

IN BOTH EARS

With the give-and-get spirit of the holiday season just past, it may be financially comforting to know that for hi fi the New Year is bargain time. During the first week in January 1978 high-fidelity manufacturers will be removing the wraps on new product lines and encouraging their dealers to clear the shelves. A bit of canny shopping will help you uncover audio bargains and a number of special hi-fi deals. The prices indicated here are 'tops' - you should be able to do better.

The first component in the cornucopia is Sansui's Model G-2000 AM/FM receiver. It pushes out 16 audio watts, so your accompanying speakers should be fairly efficient. Stereo separation is 40dB at 1 kHz. With proper speaker placement you should be able to enjoy positive spatial effect. The G-2000 features an illuminated wide tuning dial, a maximum signal strength and zero center tuning meter. It also has the circuitry you would normally associate with more expensive receivers: a four element ceramic IF filter using integrated circuits, a phase-locked loop differential demodulator for minimum harmonic distortion and a low-pass filter to suppress carrier leakage. The receiver also includes a mike mixing facility equipped with a level control. (\$230).

Looking for something out of the ordinary? Consider the GLI Creative Controller, consisting of a #3880 mixer module with a #1000 signal processor. The Creative Controller is ideal if you are an active audiophile who wants to go beyond just listening to participation. This unit will let you play disc jockey at parties, assembling tapes with excerpts dubbed from a multitude of sources, or changing the tonal balance of a recording. The Controller includes phono mixing and dynamic range enhancement. If you couple it to a multi-channel tape deck you can have your own instant living room recording studio. The unit, a pre-amp plus full controls, lets you do deck-to-deck dubbing, apply equalization to tape input or line output, use cue input selectors and operate a slide fader for two inputs.

With some 200 speaker manufacturers pouring out a product line at a fine rate, selecting a speaker can be a bit more difficult than choosing a mate for life. If your power amp can supply from 12 to 60 watts per channel, give some thought to the Leak 3050. It is equipped with a pair of 170mm (6-3/4") bass/mid range drivers and a 19mm (3/4") dome tweeter. The operation of the bass units up to the crossover at 3kHz is achieved by an 11 element crossover. In a conventional speaker system the points of origin of sound at different frequencies aren't the same distance from your ears. This results in time distortion, an effect that is eliminated in the Leak 3050 since it is time-delay compensated. The treble unit is mounted a precisely calculated distance behind the plane of the woofer panel so that the musical harmonics it reproduces will arrive at your ears precisely in step with the fundamental frequencies from the dual woofer/midrange drivers.

The Wharfedale E70 (the E is for efficiency) will play along with any stereo power amp that can supply as little as 3 watts per channel to as much as 120 watts, and that just about includes everybody's amp. Highly

efficient, it can produce a sound pressure level of 94dB at a distance of 1 meter with just 1 watt input. It has a 250mm (10") woofer, a pair of 100mm (4") midrange drivers and one 25mm (1") horn loaded tweeter. Twin 5-position contour controls are an unusual feature of the Wharfedale E-70, permitting adaptability to individual room acoustics. You can get up to 5dB of frequency adjustment in the 200 - 2kHz and 2 - 20kHz ranges. Typical system response is virtually flat from 50 Hz to 18kHz. (\$430)

If you aren't quite satisfied with the sound you've been getting out of your phono records, you might try changing from a moving magnet cartridge, quite probably the type you are now using, to a moving coil unit. The Satin moving coil cartridge produces a full 2.5mV signal level, so you can plug it directly into any phono amplifier input. This cartridge also eliminates the nuisance of stylus replacement, something that sometimes requires the digital ability of a Heifetz or Menuhin. You can do it yourself. The Satin Model M-18E has a 0.2 x 0.8 mill elliptical diamond stylus and a rated frequency response from 10Hz to 30kHz. Your ears should work that good.

Cartridges vary widely in price (and in quality). You can pay as little as \$20 or go beyond \$200 with ease. A lot depends on what pleases your ears, and that's a purely personal matter. Empire has a line of cartridges, from their model 2000 at \$30 to their 2000Z at \$100. You can get a Pickering Micro IV AC for \$24.95 or their discrete 4-channel cartridge, UV-15/2400Q, at \$125.

Hitachi has a rather nice AM/FM tuner, its Model FT-920. It has a light gold front panel and a slightly recessed and back sloped dial scale. One of the tuner's unusual features is an auto lock, a type of automatic frequency control. This turns off the moment you start turning the tuning knob. But when you stop tuning, the auto lock comes on again and holds the tuned station precisely. (\$300)

There are several trends in turntables and you might keep them in mind when shopping. Many manufacturers are now supplying direct drive, but don't discount belt drive. Thorens, an old line company with a fine reputation, has belt-driven turntables in its line. Quartz crystal oscillators for controlling turntable speed seem to be the latest trend. These supply just about perfect speed accuracy and levels of flutter so low that it's difficult to see how they could be measured.

Pioneer's PL-570 is a fully automatic, single play, direct drive record player with speed control through a quartz crystal oscillator. (\$294). The Thorens TD-160 is a belt-driven, single play unit, but is completely manual. (\$275). Garrard's GT55, also belt driven, is \$249.95.

Now that cassette decks have made the grade as true high-fidelity components, you can have the convenience offered by cassettes and the enjoyment of quality sound. Kenwood's KX-1030 uses three separate heads for erase, record and playback. And the component has a frequency response of 35 Hz to 18 kHz, plus or minus 3 dB, when using chrome tape. This unit is distinguished by the fact that it has a double Dolby system with separate circuits for the record and playback amplifiers. This means that as you record with Dolby, you can also tape monitor with Dolby so you hear exactly what you record.

Another unusual feature is the variable bias adjustment control that lets you adjust the exact bias for the kind of tape you use. Most cassette decks have either a two or a three-position bias and equalization switch, but with the Kenwood KX-1030 you should be able to use any cassette tape, now available or coming at you in the future.

Martin Clifford

InPrint

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an introduction on the theory and interpretation of dreams — all interspersed with Kathy Miyamoto's breezy comic sketches and with various appropriate quotations (the latter of which do not include the Bard's warning, "Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls").

Colman Andrews

Unholy Grail

J.R.R. Tolkien's posthumous *The Silmarillion* comes equipped with 365 pages of more-or-less text (including maps of Middle-Earth, Elvish genealogy, etc.) and costs \$10.95 to buy from Houghton-Mifflin.

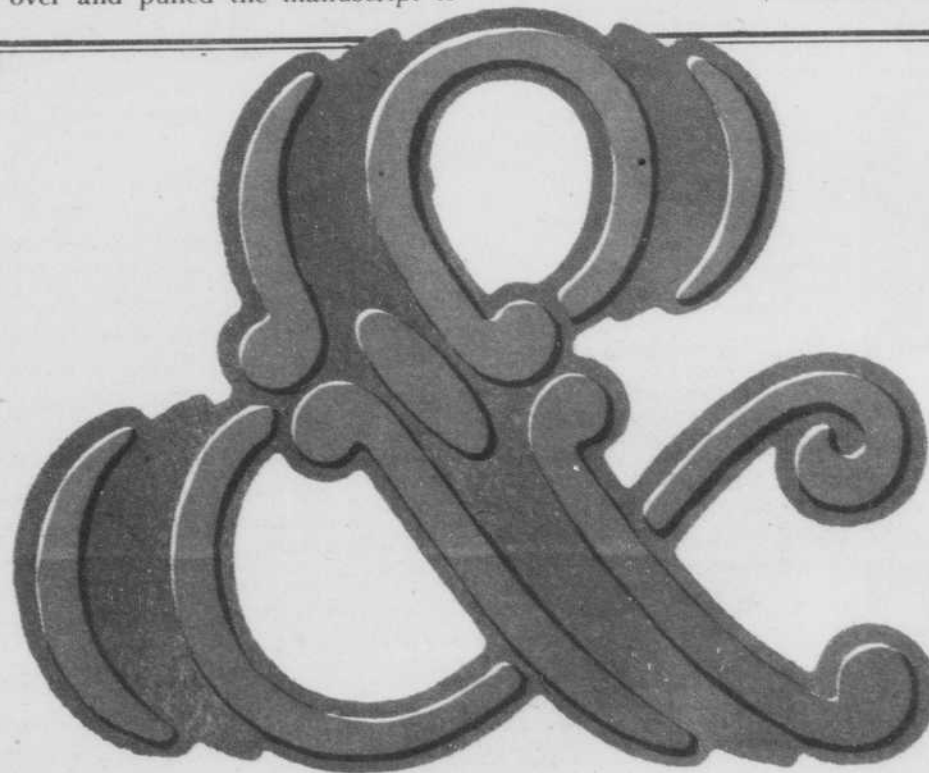
Tolkien himself had a use figured out for this unwieldy object. He was forever writing away at it in an attempt to fill the gap left by the early practitioners of English literature. These ancestral goofoffs had failed to leave English readers with a coherent body of myth and epic like the Norse *Edda* or German *Nibelungenlied*. This clumsy neglect had dire consequences: there was no source, Tolkien held, to which the English reader could go for the Big Picture on good and evil, heroism and villainy, roots. He, Tolkien, would do what our literary forbears had left undone: he would write the great definitive mythic work. Tolkien's colleagues were less than inflamed with the notion, pointing out to him that the writers of such a work should really have been dead for several centuries at the least. Tolkien, on the other hand, was alive, at least while he was writing his *Silmarillion* (his son Christopher took over and pulled the manuscript to-

gether after his father's death). He was also much too fully aware of what he was doing, too full of pedantry, too playful and, in three words, too Twentieth Century. As for Tolkien's publisher, he wanted more cute hobbits. He also objected to Tolkien's use of a rather fossilized pseudo-Biblical language.

Despite these discouragements, the volume is here, and tells, mostly, what happened in Middle-Earth during Ages I and II, which is to say, what went before the events narrated in the rest of Tolkien's work, plus a quick rundown of Age III, the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy plot. What it all comes to is the creation of Middle-Earth out of music, battles, three Silmarils (magic stones) full of light from the Two Trees of Life, battles over the silmarils, battles over territory on which the stones might be found, the use of human mortals in Elvish battles, battles to defeat the murky villain of pinched evil (whose title is Black Foe of the World) and some more battle scenes. That's a whole lot of swords flashing like ice and wounded heroes looking sad but not unhappy and bonked warriors falling and knowing no more, plus old kings with carved faces and iron mountains belching flame. Enough is enough.

Tiresome as the battle scenes may be, their accumulated tedium is nothing compared to the massive trumped-up history of Middle-Earth. Everyone must know at least one Middle-Earth Society type who has mastered an Elvish language and can sing several lengthy hobbit songs without being asked. Until now, these madmen had to rely mainly on The Appendix. This was a bunch of extra pages at the end of the *Rings* trilogy where Tolkien was allowed to put all the dull made-up geography and genealogy and linguistic information that would have bored his sane readers. In the *Silmarillion*,

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Ampersand of the Month: Fontanesi

OK, art majors and assorted creative types. This is another Big Chance from Ampersand. Each month we feature an Ampersand of the Month.

We've been lifting them from any old available type face, but we'd much rather have brand new, original, never-before-devised Ampersands. From you.

Restrictions and rules: they must be in black ink on white paper, neatly done; and they must be original. If you plagiarize, we will embarrass you in front of all your friends and then stomp you into dust.

Each original Ampersand we use will earn its maker \$25.

(As for our less creative readers, you can play too: should you happen to stumble upon a rare, old or merely unusual type face with a nifty Ampersand, send it to us. As a gesture of friendship, since you won't receive payment, just our eternal gratitude.)

Send your objets d'art to Ampersand of the Month, 1474 N. Kings Road, Los Angeles, CA 90069. If you want your Ampersand back, enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.