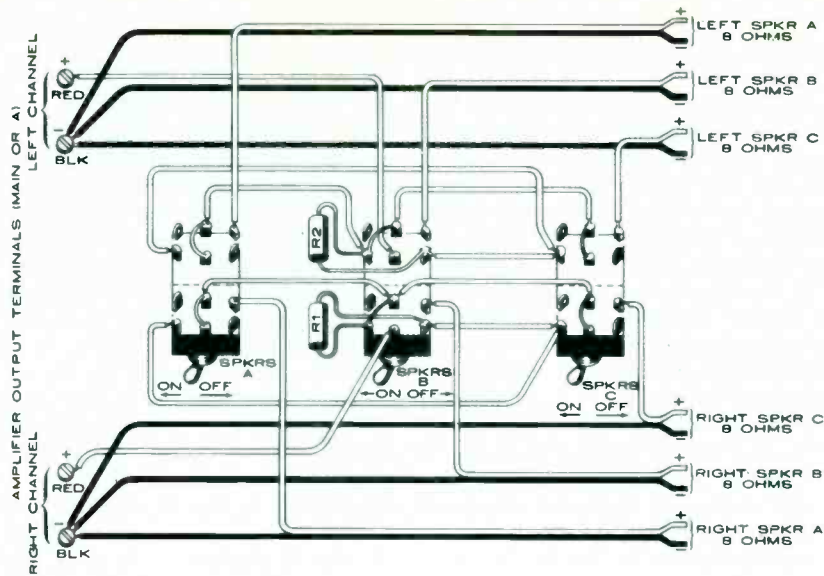


Figure 5. For three pairs of 8-ohm speakers. Switches: three four-pole, double-throw (4PDT) toggle switches (Alco MTA-406N or equivalent), or six DPDT toggle switches. Resistors: R1 and R2, 1 ohm. All resistors 5 per cent wirewound with minimum wattage rating equal to 10 per cent of amplifier power rating.

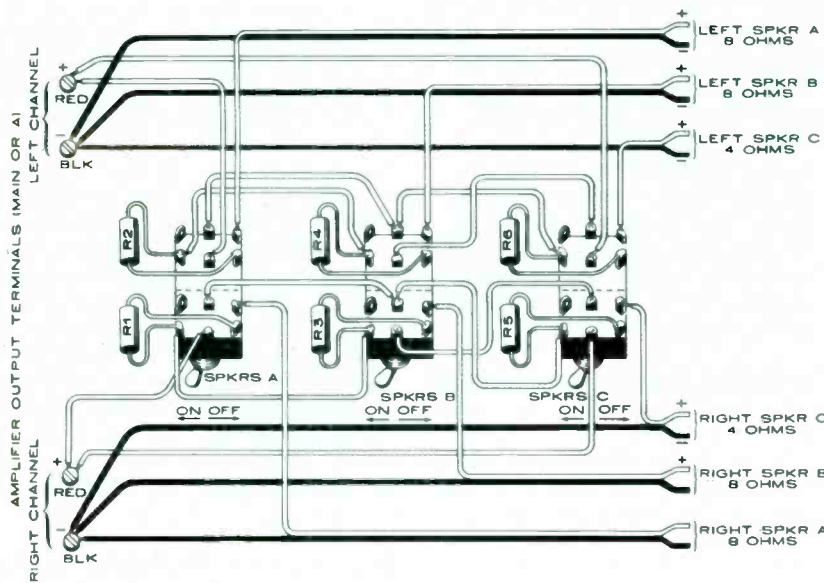


Figure 6. For two pairs of 8-ohm and one pair of 4-ohm speakers. Switches: three four-pole, double-throw (4PDT) toggle switches (Alco MTA-406N or equivalent), or six DPDT toggle switches. Resistors: R1, R2, R3, and R4, 3.3 ohms; R5 and R6, 2 ohms. All resistors 5 per cent wirewound, with minimum wattage rating equal to 10 per cent of amplifier power rating.

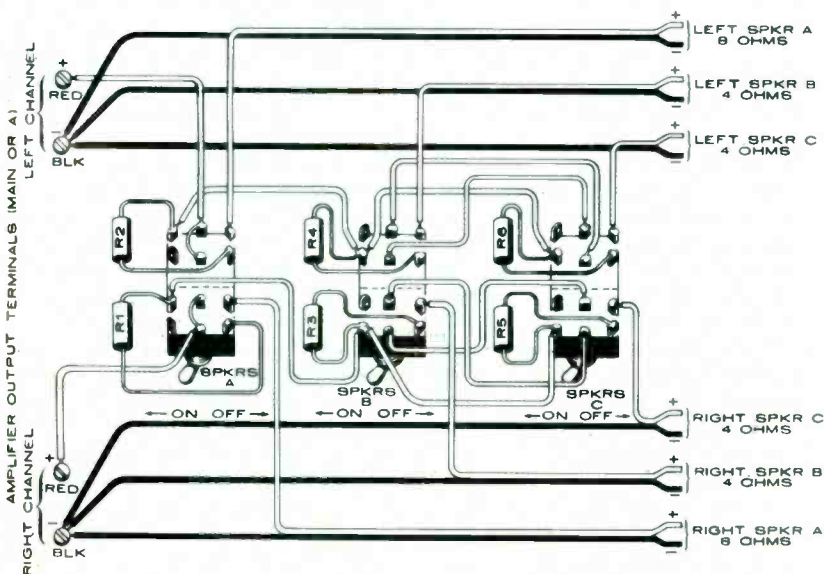


Figure 7. For one pair of 8-ohm and two pairs of 4-ohm speakers. Switches: three four-pole, double-throw (4PDT) toggle switches (Alco MTA-406N or equivalent), or six DPDT toggle switches. Resistors: R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, and R6, 3.3 ohms. All resistors 5 per cent wirewound with minimum wattage rating equal to 10 per cent of amplifier power rating.

# SPEAKER SWITCHING...

when it is needed, the minimum resistance necessary for the job is used; and, finally, that resistance is inserted in the circuit automatically as you turn speaker pairs on or off. Wiring diagrams for such circuits are shown on the two pages preceding.

**F**IGURE 1, for two pairs of 8-ohm speakers, is essentially the same as the usual built-in speaker-selector circuit. It is shown for the benefit of anyone whose receiver or amplifier doesn't have such a selector circuit and who wishes to use this combination of speakers. The switches control speaker pairs A and B independently. Both can be turned on at the same time.

Figure 2 is a little more complicated because one of the two pairs of speakers is 4 ohms. When either pair of speakers is turned on alone, no resistors are in the circuit. When both switches are turned on, resistors of different values are inserted in series with both sets of speakers. The values are chosen so that all speakers receive equal power and, at the same time, the total load impedance is maintained at approximately 4 ohms.

Figures 3 and 4 are both for two pairs of 4-ohm speakers, but different wiring systems are used according to whether the pairs are or are not identical. If the pairs are identical they can be connected in series in the "A + B" mode (making an 8-ohm total load without any added resistors) as in Figure 4. There will be no compromise in performance whatsoever because the two systems have the same impedance at all frequencies; therefore, the power delivered to each speaker at every frequency will be in exact proportion to the power it would receive if it were connected to the amplifier alone. (Note the use of a center-off-type switch.)

If the speakers are *not* identical, however, they should not be connected in series. Their impedance-vs.-frequency curves will be different, and in a series connection this would alter the frequency response of each pair more than series resistors would. Figure 3, a variation of Figure 2 in that the resistor combination is different, is recommended for two pairs of non-identical 4-ohm speakers.

Figures 5 through 7 are for three sets of speakers with various impedance combinations. (The only combination not provided for is three pairs of 4-ohm

speakers. It is possible to do this properly, but a far more complicated switch assembly than any shown here is needed.) In Figure 5, resistors are inserted only when all three sets of speakers are turned on. In Figure 6, resistors are inserted only when the 4-ohm speaker switch and at least one other are turned on together. And in Figure 7, resistors are in the circuit only when at least two pairs of speakers are turned on together. All three pairs in each circuit can be played at the same time; resistance values change automatically as needed to keep the total impedance seen by the receiver close to 4 ohms.

It is true that an appreciable value of resistance placed in series with a speaker will change its frequency response. The audible effect is a slight boost in bass output, and occasionally there is a

**O**RDINARY 18-gauge plastic or rubber-insulated lamp cord ("zip cord") is perfectly suitable for use in wiring speaker systems provided the wire length is not more than 30 feet or so. For longer runs, 16-gauge zip cord or heavier-gauge wire should be used. Both sizes of zip cord are available at most electrical and hardware stores.

slight boost in the region of the woofer/tweeter or woofer/midrange crossover. But keep in mind that this happens only when multiple sets of speakers are turned on, and in those circumstances the music is usually for background listening. Serious, attentive listening is generally done with only one pair of speakers playing.

Playing two or three sets of speakers at loud levels in different parts of the house will double or triple the amplifier-power requirement above that needed for one pair of speakers at the same level. (An amplifier can easily be driven to clipping levels in such circumstances, possibly resulting in overload and damage to the tweeters. Keep an eye on your amplifier's power meters.) But if only one pair at a time is used for loud, serious listening, and if the speakers are all turned on at once only for background music, it will not be necessary to increase the power above that required for a single pair.

The switches can be mounted on a panel in your system or on the front panel of a small box. Most hobby electronics stores sell small plastic or sheet-

metal boxes intended for custom-built projects such as these. Connections to the amplifier and to the speakers are best made via binding posts or barrier strips (carried by Radio Shack) mounted on the back of the board or on another panel of the box. If you install the circuit in a box, leave the back open or cut ventilation holes in it so that the resistors (if used) can dissipate heat.

Be sure to insulate the bare-wire jumpers and resistor leads with electrical tape or thin-plastic "spaghetti" tubing where there is any danger of a short circuit. In making connections, the insulation should be stripped off the ends of the wires for a distance of  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch, and the strands of each wire should then be twisted together. If you have a soldering iron, it is a good idea to tin (solder) the ends of the wires slightly to keep loose strands from causing short circuits.

One wire of the pair is usually coded by some means—a colored thread inside the plastic insulation or a ridge or flat edge along the outside. Some types of zip cord have one conductor colored silver and the other copper. If a particular coded wire of the pair (the black wire in the diagrams) is connected as shown from the switch lug or black amplifier terminal to the black terminal on all speakers, the phasing of the speaker systems will be uniform and correct. One switch lug can be connected to another, when required, with any type of insulated hookup wire or with short lengths of zip cord. Note that not all of the switch-wiring diagrams show the most "expeditious" connections; feel free to take short cuts if you know what you're doing.

**I**f you have trouble obtaining the four-pole switches, you can substitute a pair of double-pole switches and use them as a single four-pole unit by flipping the two toggles together. Mechanical toggle couplers can sometimes be found in parts stores. Double-pole double-throw and double-pole center-off switches are carried by Radio Shack. Toggle switches are available with either screw-terminal lugs or solder lugs. You can use either type, but if you have to attach more than one wire to a screw terminal, twist the bare ends of the wires together before wrapping them clockwise around the screw threads. To make a connection to a solder-lug terminal, put the bare-wire end through the lug and wrap it around one side, then solder it. If more than one wire must be attached to a lug, attach both wires before soldering the first one. And be certain to use radio solder (rosin core), *not* acid-core solder, for all wiring connections. □

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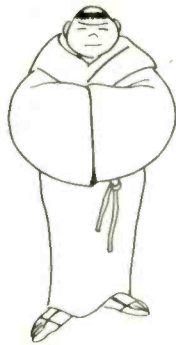
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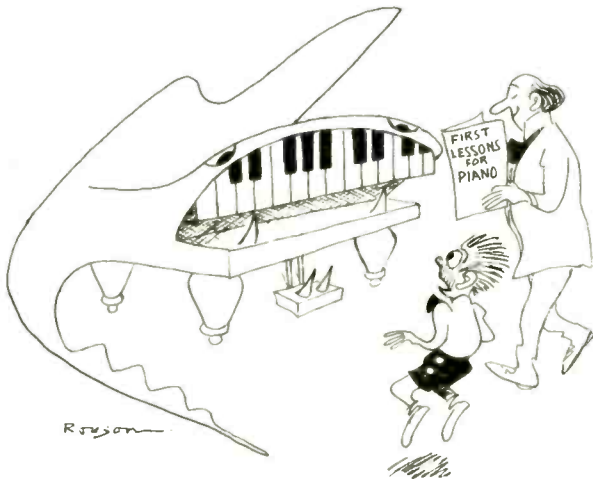
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# ROUSON'S





# Keyboards



# STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

## BEST OF THE MONTH



### • Dolly Parton in Full Flower •

**B**IG CHANGES, for most of us, often involve a 360-degree turnaround. You wind up pointed in the original direction, but it looks significantly different now that you have faced, however briefly, every other possible direction. So it seems to be going, artistically, with Dolly Parton. What she's doing in her new RCA album, "Heartbreak Express," appears to be a better-informed, more sophisticated charting of her original course. In plain talk, the album is more country than the last two or three. What was special about her brilliant, primitive *Mule Skinner Blues* years ago is what's special about these new performances.

Country music, it must be noted, has met Dolly somewhere near the halfway mark—or at least the public's perception of it has. She is surely more worldly in "Heartbreak Express" than she was in the *Coat of Many Colors* days, but then so is the rest of country music. The kicker, in both cases, is that worldliness never holds much sway over emotion, and "Heartbreak Express," more than any Dolly Parton album in years, deals with feelings.

In sound as well as in content, the album is a blend of sophistication-through-exposure and the regional-isolationist imprint we call "country." The opening cut, the title song, is introduced by a downtown saxophone balanced against the standard harmonica train lick from Terry McMillan. Elsewhere there is slickness tempered by genuinely felt playing and singing, and *such* singing—Dolly does everything to a song but turn it a-loose, as they say in

Sevierville. Her voice is in full flower with this program (which includes a couple of her older songs, *My Blue Ridge Mountain Boy* and *Barbara on Your Mind*, and an eight-beat recasting of the country standard *Release Me*), a unique mountain wildflower of a voice on a tour de force.

Dolly has said she was always uncomfortable with how her voice sounded when she heard it played back, and, well, it *does* make one uncomfortable, though not, I suspect, in the way *she* means: her natural vibrato is haunt-

**DOLLY PARTON: *Heartbreak Express*.** Dolly Parton (vocals); Eddy Anderson (drums); Ron Oates (keyboards); Lee Sklar (bass); Fred Tackett, Albert Lee (guitars); other musicians. *Heartbreak Express*; *Single Women*; *My Blue Ridge Mountain Boy*; *As Much As Always*; *Do I Ever Cross Your Mind*; *Release Me*; *Barbara on Your Mind*; *Act Like a Fool*; *Prime of Our Love*; *Hollywood Potters*. RCA AHL1-4289 \$8.98, © AHK1-4289 \$8.98, ® AHS1-4289 \$8.98.

ing, and on the right note it can send chills up your spine. And then there's the way she goes from a low note or a pause to a hair-raising high note (there's a sample of this in *Hollywood Potters*, among other places), hitting

that sucker dead center with such energy and at the same time such control that it can make a listener sit bolt upright. But, fortunately, being uncomfortable in these ways is not a bad thing; it's what we variously call kicks and pleasures, and I hope it's one of the main reasons we still listen to records. This album is so full of Dolly Parton licks that it suggests she has made some sort of accommodation to her voice or is resigned to getting the most out of her discomfort. But the best thing about it, compared with the other recent albums, is that Dolly sounds like she *means* it. She has reached 'way down and put the deeper part of herself into every one of these songs.

The choice of material is no doubt pertinent. All of these songs would be welcome (now) in New York, but a kicker in East Tennessee would not feel alienated from a single one. As far as quality goes, a couple may be predictable, but none are weak. The title song, a new one by Parton, stands out a little because of its pace and aggressiveness, but it's hard for me to pick a favorite; this is one of those rare albums in which I like at least something about every cut. The backing is by a combo with one foot in Nashville and the other in L.A., and it fills up all the spaces without overlapping too much. Like the singer, this band is drawn by the emotional authority of the songs into being sweet and sentimental and pretty and not worrying about how hip it is. The production is a little slick, but it does present everything with clarity and it catches Dolly's whole voice (a difficult

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"... more of the vocal art going on here than the ordinary person can keep track of."

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Dolly Parton  
(Photo: Charlyn Zlotnik)

one to mike) about as well as any recording I can recall.

If you grew up, as I did, with the idea that singers are not like you and me, that singing voices are special, mysterious, a little foreign, capable of non-ordinary feats, this album will resonate. Dolly's extraordinary singing style is what it's really about, and there is simply more of the vocal art going on here than the ordinary person can keep track of, which means that one can listen to it again and again and keep making discoveries. You can come on home, Dolly. I reckon we're just going have to forgive you for them disco records.

—Noel Coppage

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## Timeless Family Jazz: Wynton, Branford, and Ellis Marsalis plus Chico and Von Freeman

**F**ATHERS AND SONS" is a new Columbia album that brings together the Freemans and the Marsalises, two fine but separate father-and-son teams assembled specifically for this occasion. Jazz has not had many father-and-son teams, for when a family produced good players in two generations a wall of stylistic difference usually prevented their performing together. If that situation is now changing, it is because jazz has not undergone a significant stylistic transformation for several generations.

If there ever is to be a new direction for jazz, it had better be found soon, and don't be surprised if there is a Freeman or Marsalis among its discoverers. As Gary Giddins observes in his perceptive notes for "Fathers and Sons," there is here a kind of reversal of roles, a case of a younger generation gaining prominence, then reaching back to share the spotlight with its elders.

Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis arrived on the jazz scene very recently, but he has already established for himself the kind of reputation most musicians can only dream of. At twenty-one, his brother Branford is a year older and—despite stints with Art Blakey and Clark Terry—not as well known, but that might soon change. Their father, pianist Ellis Marsalis (whose admiration for Wynton Kelly is obviously not reflected only in his playing) has been known locally in New Orleans for a number of years; in 1962, he and this

session's drummer, James Black, recorded with Nat and Cannonball Adderley for Riverside (the album was reissued on Milestone in 1971), and in 1967 Ellis began a three-year stint with Al Hirt. These brushes with fame notwithstanding, Ellis Marsalis might have remained just a local star were it not for the success of his tutorial efforts with his sons.

Saxophonist Chico Freeman has been on the scene longer than the Marsalis brothers, but the spotlight in which he deservedly basks gets ever brighter. Chico's father, Von Freeman, has maintained a high reputation in Chicago since the Forties; top musicians have praised him over the years, but the record companies and booking agents have not seen fit to introduce his kaleidoscopic saxophone style to a wider public. Von Freeman *did* record an album ten years ago (produced by the late Rahsaan Roland Kirk), and the small Chicago label Nessa has squeezed two releases out of a 1975 session, but he remains a relatively obscure player.

This new album is, of course, based on a kind of gimmick, but the result happens to justify the means, and both groups generate sounds that rise gloriously above the occasion. The Marsalis side gets off to a flying start with *Twelve's It*, featuring lucid solos by the young Marsalis brothers and an eloquent input from their father that makes one wonder how he ever managed to fit into the Hirt herd. It is a great start, but things only get better as the side moves through three more Ellis Marsalis compositions to culminate in a

trio rendition of Billy Strayhorn's moving *Lush Life*.

As I have previously pointed out in these pages, Von Freeman's playing is erratic and often not as accessible as his son's, but the disparity is not glaring here because father and son approach each other's style and find a common ground. They swing superbly together on *Jug Ain't Gone*, a tribute to the late Gene Ammons that opens side two and obviously has its roots in Ammons' own *Walkin'* (Ammons' father, boogie-woogie pianist Albert Ammons, enjoyed equal stature as a jazz player). On the old Bunny Berigan hit *I Can't Get Started*, the elder Freeman demonstrates his mellower side *sans* offspring, and the remaining two Freeman cuts are equally splendid, my favorite being Chico's *Tribute to Our Fathers*, an energy-filled tour de force for all concerned. Among those concerned are, of course, the members of the rhythm section, a superlative one consisting of Kenny Barron, Cecil McBee, and Jack DeJohnette.

If you like good jazz, you will have a wonderful time at both of these family get-togethers. —Chris Albertson

**FATHERS AND SONS.** Wynton Marsalis (trumpet); Branford Marsalis (tenor saxophone); Ellis Marsalis (piano); Charles Fambrough (acoustic bass); James Black (drums): *Twelve's It*; *A Joy Forever*; *Nostalgic Impressions*; *Futuristic*; *Lush Life*. Von Freeman, Chico Freeman (tenor saxophones); Kenny Barron (piano); Cecil McBee (acoustic bass); Jack DeJohnette (drums): *Jug Ain't Gone*; *Time Marches On*; *I Can't Get Started*; *Tribute to Our Fathers*. COLUMBIA FC 37972. no list price.

FATHERS AND SONS: from the left, Von Freeman, Branford Marsalis, Wynton Marsalis, Chico Freeman, and Ellis Marsalis





## A New *Beggar's Opera*: At Once a Treat and A Circus, Irreverent But True to the Spirit

IT was Jonathan Swift, the English satirist and Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, who suggested the idea of *The Beggar's Opera* to John Gay in 1716, when the poet and playwright was down on his uppers. "What think you," Swift wrote, "of a Newgate Pastoral, among the Whores and Thieves there?" Gay took up the challenge, but when the play with music was completed in 1727, Swift, who had recently finished writing *Gulliver's Travels*, didn't care for it at all. London felt otherwise; when John Rich produced the "ballad opera" at his theater in Lincoln's Inn Fields, it was an instant success. Its satire was aimed at everything from Handel's Italian-style operas to marriage, lawyers, the methods of merchants, and Prime Minister Robert Walpole. John Christopher Pepusch hadn't actually written a score for it, just an overture and arrangements of English and Scottish ballads (including *Greensleeves*) that were popular at the time, but the public certainly took *The Beggar's Opera* to its bosom, and the work has stayed alive for centuries, with frequent performances not only at Covent Garden but all over the world. And, of course, the story served Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill to perfection for *Threepenny Opera*.

Frederick Austin's version of *The Beggar's Opera* is the one that has been the most widely performed in this century. Austin augmented the instrumentation and Arnold Bennett pruned the dialogue for the production, which opened at the Lyric Theatre in London in 1920 and packed them in for 1,463 performances. Almost fifty years later Sir Malcolm Sargent made a stereo recording of the Austin version (which he reorchestrated himself) with such distinguished participants as Elsie Morrison, John Cameron, Owen Brannigan, and Monica Sinclair. That delightful 1968 recording, with its fastidious interpretation of both play and music, is still available on the Seraphim label.

But the glittering performing version by Richard Bonyng and Douglas Gamley, adapted and directed for a new London digital recording by Anthony Besch, is something else again. It's at once a treat and a circus, with irreverent approaches to everything from the action to the songs, and if it bears only a passing resemblance to the



*The Beggar's Opera Burlesqued*, engraving after William Hogarth

original eighteenth-century opus, I think its spirit would have pleased both Gay and Pepusch, and possibly even the dubious Dean Swift. The principals handle the spoken dialogue very well. James Morris is perhaps too gentlemanly in his handling of Macheath's part (one can't help but remember Laurence Olivier's dashing rough-and-ready Macheath in the movie version), but Angela Lansbury (Mrs. Peachum), Alfred Mark (Mr. Peachum), Kiri Te Kanawa (Polly), Joan Sutherland (Lucy Lockit), and Regina Resnik (Mrs. Trapes) all manage their characterizations with tremendous relish and aplomb. In the singing department, Lansbury is called upon to scale rather steeper musical heights than she faced as the meat-pie-baking Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*, but she lives up to the challenge. Te Kanawa's soprano is, as always, unassailably sweet and appealing, Morris is fine as long as he's singing Macheath's songs in his big strong voice, Resnik holds her own, and Sutherland makes up for a disturbing quaver with her operatic know-how and sure grasp of the humor of her role.

The National Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Bonyng, resounds with bustling vitality, although the liberties Gamley has taken in his orchestrations, syncopating some of the accompaniments and coloring others in ways that blithely ignore the period idiom of the work, will not please everyone. In this version, it no longer seems to be Handelian opera that is being satirized but musical theater in general. A joy to the ear in any case, and a mighty

happy way to pass a few listening hours. —Paul Kresh

**GAY: *The Beggar's Opera*.** New performing version by Richard Bonyng and Douglas Gamley. Kiri Te Kanawa (soprano), Polly Peachum; Angela Lansbury (contralto), Mrs. Peachum; Alfred Marks (baritone), Mr. Peachum; James Morris (baritone), Macheath; Ann Murray (mezzo-soprano), Jenny Diver; Regina Resnik (mezzo-soprano), Mrs. Trapes; Joan Sutherland (soprano), Lucy Lockit; Anthony Rolfe-Johnson (tenor), Filch; Anne Wilkens (mezzo-soprano), Dolly Trull; others. London Opera Chorus; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Bonyng cond. LONDON ◉ LDR 72008 two discs \$25.96.

## Weinberger's *Schwanda*: An Operatic Delight Rescued, via Recording, From Undeserved Oblivion

WHEN Jaromir Weinberger's opera *Svanda Dudák* was introduced in Prague in 1927 and subsequently launched on an international career in its German version, *Schwanda der Dodelsackpfeifer* (*Schwanda the Bagpiper*), it was regarded as one of the brightest candidates for addition to the repertoire. Despite an excellent cast, however, its Metropolitan Opera recep-



## BEST OF THE MONTH: RECENT SELECTIONS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

### POPULAR

- **John Denver: *Seasons of the Heart***. RCA AFL1-4256. "... a bunch of fresh songs as pretty as a litter of speckled pups." (July)
- **Dr. John: *Plays Mac Rebennack***. CLEAN CUTS CC 705. "Probably the first solo album by a New Orleans pianist... hearty and heartfelt." (May)
- **Gordon Lightfoot: *Shadows***. WARNER BROS. BSK 3633. "A rare craftsman at work..." (June)
- **Wynton Marsalis. COLUMBIA FC 37574**. "His impressive debut album promises well for the future of jazz." (June)
- **Van Morrison: *Beautiful Vision***. WARNER BROS. BSK 3652. "... one of his best-performed, best-arranged albums." (July)
- **Jean Redpath: *Lowlands***. PHILO 1066. "... it is melodies we have here, and a voice and a half. Both lovely." (May)
- **Sister Sledge: *The Sisters***. COTILLION SD 5231. "Fresh, feminine, and flawless." (May)

### CLASSICAL

- **Alkan: *Solo Piano Works***. ARABESQUE 8127-3. "One of music's great eccentrics has found a new champion." (June)
- **Britten: *String Quartets Nos. 2 and 3***. CRD 1095. "... a disc absolutely not to be missed." (July)
- **Griffes: *Collected Works for Piano***. NEW WORLD NW 310/311. "A first-rate survey of American music at the crossroads." (June)
- **Edita Gruberova: *French and Italian Opera Arias***. ANGEL DS-37870. "... familiar coloratura specialties delivered with uncommon assurance and virtuosity." (July)
- **Haydn: *Complete Songs***. PHILIPS 6769 064. "A significant release... Eily Ameling's refinement and involvement multiply the pleasure of discovery." (May)
- **Mahler: *Symphonies Nos. 2 and 4***. PRO ARTE 2PAL-2011, PAL-1068. "Revelatory performances, splendidly recorded." (May)
- **Thomson: *A Portrait Album***. NONESUCH D-79024. "Musical portraits in performances that gladden the ears." (May)

tion (with Friedrich Schorr in the title role) in 1931 was disappointing, and the opera's initial momentum was lost. The European political situation dealt *Schwanda* the final blow. When Czechoslovakia was swallowed by the Third Reich, Weinberger came to the United States as a refugee, and he died here by his own hand in 1967, a forgotten man.

The foregoing is the merest précis of a story that is told fully, with much interesting detail, in Christopher Palmer and Hans W. Heinsheimer's annotations for the welcome new CBS recording of *Schwanda*. An eminently worthwhile opera has been rescued from oblivion in a quite wonderful, excellently recorded performance.

*Schwanda* is a Bohemian folk tale with a rich overlay of fantasy. It involves a folk musician of miraculous powers, a romantic outlaw à la Robin Hood, a kingdom under a magic spell, and an underworld ruled by a convivial and quite sympathetic Devil. Infectious dances recalling Smetana and Dvořák enliven the music (the Polka and Fugue, as combined by the composer many years ago, has had considerable currency in the orchestral repertoire). Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* was the strongest influence on *Schwanda*, but in its harmonic language and orchestral palette the music reveals a distinct indebtedness to Richard Strauss. Passing instances also point to D'Albert's *Tiefenland* and to the vocal writing of Franz Lehár.

Unquestionably it is the orchestral writing that is *Schwanda's* greatest asset. It is lively, colorful, replete with inventively spicy and splashy instrumental touches. The vocal writing is thoroughly pleasant, though some of the promising ideas are not fully developed. In fact, there are certain imaginative dramatic situations in the plot (such as the dialogue between Schwanda and the Devil) for which Weinberger simply failed to write a fitting musical equivalent. On the other hand, the two acts have a fine continuous flow, with skill-

fully written interludes linking the various scenes. Occasional uninspired pages notwithstanding, *Schwanda* works on the whole, and it is quite delightful to listen to.

The title role is tailor-made for the hearty singing style of baritone Hermann Prey, who makes the most of the character: a confident, rather self-absorbed hero with enough engaging qualities to make us overlook his human failings. The tenor part of Babinsky, the romantic robber, incorporates some grateful music, much of it in a high tessitura. Siegfried Jerusalem rises to its challenges with a great deal of style and a minimum of effort. As Dorotka, Schwanda's devoted wife, Lucia Popp sings exquisitely, though with perhaps too lady-like an aura for a simple country girl. Siegmund Nimsger is a jolly and vocally imposing Devil, Alexander Malta a satisfactory Sorcerer. Only Gwendolyn Killebrew is disappointing: her hooty and unfocused tones fall below the admirable vocal standard set by the others in the cast.

Weinberger's orchestral effects are dazzlingly realized by the Bavarian players under Heinz Wallberg's spirited direction. In addition to the excellent annotation already mentioned, a trilingual libretto is included with the set (the English text is a "singing" version, and rather stilted). The recording was a co-production with the Bavarian Radio supervised by George Korngold, who also produced his late father's *Violanta* for the same label. I hope this new release is as successful commercially as it is artistically and leads to more such rediscoveries. —George Jellinek

**WEINBERGER: *Schwanda the Bagpiper***. Hermann Prey (baritone), Schwanda; Lucia Popp (soprano), Dorotka; Siegfried Jerusalem (tenor), Babinsky; Gwendolyn Killebrew (mezzo-soprano), Queen; Alexander Malta (bass), Sorcerer; Siegmund Nimsger (baritone), Devil; Karl Kreile (tenor), Judge; others. Bavarian Radio Chorus; Munich Radio Orchestra, Heinz Wallberg cond. CBS M3 36926 three discs, no list price.

LUCIA POPP: an exquisite Dorotka



HERMANN PREY: a hearty Schwanda



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# Popular Music Briefs



Tommy Tutone: left to right, Gregg Sutton, Victor Carberry, Jim Keller, Tommy Heath, and Steve Legassick

THERE are those who claim that the hottest rock number since the Marvelettes' *Beechwood 4-5789* back in 1962 is *867-5309/Jenny* by the group known as **Tommy Tutone**. At this writing, the single has been near the top of the charts for twenty-one weeks, a certified "prime mover." The song's up-beat, contagious melody wraps itself around a favorite topic of Eighties rock: quirky love. *Jenny's* protagonist falls passionately in love with a fantasy, a woman he knows only as a name and number scribbled on a wall.

First established as Tommy and the Teentones in 1975, the San Francisco-based quintet (keyboardist Steve Legassick recently joined the group) has been steadily gathering momentum, and their 1982 national tour has drawn full houses, especially in Texas and (less surprisingly) on the West Coast.

"They've been screaming for *Jenny* everywhere," lead singer/guitarist Tommy Heath told us backstage after a recent

performance at New York's Palladium. "This is the only date on the East Coast leg of the tour where we haven't headlined [they opened for the redoubtable Graham Parker]. Everywhere else they've been out of their seats, dancing."

Well, New York is a notoriously tough town, and the crowd's allegiance was patently Parker's—it was his first Big Apple appearance in over three years. The infectious Tutone beat did manage to pry a few hard-to-please New Yorkers out of their seats and into the aisles, but it was pretty rough going.

"It felt like playing a high-school auditorium; we had to play *at* them, not with them," Heath said, squeezing past a few of fellow-guitarist Jim Keller's relatives, most of whom had come over from New Jersey for the show. Bassist Gregg Sutton, drummer Victor Carberry, and Legassick were relatively relentless backstage.

"I want all of our future dates to be in dance clubs," Heath

continued. "We're a *dance* band, after all, and it doesn't feel right to be playing for people who aren't up and moving and having a good time."

So, until Tommy Tutone appears in your vicinity, you'll just have to call 867-5309 for a good time. Better yet, ask for Columbia JC 36372, the number of their second, current album. —P.W.

**PIA ZADORA**, winner of the 1981 Golden Globe Award in the Best New Star category for her role in the film *Butterfly*, has made a record album. "Pia," Elektra/Curb E1-10109, includes a ballad by Jacques Morali (he who created the Village People) as well as *It's Wrong for Me to Love You*, a song about incest from *Butterfly*. Elektra claims the album is Zadora's disc debut. We don't say it is, we don't say it isn't. But her right to an award as a "new" star has been questioned since she is listed in the *New York Times Directory of the Film* for her appearance in *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*, a 1964 release. Wasn't there a soundtrack album? □



Elektra/Curb Records

**T**HE Rock to Riches Talent Search underwritten by the Miller Brewing Company is being conducted on major radio stations in sixty cities across the United States from now through September, and TDK Electronics is the official supplier of tape for the contest. Entries from would-be rock stars must be submitted on cassettes. Winners will receive prize money and a professionally produced recording on a TDK Super Avilyn cassette and on disc. These recordings will be played on rock stations and sold in stores. For further information write Gene Tognacci or Ed Driskill, Starstream Communications, 4801 Woodway, Houston, Texas 77056, or call (713) 961-1975. □

**A**WARDS: **Ethel Merman** has been given a Pied Piper Award, the highest honor granted by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. Previous recipients have included Fred Astaire, Duke Ellington, Frank Sinatra, and Barbra Streisand. . . . The Cathedral of St. James in Brooklyn has given singer **Mabel Mercer** the Compostela Award, an honor for men and women who have "illuminated the horizon of human experience." . . . Brazilian singer and songwriter **Roberto Carlos** is the latest recipient of CBS International's Crystal Globe Award for sales of more than five million records outside the artist's own country. His first album in English was released in the United States last fall; it was reviewed here in November. . . . The first American Eagle Award for unique contribu-

tions to American popular music was presented by the National Music Council to **Julie Styne**, composer of scores for *Gypsy*, *Funny Girl*, and many other shows and films.

Singer **Cleo Laine** and her husband saxophonist/bandleader **John Dankworth** were presented honorary degrees of Doctor of Music by Berklee Col-

lege of Music in Boston. It was the first time a husband and wife team had been so honored by Berklee, which is the alma mater of such performers as Gary Burton and Quincy Jones. ... A Doctor of Music degree was conferred on jazz drummer **Max Roach** by the New England Conservatory, also in Boston. □

John Dankworth and Cleo Laine at Berklee College of Music



Berklee College of Music

**R**EADERS of the best-selling *Book of Rock Lists* may recall that it documents all the groups who have ever claimed to be the greatest, most significant, most relevant, etc. Well, move over Rolling Stones, Sex Pistols, and the Clash (among others), because here comes **Art**, which modestly bills itself as "the only band in the world." Obviously their own biggest

fans, Art's members are various New York conceptual types, including Lori Montana, who "sings" in—*are you ready?*—sign language. Lori can be heard (?) on the group's independently released EP, produced by Chris Butler of the Waitresses, and on a soon-to-be-released live cassette of a Carnegie Hall concert. According to a press release from the

Manhattan club Danceteria, the latter is "the only sign-language solo ever on a commercially available tape," a claim I am not disposed to dispute. Also coming soon: Art's single *Ugly People with Fancy Hairdos*, also known as *Boat People*. I didn't make it up. —S.S.

**G**RACENOTES: **Sissy Spacek**, the Oscar-winning actress who turned a lot of heads with her more than creditable vocal impressions of Loretta Lynn in *Coal Miner's Daughter*, has signed a recording deal with Atlantic. No word yet on who will be producing or what sort of material she'll be warbling (though country does seem pretty likely), but it's worth noting that Sissy came to New York City originally to be a folk singer, not a thespian. ... Everything Old Is New Again: RCA Records is releasing three two-disc albums featuring the **Pride of Hoboken**, **Frank Sinatra**, singing with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. Much of the material in "The Dorsey/Sinatra Sessions, 1940-1942" has been previously released, but never on LP in this country before. To celebrate the event, RCA is preparing what may be the first promotional 78-rpm disc in over three decades—a one-song, limited-edition single featuring *Oh Look at Me Now*, on which Sinatra and Dorsey are joined by Con-



Hannibal Records

Richard Thompson

nie Haines and the Pied Pipers. ... in case you missed it, the **Richard and Linda Thompson Band** finally made it to these shores, as promised, with what one wag dubbed an "Anarchy in the Sixteenth Century Tour." We caught up with the once-and-future doyens of English folk-rock at Manhattan's Bottom Line and later at c-&-w stronghold The Lone Star Café. In both venues, we found the Thompsons no less than incandescent. High points included a shattering acoustic duet on *Dimming of the Day*, a version of *For Shame of Doing Wrong* featuring a guitar solo by Richard that reduced much of the audience to slack-jawed awe, and brilliantly spare and powerful playing throughout the set by legendary drummer Dave Mattacks. The Thompsons' latest record is "Shoot Out the Lights" (Hannibal HNBL 1303). —S.S.

## Disc and Tape Reviews

By CHRIS ALBERTSON • NOEL COPPAGE • PHYL GARLAND • PAUL KRESH  
MARK PEEL • PETER REILLY • STEVE SIMELS • JOEL VANCE

Ⓢ = stereo cassette

Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge

Ⓢ = digital-master recording

Ⓢ = direct-to-disc

Ⓢ = quadrasonic disc

Ⓢ = monophonic recording

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

**DAVID ALLYN: *Soft as Spring*.** David Allyn (vocals); Terry Lassiter, Jim Ferguson (bass); Jim Lackey, Bill Stowe (drums); Loonis McGlohon (piano). *Come Rain or Come Shine*; *She Didn't Say "Yes"*; *Saturday's Child*; *I Won't Dance*; *There Will Never Be Another You*; and five others. AUDIOPHILE AP-155 \$7.98.

Performance: **Moony and croony**  
Recording: **Very good**

No matter what the trends of the moment, there seems to be plenty of interest in the popular songs of the past, and David Allyn is one of the singers who helps keep them alive. Allyn was breaking hearts with his deep baritone all the way back in the an-

cient Fifties. He retains a considerable following among audiences who still remember all the words of *Blues in the Night* and feel that there hasn't been a good ballad written since the advent of the Beatles. And Allyn gives them what they want, letting every line cling to the microphone with a certain stickiness, sometimes holding a low, velvety note long enough to knock 'em dead. He also varies the standards in his repertoire with pretty, less well-known numbers such as Alec Wilder's *Saturday's Child* and *Soft as Spring*, which Allyn himself introduced with Jack Teagarden's orchestra when the ink was still fresh on the page. If classic crooning is what you want, this album is for you. **P.K.**

**ASIA.** Asia (vocals and instrumentals). *Heat of the Moment*; *Only Time Will Tell*; *Sole Survivor*; *One Step Closer*; *Time Again*; and four others. GEFEN GHS 2008 \$8.98, Ⓢ M5 2008 \$8.98.

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

Although Asia's line-up is nostalgically heavyweight—Steve Howe's guitar propped up Yes in its dotage, Geoffrey Downes was one of Rick Wakeman's successors after most people stopped counting, Carl Palmer waxed portentous on percussion for ELP, and John Wetton was an outstanding lead vocalist and bass player for Family and King Crimson—none of these guys was the



Capitol Records/Bobby Holland

## Peabo Bryson On His Own

**W**HEN Peabo Bryson hits one of his lustrous high notes and sustains it with masterly control, you'd swear you were listening to a rare violin. A gifted romantic balladeer with one of the best voices in popular music today, Bryson would sound good singing just about anything. Fortunately, he doesn't *have* to sing just anything, since he is also a composer and writes songs that are worthy of his sensitive interpretations. A

brains behind his band, and the debut of rock's latest "supergroup" is a decidedly balloon-headed effort. It's highly accomplished balloon-headedness, however, and it's rising straight to the top of the charts. Here are guitar riffs that grip you by the primitive brain stem and jerk your head and feet around, blistering solos sure to give rise to an epidemic of contorted facial expressions and involuntary spasms, and the kind of pure, almost angelic electronically assisted vocal harmonies that can turn a listening experience into a religious experience. On the evidence of this first outing, I'd say Asia is ready to join Journey and Toto and Styx in the Platinum Hall of Fame. In fact, the band is such a shoo-in for this year's "Best New Group" Grammy that Vegas oddsmakers have stopped taking bets. *M.P.*

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BOBBY BARE:** *Ain't Got Nothin' to Lose*. Bobby Bare (vocals); Bobby Wood (keyboards); Jon Goin (guitar); Kenny Malone

(drums); Jeff Allen (bass); other musicians. *If You Ain't Got Nothin' (You Ain't Got Nothin' to Lose); (I'm Not a) Candle in the Wind; The Old Swimmin' Hole; Isn't That Just Like Love; Goodnight Irene; Golden Memories*; and four others. COLUMBIA FC 37719, © FCT 37719, © FCA 37719, no list price.

Performance: **Clear, pure country**  
Recording: **Good**

This is a Bobby Bare singing record, as opposed to a Bobby Bare record featuring outrageous lyrics, and it is about as direct and straightforward as country albums get these days. It isn't quite as classy as Bare's last album, produced by Rodney Crowell, but it gains a lot of points for simplicity and freedom from gimmicks and slickness. Allen Reynolds produced this one, and I don't think he used a single unnecessary instrument. Bare's vocals—abetted by Lacy J. Dalton in her own *Golden Memories*—take the spotlight well. He has a big, natural-sounding baritone and uses phrasing that

seems nonchalant but is actually teeming with nuance.

Except for the finale, a send-up of TV preachers called *Praise the Lord and Send Me the Money* that's the kind of thing we look to Bare to do, the songs are conventional country love songs and ballads and things plus a couple of near-rockers. The last are well integrated with the mode Bare and the band are in, making for an unusually honest yet modern country sound. Bobby Bare is obviously in his prime. *N.C.*

**BIG YOUTH:** *Some Great Big Youth*. Big Youth (vocals and instrumentals). *World War III; Living; Roots Foundation; Get On Up; Dancing Mood*; and five others. HEART-BEAT HB 03 \$6.50 (plus \$1 postage and handling from Roundup Records, 186 Wil-low Avenue, Somerville, Mass. 02144).

Performance: **Magic-carpet ride**  
Recording: **Nice effects**

It's just like me to discover dub just as it's going out of fashion. Never mind. This new album by Big Youth, one of Jamaica's leading dub bands, is full of fine, fiery music. Dub's big appeal is its electronic sound effects—fade-ins and fade-outs, heavy reverb and echo—and animated, off-center, chattering vocals. Hardcore dub is psychedelia with a down beat. But the effects wouldn't amount to much if the music weren't solid to begin with. Big Youth's music is as rock-steady as reggae itself, with vocals that practically exhort you to riot backed by shuffling rhythm guitar and horns punching out a funky counterpoint. And although "Some Great Big Youth" goes light on the dub effects, the music does manage a suitably unreal resonance. I don't really understand much of what Michael Buchanan is trying to say in such songs as *World War III* (a nearly unintelligible polemic—all I can decipher is that we'll be viewing WW III on videotape) or *Get On Up*, but perhaps that inscrutability is one of the reasons I like this album. *M.P.*

**LAURA BRANIGAN:** *Branigan*. Laura Branigan (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *All Night with Me; Gloria; Lovin' You Baby; Down Like a Rock*; and five others. ATLANTIC SD 19289 \$8.98, © CS 19289 \$8.98.

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

Laura Branigan benefits enormously from Jack White's sharp and snappy production for her debut album. He's provided a modified disco sound that keeps Branigan front and center in all the performances. She brings a lot more sincerity and a lot more vocal talent to her work than most disco singers do, and she often achieves real communication with the listener. Considering the material she's been given to work with (only *All Night with Me* rises above the level of mediocrity), that's no small achievement. Next time around, I suggest more care in choosing repertoire, since Branigan gives every indication that she can handle heavyweight material. *P.R.*

**JOHNNY CASH, JERRY LEE LEWIS, AND CARL PERKINS:** *The Survivors*. Johnny Cash (vocals, guitar); Carl Perkins (vocals, guitar); Jerry Lee Lewis (vocals,

piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Get Rhythm; I'll Fly Away; Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On; Blue Suede Shoes; Matchbox; I Saw the Light; Peace in the Valley;* and five others. COLUMBIA FC 37961, © FCT 37961, © FCA 37961, no list price.

Performance: **Rollicking**  
Recording: **Fair to good**

This album was recorded on April 23, 1981, during a Johnny Cash concert in Stuttgart, where they make Porsches. Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis, also touring Europe, showed up in the audience and Cash called them to the stage. Rodney Crowell took the tapes home and edited and mixed them. Being mostly unrehearsed—and a little funky in the miking of Perkins' voice—the performances have an informal feel to them.

All three of the old rockabillys sing on four pieces, all of them gospel tunes, and these are of more historic than artistic significance. You can barely hear Perkins' harmony vocals, and Lewis apparently can't sing a harmony line, but he does some decorations above the melody, some of which work. Anyway, the voices don't exactly blend. But that's not really the point here. What is, I guess, is charisma; the album catches some of that, besides catching, in the most notable solo shots, a sense of the evolution of the performances of such rockabilly standards as *I Forgot to Remember to Forget, Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On,* and *Blue Suede Shoes*. These old pros sing this stuff with an authority that's rare nowadays, and the, ah, downscaled "production values" help them construct a sort of rockabilly primer. I don't want to turn a bunch of people off by saying that this album is "educational," but, since I just about *have* said that, I hope the record itself will turn them back on. *N.C.*

**JOHN COUGAR: American Fool.** John Cougar (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Hurts So Good; Jack & Diane; Danger List; China Girl;* and five others. RIVA RVL 7501 \$8.98, © RVC4 7501 \$8.98, © RV8 7501 \$8.98.

Performance: **Fair**  
Recording: **Overdone**

John Cougar continues to peddle himself as sexy rebel, a role assumed by so many rockers that it's long ceased to be a novelty. Either the similarity is accidental or he's trying very hard on this record to sound like Bob Seger. Cougar's trite material tells tales of bleeding hearts, flaming crotches, and lives of loud desperation. His production favors distorted and overmodulated drums. It's all supposed to be dramatic, like the pretentious album title, but what it amounts to is cheeseburger. One song, *China Girl*, is fairly interesting. Not surprisingly, Cougar didn't write it. *J.V.*

**JUDY GARLAND AND LIZA MINNELLI: "Live" at the London Palladium.** Judy Garland, Liza Minnelli (vocals); orchestra. *Together; What Now My Love; Swanee;* and eight others. MOBILE FIDELITY SOUND LAB MFSL 1-048 \$16.99.

Performance: **Okay to wonderful**  
Recording: **Good**

This is a half-speed-mastered reissue of a famous Capitol album. Like a soap opera, it

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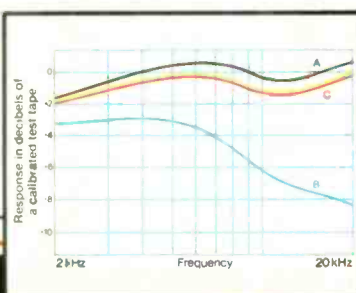
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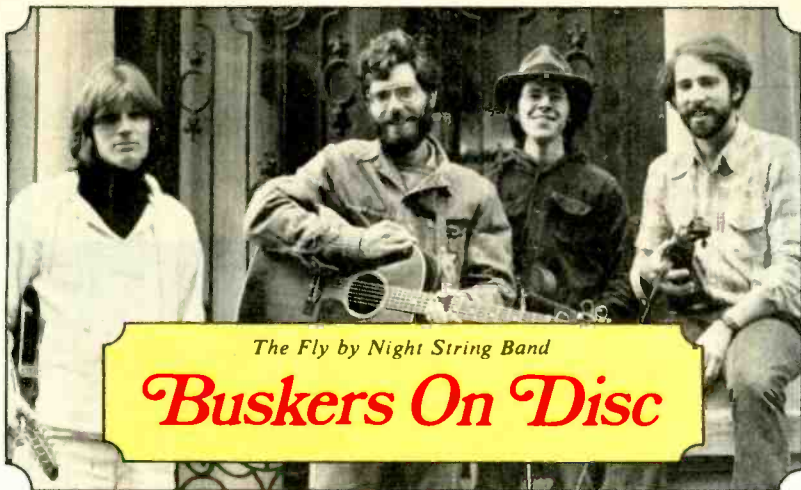
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The Fly by Night String Band

## Buskers On Disc

**S**TREET MUSIC is something one is more apt to stumble upon than to seek out, and when you do you have a choice: you can stop and listen, or you can go on about your business. While it may not signify anything more than who has time for it and who doesn't, I've always thought of street-corner music as a kind of touchstone. I don't ever want to be in such a hurry that I can't pause and listen to a busker.

New York City is probably the best place in America to hear street music. Itinerant musicians are as much a fixture of the city's life as Times Square or the Empire State Building. As Broadway playgoers leave the theater they are serenaded by a violinist and his dog; a small brass band holds forth on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; a lone tenor saxophonist moves up and down a blues scale in a dark Fifth Avenue doorway; and Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village is a summertime carnival of congas and steel drums, blues harps, electric guitars plugged into portable amps, and walking basses.

"Stars of the Streets" and its sequel, "Encore," are two remarkable albums recorded live in the parks and streets of New York. Between them, they capture the music of seventy sidewalk stars—and the freedom, the merriment, the uncompromised and unselfconscious communication of music made in the streets. Consistently surprising and delightful, they include every style and genre from Chicago blues to old-timey bluegrass, from J. S. Bach to George Gershwin.

**T**HE original "Stars of the Streets," released in England a few years ago and heretofore a hard-to-find import, features a smoking rendition of Sonny Boy Williamson's *Pontiac Blues* by Sugar Blue, a smooth-as-satin reading of the Glenn Miller classic *Moonlight Serenade* by the Mostly Mozart Trio (two clarinets and a bassoon!), an intense interpretation of Beethoven's *Für Elise* by Victor Brady on steel piano, a deliciously corny but note-perfect *cappella* performance of *Vive l'Amour* by the male quartet Steamboat Gothic, and even a heartily bad *Strangers in the Night* sung by Gene Palma, who accompanies himself on traps ("I'm just naturally talented").

The American-made "Encore" album documents a concert of street musicians in Bryant Park (behind the New York Public Library's main building) on September 30, 1980. Here one finds the old warhorse *The Prince of Denmark's March* (Trumpet Voluntary) check by jowl with Chuck Berry's *Too Much Monkey Business* and the New Orleans jazz classic *Dark Town Strutter's Ball* next to a jazz milestone of quite a different cast—John Coltrane's *Impressions*.

Altogether, "Stars of the Streets" and "Encore" are the freshest things I've heard on disc in a long time. There's no twenty-four-track control-board gimmickry, no Sunset Strip producer, no artifice—just plain, honest music making. As Tex Salvi sings at the close of "Encore," "You meet the nicest people out on the street." Don't pass these buskers by. —Mark Peel

**STARS OF THE STREETS.** Sugar Blue: *Pontiac Blues*. The Fly by Night String Band: *Leaving Home*. Tequila Mockingbird: *Vivaldi's Trio Sonata in E Minor, Op. 1, No. 2*. Steamboat Gothic: *Vive l'Amour*. Mostly Mozart Trio: *Moonlight Serenade*; *They All Laughed*. Eve Moon: *Pieces*. Victor Brady: *Beethoven's Für Elise*. Brian Slawson: *Bach's Prelude in E Major*. Street Masters: *Spirit Feel*. Astracarnaval: *Flutes-Capoeiras*. Rod Hytonen: *Send In the Clowns*. EGG 900582 \$9.98 (from Importe Record Service, P.O. Box 343, South Plainfield, N.J. 07080).

**STARS OF THE STREETS. Encore.** New York Brass Entourage: *The Prince of Denmark's March*. The Dronogos: *Too Much Monkey Business*. Jeff Masin: *Alabama Jubilee*. Elwood Bunn: *Before the Next Teardrop Falls*; *Y'All Come*. Cayenne Jazz Band: *Struttin' with Some Barbecue*. Lynn Jassem and Kathy Kramer: *Tap Dance Sequence*. Vincent Taylor: *Comin' Home, Baby*. Chicago City Limits: *Radiation Polka*. Michael Poulos: *Frog Galliard*. On the Lam Street Band: *The Dark Town Strutter's Ball*. Masterworks Duo: *Impressions*. Tex Salvi and Gene Chapman: *San Antonio Rose*; *On the Street*. CACHALOT CA 125 \$8.98 (from Importe Record Service, P.O. Box 343, South Plainfield, N.J. 07080).

poses a teasing question, but instead of "Who shot J.R.?" it's "Who managed to upstage J. Garland?" Answer: her own daughter, L. Minnelli! Their joint concert at the London Palladium in 1964 was their first public performance together, and although at the beginning Liza showed a little awkwardness and a tendency to belt too hard, she soon got into gear and it was all her mama could do just to keep up with her. The turning point is in an eight-song medley following Garland's solo in *The Man That Got Away*, done in the blurry, slurry style that had become all too familiar at her concerts. But once Minnelli ignited, it didn't take Garland long to realize she was sharing the stage with another full-fledged pro. After a snappish crack to Liza during *Hello, Dolly!* ("Don't get our wires crossed"), Garland accepted the challenge and got her own act together sensationally. They were both at their peak in *Swanee*, with Garland in glorious voice and back in total communication with her audience. By the closing number, *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*, they were both going full tilt, with Garland once again providing the kind of entertainment that made her a legend.

The sound quality is good considering the condition of the original tape, and the pressing is clean. It's worth seventeen bucks if you don't have the original or if you've worn your old copy out. P.R.

**TERRY GARTHWAITE, BOBBIE LOUISE HAWKINS, AND ROSALIE SORRELS: Live at the Great American Music Hall.** Terry Garthwaite (vocals, guitar); Bobbie Louise Hawkins (vocals); Rosalie Sorrels (vocals, guitar). *True Love*; *Take Love, for Instance*; *The Pine*; *Liver Piece*; *Hoy Hoy Hoy*; *Hot-Buttered Rum*; *Snake Toast*; *Slender Thread*; and five others. FLYING FISH FF-238 \$8.98.

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

These are three pretty disparate performers, but together—that is, one at a time—they work pretty well. Bobbie Louise Hawkins' recitations (she doesn't always do poetry, exactly, but whatever it is she does do is usually wry and funny) are sandwiched between the urban stylings of Terry Garthwaite and the countrified folkie approach of Rosalie Sorrels. The result is a lot of variety coming from just three people. The unifying thread is the sense of humor, tough and skeptical, that all three seem to have developed. The album would be stronger, though, if Sorrels had done some of her own material; for me her songwriting is a large part of her act. But the record is fun, and there's enough substance to make it fun more than once. N.C.

**GODLEY & CREME: Snack Attack.** Kevin Godley, Lol Creme (vocals and instrumentals); Bimbo Accock (saxophones). *Snack Attack*; *Under Your Thumb*; *Joey's Camel*; *The Problem*; *Ready for Ralph*; *Wedding Bells*; and three others. MIRAGE WTG 19341 \$8.98, © CS 19341 \$8.98.

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

When Kevin Godley and Lol Creme departed the then-supergroup 10cc, it was as-



sumed they would be swallowed by the shades while 10cc regrouped and continued to prosper. Instead, 10cc has all but disappeared while Godley and Creme have weathered several disasters to build a loyal audience with their quirky albums, which are richly imaginative in lyrics and aural folderol. Godley and Creme are visually oriented (they are both art-school graduates), and their primary task is to translate their visual sense of texture and bitter humor into sound. The ambition—the gall—of their ideas is what makes their work continually interesting.

Having had their fill of pop success with 10cc, Godley and Creme are now in a decidedly anti-pop humor. *Joey's Camel* is a burlesque of the Old Testament and Jewish mothers, *The Problem* takes a mathematical-textbook question to its lunatic extreme, and the title track features some fancy rhyming and rapping about a favorite American pastime, eating. Only once do they return to a straight commercial pop format, with *Wedding Bells*. Maybe they needed one enticing single. In any event, *Wedding Bells* is a drop of honey in a bottle of vintage vinegar. J.V.

**JOHN HAMMOND: *Frogs for Snakes.***

John Hammond (vocals, harmonica, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *You Don't Love Me; Got to Find My Baby; Step It Up and Go; Fattening Frogs for Snakes; Key to the Highway; My Baby Left Me;* and six others. ROUNDER 3060 \$7.98.

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

The more I listen to this album the more I like it—within, as they say, certain parameters. John Hammond has a mannered vocal style, but he really does care about the blues, and here he performs some of the better blues tunes written by the likes of Muddy Waters, Big Boy Crudup, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Howlin' Wolf. In the end, I think the only thing that really bothers me is that there's a sax in there that sounds a little out of place. Given the way Hammond sings and plays the harp and guitar, he comes off best as a primitive. Kyril Bromley's piano goes along with that, but Charles Brown's sax playing is oriented somewhere between jazz and early rock-and-roll. It's good to have such consistently strong material on one blues record, though, and it doesn't hurt that the principal performer seems dedicated and likable. N.C.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**TIM HARDIN: *Unforgiven.*** Tim Hardin (vocals, piano); Johnny Lee (guitar); Nicky Hopkins (piano); Reginald Butler (bass); Ricky Fataar (drums); other musicians. *Luna Cariba; Mercy Wind; If I Were Still with You; Judge and Jury;* and four others. IMAGINATION/SAN FRANCISCO SOUND SFS 10810 \$15 for half-speed-mastered, numbered limited collector's edition; \$10 for standard album (from Imagination Records/San Francisco Sound, P.O. Box 4161, Malibu, Calif. 90265).

Performance: **Graceful and classy**  
Recording: **Mostly excellent**

This is an unfinished work. It was to be Tim Hardin's first new album in a decade.

About 25 to 30 per cent of the work remained to be done when a heroin overdose killed him. Despite that, despite the fact that you get only about twenty-five minutes of music for an audiophile price (I've got the half-speed, numbered collector's edition), despite the fact that twice (in *Mercy Wood* and *Partly Yours*) the half-speed mastering process is wasted, despite, even, the fact that Hardin didn't write three of the melodies and had help with three others—despite everything, there is on this album a fair amount of the grace and danger Hardin wore like an aura.

The eight new songs are all strong. *Luna Cariba* is a lightweight, but a well-built one. Curiously, the jazz shadings and inflections

that seemed so up-and-coming in Hardin's work in the previous decade are kept at a minimum here; there are blues and gospel influences, but the basic orientation is folkie-pop. (What I do hear in Hardin's vocals, a time or two, are echoes of Ray Charles.) My favorites are the title song and *Partly Yours*, the latter one of the two cuts taken from "working tapes" Hardin made at home on a cassette recorder (a couple of other songs have only basic rhythm tracks and vocals, and the producers decided against any overdubs). But that doesn't mean that what made Hardin special is missing from the rest. All the songs have both depth and a light touch, plus the grace dancers shoot for. This album is a great re-



**BACK TALK.**

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lief from Top-40 tedium—and, of course, a must if you identify with beautiful losers. N.C.

**THE HUMAN LEAGUE: Dare.** The Human League (vocals and instrumentals). *The Things That Dreams Are Made Of; Open Your Heart; The Sound of the Crowd; Darkness; Do or Die; I Am the Law;* and four others. A&M SP-6-4892 \$8.98, © CS-6-4892 \$8.98.

Performance: **Pretty good**  
Recording: **Nice**

The Human League—ah, yes, another bunch of fashionably anorexic-looking young English persons playing a variety of synthesizers and drum machines. Just what the world needs, right? Well, in this case (and in doses somewhat smaller than an entire album's worth), yeah. Unlike their more melancholic colleagues—Joy Division, say, or the unspeakably tedious Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark—the Human League deals in catchy pop fluff (though it's mechanical to a fault) with generally intelligent lyrics. Overall, they suggest a punk version of ABBA.

"Dare" is of next to no significance in the larger scheme of things, mostly throwaway music, but the stuff is attractive and danceable, and in *Don't You Want Me* the League has the kind of instantly memorable single that entire careers have been built upon. That this song makes a very forceful feminist point without beating you over the head with it is icing on the cake. My one big

complaint is that no one in this group can really *sing*. The two women come off a little better than lyricist Phillip Oakey, who has one of those flat, vaguely off-key post-punk voices that have long since become tiresome (which may be the point, politically speaking), but none of them is particularly expressive. I'd really like to hear some of these songs sung by better singers. I'll be interested to see if the Human League runs out of steam by their second album: in the meantime, as debuts go this one is pretty good. S.S.

**GREG KIHN BAND: Kihntinued.** Greg Kihn Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Happy Man; Every Love Song; Dedication; Tell Me Lies; Sound System; Family;* and four others. BESERKLEY E1-60101 \$8.98, © E4-60101 \$8.98.

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

Originally from Baltimore but long settled in Berkeley, California, Greg Kihn has recorded more than half a dozen albums for the slightly oddball Beserkley label. Kihn's work is appealing and laid-back. He sings in a pleasant and unstrained middle register and writes standard rock songs but always manages to invest them with something out of the ordinary—a lyric phrase here, an instrumental rhythm there, a boyish charm over all. He and his group remind me somewhat of NRBQ; they're not nearly as rowdy but have a comfortable self-assurance, as though they're not looking for a hit but sim-

ply playing the music they like best. That kind of playing is easy to listen to. J.V.

**MELISSA MANCHESTER: Hey Ricky.** Melissa Manchester (vocals); orchestra. *Hey Ricky (You're a Low Down Heel); Slowly; I'll Always Love You; Looking for the Perfect Ahh; Wish We Were Heroes;* and five others. ARISTA AL 9574 \$8.98, © ACT 9574 \$8.98, © A8T 9574 \$8.98.

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

Almost everything is out of sync on Melissa Manchester's latest album: the mood, the performances, and the heavy-handed attempt to give her a new, more "glamorous" image. She's cut her hair into a chic version of a punk rocker's, she's had her picture taken by the old-time Hollywood photographer George Hurrell, and she's allowed Arif Mardin to give her a production that carefully irons out the artistic wrinkles that once made her seem a real musician. On "Hey Ricky" she pulls not only all her emotional punches but most of her musical ones as well. The only time that a recognizable personality emerges is in a reprise of her old hit *Come In from the Rain*, where she can't help but be lovely and convincing.

Someone has apparently decided that it is time for Melissa Manchester to get with it. Well, someone ought to have his head examined. I was never a big Manchester fan, but to hear her talents used so wastefully disturbs even me. Strange to say, Manches-

(Continued on page 76)

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## SOUND

HANS FANTEL

# Sony Cooks Up a Top Tape

**T**ape makers literally can't leave well enough alone. Just as tape development had reached the well-enough level, with the better brands sounding very good indeed, some manufacturers seem eager to outdo their own — and anyone else's — achievements.

Competition, innovation, and sheer cussed perfectionism aside, the question arises whether such compulsive pushing of limits really brings practical benefits to the listener. In the case of Sony's new UCX-S cassettes — the latest champion in the international tape derby — the answer is a decided yes.

The nature of these benefits is best understood by way of analogy. Tape is to a recorder what film is to a camera. Even the best camera can't take good pictures with poor film. Similarly, no tape recorder can sound better than the tape running in it. Just as the grain and pigments of a film determine the quality of a photograph (other factors being equal), so the frequency response, dynamic range

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**'Formulating a tape is like flavoring a sauce. Not just the ingredients count, but also their proportion.'**

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and noise characteristics of a tape determine the quality of a recording.

In Sony's UCX-S, these factors have been slightly but perceptibly improved over previous norms, and the ear readily and gratefully registers the difference. In critical listening comparisons with other ferricobalt cassettes (i.e., cassettes made with cobalt-treated iron oxide), the treble not merely seemed extended in range but also more natural in character. Credit for this goes to the greater treble capacity of this tape, which obviates any need for false emphasis in the upper range. As a result, timbres and textures of orchestral music assume a very pleasing, lifelike vividness. By the same token, the so-called transient response — the ability to render short, sharp sounds with appropriate clarity — is also enhanced, for this essential aspect of sound also requires smoothness of treble.

Yet the exceptional merit of this tape is not confined to the upper range. The bass also comes through with genuine depth and solidity not usually attained in cassettes, and the noise level remains happily unobtrusive.

No single technical advance can be credited for all these virtues. After all, formulating a tape is rather like flavoring a sauce. Not just the ingredients count, but also their proportion, blend and texture — plus what the chef

calls *je ne sais quoi*. The sauce analogy applies even to attitudes. Tape manufacturers typically are as mum about their concoctions as any professional cook might be about his hollandaise. When interviewed in his laboratory, Mr. T. Hirano, Sony's top tape wizard, declined in fluent English to divulge particulars. But he confided that the exceptional attributes of his UCX-S formulation arise from a combination of three factors:

First, the magnetic particles forming the working parts of the tape have been shrunk in size by nearly 30 percent, making a finer and more uniform dispersion on the tape. This may be likened to grain in photographic film. The finer the grain the sharper the image. Or, to invoke the proper explanatory concept, the smoother surface can "resolve" more image detail, just as finer lines can be drawn on smooth paper than on rough surfaces. Similarly, smoother grain structure in a recording tape can resolve smaller waveforms, thereby permitting higher frequencies and finer sonic detail to be captured.

Secondly, ways have been found to arrange the particles so they don't stick to the tape in a crisscross pattern like trees in a logjam. The new process allows more of the rod-shaped particles to be packed in parallel, like tree-trunks in a raft. This yields multiple benefits: It provides a smoother — and hence more receptive — surface on which the magnetic signal can be inscribed. The greater density of the tightly packed particles concentrates more magnetic force into a given area (about 500 billion particles in each millimeter of tape) so that greater loudness peaks can be accommodated with less distortion. What's more, hiss is reduced by the regularity of the particles.

Thirdly, the basic material itself has been improved by new methods of spiking each iron particle with molecules of cobalt, so as to heighten such magnetic properties as coercivity and retentivity. These determine how faithfully the tape "remembers" the music entrusted to it, and how much sonic detail it recalls on command. To be less metaphoric and more precise about it, retentivity is 1800 Gauss and coercivity is 650 Oersted — uncommonly high values assuring that this tape will be on its very best molecular behavior when jolted by the impact of the musical signal.

Although developed at Sony's laboratories at Sendai, in northern Japan, the new tape is to be domestically produced in Alabama and Texas. With a list price of \$5 for a one-hour cassette, it is much less expensive than the so-called metal tapes, yet in most practical uses virtually equivalent to their performance.

Talking to the originators of the new tape, one gains the impression that they were inspired, at least in part, by friendly rivalries within Sony's corporate empire. Traditionally, Sony tape has stood in the shadow of the company's more eye-catching developments, such as Trinitron TV, the Betamax, and its excellent stereo components. The new tape represents a bid for a bit of the limelight and is — to borrow a phrase from my college yearbook — most likely to succeed. © 1982 The New York Times Co. Reprinted by permission. ■

WE THOUGHT THIS NEW YORK TIMES REVIEW WAS FIT TO PRINT.



Paul Cox/Retna Ltd.

## Haircut One Hundred

**W**ITH the pop and New Wave music scenes looking more and more like a promotional arm of the fashion industry these days, the last thing we need is another British sensation with a new dress code. But here comes a group called Haircut One Hundred looking like a back-to-school shop window, and, even worse, they're good. In fact, on the evidence of their new Arista album, "Pelican West," Haircut One Hundred may be the best band yet to result from the current British infatuation with funk.

The Haircuts borrow from countless pop and jazz sources, ranging from the Monkees

to the L.A. Express, but their music manages to sound totally original. Their first single, *Favourite Shirts*, combines a funky rhythm-guitar ostinato played at Chipmunk speed with Ray Barretto-like congas and horn charts. Subtitled *Boy Meets Girl*, it's winning fans in New York rock clubs as the soundtrack for a clip of a touching scene between King Kong and Jessica Laing.

Two main forces are at work in the Haircuts' music: pop and funk. Half of "Pelican West" would sound just right blaring through the doors of a Greenwich Village record shop specializing in New Wave; the other half might be heard at a salsa shop in

the Times Square subway station. Yet the feel of each part spills over into the other. The pop tunes—*Love Plus One*, *Lemon Firebrigade*, and *Fantastic Day*—work at high energy levels and are frequently spiced with torrid solos by the group's extraordinary saxophonist, Phil Smith. The funkier numbers—*Baked Bean*, *Love's Got Me in Triangles*, *Calling Captain Autumn*—display a pop sense of economy and tidiness along with their pleasant nonsensicality.

If Haircut One Hundred has a gimmick, it's Graham Jones' driven rhythm-guitar riffs. They're the first thing you notice, and they're the glue that holds every track together. But the heart of the music, and what really elevates these tunes to the level of minor funk masterpieces, is Phil Smith's sax playing. Smith seems to have absorbed influences from every funk and pop-jazz performer around—the J.B.'s, King Curtis, Junior Walker, Tom Scott, Spyro Gyra's Jay Beckenstein, even John Klemmer. That may not be the heaviest kind of inspiration, but it's the right kind for leader Nick Heyward's ambitious pop tunes. The digitally mastered sound is clear and crackling.

I haven't heard funk this infectious from a British group since the late, lamented Kokomo. Haircut One Hundred's "Pelican West" is worth combing through a few record stores to find.

—Mark Peel

**HAIRCUT ONE HUNDRED: *Pelican West*.** Haircut One Hundred (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Favourite Shirts (Boy Meets Girl)*; *Love Plus One*; *Lemon Firebrigade*; *Marine Boy*; *Milk Film*; *Kingsize (You're My Little Steam Whistle)*; *Fantastic Day*; *Baked Bean*; *Snow Girl*; *Love's Got Me in Triangles*; *Surprise Me Again*; *Calling Captain Autumn*. ARISTA ● HCC 100 \$8.98, © TCHC 100 \$8.98.

ter herself doesn't seem at all uneasy in the midst of this nothingness but strides through the album in a thoroughly professional manner. You don't suppose *she* is that someone, do you? P.R.

**MASS PRODUCTION: *In a City Groove*.** Mass Production (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Maybe Maybe*; *Never Ever*; *One More Chance*; *Inner City*; *Solid Love*; and three others. COTILLION SD 5233 \$8.98, © CS 5233 \$8.98, © TP 5233 \$8.98.

Performance: **Sassy urban funk**  
Recording: **Good**

Mass Production is an unpretentious but workmanlike East Coast funk group that seems to have been around for a long time without making much of a splash, perhaps because they happen to be part of a woefully over-abundant species. However, their new album crackles with urban brashness. The best example is *Inner City*, a sassily chanted, spun-out tribute to life on the bottom of the pile that integrates familiar urban sounds into the hypnotic pulse of the music. Admittedly, some of the other tracks

fall into that blurred aural wasteland where most funk seems to end up, but there is enough rousing vocal and instrumental interplay here to guarantee pleasure. P.G.

**JOHNNY MATHIS: *Friends in Love*.** Johnny Mathis, Dionne Warwick (vocals); orchestra. *Warm*; *Memory*; *Somethin's Goin' On*; *Friends in Love*; *Got You Where I Want You*; and five others. COLUMBIA FC 37748, © FCT 37748, no list price.

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

The phenomenon known as Johnny Mathis floats serenely and agelessly on with yet another new album. This one has him paired with Dionne Warwick on two tracks, *Got You Where I Want You* and *Friends in Love*, and the blend is so smooth they sound as if they'd been singing together all their lives. An artist such as Mathis defies criticism, or even review, if for no other reason than—as I've pointed out before—the zillions of recordings that he's sold to fans throughout the world. It is for these people that he records, and for them he has reliably provided through the years the kind of

sounds they want. He does it once again here. P.R.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**RAY PARKER JR.: *The Other Woman*.** Ray Parker (vocals, drums, bass, piano, guitar, synthesizer); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Stay the Night*; *It's Our Own Affair*; *Streetlove*; *Stop, Look Before You Love*; and four others. ARISTA AL 9590 \$8.98, © ACT 9590 \$8.98, © A8T 9590 \$8.98.

Performance: **Quality dance music**  
Recording: **Good**

Ray Parker Jr. has a talent for composing and arranging catchy dance tunes that manage to sound both fresh and familiar. The music on this new album is lean and uncluttered. The simple, appealing melodies are given a special boost by Parker's blues-flavored guitar, though that's not to scant his work on piano, drums, bass, synthesizer, and the lead vocals. He serves all of it up with soulful aplomb. I like the first side better than the second because it includes a couple of the best tracks, *The Oth-*

er *Woman* and *Streetlove*, where a tasteful touch of the blues comes through so tantalizingly that they might well have been some of the better products of old Memphis. But Parker can also be coolly sophisticated; the slower numbers here give him ample space to come across like the matinee idol his good looks might qualify him to be. In all, this is a satisfying set for both dancers and listeners. P.G.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**GRAM PARSONS AND THE FALLEN ANGELS:** *Live 1973*. Gram Parsons (vocals, guitar); Emmylou Harris (vocals, guitar); Neil Flanz (steel guitar); N. D. Smart II (drums); Kyle Tullis (bass); Jock Bartley (guitar). *We'll Sweep Out the Ashes; Big Mouth Blues; Streets of Baltimore; New Soft Shoe; Love Hurts*; and six others. SIER-RA GP 1973 \$7.98.

Performance: **Country-rock bridge**  
Recording: **Fair to good**

It is the Gram Parsons arrangement of *Six Days on the Road* (included here), not Dave Dudley's original, that the young pickers emulate. But you already know that if you've spent a reasonable amount of time in roadhouses. Parsons had more influence on other musicians than he did directly on the general public, but that former influence is still apparent today; it is among the things that have made country music so widely accepted by the young.

This set was recorded in conjunction with a live broadcast on WLIR-FM on Long Island by a band that Parsons—following stints with the Byrds and the Flying Burrito Brothers—had assembled for a tour to promote his "GP" solo album. His biggest find by far, of course, was Emmylou Harris, who sings a lot of pearl-inlaid harmony here, some step-out lines in a couple of duets, and a dazzling lead on an obscure country song called *Country Baptizing*. The vocals are the main attraction, but the programming is interesting and well balanced overall. Behind that, the band plays simple country and simple rock, sort of bashed together. Its sound is rather hard-edged, in part because the bass isn't loud enough and the drums are too loud; it would sound warmer if the bass were mixed up a bit, but that's part of being a roadhouse-type band, and this one does play with a certain elegance. The record is an honest piece of work that seems to value simplicity the way Einstein did when he said to keep things as simple as possible—and not one bit simpler. N.C.

**DOLLY PARTON:** *Heartbreak Express* (see *Best of the Month*, page 62)

**STEVE ROSS:** *Live at the Algonquin*. Steve Ross (vocals, piano). *Nice Work If You Can Get It; You Were There; By Myself; Can-Can; Old Friend; We're in the Money; Sometimes I'm Happy*; and fourteen others. STOLEN MOMENTS SM 1939 \$9.95 (plus \$1.50 postage and handling charge from Steve Ross, Hotel Algonquin, 59 West 44th Street, New York, N.Y. 10036).

Performance: **Not his best**  
Recording: **Good**

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former and audience, it is extremely difficult to capture on records. The most successful attempts have often been live recordings of the singer in his regular setting with his accustomed audience. That's what Steve Ross' latest album is, but it is less than totally successful in communicating the fun and excitement of one of Ross' sets at his new location, the Oak Room in New York's Algonquin Hotel. There is a period quality in Ross' reedy voice, and he has an uncanny ability to evoke the Thirties era of Cole Porter and Noël Coward. His piano work is as dazzling as always, but his voice here seems tight throughout and especially slow to warm up on side one. The songs may all work in a club, but a few of them, such as *It Never Was You*, sound studied and precious here.

Despite these reservations, I like the record, and there is plenty to enjoy on it. *Guess Who Was There* ("Gertie and Noël, Tallulah and Cole") is still amusing, and Ross extracts a lot of fun from the word play in Porter's *Can-Can*. His best number on the album is *Old Friend*, about growing older and losing lovers, and he brings the album to a fine close with five excellent songs from the Twenties and Thirties. I particularly like his idiosyncratic way with two of these, *Thanks for the Memory* and *Time on My Hands*.

Hearing Steve Ross at the Algonquin has convinced me that he is one of the finest cabaret entertainers of our time. I just wish this record evoked his gifts a bit better.

—William Livingstone

**RICK SPRINGFIELD: *Success Hasn't Spoiled Me Yet***. Rick Springfield (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Calling All Girls*; *Black Is Black*; *Don't Talk to Strangers*; *I Get Excited*; *How Do You Talk to Girls*; and seven others. RCA AFL1-4125 \$8.98, © AFK1-4125 \$8.98, © AFS1-4125 \$8.98.

Performance: **Rushed**

Recording: **Cloudy**

I'm a Rick Springfield fan. I like to see an actor make good and play music on the side and get paid well for doing both. But if, as the album title claims, success hasn't spoiled Springfield yet, it has slowed him down a bit. This record isn't as funny or as rocking as "Working Class Dog." *I Get Excited* and *How Do You Talk to Girls* show some of Springfield's charming and detached humor, but the rest of the songs are weak. I suspect that between road tours with his band and taping his appearances as Dr. Noah Drake on the soap opera *General Hospital*, Springfield just doesn't have enough time to write better material. The cover photo, though, is great: Springfield dressed in a chauffeur's uniform handing a bucket of champagne to his bull terrier Ben in the back of a limousine. Ben's garb is very California, and he is flanked by two French poodles in cheap jewelry and feather boas. Now if the songs here were only as funny. . . .

J.V.

**JOE SUN: *I Ain't Honky Tonkin' No More***.

Joe Sun (vocals); instrumental accompani-

ment. *I Ain't Honky Tonkin' No More*; *Slow Movin' Freight Train*; *Steppin' Out Blues*; *Fraulein*; *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*; and five others. ELEKTRA E1-60010 \$8.98, © E4-60010 \$8.98.

Performance: **Cliché-avoiding**

Recording: **Good**

Joe Sun's voice, shaky and thin, sounds like it ought to be used by a character actor in radio situation comedies. He has a sound of his own, give him that, despite an echo of Dave Van Ronk now and then, but the thing about this album is how the band behind him—apparently headed by guitarist Randy Scruggs—tries to disguise and/or avoid clichés, especially in the country songs. (The uncountry songs are mainly rock.) It's an interesting sound, worthy of further experimentation, although the present release makes a choppy, disjointed impression. It is possible to take cliché-avoidance too far; sometimes a standard lick is the best lick for a particular opening in a song. But this is still a different-sounding little bugger, even though it seems to be one of those records that are not appealing enough from the start to replay enough times to appreciate fully. Life is, after all, short.

N.C.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**THIRD WORLD: *You've Got the Power***.

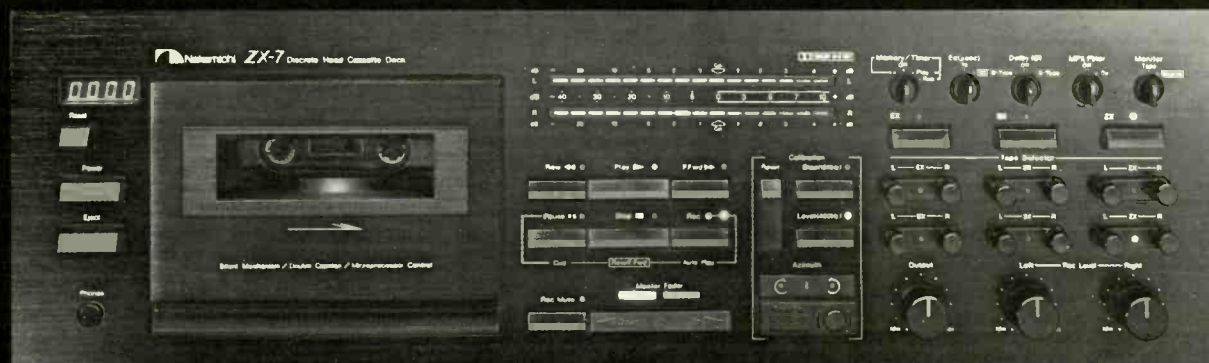
Third World (vocals and instrumentals). *Try Jah Love*; *Ride On*; *You're Playing Us Too Close*; *Before You Make Your Move* (*Melt with Everyone*); *Inna Time Like*

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THE JIVE FIVE

## Return of Doo-wop

**S**O-CALLED "doo-wop"—a syncopation-spiced singing style featuring a tenor lead backed by close harmony—was a mainstay of early rock-and-roll. Although the original hits by various groups that popularized the style have often been reissued, one rarely sees *new* recordings by any of the old doo-woppers who are still around. But now a new label, Ambient Sound, distributed by the Epic/Portrait division of CBS, is again recording doo-wop greats. Ambient's first five releases present the Mystics, Randy and the Rainbows, the Harptones, the Capris, and the Jive Five—all names sure to stir the memories and gladden the hearts of rockers who grew up in the late Fifties and early Sixties. Moreover, all these groups still have their original lead singers and most of their original members as well.

With twelve selections in each album—just as in the good old days—and jackets that recall the slapdash cover art of the period, you might think these albums were mere exercises in nostalgia aimed at a limited market—a tax loss at best. However, Ambient not only means well, it means to *do* well. With major-label distribution, Ambient is in a much stronger position to succeed than the small, independent, and undercapitalized labels that recorded doo-wop groups in the old days—and often went out of business in the process.

**A**MBIENT is serious about the groups it is recording too, presenting them as artists of enduring merit working in a classic form. Album annotator Marcia Vance (no relation to the undersigned) calls the music "traditional rock and roll," a more dignified and perhaps a more accurate designation than "doo-wop." It's like calling Dixieland "traditional jazz"; both styles are basic sources from which later ones derive.

The groups themselves are not merely intact but still have their musical wits about them, especially Randy and the Rainbows and the Jive Five. All have expanded their repertoires to include contemporary songs by John Lennon, Walter Becker and Donald Fagen (a/k/a Steely Dan), Joey Ra-

moné, and others, and they have recorded variations on their original hits instead of just redoing them. Some are true sequels, such as the Jive Five's *Never, Never Lie*, which resolves the tale of Sue and Earl who had such a hard time in *My True Story*. Randy and the Rainbows' *Denise* was covered by Blondie in the Seventies, so the follow-up on the group's new album is called *Debbie* after Blondie's Deborah Harry. The Mystics' hit *Hushabye* is updated here to *Hush My Darling*; instead of the original's "guardian angels" taking care of "the one I love," a more corporeal husband/lover is "right by your bed."

The albums by the Mystics and the Capris in particular mix reminders of the mores of the Fifties with references to more current ones. Despite all that has been written about rock as a music of rebellion, it began—and remains—essentially geared to middle-class values, particularly in matters of romance. Nowhere is this orientation more evident than in doo-wop, which originated in the Fifties with groups mainly from in and around New York City. The white groups, mostly from the outer boroughs, took for granted middle-class attitudes toward home, church, family, and employment, and their early efforts often sounded distinctly amateurish and naively romantic. Black doo-wop groups, hailing largely from Harlem and parts of Brooklyn, were still trying to *enter* the middle class. They strictly separated sacred from popular material, and their approach to the latter tended to be distinctly more worldly, professional, and flexible than that of the white groups. An aspiring black group had to be able to take on a ballad or a jump-up novelty item with equal panache. By the early Sixties, the white and black doo-woopers had achieved an amalgam of styles. The whites sang with more swing, and their material was less sappy; the blacks, buoyed by the civil-rights movement, sang more like claimants to the middle-class world than humble supplicants.

But then came the "Motown sound," closely followed by the British Invasion. Between Berry Gordy Jr. of Detroit and Brian

Epstein of Liverpool, the doo-woopers were frozen out of the record market. The sturdier groups continued to work small clubs, but it was not until the Seventies that the "Rock and Roll Revival" shows at Madison Square Garden brought them back before large audiences.

Ambient Sound's slogan, "The Sound of Human America," is a take-off on Motown's Sixties tag line, "The Sound of Young America." It is also a comment on today's studio productions, which usually emphasize deliberate vocal distortion, automated percussion, and brain-numbing volume levels. Ambient's productions are designed to result in a more natural recorded sound. Its studios in Queens are much like Motown's early Detroit garage setup—sessions have to be scheduled around those of the dance classes held next door, since the vocalists are in an unsoundproofed room where they are recorded simultaneously with the house band's backing tracks. The vocal arrangements are made up on the spot, and if someone flubs the take is done over.

**T**HE Harptones are the least changed of the five groups. On their new "Love Needs" they deal, as they always did, in moody ballads. Lead singer Willie Winfield is as smooth and seductive a tenor as you're likely to hear in pop—he's been mellowing listeners for twenty-eight years. The all-ballad format provides few variations in tempo, so the selections tend to blur together. However, *Love Needs a Heart* stands out for its story-telling lyrics, and the old standard *My One and Only Love* gets the full, luscious Winfield treatment.

By all odds the most jovial, easygoing, and historically representative of the five groups is Randy and the Rainbows. *Come On Let's Go* was Ritchie Valens' first hit, and the group sings it here with a no-frills, let's-wake-'em-up glee. *Weekend with You* is a variation on *The Ten Commandments of Love*, but the solemn spoken interjections always seem on the verge of turning into chorales.

On "Crazy for You" the Mystics' lead singer sometimes has pitch problems and is consistently bland. The group sounds much better in their ensemble efforts, particularly *You Baby You*, and they go all out on Joey Ramone's *Doreen Is Never Boring*. Both the Mystics and the Capris are determinedly naïve, which sometimes leads them into melodramatic silliness. On "There's a Moon Out Again!" the Capris go directly from *A Love of My Own*, which pleads for heaven to provide a mate, to John Lennon's *Imagine*, which rejects belief in an afterlife—singing both with equal fervor.

Eugene Pitt of the Jive Five sings with all the authority of a veteran street cop and the affection of a Dutch uncle. He's as comfortable with *Chains*, the old Carole King/Gerry Goffin plaint, as he is with *Hey Nineteen*, a cynical diatribe by Becker and Fagen. For exuberance it would be hard to beat the Jive Five's version here of *Hey Sam*, a streamlined stomper that has the group and the back-up players breaking up with helpless laughter.



Consistently steady and sometimes inspired on all five albums, Ambient's house band consists of Ronnie Lawson on keyboards, Danny Begelman on guitars, John Dooley on bass, Larry Lader on drums, and Keith Spring and Vinnie Della-Rocca on tenor and baritone saxophones, respectively. Like the vocalists and producer Marty Pekar, these guys clearly believe in what they're doing. As a result, together they make a convincing case for the enduring value of "traditional rock and roll." These releases should comfort true believers, bring lapsed ones back into the fold, and perhaps even make new converts. —Joel Vance

**THE CAPRIS:** *There's a Moon Out Again!* Nick Santo, Mike Minicelli, Frank Reina, Tony Ianno, Tommy Ferrara (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *There's a Moon Out Again; To Be Loved (Forever); Morse Code of Love; Guardian Angel; A Love of My Own; Imagine; That's How Love Goes; Boy Meets Girl; Oh Darlin'; You Are; Tonight I'm So in Love; She's My Girl.* AMBIENT SOUND FZ 37714, © FZT 37714, no list price.

**THE HARPTONES:** *Love Needs.* Willie Winfield, Raoul Cita, Linda Champion, Lowe Murray (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *My One and Only Love; Those Wonderful Moments; Love Needs a Heart; It's You; When Your Heart Has Said Goodbye; I'm So in Love with You; Gee Whiz; If I Give My Heart to You; I've Never Been in Love; That's What I Need; Our Love (I Am Yours, You Are Mine); We Are in Love.* AMBIENT SOUND FZ 37718, © FZT 37718, no list price.

**THE JIVE FIVE:** *Here We Are!* Eugene Pitt, Herbert Pitt, Frank Pitt, Charles Mitchell, Beatrice Best (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Here I Am; Never, Never Lie; Don't Believe Him Donna; Hey Nineteen; Hey Sam; Never, Never Change; Chains; Magic Maker, Music Maker; Oh Baby; Say You'll Be There; He's Just a Lucky Man; Baby You're My Only Love.* AMBIENT SOUND FZ 37717, © FZT 37717, no list price.

**THE MYSTICS:** *Crazy for You.* Phil Cracolici, Al Contrera, Albee Cracolici, John Tarangelo, Bob Ferrante (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Crazy for You; Hush My Darling; You Baby You; Prayer to an Angel; Chills and Fever; Doreen Is Never Boring; Wish I Had My Baby; Why Do You Pretend; Will Love Ever Come My Way; The Bells Are Ringing; That's the Way It Goes; Now That Summer Is Here.* AMBIENT SOUND FZ 37716, © FZT 37716, no list price.

**RANDY AND THE RAINBOWS:** *C'mon, Let's Go!* Dom "Randy" Safuto, Frank Safuto, Mike Zero, Vinnie Carella (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Come On Let's Go; Angel Face; Weekend with You; Try the Impossible; In Your Letter; You're My Girl; Till I Heard It from You; No Love; Debbie; Strike It Rich; I Want to Be Lonely; When the Morning Comes.* AMBIENT SOUND FZ 37715, © FZT 37715, no list price.

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Woodstock ethos that sounds like a pastiche of John Lennon's later works. Rundgren seems haunted by Lennon; what he needs now is to find his own way. J.V.

**JIMMY WEBB:** *Angel Heart*. Jimmy Webb (vocals, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Angel Heart*; *God's Gift*; *One of the Few*; *Scissors Cut*; *Work for a Dollar*; *His World*; and four others. COLUMBIA/LORIMAR FC 37695, © FCT 37695, no list price.

Performance: **Soft-focus rock**  
Recording: **Good**

As a songwriter, Jimmy Webb hasn't competed very well with his own early success. I

thought he was going to be one of the best back when the Glen Campbell recordings of his stark ballads were coming thick and fast. But then work got subordinated to life-style for a while, and the quality of his stuff has been inconsistent since then. This new album takes a quiet approach, although most of it is technically rock, and song after song presents a low profile and a diffuse mood. It almost seems as though Webb is trying to avoid letting anything stand out in the kind of sharp relief his early songs had.

A couple of the more interesting new ones—*In Cars*, accurately pinpointing the locus of our growing up, and *Old Wing Mouth*, about a traveling evangelist ("He

came to do good and he did well")—have been recorded by other people. The others are okay. Coming upon them cold, you'd know that some intelligence lurked behind them, but you'd hardly suspect a former genius did. N.C.

**DON WILLIAMS:** *Listen to the Radio*. Don Williams (vocals, guitar, harp); instrumental accompaniment. *Listen to the Radio*; *If Hollywood Don't Need You*; *Don't Stop Loving Me Now*; *Only Love*; *Fool Fool Heart*; *Mistakes*; and four others. MCA MCA-5306 \$7.98, © MCAC-5306 \$7.98.

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

One of Don Williams' biggest fans is Eric Clapton, and if you listen to this (or any other) Don Williams record a certain way you may stumble across one of the reasons. As singers, both Clapton and Williams favor melodies that don't go up and down much. Clapton obviously doesn't have much range. With Williams it's harder to tell, partly because he's so smooth, partly because he's so steadfastly laid-back; if he does have much range, he seldom lets on about it.

Williams' albums have had a cumulative effect on me that, as much as I respect his taste, isn't 100 per cent positive. There are three Bob McDill songs on this one, and all three could have used arrangements with a little more bite to them. In the name of changing the pace, so could the album—and the whole string of Don Williams albums I've heard. The instrumentation doesn't *have* to be as laid-back as the voice, but it always is, even when once-raunchy guitarist Dave Kirby is involved. Of course, there's no denying that Williams is good, or that this tasteful album will please his fans, or that big chunks of it please me. It's just that I don't want to be lulled *all* the time, and you know what happens in grooves that are too comfortable. N.C.

#### COLLECTION

**THE KIDS FROM FAME.** Debbie Allen, Lee Curreri, Erica Gimpel, Valerie Landsburg, Carlo Imperato, Gene Anthony Ray, Lori Singer, others (vocals and instrumentals); orchestra. *Starmaker*; *I Still Believe In Me*; *We Got the Power*; and seven others. RCA AFL1-4259 \$8.98, © AFK1-4259 \$8.98.

Performance: **Boring**  
Recording: **Real.cute**

*Fame* is an obnoxious little TV sitcom-drama (based on the rather more entertaining movie of the same title) about a bunch of obnoxious professional children and their even more obnoxious teachers and advisors. The album derived from it is perhaps a step up from the sitcom; at least you don't have to watch all those quivering narcissistic little faces try to hog the camera in every shot, and there are no commercials. No, I take that last part back. I think the whole album is a commercial for a show that seems to have done well in the ratings, and I am suspicious of anything that goes to such extravagant lengths to try to sell me something. The pitch is that these kids are just loaded with talent and waiting to be recognized. Don't you believe it. P.R.

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# JAZZ



**ORNETTE COLEMAN: *Of Human Feelings*.** Ornette Coleman (alto saxophone); the Prime Time Band (instrumentals). *Sleep Talk; Jump Street; Him and Her; Air Ship; Love Words*; and four others. AN-TILLES AN-2001 \$7.98.

Performance: **Outré funk**  
Recording: **Very good**

Ornette Coleman has always liked to lend his style to a variety of established musical expressions. I can recall a Town Hall concert in New York in the early Sixties at which he appeared with a chamber-music group one minute and a rock-and-roll group the next. It seemed rather daring in those days, but then one expected the unusual from Ornette Coleman. On his newly released "Of Human Feelings" (actually recorded over three years ago), Coleman plunges his alto saxophone into a sea of often robotic funk. The effect can be quite mesmerizing, but the music also begins to lose definition after a while, and the repetitious rhythm makes me wish someone would give the throttle a good yank. This album was produced by Coleman himself, but it does not do justice to his art. C.A.

**DARDANELLE: *The Colors of My Life*.** Dardanelle (vocals, piano); George Duvivier (bass); Grady Tate (drums); Howard Collins (guitar); Phil Bodner (tenor saxophone). *Where or When; Out of This World; The Need to Be; Something Cool*; and six others. STASH ST217 \$8.98.

Performance: **Style to spare**  
Recording: **Very good**

Dardanelle, who grew up on a plantation in Greenwood, Mississippi, heard her father improvising rags so much during her childhood that she decided to become a musician herself. In the Forties she toured the country playing the piano and vibraphone with her group, the Dardanelle Trio. Later she worked for a Chicago television station as staff pianist and acted in a children's show. About ten years ago she entered the nightclub circuit as a singer and instrumentalist, quickly earning recognition as a stylist. "The Colors of My Life" is her fourth record in a decade, and style she has, whether she's making the mediocre title song (from the musical *Barnum*) sound better than it has any right to or successfully dashing through *Where or When* at a faster clip than caution would advise or extolling the virtues of *Memphis in June*, for which she deserves a commission from the local tourist bureau. Though Dardanelle has been in the business a long time, her voice displays real freshness, and the verve with which she tackles a ballad is echoed in the first-rate playing on this disc. P.K.

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**DUKE ELLINGTON: *Concert in the Virgin Islands*.** Duke Ellington and His Orchestra (instrumentals). *Island Virgin; Chelsea Bridge; Things Ain't What They Used to Be; Jungle Kitty; Mysterious Chick*; and six others. DISCOVERY DS-841 \$8.98.

Performance: **Worthy reissue**  
Recording: **Good**

Although entitled "Concert in the Virgin Islands," this 1965 album by the Duke Ellington Orchestra was actually made in a New York studio. Previously released on Reprise (R 6185), it consists of the four selections in Ellington's *Virgin Islands Suite*, two tunes from the standard Ellington repertoire, and a handful of originals whose names play on then-current Broadway show titles. It all adds up to thirty-six minutes of excellent Ellingtonia featuring some of Duke's most memorable sides.

Among the highlights is Jimmy Hamilton's smooth clarinet work on the first two parts of the suite, fine performances by Ray Nance (on violin) and Cat Anderson (trumpet) on the last two parts, a spirited *Things Ain't What They Used to Be* featuring Johnny Hodges, and Paul Gonsalves' tenor-sax work on *Chelsea Bridge* and *Barefoot Stomper*. This is superb Ellington. C.A.

**FATHERS AND SONS** (see Best of the Month, page 64)

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**PANAMA FRANCIS AND THE SAVOY SULTANS: *Grooving*.** Panama Francis (drums); Red Richards (piano); Bill Pemberton (bass); John Smith (guitar); Irvin Stokes, Franc Williams (trumpets); George Kelly, Gene Ghee, Howard Johnson (saxophones); Julia Steele (vocals). *Honeysuckle Rose; In a Mellotone; Bill Bailey; Panama; Cotton Tail; Jersey Bounce*; and four others. STASH ST218 \$8.98.

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

I have raved before about drummer Panama Francis' Savoy Sultans, and I am happy to do it again. This is just wonderful music, exultantly confident, irresistibly charming.

"Grooving" features the addition of vocalist Julia Steele. Her two numbers, *Bill Bailey* and *I've Got the World on a String*, prove her to be an entertaining, bravura singer who enjoys what she does and makes her joy infectious. There are also two additions to the Sultans' repertoire: *Join Jones*, a tribute to a New York jazz disc jockey who programs Swing Era recordings, and *Theme from New York, New York*, played with more pep and less arrogant local boosterism than that song usually inspires. Two Ellington items, *Cotton Tail* and *In a Mellotone*, are played with all the frisky sophistication that Duke meant them to have. So are the early jazz classics *Ja-Da* and *Panama* and the sparkling arrangement of the Fats Waller warhorse *Honeysuckle Rose*, in which the solos are played against backing horns running the melody from *Sweet Sue*. The Sultans have enormous fun, and so will you when you hear them. J.V.

(Continued overleaf)

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## Art Tatum: Enough Said

**T**HERE is nothing I can say about pianist Art Tatum's music that hasn't been said many times before. He is quite simply the most dazzling, inventive, and influential pianist jazz has ever had or is ever likely to get. If you are among the small minority of jazz followers—maybe two or three—who

have not heard a Tatum recording, the Smithsonian Collection's new "Pieces of Eight" will provide a stunning introduction. And if you already have some Tatum on your shelf, even if you have an abundance, you ought to make room for this album.

Tatum fans will be delighted to hear that the Smithsonian set includes five previously unissued performances, two that have hitherto been released (by Twentieth Century-Fox) only in abbreviated versions, and four selections that were originally pressed by Standard Transcriptions for broadcast use but never marketed publicly. The recordings were made between 1939 and 1955, and all but one are solo performances. The exception is a live 1944 rendition of *Exactly Like You* by the extremely successful Art Tatum Trio (with guitarist Tiny Grimes and bassist Slam Stewart). The ending is missing, and it is the only track on which extraneous noise is bothersome, but all by itself it is worth the album's price. An altogether remarkable collection.

—Chris Albertson

**ART TATUM: *Pieces of Eight*.** Art Tatum (piano). *It Had to Be You; Oh, You Crazy Moon; Over the Rainbow; Day In, Day Out; Hallelujah* (two versions); *Memories of You; Yesterdays; Jitterbug Waltz; I Cover the Waterfront; Love for Sale; Just Like a Butterfly (That's Caught in the Rain); Sweet Lorraine*. Art Tatum Trio. *Exactly Like You*. SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION © R029 \$8.98 (plus \$1.50 postage and handling charge from Smithsonian Recordings, P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50336).

**VON FREEMAN AND CHICO FREEMAN** (see *Best of the Month*, page 64)

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**IRAKERE: *Chekeré Son*.** Irakere (vocals and instrumentals). *Chekeré Son; Quince Minutos; Camaguey; Cha Cha Cha*; and two others. MILESTONE M-9103 \$7.98.

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

In 1976 a friend returning from a visit to Cuba brought back a recording by an exciting jazz pianist named Chucho Valdes, a great favorite down there. I was much impressed by Valdes, who had mastered jazz style and techniques while retaining an unmistakable Cuban fire in his music, particularly in color and rhythmic emphasis. Therefore, I was not the least bit surprised when a sensational new Cuban jazz ensemble called Irakere made its U.S. debut at the 1978 Newport–New York Jazz Festival and the leader turned out to be the same Chucho Valdes.

"Chekeré Son," recorded in Havana shortly after Irakere burst onto the international scene, is the most fundamentally Latin set the group has released here to date. There is no attempt to sound hip in North American terms, though the jazz elements are firmly implanted in every inspired note,

with Valdes laying down a solid foundation on the keyboard. The exuberant vocal chants set up an antiphonal interplay with the horns that is common in Latin music, and a battery of percussionists whip up a blaze of rhythmic sounds that impel saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera and trumpeter Arturo Sandoval, among others, to provide searing instrumental commentary. Don't worry about not understanding the lyrics; every note here speaks for itself. *P.G.*

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MEL LEWIS: *Mellifluous*.** Mel Lewis (drums); John Mosca (trombone); Dick Oatts (alto flute, soprano and alto saxophones); Jim McNeely (piano); Marc Johnson (bass). *Warm Valley; Audrey; I'm Old Fashioned*; and three others. GATEMOUTH 1006 \$7.98 (from Gatemouth Recording Company, 90 Madison Avenue, Island Park, N.Y. 11558).

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

The Mel Lewis Quintet is an independent unit that is often more interesting than the Mel Lewis Orchestra, the big band that spawned it. If "Mellifluous" is not the group's first release, it is the first to come to my attention, and it is an altogether worthy introduction to small-band jazz of the mod-

ern, highly accessible variety. All five members perform with taste and a winning nimbleness, but the lion's share of credit for this fine album—and, indeed, the success of the group—probably belongs to pianist/arranger Jim McNeely. Besides contributing two fine tunes, *Blue Note* and *Giving Way*, McNeely shows his admiration for Bud Powell with loving arrangements of the late pianist's *Audrey* and *John's Abbey*. C.A.

WYNTON MARSALIS, BRANFORD MARSALIS, AND ELLIS MARSALIS (see Best of the Month, page 64)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ART PEPPER, JOHN KLEMMER, JOHNNY GRIFFIN, JOE HENDERSON:** *Ballads by Four*. Art Pepper, Johnny Griffin, Joe Henderson, John Klemmer (saxophone); Stanley Cowell (piano); John Heard, Cecil McBee (bass); Roy Haynes (drums). *Over the Rainbow; God Bless the Child; Smoke Gets in Your Eyes; Good Morning, Heartache*. GALAXY GXY-5133 \$7.98.

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

This album has four tracks, each of which features a different saxophonist. All are products of three 1978 sessions by the album's one constant, pianist Stanley Cowell. Art Pepper, John Klemmer, Johnny Griffin, and Joe Henderson have their individual approaches to the four familiar ballads, and all succeed admirably in making statements that sound fresh while fueling the mind as well as the spirit. John Klemmer's *God Bless the Child* is the gutsiest of the four, Art Pepper eases us *Over the Rainbow* most impressively, and Johnny Griffin's *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* might produce a tear or two, but my favorite is Joe Henderson's reading of *Good Morning, Heartache*. It sums up all the ingredients here. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MCCOY TYNER:** *13th House*. McCoy Tyner (piano); Hubert Laws (flute); Ron Carter (bass); Charles Sullivan (trumpet); Airtio, Jack DeJohnette, Dom Um Romao (percussion); other musicians. *Short Suite; 13th House; Search for Peace*; and two others. MILESTONE M-9102 \$7.98.

Performance: **Tyner triumphant**  
Recording: **Good**

McCoy Tyner, whose awesomely powerful approach to the piano is matched by his productivity as a recording artist, has mastered the rare feat of managing always to sound like himself despite imposing a different character on each of his albums. This new release, his last on Milestone, was apparently drawn from material recorded before he made his switch to Columbia. It finds him working with a full orchestra playing arrangements by Jimmy Heath, Slide Hampton, Frank Foster (who also plays reeds and winds), and Tyner himself, with William Fischer conducting. The band augments Tyner's already full, robust sound without detracting from his basic thrust. Here are all the familiar clustered chords and carefully placed dissonances showcased in a dazzling setting. Though the band in-

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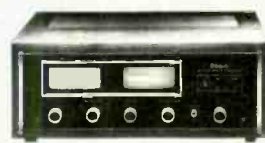
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cludes such jazz greats as Hubert Laws, Ron Carter, and Jack DeJohnette, Tyner is so assertive that it is his musical personality that prevails. A fine record. P.G.

**PAUL WHITEMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA:** *At Aeolian Hall—An Experiment in Modern Music.* Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra: *Mama Loves Papa; So This Is Venice!; Whispering; Limehouse Blues; I Love You; Raggedy Ann; Stumbling; Say It with Music;* and ten others. George Gershwin (piano); Paul Whiteman and His Concert Orchestra: *Rhapsody in Blue.* Zez Confrey (piano): *Kitten on the Keys.* Zez Confrey and His Orchestra: *Humorestless; Nickel in the Slot; Mississippi Shivers.*

Original Dixieland Jazz Band: *Livery Stable Blues; Barnyard Blues.* The Great White Way Orchestra: *Yes! We Have No Bananas.* Broadway Dance Orchestra: *Russian Rose.* Jean Goldkette and His Orchestra: *Fox Trot Classique.* Clarence Senna: *How to Write a Popular Song.* SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION ® DMM2-0518 two discs \$13.98 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling charge from the Smithsonian Collection, P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50336).

Performance: **Evocative**  
Recording: **Excellent restorations**

Paul Whiteman was the *ne plus ultra* of popular dance-orchestra leaders from 1920

until 1935. His records sold in the millions and his name was a household word. The general public took it for granted that he was, as his publicists said, the "King of Jazz." A violinist by training, Whiteman was himself incapable of playing jazz, but he liked it and brought some of its elements into his orchestral sound. His use of a flowing rhythm, syncopation, and loose arrangements combined to obliterate the stodgy, tea-party sound of dance orchestras in 1920.

Whiteman's New York Aeolian Hall concert on February 12, 1924, is primarily remembered for the premiere of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, with the composer at the piano. Whiteman wanted to do something special without quite knowing what. He believed in the possibilities of jazz as a compositional and orchestral style that could be scored and notated and that would establish a dignified native American music independent of European "classical" forms. (In 1924 this was a burning issue among critics.) So he commissioned a piece from Gershwin and also called in the very respectable Victor Herbert to provide other material and arrangements.

Billed as "An Experiment in Modern Music," the concert was a grab bag of show tunes, novelty items, and "concert" arrangements of current pop hits. The star guest on the program was not Gershwin but Zez Confrey, an "eccentric" pianist whose *Kitten on the Keys* was then all the rage. The concert confirmed Whiteman as the most important, prestigious, and daring of popular orchestra leaders, and there was general enthusiasm for the *Rhapsody*.

In the later Twenties Whiteman augmented his orchestra with real jazz musicians and continued to do so until the mid-Thirties. He was a spotter of talent and generously enthusiastic about potential jazz composers and orchestrators. His reputation, after a severe pummeling by historians, is now ripe for rehabilitation. It's true that he did not play real jazz (except at moments), but his enormous prestige and success gave it a good name.

This Smithsonian Collection release recreates the program of the Aeolian Hall concert through original recordings by Whiteman and Zez Confrey, plus several renditions by other orchestras of the time to help show just how relatively free Whiteman's sound was. The fourth side consists of encores he might have played at the Aeolian Hall concert, which opened with what Whiteman hoped would be a reassuring parody of "discordant" jazz, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's 1917 hit, *Livery Stable Blues*. What Whiteman discovered in the course of the concert was that the public was not interested in justifying jazz intellectually; they just wanted more of it, and they considered him an infallible guide.

One must listen to this re-creation in perspective; without some knowledge of the historical context you may wonder what all the controversy was about. Fortunately, Thornton Hagert's extensive liner notes make clear that the Aeolian Hall concert was an important event in American popular music for which Whiteman took the responsibility and the chances, and its influence is very much with us today, nearly forty years later, in jazz and avant-garde orchestral presentations. J.V.

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## THEATER • FILMS

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**CAT PEOPLE** (Giorgio Moroder). Original-soundtrack recording. David Bowie (vocal); orchestra. BACKSTREET BSR-6107 \$7.98.

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

I haven't yet seen the movie *Cat People* (a remake of an earlier one, *The Cat People*, that I remember fondly), but the soundtrack recording has definitely roused my interest. The music for this "erotic fantasy about the animal in us all" is by Giorgio Moroder, once the most prominent disco producer (and Donna Summer's Svengali). He works up an atmosphere of suspense right from the very first notes of the title song, the lyrics of which David Bowie wrote and sings in an arresting fashion. The rest of the score is all instrumental, but the initial tension is sustained right up through the final strange, sensuous note. If the movie is half as good as the score, it must really be something. *P.K.*

**DAS BOOT** (Klaus Doldinger). Original-soundtrack recording. Rita Cadillac, Rina Ketly (vocals); orchestra. ATLANTIC SD 19348 \$8.98, © CS 19348 \$8.98, © TP 19348 \$8.98.

Performance: **Not bad**  
Recording: **Very good**

There was a time during World War II when just about every other new movie took place on a British or American submarine in hot pursuit of a German U-boat. They were all told strictly from the point of view of ourselves and our brave allies. *Das Boot* is a recent German movie that shows us how it was on the other end of the periscope. The music for Hollywood's submarine sagas was usually nothing if not nautical, and Klaus Doldinger's score, though strong and lean and saltier than its California predecessors, lurches along in the same stream a good deal of the time, occasionally mingling the sound of the orchestra with a sonar hoot or underwater groan. More interesting than the orchestral passages are two sexy, Weill-like honky-tonk songs, *Mon Gars* and *J'Attendrai* (this one is not by Klaus Doldinger). Rita Cadillac sings *Mon Gars*, and Rina Ketley sings *J'Attendrai*. They're both good, heartbreaking French songs, the kind that the incomparable Edith Piaf loved to sing, and Rita and Rina really put them over. *P.K.*

**JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT** (Tim Rice-Andrew Lloyd Webber). Bill Hutton, David Ardao, Tom Carder, others (vocals); instru-

mental accompaniment. CHRYSALIS CHR 1387 \$8.98.

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

*Joseph* is the first collaborative work by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice—the team that later gave us *Evita*—to win public performance. They wrote it for the choir at St. Paul's Junior School in London, and at its premiere in 1968 the piece ran less than half an hour. In the intervening four-teen years an expanded version of *Joseph*—a retelling in contemporary musical terms of the Biblical story of Joseph and his brothers—has been in nearly constant performance all over the world. Right now it's a

hit on Broadway with the same cast as on this new recording.

*Joseph* is a modest and spirited little romp that kids of all ages can enjoy. Everything about it is simple and straightforward, sweet-tempered and innocently joyous. Even adults can get caught up in such conceits as a Pharaoh who's modeled on Elvis Presley or the *Benjamin Calypso*. The cast is excellent, particularly Bill Hutton as Joseph and Tom Carder as Pharaoh. Tim Rice obviously still feels affection for this early effort, since he's co-produced the recording along with Roger Watson. The production is just right, with an intimacy of sound that's in proportion to the scale of the material. *P.R.*

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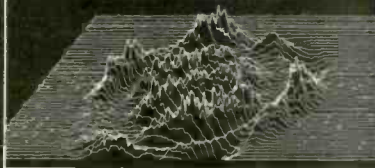
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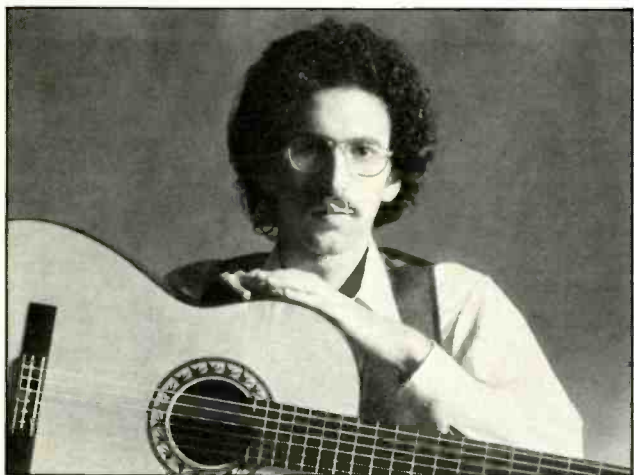
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# Classical Music Briefs



Don Munstein

"**M**OST guitarists I know are baseball fans," said Michael Newman, who is a guitarist, and knows a lot of other guitarists. When I asked him recently what else guitarists have in common apart from the instrument itself, he continued, "Well, most of the ones I know are also dreadful gossips, and they love telling jokes. And all the American classical guitarists I know have some appreciation of pop music."

But Newman, who is not only an American classical guitarist (he was born in New York City in 1957) but also a much praised and admired musician, did not come to the guitar through pop music. "I've listened to a lot of jazz and I played in a rock group—for one week. But basically I'm an interpreter of what other people have put down on paper. I don't have any notes in my head that are dying to come out."

Such matters do not come up with most other kinds of instru-

mentalists, but the place of the guitar and the guitarist in musical society is still not solidly defined. It is the amateur instrument *par excellence* (there are guitar societies throughout this country and the world). And there are still professional players who divide their programs between jazz and classical music or between flamenco and classical music.

"What is different about the guitar—the piano too—is that you don't have to breathe or take a new bow, so that it's all too easy to get along without phrasing. But I was brought up with a lot of music other than guitar music. And my teachers (Albert Valdes-Blain and Oscar Ghiglia) made their students think about what they were doing—where the music was going, how and why. And, finally, I had to learn to sing the pieces I was playing."

Part of the problem of the guitar has been the limitations of its repertoire. "I'm glad to be starting a career now rather

than ten or fifteen years ago. There's simply more music, both new and old, to play. The great break came when Julian Bream got Benjamin Britten to write the *Nocturnal*. When other composers—when other people—heard music of that quality written for the guitar, they really began to consider it a legitimate instrument. There's been a lot of good music written for it since."

Newman's current interest, though, goes in the opposite direction, in unearthing more of the nineteenth-century pieces, and his recordings show that. And what about transcriptions, which are simultaneously the blessings and the banes of the repertoire? "If they really work on the guitar, I play them," says Newman. "But I'd rather hear it good on the piano than hear it on the guitar and think to myself how good it would sound on the piano."

Newman has made two direct-to-disc recordings for Sheffield Lab, and he has received, from STEREO REVIEW, two rave reviews. The first of these was in November 1979; the second is on page 104 of this issue. —J.G.

**T**HE rivalry between tenors Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti seems to have quieted down a bit, with Domingo very much more in the public eye for the moment. London Records has released a new recording of Bellini's *La Sonnambula* with Pavarotti and Joan Sutherland and in August will release the soundtrack of Pavarotti's forthcoming movie *Yes, Giorgio*, which should be in theaters in September. In October

Pavarotti will sing *Idomeneo*, his first Mozart opera, at the Metropolitan in New York.

But Domingo is all over the place. After working on the film version of *La Traviata* with Teresa Stratas (directed by Franco Zeffirelli) in Rome, he sang *La Bohème* in Barcelona in May. Following a June stint at the Vienna State Opera singing *Otello* and *Andrea Chenier* and conducting *Die Fledermaus*, he returned to Spain to sing in Madrid and to open the World Soccer Cup Competition.

At press time Domingo's plans for filming *The Merry Widow* in July were still uncertain because of casting problems, but in August he will be at the Salzburg Festival in *Tales of Hoffmann* and will return to Vienna for more performances of *Otello*. In September, he will return to the Met for *La Gioconda*, and in October he will go to Chicago for *Tosca* at Lyric Opera. Then, in November, he will sing *Girl of the Golden West* at Covent Garden in London, and in December he will open the season at La Scala in Milan with *Ernani*. Somewhere in there he is scheduled to record the soundtrack for a movie version of *Carmen* to be filmed next summer with the soprano Julia Migenes-Johnson.

In May, Deutsche Grammophon released "Placido Domingo: Greatest Hits," a two-disc (or two-cassette) album of arias, tangos, and popular songs at the special price of \$15.98 including poster. In June, DG released Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedict* with Domingo, Ileana Cotrubas, Yvonne Minton, and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, conducted by Daniel Barenboim.



Domingo has signed an exclusive contract with CBS Records for crossover material, and a June release from CBS is "Adoro," an album of his renditions of popular Mexican songs. For fall CBS is planning a follow-up album to "Perhaps Love," the pop recording Domingo made with John Denver. Where will it all end? Domingo will almost certainly wind up with a hefty bank account, but with a schedule like that it's unlikely he'll ever need to work off weight at a fat farm. —W.L.

FROM perhaps the most historically important producer of classical stereo recordings comes an almost-finished autobiography filled with juicy anecdotes on the behind-the-scenes activity of a large record company. The late John Culshaw's *Putting the Record Straight* (Viking Press, \$17.50) concentrates on his work as a producer of operatic and vocal recordings for London Records (Decca outside the U.S.). Culshaw names names and points accusatory fingers with fine literary style, at least for a record producer, but missing is a sense of the joy of creation, a sense of pride in his often brilliant recordings. There is little

on his technique of production, his philosophy of what a recording should be, or indeed of exactly what a record producer really does. Instead, we are given entertaining vignettes of conductors' and singers' rivalries and peccadillos, tales of record-company politics and policies. This could have been an important artistic statement on what it means, musically, to make a recording. The result, however, is a less interesting remastering of Culshaw's *Ring Resounding*. For artistic statements his many recordings will have to suffice, and that they do superlatively.

*On and Off the Record* (Scribner's, \$17.95) is a memoir of Walter Legge by his widow, the German soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. Legge occupied a position at EMI/Angel that was similar to Culshaw's at Decca/London, and he was as well the founder of the Philharmonia Orchestra. Mrs. Legge's memoir also contains gossip and controversial comments about a lot of famous musicians as well as further insights into how and why records are made. In the main, though, Legge's artistic statements, like Culshaw's, are his recordings, and not least those he made of his wife. —D.R.



THIS year's winner of the Avery Fisher Prize is the Cuban-born American pianist **Horacio Gutiérrez**, shown above (center) with his wife Patricia and Avery Fisher, retired audio-equipment manufacturer now turned philanthropist. Administered by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the prize was established in 1974 as part of Mr. Fisher's major gift to Lincoln Center. It is awarded (usually annually) to an American instrumentalist who has already achieved a substantial solo career and is ready for it to become a major career. The prize consists of a \$10,000 cash award, concert appearances at Lincoln Center, and help in getting exposure through television, radio, and recordings. Gutiérrez has already made three recordings for EMI/Angel.

Previous Fisher laureates include, among others, pianists Emanuel Ax, Richard Goode, Murray Perahia, and André-Michel Schub, cellists Lynn Harrell and Yo-Yo Ma, and clarinetist Richard Stoltzman. In accepting this year's prize, Gutiérrez said he was "thrilled." He continued, "I want to thank Mr. Fisher although I learned this morning that he did not vote for me." This comment was a reference to the fact that Fisher is an advisor to the committee that chooses the winner, but he does not vote.

Of the prize, Fisher says, "Music was what motivated the people who bought my hi-fi equipment. I wanted to give something back to music, and I feel privileged to be able to help some of these young artists in their careers." □

## Disc and Tape Reviews

By RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH  
STODDARD LINCOLN • ERIC SALZMAN

Ⓢ = stereo cassette

Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge

Ⓢ = digital-master recording

Ⓢ = direct-to-disc

Ⓢ = quadrasonic disc

Ⓢ = monophonic recording

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

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**J. S. BACH: *Flute Sonatas, Complete* (BWV 1013, 1020, 1030-1035).** Maxence Larrieu (flute); Rafael Puyana (harpsichord); Wieland Kuijken (viola da gamba). PHILIPS 6768 176 two discs \$21.96, © 7699 155 \$21.96.

Performance: **Elegant**  
Recording: **Fine**

It comes as a tremendous relief to hear, at last, a flutist who stresses musicality rather than speed. Not that Maxence Larrieu cannot play fast—he can, indeed, and he possesses all the attendant technique and virtuosity—but one is primarily struck by the beauty of his tone and the elegance of his phrasing. His playing evokes a world of serenity and poise. Rafael Puyana plays a Pleyel harpsichord, and I must confess that I found it good to hear that grand instru-

ment again. Perhaps the sixteen-foot stop muddies the texture in the B Minor Sonata, but in general Puyana uses his instrument imaginatively and tastefully, producing some of those wonderful sonorities that the purists currently frown upon.

The partnership of Larrieu and Puyana is a good one; the players are equally matched in the obbligato sonatas, and Puyana gives strong continuo support in the solo sonatas. Puyana's realizations are bold but musical, and his reconstruction of the first movement of the A Major Sonata (BWV 1032) is convincing. S.L.

**BAINBRIDGE: *Viola Concerto* (see KNUSSEN)**

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BEETHOVEN: *Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61.*** Gidon Kremer (violin); Acade-

my of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS Ⓢ 6514 075 \$12.98, © 7337 075 \$12.98.

Performance: **A joy**  
Recording: **First-rate**

Many listeners will undoubtedly take issue with Gidon Kremer's use here of a first-movement cadenza by his Soviet avant-garde composer friend Alfred Schnittke. But I found this beautifully recorded performance of Beethoven's great masterwork one of the most vital and stimulating ones to have come my way in years.

A major contribution to the success of the performance is the orchestral collaboration; it is a rare pleasure to hear this music scaled down to a comfortable room size while retaining its virile lyricism and rhythmic vitality. Kremer, for whom technical problems are seemingly nonexistent, approaches the music in the same spirit as the orches-

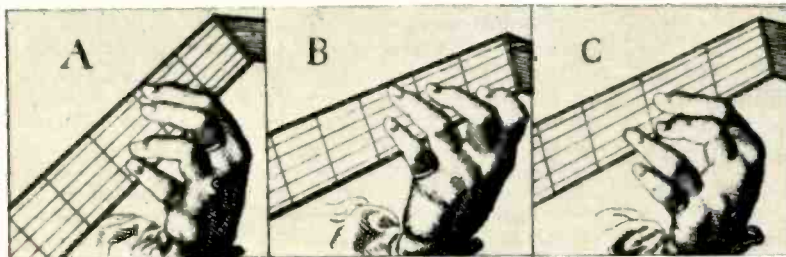
tra. There are no longueurs in the architecturally grand opening movement, and in the slow movement Kremer cultivates a sweet but chaste tone. The finale is delightful, and one can revel in the fluency of the passage work. But this is not merely a polished virtuoso performance; what gives it life is the sense of a brilliant mind at work probing every nook and cranny of line and nuance.

The Schnittke cadenza is a shocker on first hearing—I could almost see Joachim and Kreisler spinning in their graves. But,

at the same time, I found myself marveling at the sheer imagination of it. Without going into detail, I would describe Schnittke's cadenza as a twentieth-century commentary on Beethoven's original, somewhat in the spirit of the collage pieces commonly encountered in contemporary concert music. In any event, I enjoyed this production thoroughly in every way. *D.H.*

**BRUCH: Violin Concerto No. 1, in G Minor, Op. 26** (see MENDELSSOHN)

**DVOŘÁK: The Devil and Kate.** Anna Borová (mezzo-soprano), Kate; Miloš Ježil (tenor), Jirka the Shepherd; Richard Novák (bass), Marbuel; Jaroslav Horáček (bass), Lucifer; Jan Hladík (bass), Gatekeeper; Aleš Štáva (bass), Guard Devil; Brigita Šulcová (soprano), Princess; Natálie Romanová (soprano), Chambermaid; others. Brno Janáček Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Jiří Pinkas cond. SUPRAPHON 1116 3181-3 (three discs \$29.94 (from *Continued on page 93*))



Guitar finger positions from the method of Gaspar Sanz (1675)

## Three Young Guitarists

THERE seems to be an endless profusion of young guitarists these days, all of them talented, all of them making records, all of them coming up with their own arrangements of such well-known pieces as the Albéniz *Leyenda* and expanding their repertoires with transcriptions and original guitar works from the past and present. Three of these artists have new discs out: Sharon Isbin playing Spanish works on Denon, Timothy Walker with a "world tour" program on Hyperion, and Jonathan Taylor in a mixed Italian, German, and Spanish program on the Mark56 label.

To my ear, the most appealing of these performers is the twenty-six-year-old American Sharon Isbin. Her program also strikes me as the most substantial, and she benefits from handsomely realistic digital sound on a flawless Japanese pressing. There are no transcriptions at all here. The solo side of her disc opens with Tárrega's familiar *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* (the only piece duplicated among these three collections), continues with three more pieces by that composer, and concludes with more outright folk-flavored ones by the brothers Eduardo and Regino Sainz de la Maza.

It was, in fact, Regino Sainz de la Maza who in 1940 gave the world-première performance of Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*, which Isbin plays with great authority and appeal on side two of her release. The Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra seems a little rougher around the edges here under Hideomi Kuroiwa's direction than it has in other recordings under Akeo Watanabe, Louis Frémaux, and Jean Fournet, but, in general, this is a sympathetic and enjoyable presentation, with some nice solo work from the English horn as well as by

Isbin herself. While my own preferences among the many recordings of the *Concierto* continue to be the old Yepes/Argenta (London STS 15199) and the recent Moreno/Batiz (Angel DS-37876), guitar aficionados will be happy to add a version as attractive as Isbin's and will want the disc for the solo pieces in any case.

Narciso Yepes is listed as one of the early teachers of Timothy Walker, and he is represented in Walker's program by his arrangement of an anonymous *Romance* that became known a few years back through its use in the French film *Jeux Interdits*. Walker, a thirty-nine-year-old Englishman born in South Africa, is a skilled performer and a tasteful composer and arranger. His own *Folkish Fantasy and African Hymn and Dance* are fresh, attractive pieces (the latter, unlisted on the label, contains percussive effects that really work), and his version of Carcassi's meandering Russian Variations probably represents an improvement on the original. Especially fetching are the *Masanga* by Mwenda Jean Bosco of Zaïre, the *Légende* by the French virtuoso Francis Bebey, and the *South American Suite* by Hector Ayala that devotes one brief movement apiece to Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Chile, Peru, and Argentina. What some listeners will find an attractive variety here may strike others as uneven programming, but there is no unevenness in Walker's expert playing, and Hyperion, on its fine German pressing, has given him sound that compares well with Denon's digital product.

The sound put me off a bit on Jonathan Taylor's debut disc: it is sumptuous and lively, but so close-up as to seem larger than life. The annotation is off-putting too, with its grammatical lapses, its puffery, and its

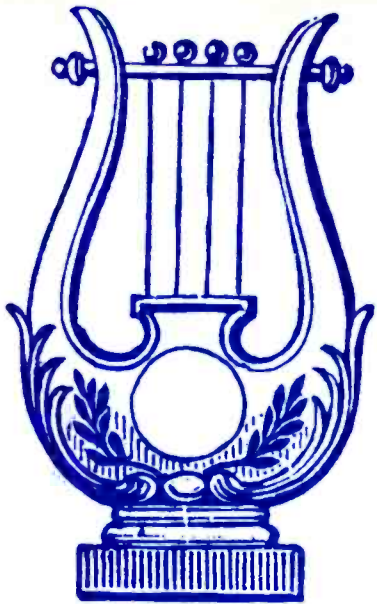
failure to identify some of the music. Both of the Tansman pieces are identified as parts of the suite *In Modo Polonico* and the Gaspar Sanz item as an extract from the *Suite Española*, but the Bach *Double* is nowhere identified (it is from the concluding gigue of the Partita in G Minor for Unaccompanied Violin, BWV 1002). The music, including Taylor's own transcriptions of the Sanz, two Bach pieces, and the Albéniz *Leyenda*, is all quite attractive. Carcassi's Rondo No. 3 is a far more enticing piece than his Russian Variations, and Steven Wight's *Andante*, written for Taylor, has real substance, as do the more familiar items here. The close focus tends to magnify "mechanical" noises, the surfaces are far from silent, and there is not enough breathing space between selections (as little as two seconds, actually). The playing itself, though, is all on a very high level.

—Richard Freed

**SHARON ISBIN: Spanish Works for Guitar.** Tárrega: *Recuerdos de la Alhambra; Preludes Nos. 1 and 2; Danza Mora.* Eduardo Sainz de la Maza: *Habanera.* Regino Sainz de la Maza: *Zapateado.* Rodrigo: *Concierto de Aranjuez.* Sharon Isbin (guitar); Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Hideomi Kuroiwa cond. (in Rodrigo). DENON Ⓞ OF-7012-ND \$15.

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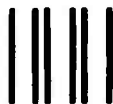
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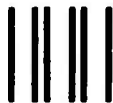
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Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

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

Even considering its fairy-tale plot, Dvořák's penultimate opera, *The Devil and Kate* (1899), has a few surprising twists. Lucifer dispatches one of his lieutenants, an impulsive and rather inept devil named Marbuel, to summon a despotic prince to Hell. Once on earth (in Bohemia, of course), Marbuel takes a detour to a tavern to join the merrymaking. There he strikes up a friendship with Kate, a garrulous old maid with a passion for dancing. Not at all popular in the village, Kate readily accepts Marbuel's invitation to join him "in his abode" where unlimited opportunities for dancing are promised. To the consternation of the villagers, the odd couple sinks below the earth. Kate's constant gabbing, however, is more than Hell can take, so Lucifer orders Marbuel to get rid of Kate and come back with the princess once and for all. In Act III, however, a clever shepherd named Jirka persuades the princess not only to mend her ways but to abolish serfdom in her domain. Jirka is made prime minister by the grateful princess (whose reformed personality, we assume, no longer destines her for the underworld), and Kate is given enough wealth to make her a bright bridal prospect with lots of willing dancing partners. Marbuel is outwitted again.

There are no romantic episodes in this opera, and the absence of love music is clearly a liability. Otherwise the score is tuneful, richly orchestrated, and altogether delightful. As depicted in the second act, Hell is decidedly a fun place, jumping with infectious Slavic rhythms. Wagner's influence is noticeable only in Dvořák's compositional technique: the music is light in texture, concise in expression, and buoyant in spirit. Not everything is on the same level of inspiration—an extended scene for the princess in Act III is rather disappointing—but the high spots are virtually irresistible.

By the standards currently prevailing in Czech opera recordings, the singing here is quite creditable. The singers who portray Kate and Jirka combine good voices with spirited personalities, but Richard Novák (Marbuel) does not always keep his sizable voice on tonal center. Technically, the production is above reproach, as is the multilingual album presentation, the odd English translation notwithstanding. (I don't understand why the libretto and album cover invert the opera's title to *Kate and the Devil* when the original is *Cert a Kača*.) G.J.

**FARINA: Sonata "La Desperata"** (see MONTEVERDI)

**FRANCK: String Quartet in D Major; Piano Quintet in F Minor.** John Buttrick (piano); Quartetto Academica. DYNAMIC DS 4012 two discs \$27.96 (from Brilly Imports, 155 North San Vicente Boulevard, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211).

Performance: **Voluptuous**  
Recording: **Creamy smooth**

It seems incredible that there is not a single recording of the Franck String Quartet listed in the current Schwann. The Fitzwill-

(Continued on page 95)



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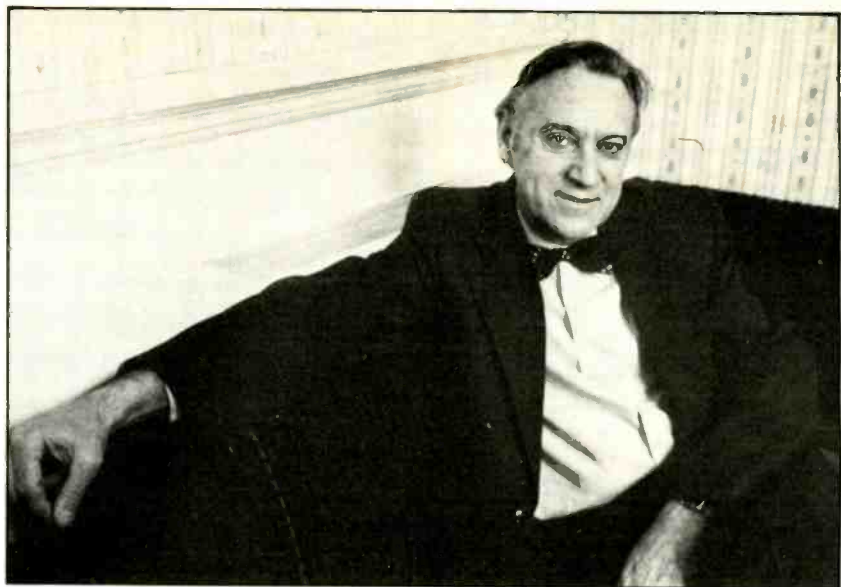


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# Shostakovich: Symphonies 13 and 14

Conductor Kyril Kondrashin  
at the Concertgebouw,  
Amsterdam, in 1979.



Wide World Photos

**T**HE Thirteenth and Fourteenth Symphonies of Dmitri Shostakovich are not "symphonies" at all in the sense of, say, the composer's tautly structured Tenth Symphony scored for orchestra alone. The Thirteenth (*Babi Yar*), composed in 1962, is an epic cantata for bass, male choir, and orchestra on poems of Yevgeny Yevtushenko; the Fourteenth, composed in 1969, is an eleven-part song cycle for soprano, bass, and chamber orchestra that is in effect Shostakovich's sequel to Mussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death*—and it is fully equal to that earlier masterpiece. But the Tenth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Symphonies all have in common this profoundly gifted and sensitive artist's witness to the social and personal injustices of his age.

Philips has released a superb live recording of the Thirteenth Symphony led by Kyril Kondrashin in Munich in December 1980, three months before his sudden death at the age of sixty-seven. Kondrashin—who left the Soviet Union for good in 1978—conducted the premiere performance of *Babi Yar* in Moscow in 1962, and that was the last time until the Munich concert that any Russian-led performance used Yevtushenko's unexpurgated text. The new reading carries an overwhelming conviction. The Bavarian Radio Male Chorus and Symphony Orchestra stand up very well to the Soviet competition, and that most British of bass-baritones, John Shirley-Quirk, does a magnificently eloquent job from beginning to end. The recorded sound is altogether splendid, with barely an audible trace of the audience's presence. Not to belittle Eugene Ormandy's wonderful 1970 RCA recording or André Previn's recent Angel one, both of which also use the full text, this release is really something special—a deeply moving recorded document.

The eleven poems that make up the text of the Fourteenth Symphony are by Federico García Lorca, Guillaume Apollinaire, Wilhelm Karlovich Kückelbecker, and Rainer Maria Rilke. Except for *O Delvig, Delvig!* by the Russian critic-poet Kückel-

becker, the texts Shostakovich used are Russian translations from the Spanish, French, and German originals. And with one savage exception—Apollinaire's poem on the Zaporozhian Cossacks' reply to the Sultan of Constantinople—all of them deal with death, exile, or the loss of loved ones. The scoring is for strings and percussion. It is hard not to view the ailing Shostakovich as composing his own requiem in this work, which achieves an intensity comparable not only to the Mussorgsky cycle already noted but to the last pages of Tchaikovsky's B Minor Symphony as well.

**T**wo new recordings of the Fourteenth have been issued, by Leonard Bernstein on CBS and by Bernard Haitink on London. They have been preceded by three first-rate recorded performances: on Angel/Melodiya by Rudolf Barshai, who conducted the work's premiere in Leningrad in 1969; on RCA by Eugene Ormandy, with Phyllis Curtin and Simon Estes as the vocal soloists; and on Columbia/Melodiya by Mstislav Rostropovich, with soloists Galina Vishnevskaya and Mark Reshetin, both of whom sang in the premiere under Barshai but did not appear on his recording.

Bernstein's performance is full of passionate conviction, and his singers—Teresa Kubiak and Isser Bushkin—respond superbly to the texts and to the conductor's direction. Kubiak's vibratoless performance in the soprano-bass dialogue of Apollinaire's "Madame, Look!" is particularly effective, but on the unison duet declamation of Rilke's "Conclusion" she verges on the strident. The performance as a whole is betrayed by less than perfect intonation by the New York Philharmonic bass players and, at moments, by overly resonant sonics—for instance, when the drums sound for the brother marching to his death in "On Watch." Both of the earlier Russian recordings managed to keep the sound appropriately hard and dry at this point.

Haitink's digitally mastered London recording also suffers from over-resonance,

and there are interpretive problems too, resulting from a decision to perform all the poems in the various original languages. True, as the liner notes point out, Shostakovich did approve this multilingual version—understandably in view of the enhanced potential for worldwide performance. But here, combined with what strikes me as Haitink's overly refined treatment of the music, the effect is to weaken the work's impact. The Russian word for death, *smert*, has infinitely more cutting edge together with Shostakovich's musical line than do its French or Spanish counterparts, and there are places where the music written for the Russian translations simply does not match up convincingly with the original texts.

Nonetheless, soloists Julia Varády and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau give their all here, with the latter most impressive in Apollinaire's prison poem, "*A la Santé*," conveying superbly the French poet's bitter memories of dehumanizing incarceration. All in all, the London record of the Fourteenth Symphony is a fascinating alternative presentation, but it is simply not on the level of conviction of its Russian predecessors or Kondrashin's new reading of the Thirteenth Symphony. —David Hall

**SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 13, Op. 113 ("Babi Yar").** John Shirley-Quirk (bass); Male Chorus and Symphony Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio, Kyril Kondrashin cond. PHILIPS 6514 120 \$10.98, © 7337 120 \$10.98.

**SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 14, Op. 135.** Teresa Kubiak (soprano); Isser Bushkin (bass); New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein cond. CBS M 37270, © MT 37270, no list price.

**SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 14, Op. 135.** Julia Varády (soprano); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (bass-baritone); Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink cond. LONDON ◉ LDR 71032 \$12.98, © LDR5 71032 \$12.98.

liam Quartet's superb recording of the work, issued in England a year ago (L'Oiseau-Lyre DSLO 46), has not found its way to our shores, but the Quartetto Academica, a Romanian foursome now rounding out its fifteenth season, brings the work to life no less vividly. In fact, this intense, impassioned, and altogether voluptuous performance may strike some listeners as a bit larger than life, but few, I think, will be able to resist its persuasive power. It is not as subtle or polished as the Fitzwilliam performance, but it's a close match, and we can only be happy to have so conspicuous a gap so handsomely filled.

The Piano Quintet has been rather neglected too, the only other current recording being the slightly cut version by Pennario, Heifetz, Piatigorsky, and friends on RCA LSC-2739. That one is more than respectable sonically and seems better focused than this new one. For all the beautiful playing (especially by Philadelphia-born John Buttrick), this performance is too hectic and frenzied in the outer movements and rather lacking in momentum in the middle one. It's too bad the quartet from this set is not offered separately, that the comprehensive notes by Edward Neill are printed only in French and Italian, and that the album box takes up as much shelf space as a set of the Brahms symphonies, but the close-up recording is creamy smooth (more so in the quartet than the quintet) and the Italian pressings are first-rate. *R.F.*

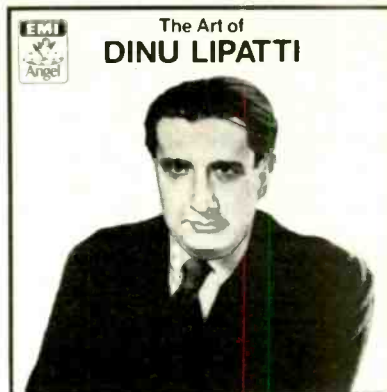
**GAY:** *The Beggar's Opera* (see Best of the Month, page 65)

**HANDEL:** *Xerxes*. Carolyn Watkinson (soprano). Xerxes; Paul Esswood (countertenor), Arsamene; Ortrun Wenkel (contralto), Amastre; Barbara Hendricks (soprano), Romilda; Anne-Marie Rodde (soprano), Atalanta; Ulrik Cold (baritone), Ariodante; Ulrich Studer (baritone), Elviro. Ensemble Vocal Jean Briday; La Grande Écurie et la Chambre du Roy, Jean-Claude Malgoire cond. CBS M3 36941 three discs, no list price.

Performance: **Spirited**  
Recording: **Fine**

Listeners familiar with Handel's *opera seria*—such as *Julius Caesar*, *Arcina*, or *Ariodante*—are in for a surprise with *Xerxes*, which is a delightful situation comedy worthy of Lorenzo da Ponte. The plot involves two serious and faithful lovers: Arsamene and Romilda. The rakish Xerxes, Arsamene's brother, is bent on having Romilda for his queen, and fickle Atalanta, Romilda's sister, is bent on stealing Arsamene for herself. Amastre, betrothed to Xerxes and disguised as a soldier, spends her time trying to get Xerxes back, and Elviro, a comic servant, makes certain that the many confidential messages that fly back and forth are read by the wrong people. As the situation becomes more and more involved, one cannot help but recall Mozart's operas. The pairing of two brothers and two sisters brings *Così* to mind. Xerxes, unscrupulously pulling rank, reminds one of Count Almaviva and the long-suffering, patient Romilda of his countess. Elviro, of course, recalls Leporello, and the wronged Amastre conjures up Elvira. The complex plot of *Xerxes* is a good one, but it is very difficult

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to follow from the almost illiterate 1738 English translation of the libretto used for the first performance and included here.

The music too reveals a different Handel from what one expects in serious opera. Rather than presenting a series of formal *da capo* arias with intervening recitative, Handel maintains a rapid dramatic pace with short, syllabic little arias, and the music flows freely from *secco* recitative to aria. While this earlier Venetian structure works beautifully on the stage, it is apt to be frustrating musically. One misses Handel's expansive melodic lines and the vocal excitement of the coloratura. What it comes down to is that *Xerxes* is better seen than heard.

On this first complete recording, the use of period instruments and conductor Jean-Claude Malgoire's dogged adherence to what he considers authentic performance practice frequently obstructs the music. The string sound is thin and at times downright nasty. The exaggerated use of "decay" on each violin note eliminates any sense of phrase. By taking rather quick slow tempos and slowing down the fast tempos, Malgoire manages to make everything sound pretty much alike. The Baroque intent of contrasting well-defined "affects" is frustrated. The only real drama is in the spirited recitatives. Although the continuo is confined to short chords with no arpeggiations or embellishment and the cadences are imposed on the final notes of the vocal lines, the singers are so involved with the drama that the effect is exciting. But do we really need the sound of footsteps for each entrance and exit? The

din of an approaching army is a bit much in a listening room. The singing is, for the most part, on a high level. The lion's share of credit belongs to Carolyn Watkinson as Xerxes, especially in the final rage aria. Paul Esswood is in fine voice and gives a convincing portrayal of the faithful Arsamene. Anne-Marie Rodde's Atalanta is the essence of coquetry, and Ulrich Studer's broadly characterized Elviro heightens the comedy tremendously.

Although this release is a mixed blessing, it is an important one. It reveals the light side of Handel and his unerring sense of theatrics. As for "authentic" performance practice, here is a large dose of what is currently popular with the early-music crowd. Take it or leave it. *S.L.*

**HAYDN: *Symphony No. 96, in D Major ("The Miracle"); Symphony No. 101, in D Major ("The Clock")***. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti cond. LONDON ① LDR 71044 \$12.98, ② LDR 571044 \$12.98.

Performance: **Glossy**  
Recording: **First-rate**

Among Georg Solti's earliest recordings for London/Decca were his zesty performances with the London Philharmonic of Haydn's Symphonies Nos. 100, 102, and 103. This new digitally recorded disc would appear to be his first Haydn release in nearly thirty years, and it shows even more brilliance. The performances are again zesty in Solti's way—which is to say spirited, driven, high-

ly polished, but a bit short on the warmth and geniality with which Haydn balanced his brilliance and drive to give his music its unique character. There is much to enjoy here, but there is a great deal more in the performances conducted by Reiner, Colin Davis, Jochum, Dorati, and others. Jochum's magnificent six-disc Deutsche Grammophon set of all twelve of Haydn's "London" Symphonies, also with the LPO, has been reissued in a bargain box (2720 091) at little more than twice the price of Solti's single disc. *R.F.*

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**KNUSSEN: *Symphony No. 3, Op. 18***. Philharmonia Orchestra, Michael Tilson Thomas cond. **OPHELIA DANCES, *Book 1, Op. 13***. London Sinfonietta, Oliver Knussen cond. **BAINBRIDGE: *Viola Concerto***. Walter Trampler (viola); London Sinfonietta, Michael Tilson Thomas cond. UNICORN ① RHD 400 \$11.98 (from Euroclass Record Distributors, Ltd., 155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10013).

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

Regulars at the Tanglewood Summer Music Festival may be familiar with the names of Oliver Knussen and Simon Bainbridge, who belong to the talented younger generation of British composers. Both were born in 1952, studied composition with John Lambert, and went on to work with Gunther Schuller at Tanglewood. Their music shows

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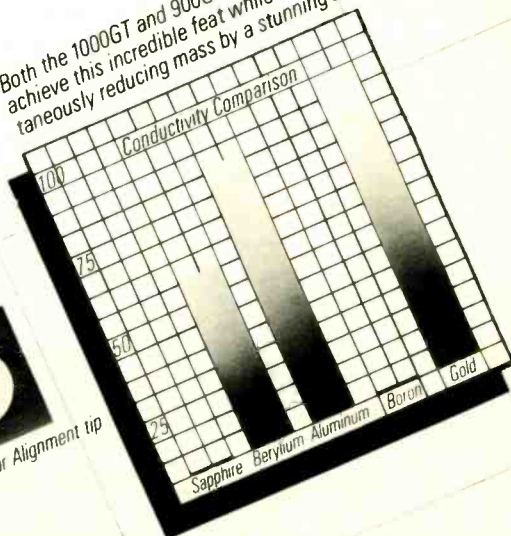
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yet another facet of the "new pluralism" in contemporary composition.

Knussen began his composing career as something of a prodigy; having completed his First Symphony at the age of fifteen, he conducted its première a year later with the London Symphony. His Symphony No. 3 had a longer gestation, however, beginning as a big symphonic poem built around the pathetic figure of Ophelia in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It wound up some six years later as a highly colored yet terse (fifteen-minute) one-movement symphony dedicated to conductor Michael Tilson Thomas. The symphony is very tautly organized and scored with all the contemporary trimmings for a very large orchestra. (The opening pages, with their "mad" clarinet fanfare, may remind some listeners of a corresponding passage in Roger Sessions' 1920 music for Andreyev's *The Black Maskers*.) Knussen's command of his materials and use of them is wholly masterly, and the piece stands up well under repeated hearings. The *Ophelia Dances*, which seem more directly related to the Shakespearean character, represent a chamber music offshoot of the original project, being a nonet for flute, clarinet, English horn, French horn, piano, celesta, and string trio. The performances of both works are superb, and Knussen's complex scoring is made to order for digital mastering when it is employed as expertly as it is here.

Famed violist Walter Trampler commissioned the Bainbridge Viola Concerto in 1972. Written mainly in 1976, it is rather

far removed from the conventional virtuoso essay. Its two movements require a chamber orchestra of only twenty-six players, plus two offstage violas for the second half, and the work features plectrical and percussive sounds across the whole audible frequency range. If Knussen's music is eventful, Bainbridge's is outwardly contemplative but inwardly full of substance. The concerto develops in cumulative fashion from a beginning in sliding microtones, with both cantabile and recitative elements being woven into the musical fabric. Only with the extended cadenza at the very end does anything like conventional virtuosity enter the picture, and only with an exasperated final orchestral chord is there anything resembling a conventional climax. It is a fascinating and ear/mind-stretching listening experience, with superb solo work by Trampler, beautiful playing from the London Sinfonietta, and a topnotch recording job.

Not the least distinguished aspects of this very distinguished production are the excellent and lucid notes for all three works by Oliver Knussen and the outstanding jacket art on *both* sides. The illustrations relate specifically to the works at hand, one being *Ophelia* by the pre-Raphaelite painter Arthur Hughes, the other an abstract evocation of Simon Bainbridge's *Viola Concerto* painted by his father, John Bainbridge, just before his death in 1978. *D.H.*

**MACDOWELL: *First Modern Suite, Op. 10; Sonata No. 4, Op. 59*** ("Keltic"). Charles

Fierro (piano). NONESUCH H-71399 \$5.98, © N5-71399 \$5.98.

Performance: **Idiomatic**  
Recording: **Just fine**

Charles Fierro, who made such a strong impression with his Delos recording of Copland's piano music (DEL-25436), proves a very happy choice for the première recording of MacDowell's *First Modern Suite*, the earliest of his works to earn him recognition (with the hearty support of Franz Liszt), and for the last of the four sonatas with its evocations of Cuchulain and Deirdre. Since I cannot pretend to find a great deal in this music without an awareness of its historical significance, I'm grateful that Nonesuch had the imagination not only to record Fierro's fine performances, so stamped with committed advocacy, but to grace the album with some very worthwhile reading in the form of annotation by Margery Morgan Lowens, an outstanding MacDowell authority and author of the MacDowell entry in *The New Grove*.

Whoever prepared the material for print, though, has created what must be frustration for the writer as well as challenges for the reader by scattering typographical excesses and inconsistencies through the text and by a boner that makes one of the author's own paragraphs appear at first to be a part of a quoted article from 1898. The same editorial hand apparently saw fit to label the suite in the liner heading "(1881)," though in the paragraph just cited Lowens advises us that MacDowell

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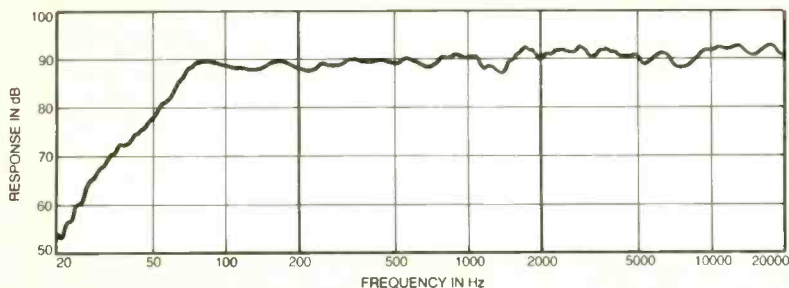
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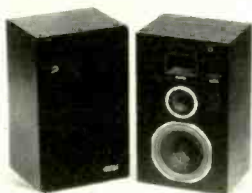
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kept revising this work over the years and that the version performed here is "the 1906 edition, one of the last attempts—if not *the* last—MacDowell ever made at composition." That does alter the historical perspective. Fortunately, Fierro's contribution does not appear to have been similarly edited, and the listening is just fine. *R.F.*

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MENDELSSOHN: Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64. BRUCH: Violin Concerto No. 1, in G Minor, Op. 26.** Anne-Sophie Mutter (violin); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ● 2532 016 \$12.98, © 3302 016 \$12.98.

Performance: **A pleasure!**  
Recording: **A-1**

This is eighteen-year-old Anne-Sophie Mutter's first disc excursion into the Romantic concerto literature following her earlier recordings of Beethoven and Mozart. I find it an unqualified interpretive success, and the sound of DG's digitally mastered recording is unusually warm and clean with just the right feeling of presence and sense of space.

Mutter and Karajan take a moderate pace in the opening movement of the Mendelssohn. The allegro is a bit less *molto* than some I've heard, but not heavyhanded, and everything flows along just beautifully, with the emphasis on lyricism rather than Romantic passion. The high point is the slow movement, which is played with a hushed tenderness that is rarely encountered. The transition to the finale is handled with the greatest elegance, and that movement itself is delivered in featherlight fashion without a trace of forcing.

After the low-key but eloquent and lovely Mendelssohn, the thrust that Mutter brings to the opening movement of the Bruch comes as a real surprise. The entire performance of the Bruch concerto is full of spirit, but it reaches its musical peak in the final solo statement in the slow movement—and how lucky Mutter is to have such superb orchestral backing in both works! There are at least seven pairings of these concertos in the current Schwann, but this is one of the best on all counts. *D.H.*

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MONTEVERDI: Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda; Lamento d'Arianna; Lamento d'Olimpia.** FARINA: *Sonata "La Desperata."* Carolyn Watkinson, Patrizia Kwella (sopranos); Nigel Rogers (tenor); David Thomas (baritone); Reinhard Goebel (violin); Musica Antiqua Köln, Reinhard Goebel cond. ARCHIV 2533 460 \$10.98.

Performance: **Superb**  
Recording: **Bright**

Though Monteverdi's *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* and *Lamento d'Arianna* are now relatively familiar works, the *Lamento d'Olimpia* is a rarity. Like Arianna, Olimpia is abandoned by her lover and wavers between expressing her personal grief and cursing her betrayer. In the end, she retracts her curses because, despite all, she still loves her man. The large-scale monodic work is vintage Monteverdi that

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supports his reputation for powerfully stark dramatic vocal writing.

But the real revelation of this record is the violin sonata *La Desperata* by Carlo Farina (circa 1600-1640). A violinist under Monteverdi's direction in Mantua, Farina obtained a post in Dresden with the help of Schütz. In *La Desperata* he transposed the taut emotional expression of early Baroque vocal monody to the violin. This brief sonata, made up of many short sections, is a knockout and should be added to the violin repertoire as soon as a modern edition becomes available.

The performances throughout are superb. Nigel Rogers as Tancredi and Carolyn Watkinson as Arianna and Olimpia sing with appropriate intensity. Their diction and word coloration are exemplary, and their sense of pacing carries us along with the tide of emotions they invoke.

Reinhard Goebel, the director of the Musica Antiqua Köln, evokes a tight sound from the ensemble of early instruments that is just right for Monteverdi's clashing of arms and galloping of horses. Goebel is also an excellent violinist, as he shows in his thrilling solo performance (with cello and harpsichord continuo) in the Farina sonata. He handles the Baroque violin with technical perfection and high artistry. This record is not to be missed. S.L.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MOZART: Concert Arias. Ah, lo previdi!**  
*Ah, t'invola* (K. 272); *Vado, ma dove?* (K. 583); *Oh, temerario Arbace!* *Per quel paterno amplesso* (K. 79); *Chi sa, chi sa, qual sia* (K. 582); *Non temer, amato bene* (K. 490); *Bella mia fiamma, addio*  
*Resta, oh cara* (K. 528); *Nehmt mein-en Dank, ihr holden Gönner* (K. 383). Kiri Te Kanawa (soprano); Rainer Küchl (violin); Vienna Chamber Orchestra, György Fischer cond. LONDON OS 26661 \$10.98.

Performance: **Beautiful singing**  
 Recording: **Good**

These seven concert arias cover a broad span in the life of the operatic Mozart, from 1770 (K. 79), the year of *Mitridate, Re di Ponto*, to 1789 (K. 583), the year of *Così Fan Tutte*. These were "insert" arias intended to fill out (and improve) operas by other hands in the tradition of the period. The early K. 79, set to a Metastasio text, is a rarity, but the others have been recorded before by the likes of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Rita Streich, and Margaret Price, expert Mozartians all. That description fits Kiri Te Kanawa as well, a fact already established by her previous recordings and stage appearances. Her voice is all warmth and roundness in every register, smooth as velvet, rich as cream—feel free to pick your own metaphor. She may not be the acrobatic kind of singer who dazzles you with the careless abandon of her fireworks, but there is assured musicality in her phrases, blended with technical mastery, and her sheer sound—this must be emphasized—is something to cherish.

So many things are so good here that it seems almost churlish to add that with a little extra effort the artist's phrasing could have been chiseled even closer to perfection. Was the conductor too deferential? He certainly tolerates a considerable amount of



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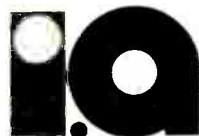
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orchestral imprecision and lack of coordination between orchestra and singer. Just the same, the disc must be heard for its vocal pleasures and for the joyous rediscovery of some superlative Mozart. *G.J.*

**MOZART:** *Fantasia in C Minor (K. 475); Sonata in C Major (K. 330); Sonata in G Minor (K. 312), Allegro; Sonata in B-flat Major (K. 570).* Thomas Richner (piano). TOWERHILL T-1013 \$8.98 (plus \$1.50 postage and handling charge from Towerhill Records, 600 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, Calif. 90028).

Performance: **Warm**  
Recording: **Rich**

**MOZART:** *Fantasia in C Minor (K. 475); Sonata in C Minor (K. 457); Fantasia in D Minor (K. 397); Twelve Variations on "Ah, Vous Dirai-je Maman" (K. 265); Rondo in A Minor (K. 511).* Jos van Immerseel (fortepiano). ACCENT ACC 8018 \$6.98 (from AudioSource, 1185 Chess Drive, Foster City, Calif. 94404).

Performance: **Forced**  
Recording: **Harsh**

Anyone who can tame the power of a Bösendorfer Imperial concert grand and

evoke the delicate trceries of a Mozart sonata on it is to be congratulated. Thomas Richner can, and he does it without sacrificing any of the tonal richness of the magnificent instrument. The somber opening of the C Minor Fantasia smolders with an infinite variety of shadings. In the lacy C Major Sonata the passagework is crystal clear, the phrases are well defined, and the articulation is detailed without being fussy. Wit and warmth are the main characteristics of Richner's playing, and his years of experience with Mozart have yielded stylistic perfection. Yes, Mozart can be played beautifully on a modern piano. Richner's record is labeled "Mozart: Piano Works, Vol. I," and I am looking forward to further volumes in the series.

Historically more accurate, Jos van Immerseel offers his Mozart on a 1978 fortepiano by the Belgian builder Claude Kelecom modeled on a 1788 instrument by Stein. Unfortunately, it is rather unpleasant-sounding, with a shrill treble and a rasping bass. Moreover, Van Immerseel plays it with so much force that it jangles or buzzes most of the time. He approaches the C Minor Fantasia and Sonata as though they were middle-period Beethoven, giving us forced interpretations that neither the

music nor the instrument warrant. In the slow movements the accentuation and articulation are so exaggerated that there is little phrasing. Nothing is molded. And where are the feminine endings so dear to Mozart? The D Minor Fantasia comes off better, and we are even afforded a bit of lightness in the allegretto. But the delicacies of the A Minor Rondo are lost in forced tones, and the leisurely transitions push too hard toward the return of the refrain. This is rough Mozart without poise. *S.L.*

**PROKOFIEV:** *Symphony No. 2, in D Minor, Op. 40.* Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Zdeněk Košler cond. PRO ARTE PAL-1055 \$9.98, © PAC-1055 \$9.98.

Performance: **Sturdy**  
Recording: **Clear, strong**

Prokofiev wrote his Second Symphony in Paris in 1920. His First Symphony is the charming and ever-popular *Classical*. The Second might have been termed, by way of contrast, the *Modern*. It has the reputation of being aggressively modern and noisy in that Age of Steel mode that was so much in vogue at the time. But perhaps "in vogue" is the wrong term, for the work was disliked when it appeared and has been heard only rarely since. Certainly its reappearance here is of note.

Actually, only the first movement is really noisy, and even that is as much *Sturm und Drang* as Age of Steel. The second movement (there are only two) is a gorgeous theme and variations in the composer's best reflective/lyric mood. If you can weather the first, you'll find the second one of Prokofiev's most grateful creations. This is a nice disc, strongly played and decently recorded. *E.S.*

**RAVEL:** *La Valse; Prélude in A Minor; Menuet sur le Nom d'Haydn; Sonatine; Miroirs.* Ruth Laredo (piano). CBS M 36764, © MT 36764, no list price.

Performance: **Glitter galore**  
Recording: **A mite hard**

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gram here, all of which is rendered with her equally formidable technical prowess. This is the third Schwann listing for the finger-busting solo-piano version of *La Valse*, a tour de force that sheds a special light on the orchestral original by way of clarifying the textures. The A Minor Prelude is a nice little conservatoire test piece, and the "Haydn" minuet is touchingly sweet/sad. More familiar are the always delicious *Sonatine* and the corruscating *Miroirs*.

Laredo comes off best here in her quietly vibrant way with the middle movement of the *Sonatine* and its sparkling finale. She does splendidly also with the sea piece in *Miroirs*, *Un Barque sur l'Océan*, which offers Debussy a bit of competition in this genre. The final *La Vallée des Cloches* with its Russian-bell evocation is effective too.

I don't feel, however, that the recording does justice to the performances: the dynamic and frequency ranges both seem somewhat restricted, which may have something to do with the recording locale or, perhaps, the particular instrument used. But I am inclined to ascribe my dissatisfaction mainly to an imbalance between presence and ambiance that falsifies the hearer's perception of impact, texture, and resonance. In this regard, it is instructive to compare this recording with the Scriabin recordings Laredo made in the early Seventies for Connoisseur Society (now on In Sync cassettes) and Desto, which achieved better balance.

D.H.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**R. STRAUSS: *Alpine Symphony, Op. 64.*** Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2532 015 \$12.98, © 3302 015 \$12.98.

Performance: **Believe It**  
Recording: **Super blockbuster!**

I've never been very enthusiastic about most of the music Richard Strauss put into his cinematic "day in the life of a mountain," but I have to hand it to Herbert von Karajan, the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Deutsche Grammophon recording staff for giving this piece everything they've got. Whether you like the music or not, the playing and sonics are a total knockout. My only objection to the production is the side break in the middle of an episode.

Among the high points is the fine thrust Karajan brings to the main allegro motif, which in most other recordings sounds forced and heavyhanded. The famous band of offstage horns in the hunt episode has never sounded better, and the climaxes of the storm scene, with electronic wind effects, are simply hair-raising. The orchestral sound has enormous impact and presence but leaves ample space for acoustic expansion. In short, this is a real demo disc for state-of-the-art sound systems.

D.H.

**STRAVINSKY: *Apollo; Orpheus.*** Orchestra of St. John's Smith Square, John Lubbock cond. NONESUCH H-71401 \$5.98.

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Somewhat velled**

This is a very useful coupling, as well as an eminently sensible one. *Apollo* (the com-  
*(Continued on page 103)*



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## New Music: Percussion



Sandy Underwood/Opus One

Woodblocks and handclaps: Michael Udow's *Strike*

I HAVE commented in these pages more than once about the current split in the new-music scene between composers associated with the universities and music schools—still very much involved with the aftermath of serialism—and the producers of minimalist and conceptual music associated with the art world in such places as New York's SoHo and San Francisco's Arch Street. That the concerns of these two groups need not be mutually exclusive is demonstrated by a positively overwhelming two-record boxed set on the Opus One label by the Cincinnati Percussion Group. Successor to the now-defunct Blackearth Percussion Group, the ensemble is based at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music.

Of the nine pieces included in the set, one is by an older composer (Herbert Brün, born in Berlin in 1918), one by a representative of a middle generation (Christian Wolff, born in 1934, also in Europe, though long an associate of the American John Cage), and the rest by younger men born in the Forties and Fifties—all of them except Takayoshi Yoshioka products of American musical academies. But that does not mean that all of their music is academic—far from it.

Jonathan Kramer's *Five Studies on Six Notes* are minimalist with a strong Third World influence, and so is Michael Udow's *Strike*, which is performed by the delightful combination of three hand-clappers each of whom also plays a woodblock struck by a mallet operated by a foot pedal! Russell Peck's *Lift Off*, by far the most individual-sounding work in the album, is roughly in a similar genre, but, using impulses from American popular music (hence indirectly from West African folk music), Peck achieves a neat and exciting compositional

synthesis. Theodore May's *Para-Diddle* is a take-off on military drumming with (we are told) an only dimly perceived political meaning.

Most of the rest belongs with or in the wake of the serial and (in one or two cases) aleatory movements of the Sixties and early Seventies. All of it is reasonably well crafted and brilliantly realized by this first-class percussion ensemble. How strangely gentle and unaggressive most of its sounds, as though the angry, sock-it-to-'em qualities of percussion music have been blunted with the passage of time. Perhaps one reason I liked Herbert Brün's *More Dust* for live percussion and computer tape is just that it seems less obvious and self-assured than so much of the rest.

THE sumptuousness of the album production is extraordinary. The twenty-page booklet tells you more than you could possibly want to know about percussion music, the nine pieces on the records, and everybody concerned in composing and performing them. Extensive photo documentation, detailed instrumental lists and performing instructions, and lengthy excerpts from the scores are combined with elaborate but often murky notes on the music. The best annotation is in Allen Otte's brief overall introduction, which actually tells us things about the music we ought to know (for example, that Brün's *More Dust* is for three live percussionists and an eight-voiced computer-generated tape, a simple fact that cannot be gleaned from the four pages of notes, diagrams, lists, etc. that the booklet devotes to the piece).

The performances are uniformly superb, and so are the recordings and the pressings. Program-note quibbles aside, the totality is most impressive, and the album is a first-

rate introduction to new music for percussion in this country.

A much more "classical" view of percussion music is offered by Harold Farberman and the London Percussion Ensemble in their new album "Digital Percussion" from the Moss Music Group. Farberman is himself a percussionist (one of the few, by the way, to move on to a successful composing and conducting career), and the pieces by Edgard Varèse and John Cage are, of course, pioneering efforts in the medium. The other piece on the record is Farberman's own first composition, *Evolution*, written in 1954. Essentially a symphony for percussion (augmented in the middle movement only by a wordless soprano voice and a French horn), it is an exciting piece, and Farberman puts his heart into the performance even more than he does in the Varèse and Cage works. Most effective, and very well recorded.

—Eric Salzman

**THE PERCUSSION GROUP—CINCINNATI.** Brün: *More Dust*. May: *Para-Diddle*. Mosko: *The Cosmology of Easy Listening*. Yoshioka: *Paradox III*. DeFotis: *Continuous Showing*. Kramer: *Five Studies on Six Notes*. Peck: *Lift Off*. Wolff: *For 1, 2 or 3 People*. Udow: *Strike*. The Percussion Group—Cincinnati. OPUS ONE 80/81 two discs \$11.96 (from Opus One, P.O. Box 604, Greenville, Maine 04441).

**LONDON PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE:** *Digital Percussion*. Cage: *First Construction in Metal*. Varèse: *Ionisation*. Farberman: *Evolution*. Meryl Drower (soprano, in Farberman); Alan Civil (French horn, in Farberman); London Percussion Ensemble, Harold Farberman cond. Moss Music GROUP • D-MMG 105 \$7.98, © CMG 105 \$7.98.

poser's revised title for the string-orchestra ballet score formerly called *Apollon Musagète*) and the later and far less familiar *Orpheus* were once offered together on a CBS disc conducted by Stravinsky himself, but those performances are now available only in the mammoth centenary set (CBS GM 31), and there has been no recording of *Orpheus* on a single LP for some time. John Lubbock and his London players make a much stronger impression here than in the few other recordings of theirs I've heard; in both works, in fact, they more than equal the composer's own stereo recordings. Stravinsky's 1965 recording of *Apollo* was a rather lackluster job, I'm afraid. Lubbock shows both more vitality and more delicacy, even if he is hampered by a certain veiled quality in the sonics, and his *Orpheus* shows the appropriate dignity and conviction. Ansermet's *Apollo* (gratuitously interrupted for turnover on London STS 15028 but less interestingly coupled on STS 15265) has a luminosity lacking in all other current recordings of this marvelous work, but the general quality of both of these new performances, combined with the convenience and economy of the coupling, makes the Nonesuch disc a pretty safe buy. *R.F.*

**WEIGL: Songs.** Judith Raskin, Colette Boky (sopranos); Betty Allen (mezzo-soprano); George Shirley (tenor); William Warfield (baritone); David Garvey (piano). ORION ORS 81407 \$8 (from Orion Master Recordings, Inc., P.O. Box 4087, Malibu, Calif. 90265).

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

Karl Weigl was born in Vienna in 1881, became Mahler's assistant at the Vienna Opera in 1904, taught for many years at the New Vienna Conservatory, and, after immigrating to this country in 1938, taught at several American institutions. He died in 1949, but his memory has been steadfastly kept alive by the activities of a few surviving friends and disciples, notably his wife, Vally Weigl, herself a talented composer.

Weigl wrote six symphonies, eight string quartets, and over 130 songs. Although he was much younger than Mahler and the other late Romantics, he remained true to their tradition most of his life. There are no dates on most of the songs here, but except for a couple of English songs that are obviously from late in his life (and show a more contemporary—and quite successful—style), all of them could have been composed before the turn of the century. Not that they are imitative; they are extremely well written, deeply felt, and full of individuality. Indeed, their very old-fashionedness is moving. There is in them an atmosphere of regret and even desperate longing for a vanished world that goes beyond mere nostalgia and conservatism.

The songs have the benefit here of an excellent group of singers as well as a first-class pianist. Although it does not always show off the voices to their best advantage, the recording is by and large adequate. Texts and translations are provided. *E.S.*

**WEINBERGER: Schwanda the Baggpiper** (see *Best of the Month*, page 65)

(Continued overleaf)



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### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MICHAEL NEWMAN:** *Italian Pleasures. Giuliani: Introduction, Theme, Variations, and Polonaise, Op. 65. Carulli: Petit Duo Nocturne, Op. 90, No. 3. Legnani: Introduction, Theme, Variations, and Finale, Op. 64.* Michael Newman (guitar); Laura Oltman (guitar, in Carulli); Sequoia String Quartet (in Giuliani). SHEFFIELD LAB Ⓞ 16 \$16.95.

Performance: **Exceptional**  
Recording: **Tops**

Mauro Giuliani, Ferdinando Carulli, and Luigi Legnani were Italian guitar virtuosos of the early nineteenth century. Michael Newman is an American guitar virtuoso of the late twentieth century. The guitar is not an instrument noted today for high standards of technical achievement. This is, however, a direct-to-disc recording, and these are not edited performances. And they are not only technically superb—include Laura Oltman and the Sequoia Quartet in these encomiums—but gracious and grateful. The music is charming. The sound is close, warm, simple, and roomy (in both good senses but not boxy or studio-ish). A gorgeous, noiseless, perfectly produced disc with elegant musical contents. **E.S.**

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**THE TANGO PROJECT. Rodriguez: La Cumparsita. Gardel: Por una Cabeza. Discepulo: Yira Yira. Padilla: La Violetera. Filiberto: Caminito. Arolas: Retintín. Schertzing: Chilita. Villoldo: El Choclo: El Esquinazo. Fresedo: Vida Mia. Donato: A Media Luz. Sanders: Adiós Muchachos. Gade: Jalousie.** William Schimmel (accordion); Michael Sahl (piano); Stan Kurtis, Richard Henrikson (violins); Russell Savakus (bass); Susan Herl-Conroy (wood block). NONESUCH Ⓞ D-79030 \$11.98.

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

It was a happy idea on the part of producer Eric Salzman to put together a program of tangos, get a really good instrumental ensemble to record them, and supply enough information on the subject to keep the listener safely seated reading the liner notes rather than going out into the night, feet splayed and arms extended in the grip of a Latin rhythm, a possible menace to the entire neighborhood. Naturally, when the tango became really popular north of the Mexican border in 1913, U.S. religious leaders lost no time in denouncing it as immoral, and the same fate would no doubt overtake it nowadays should this album spark a revival. Meanwhile, it's exceptional fun to hear Michael Sahl's arrangements of tangos both familiar (*La Cumparsita* and *Jalousie*) and obscure. All are superbly played by an accordionist, pianist, and two violinists who know what they're doing and are well served by the sound engineers.

The excellent notes, by the way, are by STEREO REVIEW's own William Livingstone, revealed in a biographical sentence as "the winner of the 1941 tango prize at the Eleanor Moffett School of the Dance in

(Continued on page 107)







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Asheville, North Carolina." You think you know people pretty well, and then you find out things like *that* about them. P.K.

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TRIO SONATA. Telemann: *Trio Sonata in C Minor*. Ibert (trans. Kessler): *Two Interludes*. Villa-Lobos: *Prelude No. 1*. Vivaldi (trans. Kessler): *Concerto for Two Mandolins and String Orchestra, Andante*. Satie (trans. Bender): *Gymnopédies Nos. 1 and 3*. Loeb: *Madrigal*. Torgerson: *Clear Out of Touch with Time*. J. S. Bach: *Trio Sonata in G Major*. Haydn: *Trio No. 1 ("London")*, *Finale*. Trio Sonata (Anton Kuskin, flute; Donald Bender, oboe; Gary Kessler, guitar). BOSTON INTERNATIONAL B1 1202 \$8.98 (plus \$4 postage and handling charge from Boston International, 419 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116).

Performance: **First-rate**

Recording: **Excellent**

Since 1975, guitarist Gary Kessler, flutist Anton Kuskin, and oboist Donald Bender have been taking time off from their solo careers to perform together under the name Trio Sonata, appearing in concert halls in New York, where they live, and touring in Pennsylvania and the Midwest. Now they've made a record, and a lovely one it is, offering sensitive performances of works ranging chronologically from a trio sonata by Telemann to a piece by Walter Torgerson that the composer himself transcribed expressly for this album. Transcriptions can distort a composer's intentions, but in those here of Ibert, Satie, and Vivaldi, the three perceptive musicians of Trio Sonata somehow manage to preserve the character of the music through the instrumental metamorphosis. Many of the pieces in their program are of an elegaic, contemplative nature, so there is no disconcerting jolt going from the Vivaldi to the Satie or from David Loeb's *Madrigal* to Torgerson's *Clear Out of Touch with Time*. It's all as exquisite as a jewel, as evanescent as a dream. A lovely album. P.K.

## CORRECTION

THE "Going on Record" column in June ("Buying Frustration") contained a record retailer's statement about RCA's new policy for ordering Red Seal (classical) recordings. RCA, quite fairly, has asked us to clarify the policy and correct some misinformation that we inadvertently passed along. The records involved are not the entire Red Seal catalog, but "293 of the most famous older titles," just under half the catalog. Dealers will be able to order these records only three times yearly, but they will receive extra discounts and delayed billing on them. According to RCA, "The success of the program will preserve for consumers great titles in the catalog which otherwise would require a price increase or their being discontinued from the catalog."

—James Goodfriend

Pianist Irwin Gage,  
soprano Elly Ameling,  
and baritone Tom Krause



Noneauch/Kees De Jong

## The Ameling Report

**E**LLY AMELING continues her exploration of the lieder repertoire with a delightful Mendelssohn collection on CBS and, on Nonesuch, her second recording of Wolf's *Italian Songbook*, this time with baritone Tom Krause as her vocal partner (an earlier version with Gerard Souzay on Philips was deleted years ago). She is in excellent form on both releases, which will be musts for any serious collector of this material.

The Mendelssohn album includes some of the best of his songs, all unpretentious lyric inspirations (even their titles are brief) realized with charm and high artistic polish. There is not a really weak song in the lot, and some—particularly the elfin *Neue Liebe* and *Hexenlied*—are true little gems in Mendelssohn's unmistakable manner. With Peter Schreier's excellent Deutsche Grammophon recording (2530 596) now deleted, this appears to be the only comprehensive Mendelssohn song collection in the domestic catalog. I find a certain lack of spontaneity in Ameling's approach to the most familiar song, *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges* (*On Wings of Song*), but her singing throughout is of the highest order, and she has a deferential but skillful accompanist in Rudolf Jansen. The digital recording is very good.

Hugo Wolf's *Italian Songbook* is a collection of forty-six tiny songs. It is not a *cycle* in the usual sense; the songs do not follow any kind of planned sequence. What they share, rather, are certain similarities of mood: some are prayerful, others ironic, and quite a few deal with miniature conflicts between men and women. At least the *songs* are miniature; I agree with Ernest Newman's view that "Wolf, with his intense earnestness, seems to be bent on proving to the poet that there is more wisdom in his verses than he knew." Certainly these brief songs are packed with musical expression, and though at least half are bona fide masterworks, quite a few seem overweighted with sentiment or profundity, to say nothing of the composer's obsessive chromaticism.

Nonetheless, I doubt that any other soprano today can do more with these songs than Elly Ameling. The simple dignity and tonal roundness she displays in *Wir Haben*

*Beide Lange Zeit Geschwungen* (No. 19 in the collection and one of the best) is an example of her best work on records. But, to pick a couple of nits, the tiny tonal swells with which she attacks certain notes detract from the characteristic spontaneity of her singing, and in the "coy" songs (Nos. 11, 24, and 26, for a few examples) she does not always avoid the obvious temptation of overstatement.

Tom Krause, an experienced and reliable artist, also performs commendably on this occasion. For soft dynamics his tones are mellow and firm; in the more passionate songs he keeps his voice under steadier control than does Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, who has recorded the collection three times and on whose interpretations Krause's seem modeled. The witty and quite virtuosic handling of No. 14 is particularly enjoyable here, and if *O Wusstest Du* (No. 44) remains obstinately charmless in Krause's rendition, other performers have not been more successful with it.

**P**IANIST Irwin Gage follows Ameling's lead in overstating the humor in No. 11; otherwise his work is tasteful and sensitive though with fewer subtleties than in Gerald Moore's accompaniments to Fischer-Dieskau and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf on Angel (S-3703). The voices and the piano sound are perfectly blended, the surfaces are superb, and the notes and translations by Philip L. Miller are done with that author's customary perception. —George Jellinek

**MENDELSSOHN: *Lieder. Auf Flügeln des Gesanges; Gruss; Neue Liebe; Romanze; Bei der Wiege; Tröstung; Im Herbst; Frühlingslied; Der Mond; Die Liebende Schreibt; Suleika I and II; Lieblingsplätzchen; Das Erste Veilchen; Des Mädchens Klage; Nachtlied; Hexenlied.*** Elly Ameling (soprano); Rudolf Jansen (piano). CBS ◉ 1M 36678, © HMT 36678, no list price.

**WOLF: *Italienisches Liederbuch.*** Elly Ameling (soprano); Tom Krause (baritone); Irwin Gage (piano). NONESUCH NB-78014 two discs \$17.96.

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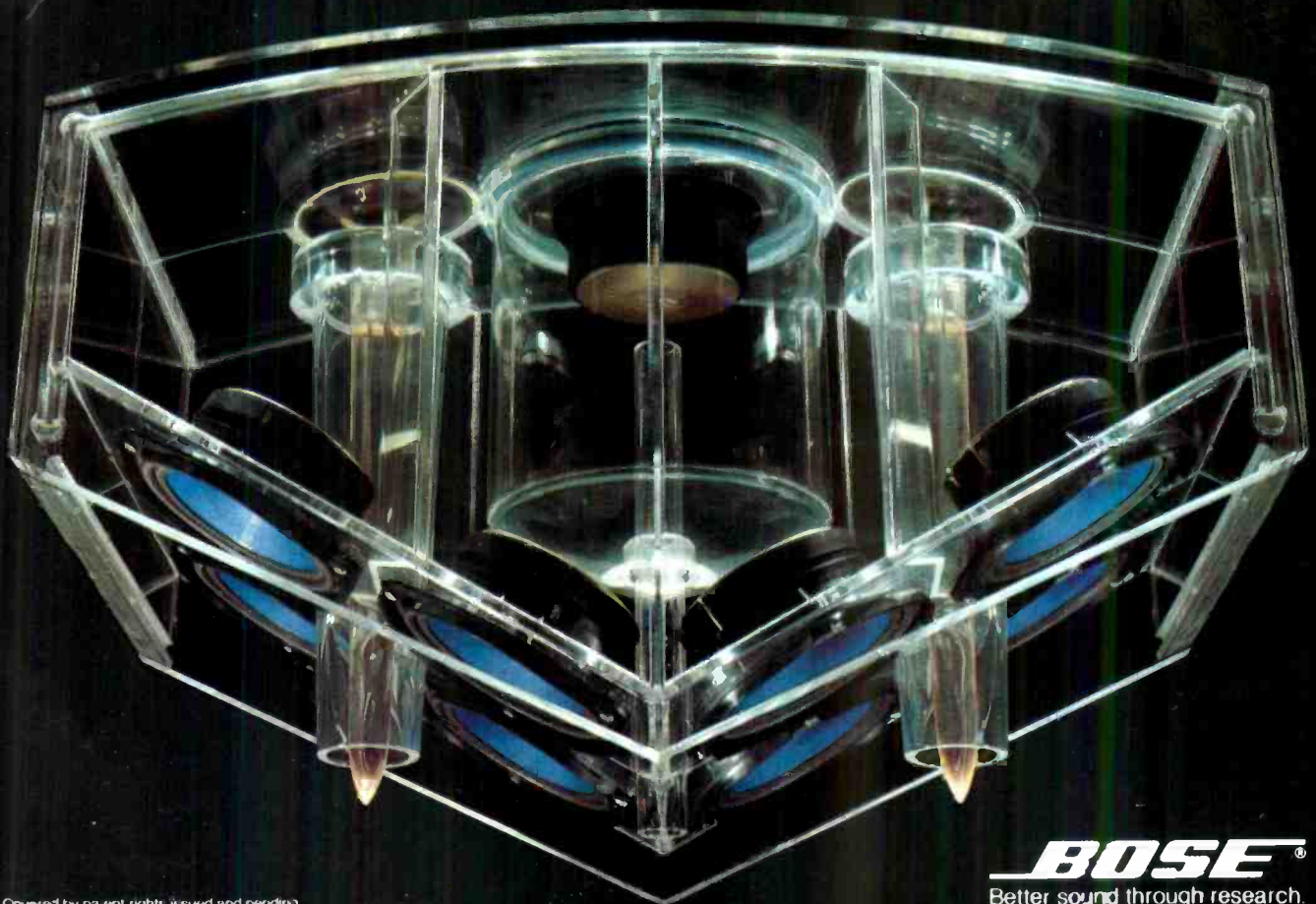
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