

the village Voice

Special Hi-Fi Section

September 26, 1956

Mechanical Marvels of the Modern Record-Changer

by Milton D. Thalberg

President, Audiogersh Corporation

For a device that couldn't possibly work, the modern record-changer is a remarkable piece of automatic machinery. And a look at the inside of any changer will almost convince anyone that it couldn't work and do all the things required of it—yet it does. Within its small chassis is a mechanical brain that accepts the information you give it, translates that information into the necessary sequence of lever movements, and then follows your instructions until it finishes its job. Truly, such a machine vies with modern computers in ability, yet it performs its various duties more smoothly and carefully than you could do them yourself, and it does them time after time without error, noise, or mistake. Furthermore, when you consider that an unwanted movement of as little as six millionths of an inch is sufficient to be objectionable—as it is with a phonograph turntable, for such motion is translated as noise in

the loudspeaker—you would expect to find the type of construction required for celestial telescopes, almost. Yet with all of this precision, good record-changers are not expensive.

New Products

It has been customary for many years for those who want the best in home music systems to insist on a professional type of transcription player, and there are many good ones on the market. But there is no denying the convenience of the record-changer, and the most critical users have turned to products developed only in the past two years as those that can re-

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The Night People

by JEAN SHEPHERD



MOTORIZED, ELECTRONIFIED JEAN SHEPHERD, dropping off his copy at The Village Voice. Voice: Gene Dauter

'FREQUENCY RESPONSE IS NOT ENOUGH'

by Ralph Vaughn, Jr.

Musical consultant and director of installations, Lyric Hi-Fi, Inc.

A few months ago this newspaper presented an excellent article on high-fidelity by the president of the Institute of High-Fidelity Manufacturers. In his article Mr. George Silber covered in detail the various pieces of equipment available to create a hi-fi set.

There are several manufacturers who are producing excellent equipment at this time. However, there is more to getting results than simply having good equipment. By getting results I mean recreating faithfully musical sounds as they were performed. An instrument that will make the Paris Conservatory Orchestra sound like the Cleveland Orchestra, or vice versa, is not only operating incorrectly but is almost impossible to con-

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Progress

OLD MURPH squinted down into the darkness. He was trying to set the volume-level of his transistor applause-generator. "Damn it," he muttered under his breath, "Why the hell do they have to make these knobs so small?"

The theatre seemed even darker than they usually do during the first act. The audience wasn't settled yet, but already people all around Murph were setting up the applause-generators they all carried. He guessed that most of them were moving the pointer to "ENTHUSIASTIC," just as he was, since the majority must have read the same review he had seen in the Times the day before. Perhaps a few might even move the dial all the way over to "TUMULTUOUS" or even "WILD," but not many, because this was a mid-week crowd and did not include more than a sprinkle of out-of-towners, who go overboard for everything and rarely read the Times. He figured there would be the usual quota of flinks who were in every audience and who would set the dials on their Applaudo's to "POLITE" and maybe a few would go as far as "SCATTERED," but that wasn't likely. Not with this crowd anyway.

Better Organized Now

With his Applaudo finally adjusted, Old Murph settled back in his seat to enjoy the evening. He so often these past few years had lacked that wonderful feeling of anticipation and excitement that used to be part of the world of the theatre. But on the other hand, things were better organized now, and it wasn't nearly as hit-or-miss as it used to be. That is, during the old days, when they were just beginning to perfect the play-writing machines over at the IBM labs and the composing-calculators were still primitive as all hell. There was no question about it, when you really thought about things: progress in music and art and theatre were completely tied-in these days with the good old electronic game. And that was Old Murph's meat. As the play droned on smoothly and neatly, Old Murph's mind wandered.

He was about the last of the old Hi-Fi gang, and could remember all the way back to the days when they used live artists to record in the old LP disc-system. "God, LP's!" he thought: "It must be 20 years since I've even heard the name mentioned." For a moment his mind snapped back to the play, but not for long. He had had a hard day and he was tired, and anyway his eyes were bothering him again. It was pleasant to just sit and dream away in the darkness. He was seated near a quiet corner of the Orchestra, and the mood-music

it created added to the sleepy mood he was in. His mind focused on the Orchestra itself.

Of course he was far too young to remember much about hearing actual live orchestra, but his father used to tell him stories of musicians he had known. Real live ones. As far as Old Murph was concerned, he preferred the Orchestra. His earliest recollections of music were connected with LP's and tapes and some of the later film-methods of recording live musicians in studios, but he had never actually seen or heard one in the flesh. Still, everyone knew that music always sounded better when it was recorded, so it wasn't a great loss. And since the RCA people had come up with the first Orchestrons that did away with the musicians themselves, the whole business of music had taken a turn for the better.

An Old Codger

Murph knew a man who had booked concert artists way back in the mid-50's, and the old codger used to tell a lot of strange things about that crowd. Of course, he was a very old man when he died, and it was hard to tell whether he was senile or not, but the stories were wonderful. For example,

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