

LASER

DISC REVIEW

MARCH 1987

ISSUE 10 £1.50

PHILIPS new LV player

**5000 more discs
– NTSC update**

**HDVS on
disc at IBC**

**News &
Disc Reviews**



**NEC's AV-300E
Surround Sound Amplifier**

CAMBRIDGE VIDEO

Telephone (0223) 213042

8 SEYMOUR STREET
CAMBRIDGE
CB1 3DQ



For all your LaserVision and CD requirements

**10% OFF NEW YEAR
DISC ORDERS**

10% OFF ALL TITLES INCLUDING
NEW RELEASES FOR ORDERS
PLACED BEFORE JANUARY 31 !!

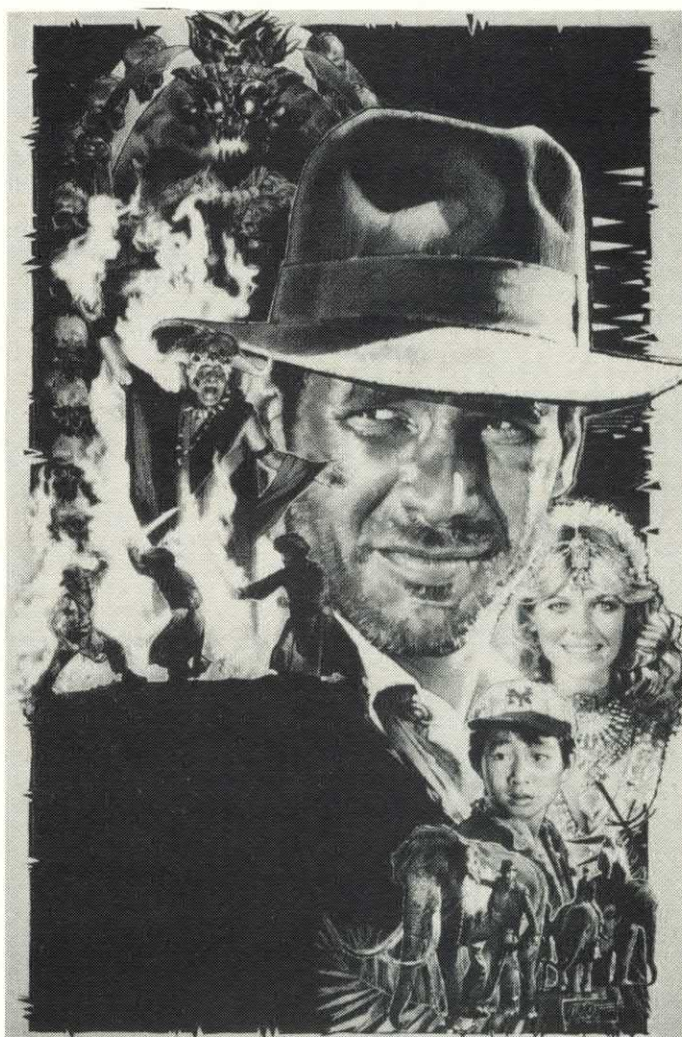
**THE HERO
IS BACK**

INDIANA JONES
and the
TEMPLE OF DOOM



All the
latest titles in stock
- if they are currently
available we have them -
- QUEEN/WE WILL ROCK
YOU (Now only £10), BACK
TO THE FUTURE, ROCKY IV,
BIGGLES and all the Winter
Release titles.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL
LASERVISION ENTHUSIASTS



- ALL NEW TITLES AVAILABLE ON RELEASE DATE
- EXTENSIVE BACK CATALOGUE SERVICE
- PLAYERS AT COMPETITIVE PRICES
- MAIL ORDER FOR UK AND REST OF WORLD
- TELEPHONE ORDERING SERVICE
- ACCESS AND VISA ACCEPTED

**** ENQUIRE ABOUT QUANTITY DISCOUNTS

SEND OR TELEPHONE NOW FOR LISTS

LASER DISC REVIEW

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

MARCH 1987

ISSUE 10

EDITOR & PUBLISHER ... Philip Parr
DESIGN & LAYOUT . Gillian Tilbrook
CONTRIBUTORS ... Tony Wells, Peter Moverley, Marc Comfort, Tony Parkin, Craig Hyland, Ad Jonker, H.T. Swaep

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES -

Single copies of LDR are £1.50 sent anywhere in the world. For those outside Europe who prefer Air Mail delivery the cost is £2.50.

Reduced rate 4-issue subscriptions are £5.00 worldwide. The Air Mail rate for those outside Europe is £8.00.

ISSN 0267-9671

LASER DISC REVIEW
PO BOX 526
LONDON, UK
SW10 9AB

Tel: 01-351 4535

LASER DISC REVIEW is published quarterly and is copyrighted, and may not be copied or the contents reproduced without consent.

© 1987

Your subscription has expired if there is a cross in this box.



Payments may be in cash or by cheque, PO, Banker's Draft, IMO, or by GIRO to a/c 55 521 2009. Make all payments out to "Laser Disc Review". Payment must be in £ Sterling with the exception of US remittances which can be in US \$ bills at the appropriate current exchange rate. US \$ cheque payments must include an extra \$2.00 over the conversion to cover the additional clearance charges.

Please state whether you are ordering a new subscription or renewing an existing one. State the first issue you wish to receive if a new subscription.

LASER DISC REVIEW welcomes correspondence but if you require a reply please include an SAE. Allowance should be made in the length of time taken to reply - the production of the magazine always being the first priority.

Printed by: Kingprint Ltd., Orchard Road, RICHMOND, Surrey, UK. TW9 4PD.

As One Door Closes.....

Managing to publish a magazine committed to consumer optical disc technology dependent on the TV screen to realise its full potential (which we call LaserVision) past single figures is probably worth celebrating in some way. We missed our second anniversary proper (for the usual reasons - lack of space) but Issue 10, if anything, seems more of a landmark in its own little way. Ten issues of a regular consumer monthly counts for little in the normal course of events, but ten issues here means over two years. And that seems a long time for a supposedly "loser" technology. Do we know something the rest of the world doesn't?

However, the most unexpected of events can come to bear heavily on this emerging technology. A hysterical over-reaction by our parliamentary representatives has resulted in the whole video industry being subjected to a level of intimidatory censorship that is totally out of keeping with anything that could be considered reasonable in a democratic country. What kind of logic dictates that broadcast TV programmes have to be certified for distribution on video? What can be more indiscriminate and uncontrolled than the transmission of programmes over the air? So why then demand that such material should be subject to additional censorship and regulation? Or is this just the first stage to clamping down on all forms of free expression?

We are past the stage where people can say "it won't happen here". Innocuous films are being routinely butchered in the cause of whatever, and our cultural heritage is being modified to suit a political whim. The list of films being adapted to conform thus is depressing - *How The West Was Won*, *Khartoum*, *Any Which Way You Can*, *Kentucky Fried Movie*, *Once Upon A Time In America*, *Taxi Driver*, *Teen Wolf*, *Thief Of Baghdad*, plus endless DISNEY features. What brings it all home is the expectation (as of this writing - late November) that even the likes of *Indiana Jones* will turn up on disc in an abbreviated form. It's almost certain that *9 1/2 Weeks* will have bits missing from it that were deemed quite acceptable in the cinema. Is this really the way to encourage people to buy discs? Or are we just fighting the wrong battle?

The underlying motivation for all this censorship is to water down all home video to a consistency that can be viewed by non-adults - hardly a basis

to engender a following for the serious collecting of audio-visual media. Isn't it about time that someone pointed out that the folks who go and shell out £20 or more for a feature movie are not likely to be children, and should accordingly not be treated as such? Isn't this an ideal opportunity to further underline the motivation of the disc buyer by insisting that disc versions of films should be complete ones - not the same ones foisted on to the videotape rental market? Film collectors want films - not the remains of films. If it suits a video company to edit a film down to achieve a lower certification on the home video market and so increase rentals - so be it. But the disc market is a sale market, to predominantly over-18s, and as such, deserves to be treated accordingly.

Let's have the full versions of films out on disc - even if it means them carrying a higher rating than the tape version. Everyone benefits. The politicians get their way (necessary - otherwise they start bawling and throwing their food on the ceiling), the tape renter is "protected", and the disc buyer gets the same film on disc as they saw in the cinema. It wouldn't hurt disc sales one bit to have every disc tagged with an 18 certificate. So why not exploit the situation by ensuring that the term 'disc version' is synonymous with 'complete version'.

But this isn't what we planned to talk about this time round. While the hardware side of PAL LV still rests in limbo, the software side - at least as far as current cinema product is concerned - continues to fulfil the promise made all those years back. While still unconfirmed at press time, there is every likelihood of another label previously releasing discs on the format rejoining the ranks, and the flow of new product scheduled for the next year will hopefully mean that we will no longer have to endure these cyclical on/off batches of releases that cause untold havoc to the Disc Review section of the magazine - though, understandably, the magazine's production problems are hardly of prime interest to readers who are more concerned just to get their hands on the goods.

So, enough of such matters. Time just to apologise for all the things that ended up left out due to pressure of space, and just time to sign off.....

CONTENTS

LETTERS.....	4
DEALER NEWS - Tower Records, W.1.....	6
WHAT'S HAPPENING	
The Golden Box, Disappearing Discs, The Show Scene, Philips VP-415 launch.....	8
NEW PRODUCTS	
Yamaha DSP-1, Marantz RV 351, Pioneer SV-Series.....	13
ONE STEP BEYOND	
The International Broadcasting Convention & HDVS on disc.....	14
DISCUSSIONS	
The presentation and packaging of LV discs.....	18
NEC AV-300E SURROUND SOUND AMPLIFIER.....	21
JAPAN REPORT	
Still-frames on CLV on new SONY player, PIONEER's LD-S1.....	24
5000 MORE DISCS	
An update on NTSC LaserVision.....	25
DISC REVIEWS.....	29
USA REPORT	
Compact LaserDisc - A new format.....	36
THE LASER CALENDAR.....	38

Letters

From: T.B. Line, South Devon

My Jacques Tati boxed set arrived last week with a Customs charge of £19-30 levied on it. After taking it up with them they refunded £16-00. They had opened up the package and mistaken the catalogue number for the price!

Due to the lack of foresight from PHILIPS and now LIGHTNING & GOLD we have to send abroad for films like this. I have obtained *The League Of Gentlemen* from Holland but VLP2180E that arrived with it is not *Brief Encounter* as you stated in the Dutch list. It is in fact *The Lady Vanishes*. However I didn't have this film so I am pleased to own it, and having compared it with our RANK copy it looks to have been pressed from a better master. Perhaps you could point out that the correct catalogue number for *Brief Encounter* is VLP2182E.

Why cannot these discs be imported through the usual channels? Is there not a dealer who will stock some of these discs in the UK? I have the impression that L & G are not interested in the older films. I had ordered and paid £24.99 for *West Side Story* but ended up sending another £5 and acquiring *Once Upon A Time In America* by means of a substitute. P.S. *Brief Encounter* has just arrived and although the print is not as good as *The League Of Gentlemen* (still, it is older), it is OK with the contrast turned down. The accompanying list from VIDEOSCREEN shows most of the film titles at £21 and they will accept cheques drawn on our own UK bank accounts. My order that I did this way took three weeks.

● Apologies to anyone else who was inconvenienced by the magazine printing the wrong catalogue number. Now the Video Recordings Act, 1984 is with us, dealers are effectively denied the option to carry imported film titles, though it may be possible to handle music and documentary material. A dealer bringing in one copy of a feature film has to submit it for certification to the BBFC in the same way as a major distributor releasing tens of thousands of videocassettes and discs of a particular title. Good as LV discs are one doubts many consumers would be willing to pay £500 or more for a disc as a result. Personally imported discs (and tapes) are outside the provisions of the Act because it only exercises control over the UK supplier - not those overseas or the consumer in this country.

From: Rev. Richard B. Miller, Berkshire

I have certainly found your opera and ballet reviews very thorough, though I found the comment that *Carmen* was the last of the present series of 40 discs (of which I now have about 14) disappointing. The format is ideal for such material but it does seem we are badly neglected. Covent Garden no longer appear to be advertising discs because they were fed up with not being able to satisfy customer demand (and frustration). When I complain to LIGHTNING & GOLD they put the blame on PHILIPS, and when I complain to PHILIPS they

put the blame on to L & G. It seems to me nobody knows what is happening, and meanwhile, as you suggest in your editorial, the customer is doomed to wait and wait until something might help the whole system take off or die. Perhaps it is such a good system, threatening to undermine the whole video market, that other companies are hoping it will fizzle out.

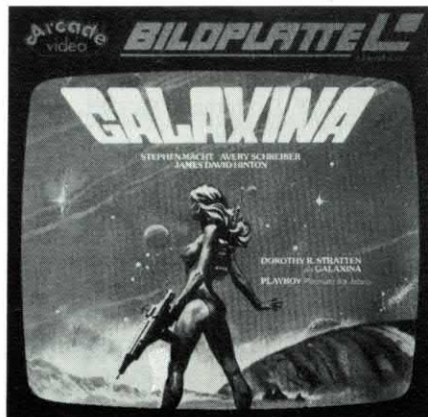
I feel in some ways LDR is the only lifeline of the disc enthusiast. It may be that your magazine could get together all those interested in the format in the business world to form a company to exploit the full potential of the medium, particularly in the field of arts and education. At the moment, when I show friends a laser disc they have a feeling it is something from another world.

● Now that PHILIPS have made a special effort to cater to opera and ballet fans it would be silly to antagonise them by cutting off the supply of software midstream. Your statement that "nobody knows what is happening" amounts to a reasonably succinct summary of the situation. The magazine blundered in unannounced to a similarly confused LV market some two years ago, motivated by the belief that no company could be that daft as to pass up on such a useful technology. PHILIPS, much as they publicly deny knowledge of LaserVision, are obviously loath to actually let it go - but it is obvious the present market will stagnate and die if no new hardware materialises, and it really is up to them to clarify the situation as soon as possible. Until then, there is no way anyone else is ever likely to make any other commitment of time or money. There is no obvious hostility to the LV disc among those in the industry who actually count - do not be misled by the ramblings of a few misinformed hi-fi/video magazines - and now that the optical format is within spitting distance of being acknowledged as the ONLY disc format, any confusion that may have lingered in the minds of software suppliers has been effectively removed.

From: Kees Borger, Holland

Rolf Kindermann's letter was interesting and so I bought *Galaxina*. Not only was it bi-lingual, it was also in wide-screen.

I repair amusement machines and I



came across a PHILIPS VP932 which was 110 volts and to my surprise, a PAL player. These machines usually are in NTSC but this one was German. The VP932 is similar to the 830 except it uses another microprocessor (L634LX6 & PROM). If you replace those two for a MAB8049HP and MAB8048H you have the 830.

The situation in Holland is indeed terrible. Only a few people know what an LV disc is.

One more thing. Will there ever be a multi-system LaserVision player?

● The animated Halas/Batchelor version of *Animal Farm* is also reported as being a bi-lingual English/German disc.

There will eventually be a multi-standard LaserVision player, but when is a matter of some speculation. It could be when - 1) Some alert entrepreneur realises there is a viable market to do customising of the existing players. 2) The manufacturers realise that it is a lot easier and cheaper to produce a multi-standard player than press ridiculously small quantities of specialist titles that do not warrant pressing in both formats. 3) Digital technology eliminates the standards barrier. 4) We have a worldwide TV standard.

From: Rolf Kindermann, West Germany

The detailed surround sound information in LDR-9 was interesting. Some of my own experiments may be of interest too. Readers who own an oscilloscope can visualise the different types of of sound signal on LV discs by connecting one stereo channel to the normal Y input of the scope and the other to the auxiliary X deflection (sweep) input. After adjusting the gain controls to equalise the X and Y sensitivity, a mono signal will produce deflections of varying length at a fixed angle of 45°. The independent signals of a two-channel soundtrack are displayed as horizontal and vertical deflections. Stereo sound will produce angles varying between 0° and 90°, while DOLBY surround sound can be distinguished from stereo by its significant activity in the opposite quadrants - indicating the inverted phase of those sound elements intended for the rear channel. Such out-of-phase components are also present in stereo recordings, but there they are restricted to higher frequencies, in contrast to bass frequencies and the discrete sound effects with DOLBY MP.

Electronics freaks should not hesitate to make their own experiments with a simple circuit to extract the rear channel information. Using the difference outputs of the OpAmp it is pretty easy to obtain a signal from all out-of-phase elements in the two stereo channels. Don't worry about delay and DOLBY B - I obtained really impressive results, even from this simplest of circuits without any delay.

In the T-speaker arrangement I obtained better results with two speakers at the rear (left & right) instead of one in my neck - connecting them in parallel but in opposite polarity. I agree with your

statement that these experiments are somewhat time-consuming, but you should listen to *The Never Ending Story* between 0.16 and 0.20 on side two, for example. In fact the rear channel (even from my low-cost experimental circuit) did not affect any normal stereo localisation. A centre channel (you guessed it - from a second OpAmp, by adding the source signals) is really a help to keep the sound concentrated to the narrow TV image.

Olivia Newton-John *Live* should also be MP encoded, as well as Simon & Garfunkel's *Concert In Central Park* - that being both MP and CX.

Readers with some electronics capabilities may be interested in attaching an external CX Decoder to their players. I have found a ready-to-use board with all the components. However it must be connected to a suitable small mains transformer (15V AC, 50mA) and rectifier, as well as to the leads from the player and to the stereo amplifier. And it will need an on/off switch. There are no technical problems and after adjustment to an approximately 100% modulated soundtrack section of any disc, the result is identical to the CX output of a VLP830. Try asking for these CX boards in an electronics hobby shop. In Germany they are available from VOELKNER ELECTRONIC, Marienberger Strasse 10, D-3300 Braunschweig. (RENFORCE CX Decoder. Part No: 0401791, price DM 29.50 - transformer, rectifier and switch extra.)

PHILIPS hesitation with CX is really hard to understand. The discs without CX are an annoying and unnecessary compromise. Just listen to Mr. Barenboim on your headphones compared to the better quality of a CX encoded disc.

Concerning your Laser Rot list: what about *The Sleeping Beauty*? My disc was virtually error-free after the third replacement in January '85. In the meantime it has destroyed itself and both sides are now providing picture quality like TV without the antenna.

● According to information from DOLBY LABORATORIES the Olivia Newton-John *Live* disc is not surround encoded, but both this disc and the Rod Stewart one (also on EMBASSY) bear the DOLBY Logo - mistakenly transferred from the cassette packaging where it was intended to notify the presence of DOLBY B noise-reduction (which of course doesn't apply to the disc).

PIONEER are presently the only users of CX on PAL disc (or were, to be more precise!) but the magazine still pursues the cause so far as UK-produced product is concerned. Review experience would indicate a tendency for many German-pressed LV discs to manifest a low-level 'spitting' sound that is very noticeable in quiet passages. Certainly the Barenboim disc we reviewed in LDR-5 (a German pressing) suffered this background mush, which considering the nature of the programme contents, could not be regarded as acceptable. Maybe CX would solve that too, but the main requirement is to reduce the noticeable level of hiss present on the format. The review of *The Sleeping Beauty* commented on the "excessive amount of flecking" present on two samples of the disc. Obviously matters have progressed since then! After an absence from the catalogue in recent months the title is now available again and other readers whose disc looks like "TV without the antenna" are advised to seek replacement via their dealer.

From: Graeme Ireson, Tyne & Wear

Does the appearance of all these cheap discs (of which I approve) mean that they

are clearing out old stock and once they are all sold they will then be deleted? Or, as I hope will be the case, is it a new line of cheap discs that will be constantly added to. After all, when you look at the price of some of the new cheap pre-recorded cassettes it means they are actually cheaper than the disc.



[At least the sleeves are ready if ever a decent mastertape turns up]

Something more - the usual gripe about availability relating to the non-appearance of *War Games*, *Pale Rider* etc. What gets me is why it takes so long to get a disc onto the market when cassettes seem to have little or no problem. For example, *The Empire Strikes Back* was held up because of a dispute over artwork - and when you see the finished product it is nothing to shout about. And..... why do discs have to be released in blocks of twenty or more. What are they - double-decker buses? Why not release them as they become available, a slow but steady stream on to the market? Maybe that's just too simple an idea and as such would dispell the veiled mysteries of the laser disc.

● The cheap discs result from a combination of factors. There is an element of response to the cheap videocassette promotions involved, along with the general desire to stimulate the disc market and clear dead stock - though opinions of what actually constitutes dead stock are open to debate. Many slow-moving titles have been much sought after in the past but bad distribution has prevented people actually obtaining them. Some titles will undoubtedly disappear when current stocks are exhausted - for contractual reasons. Those that can be re-pressed will probably have to justify a higher price to cover royalty/pressing costs. Until such time as there might be a disc player in every home the price of LV discs is likely to remain considerably above the £5 or so of the present cheapies.

Satisfactory mastertapes of the trio of outstanding titles from the first WARNER release are not available. Do people really want discs with faults? A recent US Laser enthusiast visitor to LDR, on being played the beginning of side two of *Gremlins* - where the sound dropout occurs, asked somewhat incredulously "You mean they actually put it out like that?". Seeing as the quality of the disc is its unassailable selling feature, there is a limit to how many faulty titles you can release before people turn round and question the whole concept of purchasing (as opposed to renting) software.

Just before PHILIPS gave up direct responsibility for issuing discs, we managed a couple of months with their own release sheets. Due to problems with mastertapes and scheduling pressing time, it has taken some time for the new distribution arrangement with LIGHTNING to settle down. It is in everyone's interest to achieve a steady flow of new releases. Whether this will ever come to pass while disc is a minority format is open to question.

From: Dr. Jan Vanek, Czechoslovakia

In June 1985 a friend of mine from Minnesota stopped in London for a few days and brought me Issue 3 of your magazine. I enjoyed it very much and immediately subscribed and I think that not only me but all your readers would welcome a new issue of LDR every month.

In LDR-9 a reader asked for a Top 10 list to be printed and you answered that it would be difficult to put together. Well, OK, but then give us a basic idea how large the LV market is by telling us how many discs of the better-selling titles are sold.

Someone else mentioned the idea of a "press-by-order" system. It's a good idea, especially for collector titles, and I have experience with such a system here in our country where for many years we had The Gramophone Club for the special pressing of audio discs. Every year the members received an offer list from which they made their choices and SUPRAPHON pressed the corresponding number of records. It worked well. There was only one problem which was it usually took SUPRAPHON two to three years to press the discs. I believe with PHILIPS it could work faster.

Do PHILIPS know how many LV players were sold in Europe up till now?

At this moment the UK is the only source of LV discs. All us non-British residents depend on mail-order supply from there. So I see it as a kind of discrimination from PHILIPS that the Silver Disc Club is opened only for British residents. We "foreigners" are also doing some profit for PHILIPS so we should share the advantages of SDC members too. You should be our representative and press PHILIPS to open the SDC for all. If not, you should do more for overseas subscribers, even for a slightly higher subscription. Most welcome would be a simple newsletter informing us about the newest releases.

I think, here in Europe, LV time is coming. I believe, by now, the majority of households in Western Europe already have video-recorders. We Europeans like quality and precision and so I believe that people will soon start looking for these two qualities in video, and only LV can offer them. It is time for the software companies to realise this and supply the market with more discs.

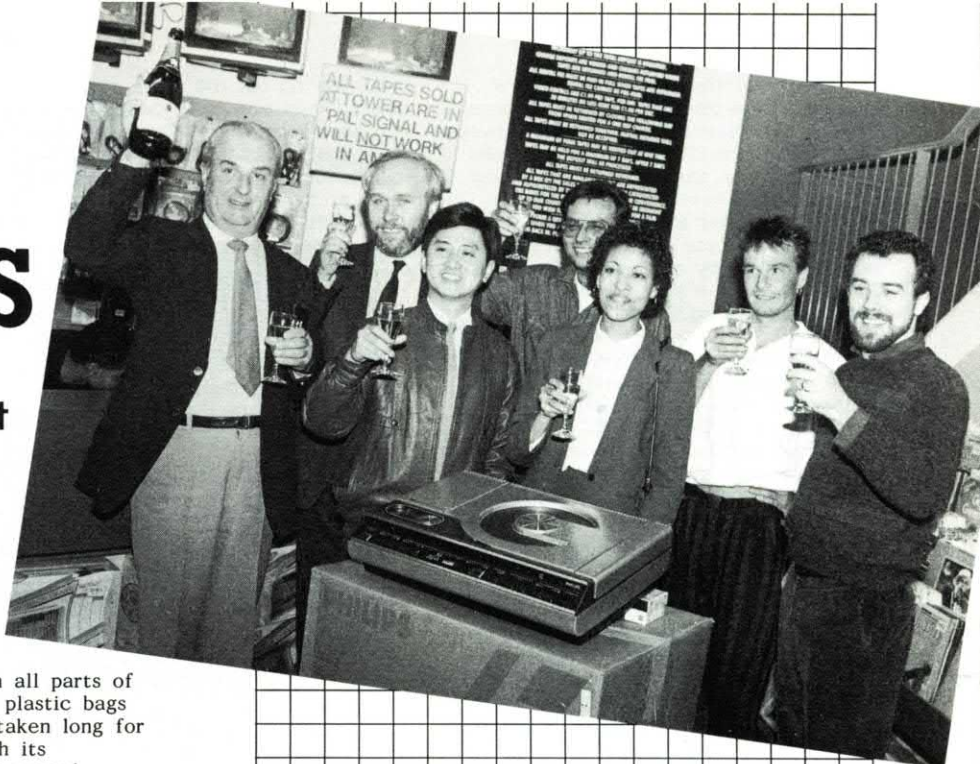
● There is a wholesalers' top-selling LV disc chart - but this is regularly flawed by the absence of the many titles that are out of stock awaiting re-pressing. The best-selling discs of recent times are all the obvious ones - *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return Of the Jedi*, *A View To A Kill*, *Dune*, *Blade Runner*, *Gremlins* etc. Judging by the pre-release orders, *Indiana Jones* and *Back To The Future* should be two of the biggest. Reputedly the best-selling UK disc of all time, with sales around 3,000 copies, has been *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, but the average run for a new title is between 500 and 1,000 discs. Having discs pressed to order is certainly an idea worth pursuing - but only when PHILIPS have decided the future of the hardware side of things.

Statistics of player sales do exist but are somewhat vague, ranging from UK sales of 10,000 players to 50,000 in PAL in total. Whichever is the closer, the active consumer base is still too small to sustain the required level of software.

While it is a multi-national company, the trading agreements PHILIPS enters into in each territory prevents it trading outside its prescribed operational area. In future though, when Silver Disc Club mail-outs coincide with ours, we will endeavour to obtain some spare copies and include them with overseas subscriptions. Even though you won't be able to take advantage of the facilities, you'll at least know what's going on.

TOWER RECORDS

LaserVision activity at the new London outlet of the U.S. record chain



Judging by the number of people you see in all parts of the capital city sporting bright yellow and red plastic bags bearing the TOWER RECORDS logo, it hasn't taken long for this latest addition to the US chain to establish its identity in an area already well-served by big record stores. Contrary to the popular conception of large chain outlets, TOWER sets its sights on being a complete catalogue stockist, and not just a mover of quantities of whatever the latest hot chart item happens to be. With a claimed 500,000 units in stock that makes for a pretty big specialist shop by any standards.

Carrying an extensive catalogue means that, in addition to the usual record store fare, the Video Department has an impressive display of LaserVision discs, and as something of a promotional tie-in to coincide with the opening, early visitors were invited to enter a prize draw with the opportunity to win an LV player. From the bulging sack containing literally thousands of entries five lucky winners were invited in last September 25th to collect their prizes.

Video Manager, Joseph Porterfield (pictured far right), having come fresh from one of the U.S. outlets to the Piccadilly store, had some interesting things to say about setting up the London operation and how the UK LV scene compared to that back home.

"We order everything. There is no title we pass over. Of course, that depends on the stock supply, which is somewhat sporadic, even from LIGHTNING. They get big shipments from PHILIPS every so often - but when it's towards the end of that shipment your orders start getting very skimpily filled. It would nice to have PHILIPS do things consistently with their pressing - both on printing catalogue titles and having monthly new releases."

"The way it works in the States is that PIONEER has a local plant and one in Japan, and they print a lot more copies of each title - with a priority system for new releases. Back-catalogue material is maintained accordingly. In the beginning of 1985 we were left with very few back-catalogue items. They were prioritising all new releases and in any given month most of the pressing time was given over to this. They realised that wasn't going to work, because you don't sell the hardware when there is no software available. Since there are only 20 - 30 titles released each month, the other 1000+ that are in the catalogue being unavailable kills the market. So they re-arranged it and I'm sure it's a result of PIONEER having a very good relationship with the major labels."

"That's what seems to be lacking here with PHILIPS. I don't think things can be that far off here that PHILIPS cannot come to work with the major labels in a business-like manner. In my opinion, coming from the States and seeing the amount of product available here, the situation in the UK is appalling. There are so few releases. The October - December list is the first one we have received since we opened. So in July, August and September - nothing!"

"The release situation should be like it is with tape where you have releases each month - consistently. However, with the smaller number of disc players you are not going to have every single title out on laser. PHILIPS isn't going to be prepared to pay for that many rights. There's obviously a problem with some major labels. It's incredible that there are no RCA titles. That an entire label would withhold its product from laser is unfathomable to me. It would never happen in the States, it couldn't happen - RCA

wouldn't allow it. What is RCA going to do? In two or three years from now, when the format is doing well, are they going to jump on and recoup the benefit the other companies have done the groundwork for? I think that's incredibly detrimental to the industry as a whole. It's stymieing the growth that could be happening right now."

"From just the initial impression, it doesn't look as though PHILIPS have been too supportive of the laser disc industry here either. I think, if anything, they've hurt it. What goes around, comes around, you know. If they don't do it right PHILIPS will have it all fall in on them. They can't want that surely?"

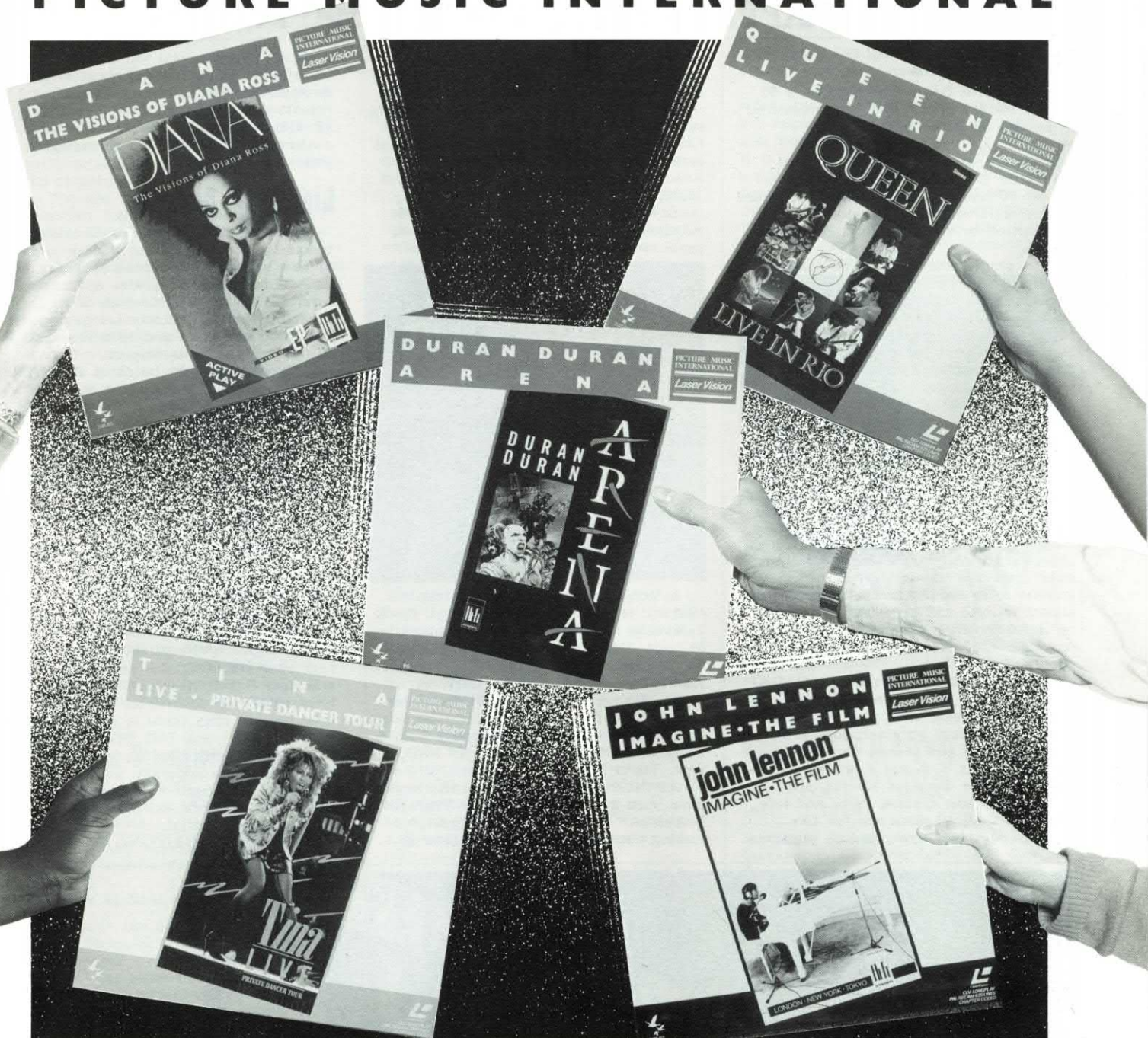
"As far as TOWER RECORDS is concerned, everything pressed on disc, we will carry. We are, in that manner, supporting it to our fullest. With the promotion today here with LIGHTNING we are doing our bit to create more interest. I want to see the disc format succeed in England."

The bulk of the store's trade though is obviously in the more mainstream lines - vinyl and CD records, as well as videotapes. Joseph described the level of business since the outlet's opening as - "Fantastic. We're selling upwards of 6000 records a day here. We do sell to tourists, but we are also doing well locally too. London is the first city we've had so much competition, with the likes of HMV and VIRGIN. We try and carry everything. Deep catalogue stocking - that's what pays off - and the organisation of the store. And in future we do intend expanding into Europe too."

The store itself - which is at 1 Piccadilly Circus, W1 - opens every day of the year. Weekday closing is midnight, but Sundays they close one hour earlier at 23.00. If you can't make a trip in person they operate an international mail order service whereby customers phoning in can be told if an item is in stock, in which case it can be paid for with ACCESS/VISA/AMEX and then mailed off. The idea is the mail order service is geared up for in-stock lines, and a member of staff will actually check what you want is in the rack and ready for shipment. You can phone in any time the store is open. For the Video department you should call 01-734 3411. For general audio discs dial 01-439 2500 and ask for the relevant department - Classical, Jazz etc. Inland mail costs are £1-50 on one item, £1-00 each additional disc. It's worth trying to pay a visit though.

Every now and again the magazine gets a call along the lines of "I was in New York and I couldn't find any stores with LV discs". Well, the TOWER store at 1961 Broadway carries them, and the one at 692 Broadway (in Greenwich Village) also operates a similar international mail order service to the London store - but for NTSC discs, of course. The number is (212)505-1500.

PICTURE MUSIC INTERNATIONAL



**Q U E E N
L I V E I N R I O**

**D U R A N D U R A N
A R E N A**

**J O H N L E N N O N
I M A G I N E • T H E F I L M**

**D I A N A
T H E V I S I O N S O F D I A N A R O S S**

**T I N A
L I V E • P R I V A T E D A N C E R T O U R**

THE BVA AWARD WINNER FOR THE MOST OUTSTANDING MUSIC VIDEO OF 1986.

A COMPILATION OF ALL THEIR BEST MUSIC VIDEOS. FROM THE DIRECTOR OF 'HIGHLANDER' AND 'RAZORBACK' RUSSELL MULCAHY.

THE CLASSIC MUSIC OF JOHN LENNON UNITED WITH THE ORIGINAL FILM OF JOHN AND YOKO IN LONDON, NEW YORK AND TOKYO.

FEATURING MANY TOP TWENTY HITS INCLUDING THE SMASH NUMBER ONE 'CHAIN REACTION'.

TINA AT HER BEST — LIVE. WITH SPECIAL GUESTS DAVID BOWIE AND BRYAN ADAMS.



PICTURE MUSIC INTERNATIONAL
20 MANCHESTER SQUARE LONDON W1

DISTRIBUTED BY
Lightning
DISTRIBUTION

The Golden Box

The Golden Box is the title of a 70 minute history of TV that was premiered in London on 30th October last. November 2, 1986 marked the 50th Anniversary of the world's first 'high definition' (so called because of the earlier 30 line experiments that preceded the event) broadcasting service, transmitted by the BBC from Alexandra Palace.

The programme itself is an assemblage of clips from the entire fifty years of broadcasting - both BBC and ITV material - and of special relevance to this magazine is the fact that the programme is sourced from a series of LaserVision discs being displayed on a Vidiwall multi-image display - 72 26" monitors plus a large central projection screen.

Producers of the show, STEFAN SARGENT & PTNRS, had 300 hours of archive material (some of it having lain unseen since it was originally made) to sort through. The finished programme relies on 10 discs running simultaneously on 10 different VP835 players to feed the 73 screens. At any one time many different images can be displayed - either static or moving, on individual screens or in multiples. The variations are almost infinite and very much dependent on the depth of programming of the computer that controls the whole operation.

Discs 1, 2, and 3 of the series of 10 carry the first 36 minutes of the programme in real time plus one extra minute of random access frames. Discs 4, 5, and 6 carry the second part in like fashion. Discs 7, 8 and 9 are purely random access discs for inserts, and Disc 10 contains credits, logos and late additions. All 10 discs run for the duration of the programme and segments

can be extracted from any individual disc at any one time.

The Golden Box has been scheduled to run till January 4th, 1987 at the Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8 (top of Earls Court Road). Performances are 12.00, 13.30, 15.00, 16.30, 18.00, 19.30 Mon - Sat. Sunday's shows do not begin till 15.00. Admission is £2-50 (£1-25 for children, pensioners, students, and unwaged).



In conjunction with PHILIPS, the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television has produced a commemorative 36 page illustrated history of British TV *Television - The First Fifty Years* that is available at the Institute for £1.50 or alternatively by post from the Museum itself for £2.25. Write: The Shop, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, Princes View, BRADFORD, West Yorks BD5 0TR.

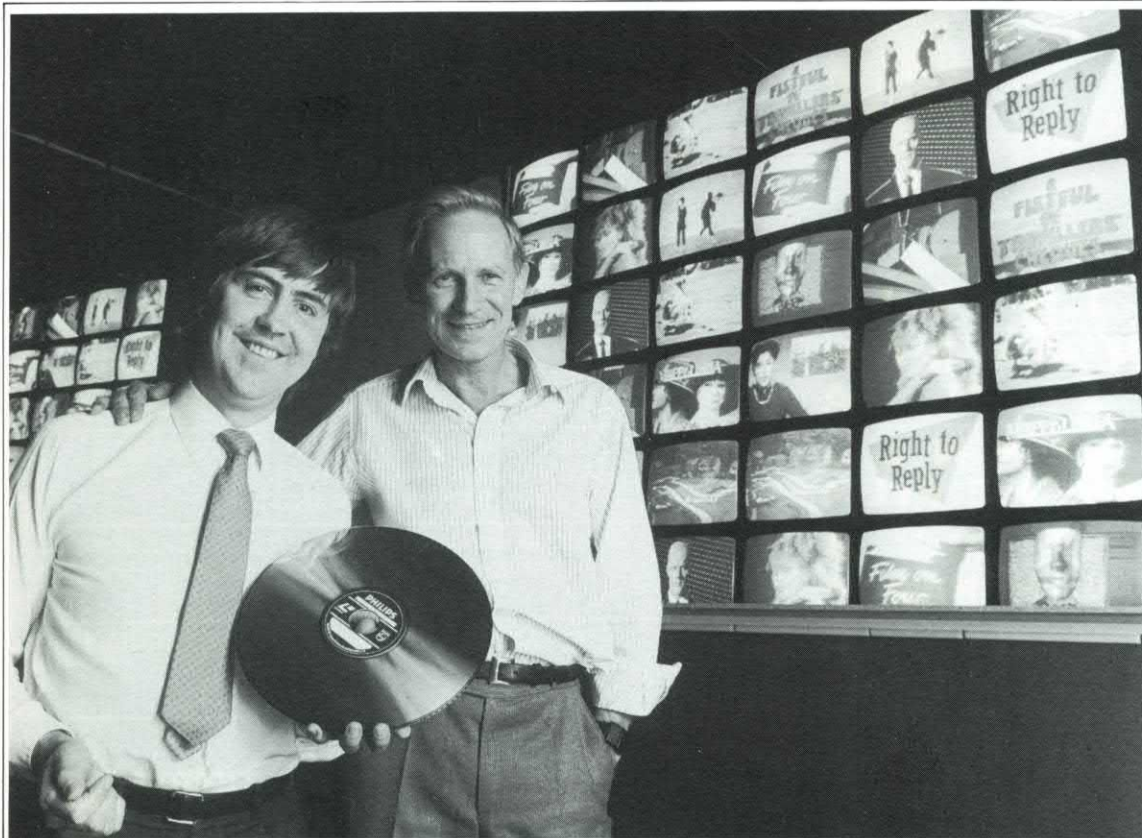
At the Bradford Museum, two floors have been given over to a "50 Years Of Television" exhibition that is again making extensive use of more than 20

LaserVision players in the various displays. Additionally there is the opportunity to see the new PHILIPS VP-415 player that has been developed in conjunction with the BBC Domesday project.

Lightning Changes

Seasoned LV'ers have now acclimatised themselves to the erratic release pattern of new software. It is something to be expected, to a degree, with a minority format. On top of this fact of life, though, each year usually brings at least one major upheaval and 1986 has proved fairly typical in this respect. The eagerly awaited first batch of WARNER titles (which, as a matter of interest, was twice the size of the parent company's first toe-dipping entry into the US disc market) should have seen the light of day some months before its eventual appearance, but the tying up of contract details, followed by problems with the actual mastertapes, delayed the arrival considerably. By the Autumn, the original LIGHTNING & GOLD deal with PHILIPS to take care of the commissioning and distribution of LV software expired, and prolonged negotiations for the 1986/7 period again resulted in a gap in the new releases. There is a new deal - which is for a 75 title package spread over the next year (75 being the supposed minimum figure; if sales of the new releases are as positive as they have been of late then there is scope to up that number) - and PHILIPS made mention of attention being paid to some minority interests, which hopefully will mean seeing to the needs of the established opera/ballet buyers and fans of older feature film material.

The original LIGHTNING & GOLD



[Bob Auger (left) & Stefan Sargent (right) of Stefan Sargent & Partners with the Golden Box Vidiwall]

partnership is no more - S. GOLD having dropped out to leave LIGHTNING in sole charge of matters. (S. GOLD will continue their wholesaling of LV product. While of no great relevance to the LaserVision side of things, LIGHTNING themselves were bought out by the larger PARKFIELD GROUP in a £6.5 million takeover last July.)

Come September, new releases for the Winter '86 period were being urgently signed up. At the Vidtel Trade Show the long-imminent(!) re-appearance of PMI product was finally secured and tapes and artwork for the first batch of titles had been prepared and shipped up for pressing in October. Further titles from WARNER, CIC, CANNON (which, for readers who may not be aware of the fact, is the new name for THORN-EMI product since the company's buy-out by the Golan-Globus CANNON FILMS organisation), EMBASSY and CBS/FOX were added.



Meanwhile, inspite of quality problems which even LIGHTNING themselves feel may have impaired sales to a certain extent, the WARNER titles were selling out left, right and centre and by October, 14 out of the 19 titles had needed re-pressing. "Everything on WARNER has sold well" were the precise words from the LIGHTNING spokesman. The three titles outstanding from the first batch - *War Games*, *Pale Rider*, and *Sudden Impact* are now unlikely to appear as satisfactory masters are still not available. It should go on record that *War Games*, particularly, will be sorely missed. Many will bemoan the non-appearance of *Pale Rider* too. *Sudden Impact* is possibly not such a great loss, being a cut version and thus the kind of presentation unlikely to endear it to serious collectors. (The delay on *Mad Max* would appear to be a result of having to wait for the censored version to be delivered for pressing - a not insubstantial 48 seconds missing from the final disc.) James Bond fans might do well to make known their preferred choice of future releases in the series as the likelihood is that these back-catalogue items will be slotted in as and when a gap occurs in the flow of new title releases.

Disappearing Discs

Following the latest implementation stage of the Video Recordings Act, the following film titles have been re-certified with cuts - thereby making the existing LV disc versions prohibited goods, and

as such, requiring them to be withdrawn from sale - whether by dealers or private individuals:

Breathless
Exterminator
Gwendoline
Once Upon A Time In America
Revenge Of The Ninja
Soldier Blue
Street Of The Damned

This deletion of discs is likely to continue as the backlog of existing film and video product is worked through. Details will be published as and when available. "As and when available" touches on something of a sensitive area. The British Board Of Film Classification (BBFC) are effectively restricting access to such information and will only reveal details via the sale of lists at a cost of £25 for each year's certifications - that'll mean a £100+ in total for the most basic listing. This is hardly a realistic price for the hundreds of thousands (maybe even millions) of consumers who own just a handful of video tapes and discs that they may not now dispose of without a contravention of the law and the severe penalties that ensue. (£20,000 fines, search, seizure and arrest - real friendly stuff.)

We pointed out to the BBFC the unsatisfactory nature of the situation, but after some checking they decided that it wasn't part of their brief to make such information readily available.

The Home Office, ultimately responsible for such matters, was the next port of call. Here the spokesman was well aware of the fact that every owner of a "video work" was indeed subject to the provisions of the Act. (And he was the first person the magazine has come across to be actually aware of that fact. Most people harbour the illusion that the VRA only applies to manufacturers and dealers. It doesn't - it applies to every individual who might ever sell on even one item from their collection.)



Inspite of the Home Office awareness of the effect of the VRA on each consumer, the end result of the phonecall was that members of the public had little option but to buy the lists in order to avoid risk of prosecution. However, there will be a copy of the list ("BBFC List Of Classified Video Works") on deposit at the Public Record Office and the British Library which will be freely accessible to anyone able to make a personal visit. (Well that's two copies - better start queuing right now!) It may be possible to persuade your local public

library to carry the list (ours won't). Public Libraries with their own video sections are probably the best bet in this regard.

Beyond that, you're on your own. That such a denial of information by the 'responsible' authorities might be construed as a convenience well-suited to the subsequent entrapment and intimidation of otherwise innocent citizens never crossed our minds for one moment, of course.

PHILIPS' Service



Changes in PHILIPS' servicing and repair policy means that LaserVision players and many other pieces of their equipment are now dealt with by outside dealers, and not by the Waddon, Croydon service centre as before. Participating dealers can be identified by the blue and white 'Approved Service Dealer' (ASD) logo. If you have difficulty seeking one out, PHILIPS at 01-686 0505, should be able to provide the names and addresses of some ASDs in your area.

You may even come across one that uses the newest LaserVision Test Disc (Part No: 397 30118), which is the first 20cm LV disc we know of to have crept out of Blackburn by any legitimate means. Containing various test signals for setting up the Laservision player, the disc is a little low on entertainment value although the list price of £87.90 is in itself quite impressive.

The Show Scene

FIRATO - The Firato Show (which is held every two years) was on at the RAI Exhibition Centre in Amsterdam last August/September. Two years ago the big attraction was the (then) relatively new Compact Disc. This year there were no real eye-catchers - it was mostly as two years ago, but with improvements.

PHILIPS had the largest stand. They had three LV players for general display purposes - two VP830s and one VP720 - all connected to Matchline monitors. Also there were three VP835s hooked up to VP120 touch-screen monitors. Finally, they had a VP831 connected to an MSX computer for interactive computing. (MSX is quite big in many European countries and PHILIPS have MSX-2 models such as the VG8235 and the new two-part NMS8250 in their range.)

Mr. Vervoort, the spokesman for PHILIPS LV, stated that within two years

.WHAT'S HAPPENING...WHAT'S HAPPENING...WHAT'S HAPPENING

we can expect a combined LV/CD player from PHILIPS which should cost about £400. New titles will continue to come out in the meantime, but slowly as there are still too few machine owners. We should be seeing CD with graphics within a year or so.

On the PIONEER stand the PAL future was less promising. PIONEER has so little to do with LV in Holland that they needed to send somebody over from the UK to take care of the stand. His main task was to promote their new 20cm disc video jukebox (NTSC). There was no news of any new PAL LV players from them. They sell very few PAL players in comparison with the NTSC markets where they are working flat out to keep up with demand. He himself even had NTSC disc equipment in his home to take advantage of the much larger choice of software available. The European market will be getting four new models of the Bodysonic chair, which should be considerably cheaper than the one sold at present.

PIONEER didn't have anything about surround sound, neither did SONY - but most of the Japanese companies did. AKAI had a little studio where they showed their equipment off, but the best surround effects I heard were on the MARANTZ stand with the RV351 and an audio/video "tower" system with their NTSC combination LV/CD player, the LV10CD, providing the signal source. KENWOOD (TRIO) had a surround demo studio too with 16 speakers. Their surround processor was very small and did not give a very good surround effect. However, it is not planned for sale in the near future - maybe just as well.

[AD JONKER]

LONDON BUSINESS EQUIPMENT SHOW -

At the Earls Court LBES in October, nestling amid comfy executive chairs and row upon row of typewriters, was the 3M stand where the DOCUTRON 2000 optical disc based document storage system was launched on to the UK market. This £80,000 collection of hardware uses a 30cm laser read/write WORM disc (Write Once Read Many) - a double-sided disc capable of storing 3.6 Gigabytes of information, or 60,000 A4 pages/photographs - coupled to a computer-based management system controlling the associated document scanner and laser output printer.

Documents and photographs are fed into the scanner at a rate up to 20 pages a minute, digitised, and then written to the optical disc for subsequent retrieval. (Access time is 6 seconds and hard copies can be obtained via the laser printer. The copies are of good quality but, by virtue of the digitisation, there is an element of image degradation - printed type, for example, tends to look slightly 'bitty' when compared with the original.)

Up to four 25-disc jukeboxes can be wired into the basic setup to expand the on-line storage and the DOCUTRON 2000 system's application is seen in areas where microfilm is presently used. Disc storage costs work out to 1p per document - the blank discs (which like most discs of this type come in a permanent protective caddy) cost £600 each. Further models in the DOCUTRON range promise system control and on-line

storage for tens of millions of documents by combining even more disc jukeboxes.

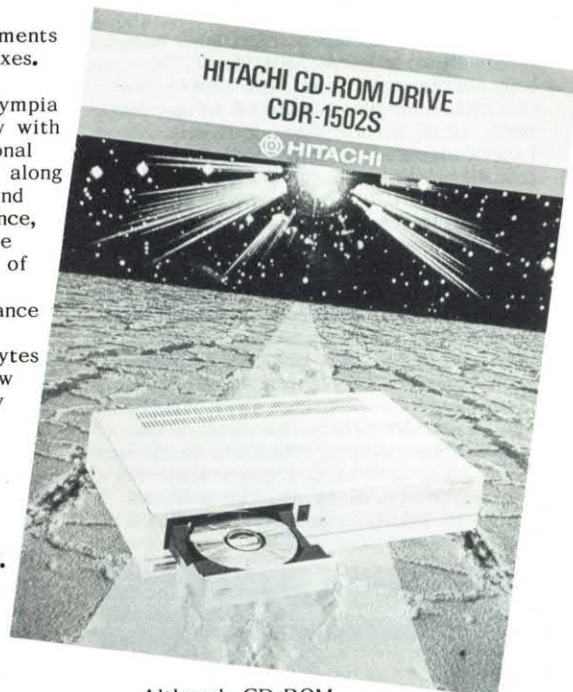
COMPEC 86 - And now.... on to Olympia in November for this computer show with a distinct bias towards the professional user. Recordable optical data discs along the lines of the PHILIPS Megadoc and 3M Docutron systems were in evidence, and both HITACHI and PHILIPS were showing 30cm jukebox units capable of holding twenty or so such discs.

More interesting was the appearance of CD-ROM drives - the optical computer data disc offering 552 Mbytes of storage capacity. HITACHI's New Media Division has been aggressively marketing the hardware of late, although in fairness, unit sales are modest at this early stage. Prices of CD-ROM drives are still in the £1,000 region - more than a basic CD Audio player by virtue of the greater demands of the media itself. Missing data is more difficult to compensate for than music errors that can be comparatively easily related to adjacent information on the disc in order to reconstitute the absent notes. Missing data, however, tends to be missing data - period. Apart from that, CD-ROM drives are actually heavier-duty jobs all round, though with an expansion in the size of the market, prices are expected to fall progressively.

PHILIPS have been maintaining a relatively low-key approach to hardware sales - their CM 100/110 drives being essentially re-jigs of their CD 100 top-loading CD players that launched the audio format some years back. In 1987 PHILIPS expect to be able to supply half height CD-ROM drives for incorporating directly into IBM and compatible type computers.

The present selection of CD-ROM software, running to about 600 titles, looks decidedly dull to consumer eyes. Apart from the understandable number of experimental discs that have been pressed to give people a feel for the format on which to base further development, the majority of CD-ROM discs are just lists and databases of varying descriptions. We've already mentioned the use of CD-ROM by the British Library for cataloguing their books, and the CD-ROM equivalent of the *Grolier American Academic Encyclopaedia*. This latter title (at \$199, twice the price of the comparable LV disc) contains all the text from the 20-volume encyclopaedia. Just out on CD-ROM, though, is the excitingly titled *Postcode Address File* - a £2,500 (+VAT) CD-ROM containing all 23,500,000 addresses in the UK - that has been produced by the Post Office both for internal use and for sale to outside parties.

In Germany there exists *Wer liefert Was (Who Supplies What)* - a 286,000 product/60,000 supplier directory of German manufacturers that includes a multi-lingual English/French/Italian/Spanish and German index to broaden its appeal. Price is DM 1,950. In the UK a group of British publishers has formed PUBLISHER DATABASES in order to convert major reference works to CD-ROM, with initial plans to produce a 200-title catalogue to be sold under the KNOWLEDGE WAREHOUSE banner.



Although CD-ROM can produce digitised graphics and synthesised sound, the more creative uses of such data in education and general domestic applications is likely to be with the future CD-I (Interactive) format that is being seen as an extension of CD-ROM rather than as a replacement. Recent international meetings to thrash out standards for both CD-ROM and CD-I should allow each type of disc to co-exist, as well as ensuring that CD-ROM discs retain a substantial level of interchangeability between computer operating systems.



MICROVITEC [Futures Way, Bolling Road, BRADFORD, West Yorks BD4 7TU. Tel: (0274) 39011], the UK computer monitor specialists, have a new series of flat square tube models (the 700 range) due in 1987, and were showing one in conjunction with another new product in their range - the Touchtech 702. Seen here atop a SONY LDP-1500P disc player the Touchtech 702, as its name implies, offers touch-screen control of

T'S HAPPENING...WHAT'S HAPPENING...WHAT'S HAPPENING

disc player functions (by placing a finger on the appropriate part of the screen). A headphone socket is also incorporated for computer-assisted learning applications.

Bad News

The magazine continues to receive complaints about the trading practices of both RELIABLE VIDEOS of Birmingham and AV REPORT in Berlin. We contacted PHILIPS in Germany about AV REPORT (it was through them that we were introduced to the company) and they told us they had received other complaints too. We can presently suggest no other source for German discs (other than the software companies themselves, on an individual basis). We certainly do not advise dealing with AV REPORT further or its proprietor, Hannes Dahlberg.

Small Ads

The SMALL ADS column is an ideal way for readers to dispose of unwanted discs and communicate with others. At present this is a free service. List details of your entry briefly, and on a separate sheet of paper from any other correspondence. It is not possible to take particulars over the telephone.

Next deadline - February 14th.

□□□ FOR SALE - Saturn 3, Airplane, Class Reunion, Raise The Titanic, Whose Life Is It Anyway?, Coma, Visiting Hours, High Anxiety, Absolution, Janitor, Seven-Ups, Challenge, Young Frankenstein, 11 Harrowhouse, Amateur, An Eye For An Eye, Zapped, Codename The Soldier, Saturday 14th, Manitou, Queen/Greatest Flix, Seduction Carbon Copy, Thunderbirds, Captain Scarlet. - Highest offers over £3.50 each. Phone Ronald on 031 337 7575.

□□□ FOR SALE - Unused sealed copies - Blue Hawaii, Private Lessons, Conquest Of The Earth, Kagemusha, Butch Cassidy, Kenny Everett Show, Exterminator, Capricorn One, Eagle Has Landed, & 50 more top films. Price negotiable. Telephone between 18.00 - 24.00. Mr Andrews. 01-691 8376.

□□□ FOR SALE - Philips VLP 700. £60-00 ono. Martin Tominey. Telephone - St. Albans 58193.

□□□ FOR SALE - Everly Bros Reunion Concert £6 Just Before Dawn £4, Panic In Needle Park £3, or all three for £10 post free. WANTED - Copy of Stevie Nicks/Live that doesn't look like a snow storm! Bert Collier (0942) 605839 (after 18.00).

□□□ WANTED - Best Of Benny Hill, Blue Max, Der Grosse Diktator, Henry V, Jacques Tati box, New York City Ballet (Polygram), Swan Lake, American Ballet Theatre. - Carleton Sarver, 256 West 88th Street, New York, NY 10024, USA.

□□□ WANTED - Blues Bros. Good price or swap. Brian Hendry - Telephone: (0224) 897007 (Office) or (0224) 648948 (Home).

□□□ FOR SALE - Jaws £35. Last American Hero, Wildcats Of St Trinians £4 each. Tel: 01-656 1684
□□□ WANTED - Butch Cassidy, The Wicked Lady, French Connection I, Great Railways + others. M.D. HARKER, 54 Wolverhampton Road, Penkridge, STAFFORD ST19 5AQ. Tel: (078571) 2661.

□□□ FOR SALE - PHILIPS VLP700 + 48 discs. Mostly all best-selling titles. £350-00 ono. M. Keen. Tel: (0908) 644901.

□□□ FOR SALE - Richard Pryor/Live & Smokin' NTSC disc. A. Bell. Tel: (0603) 620980.

□□□ SITUATIONS VACANT - Shop assistant. Specialist shop seeks laser disc/media enthusiast. Efficiency, enthusiasm and friendly personality important. Coalville/LEICS area. (0530) 36100.

Domesday & the 415

The BBC/ACORN/PHILIPS launch of the Domesday hardware (details in LDR-9) in the last week of November was not best suited to this issue's deadline that very same week.

Some mention of the LV hardware must be made though. With the arrival of the VP-415 player designed for the project



PHILIPS at last have a solid-state laser, front-loading machine to offer the professional user. With its electronic time-base correction and unique RGB video output mode, substantial picture quality improvements are available over previous models.

Though the coding of LaserVision discs is still in composite video, PHILIPS have developed a special PAL composite video - RGB decoder with a fast locking time to enable a better quality picture to be obtained. This has special relevance in the special effects modes, where the previously limited bandwidth has caused picture quality to be compromised. Working with an RGB signal also makes it easier to mix text and graphics in with the video picture. Certainly, the brief glimpse of a working player we saw looked impressively clean and crisp on some still photos of street scenes, where brick walls and similar sharply defined features stood out most markedly.

Also apparent was the speed of access - 4 seconds or so across a disc. The average is quoted at 1 second, with instant-jump access for up to 50 frames either side of the one currently in play. External control of the player is via SCSI and RS-232C ports and the player is, of course, fully genlockable. The player is able to operate with LV-ROM discs that hold up to 324Mbytes of data encoded on the audio channels - either taking their place or mixed in as required.

The whole Domesday package, including the two discs, the special BBC AIV computer, colour monitor, user guide and disc player runs to £3,990 + VAT, and distribution will be handled by selected ACORN and PHILIPS professional dealers.

PHILIPS existing professional LV player stocks - VP831/835s - are pretty much exhausted, and so the scheduled Christmas arrival of the more basic

VP-410, and later in the New Year, the VP-412 should work out most timely. Both players are simpler variations of the 415 which will bring their price down to near the £1,000 mark. Only PAL models will be supplied for the UK market, though the 400 series has been designed with the option to produce an NTSC model for North America if demand warrants.

Bits & Pieces

□□□ PHILIPS DU-PONT OPTICAL (PDO) continues to expand its disc pressing capacity with new CD plants in King's Mountain, N. Carolina USA, Louviers in France and Rome in Italy. The Blackburn, UK plant remains the only one able to produce LV and other non-CD discs and recently completed its first LV custom-pressing order for the US market - with more to follow. □□□ The FINIAL solution? Those anxious to preserve their vinyl collections should be aware of the FINIAL Laser Turntable - a vinyl disc player that uses a pair of lasers, one for each groove wall, to track discs in a non-contact manner without the wear/tracking problems of conventional stylus systems. Projected price is \$2,500, but several models at different price points are planned. □□□ December's US release on disc of *Star Trek/The Cage* is the original pilot, that was later cannibalised to make the broadcast two-partner) *The Menagerie*, put back together and featuring 10 minutes of "new" footage. Just prior to the US cinema release of *Star Trek IV*, PARAMOUNT's TV Division announced the production of 26 new one-hour episodes with a new crew but still under the guidance of Gene Rodenberry.

NTSC Hardware

Also just before we went to press a letter arrived from Japan suggesting the possibility of shipping NTSC LV players direct for UK readers. Would anyone who might be interested please send a S.A.E to the magazine - indicating whether you would want the latest PIONEER combination LV/CD machine or just the cheapest LV-only player we can negotiate for. We'll take it from there. (Include your phone number too.)



**72 TERMINUS ROAD,
EASTBOURNE, EAST SUSSEX
(0323) 640911**

COME & VISIT OUR NEW SHOP

- WE ENDEAVOUR TO STOCK ALL AVAILABLE LASERVISION DISCS AS WELL AS SOME IMPORTS
- 1000s OF COMPACT DISCS ALSO KEPT IN STOCK
- WE STILL HAVE PIONEER LD700 & PHILIPS PLAYERS IN STOCK

**SAME DAY DISPATCH - WE ALSO
MAIL OVERSEAS - TELEPHONE
ORDERS & MAIL ORDER WELCOME
- ACCESS & VISA -**



Canon

marantz

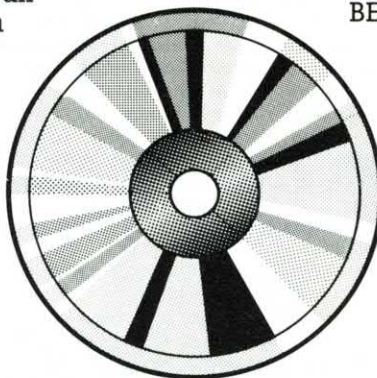


20 Chadwell, Hertford Road, Ware, Herts. SG12 9JY

Telephone: Ware (0920) 61339

If you have been searching for that all round professional Mail Order Service that doesn't treat you like a number and also caters for all of your needs in requiring all the latest Compact Discs, Films on Video, LaserVideo Discs, Music on Video and all of your other Audio and Video needs, then look no further as I can do this and more like Big Discounts, Export Orders anywhere in the World, plus a brand new elite **Personal Mail Order Service** that is second to none.

To find out what the buzz is all about, don't delay, just send a 43p stamp and you will be amazed at what arrives through your letter box!



In the meantime, look what's on offer for you:

Albums and Tape CassettesFrom £1.45

BETAMAX Blank Video

Tapes.....From £2.90

Compact DiscsFrom £5.95

Films on VideoFrom £4.65

LaserVideo Discs ..From £3.95

Music on Video.....From £4.65

V2000 Blank Video

Tapes.....From £4.80

VHS Blank Video Tapes....From £3.85

VIDEO 8mm Blank Video Tapes...From £7.75

NEW PRODUCTS

YAMAHA DSP-1

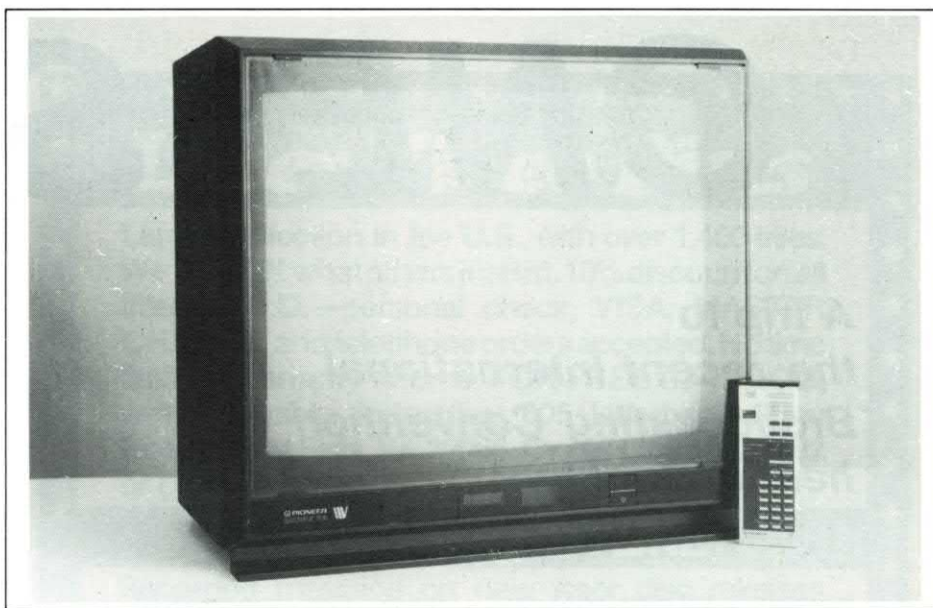
The DOLBY Surround logo on the front of YAMAHA's new £649 DSP-1 Digital Sound Field Processor is primarily what leads it to be featured in these pages, but this innovative unit has considerably more going for it than just that one facility. Benefitting from YAMAHA's in-house pursuit of large-scale chip integration, the DSP-1 fortells the future of signal manipulation whereby such matters will be conducted solely in the digital domain.

With such colossal processing power available YAMAHA's engineers set about the task of recording the ambience/reverberation characteristics of a number of major concert halls and more typical music venues which they have programmed into the DSP-1's memory. With such a reservoir of sound patterns on tap the listener is then able to simulate the 'correct' acoustic for any programme content - most significantly those that have been more closely recorded, and in consequence, lack the reverberation characteristics of the environment in which they were made.

tremolo, chorus, pitch change and other effects can be added to both instruments and finished recordings - facilities which in themselves would come very near to justifying the cost of the DSP-1 on its own.

The range of possibilities beyond that of a straight PCM DOLBY Surround Processor is almost intimidating and such a brief description can hardly do the unit justice. Anyone with a low opinion of recording techniques over the last twenty years will find the DSP-1 especially intriguing in its conception, and further investigation is recommended on that basis alone.

**YAMAHA ELECTRONICS - Yamaha House,
200 Rickmansworth Road, WATFORD,
Herts WD1 7JS Tel: (0923) 33166**



PIONEER SV Series

PIONEER's SV series of receiver/monitors are not strictly brand new products but the availability of a series of add-on modules to expand their capabilities merits them a mention here. All the monitors feature black-matrix square tubes with Teletext, 99 channel/39 programme selection, 20 watts/channel audio and the usual inputs, including a Euroconnector. Screen sizes are 70cm (SV-2801), 63cm (SV-2501) and 55cm (SV-2101) and the prices are £599, £549 and £499 respectively.

What sets the range apart from the crowd is the series of add-on modules to cater for SECAM and NTSC reproduction. Of most interest is the NTS-01 module (about £20) that enables reproduction of NTSC video sources. The module (like all those in the series) requires dealer installation but once fitted is self-switching, depending on the incoming signal. There is even a module for the reception of NTSC and SECAM broadcast signals (SEC-01) that may be of interest to readers within such transmission areas.

**PIONEER - 1-6 Field Way, GREENFORD,
Middx UB6 8UZ Tel: 01-575 5757.**



There are 13 programmes available, with additional variation possible by using other of the unit's sound effects - plus the option of further user control over the delay/balance characteristics. Specially modified sound fields can be stored by the user for later re-call.

All types of music are catered for - from that of a large German cathedral ('Munster') to a sports arena ('Pavilion' - actually Tokyo's Budokan), and a small jazz club setting (just called 'Jazz Club'). The unit is totally controlled by the 30 function-keyed infra-red remote.

The DSP-1 can be made to work in a 4, 5, or 6 speaker output configuration - although in each case separate amplification is necessary. The DSP-1 contains no amplification of its own. Typically thorough, YAMAHA offer the £199 M-35 2/4 channel power amplifier for this purpose.

And there's more. Musician readers will appreciate the dual-purpose role of the sound-shaping characteristics of the DSP-1 which can be accessed via the front in/outputs and used to alter the tonal characteristics of many musical instruments. Flanging, phasing, delay,

MARANTZ RV 351

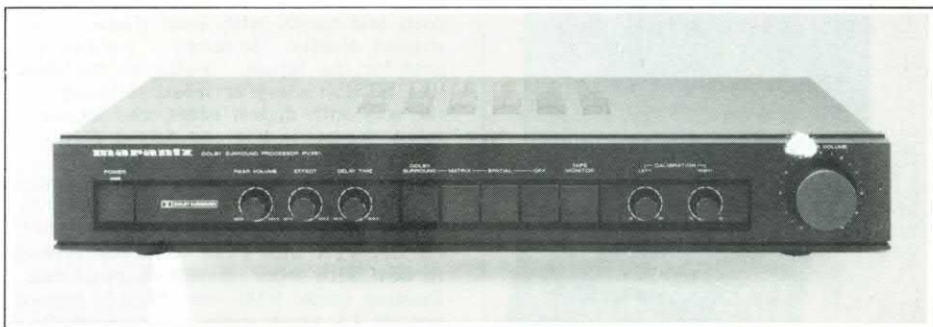
Newly introduced, but planned to run concurrently with the previously reviewed RV 353, MARANTZ' new RV 351 DOLBY Surround Sound Decoder is a 420mm full-width unit manifesting slight operational differences compared to its predecessor.

A marginal increase in power (20 watts/channel) is accompanied by an improvement in the harmonic distortion figures (down from 0.3% to 0.05%) and the decoder no longer monopolises the main amp's tape-monitor circuit, having

its own loop-through facility. Rotary controls prevail and a rear volume control has been added too. The RV 351 does not, however, function within the MARANTZ AV Bus remote-control system. Price is £149 - as is now the 353 too.

MARANTZ also have some new LS 153 flat loudspeakers specifically designed for rear-channel surround applications.

**MARANTZ UK - Unit 15/16 Saxon Way
Industrial Estate, Moor Lane,
HARMONDSWORTH, Middx UB7 0LW
Tel: 01-897 6633**



ONE STEP

**A trip to
the recent International
Broadcasting Convention
held in Brighton**

BE

TV broadcasting and home video are not necessarily allied fields of interest, but the bandwidth potential of LaserVision runs closer to the performance of the broadcast studio signal than any other domestic format, and so paying heed to what goes on in this area is always a worthwhile activity. Sooner or later, their technical advances filter down to the consumer. Last September's International Broadcasting Convention (IBC), held at the Sussex seaside resort-town of Brighton, brought manufacturers and broadcasters together for four days of demonstrations of the new hardware and for the purpose of attending the tightly-packed programme of lectures on developing technologies and other trends.

Unlike most of the shows LDR visits, where confrontation by row upon row of blurry junk sourced from lo-fi domestic VCR formats has come to be something of an occupational hazard, this event is indeed a sight for sore eyes and the mean standard of video display at the IBC is to a quality level most LV owners would like to achieve all the time in the home. Videotape here means bulky reel-to-reel recorders utilising 25mm wide tape with hardware prices comfortably placed in the five-figure

region. Even those broadcast-grade monitors that squeeze every last drop of detail out of the signal routinely run to £2000 or more a time - and that's for screens of modest proportions in the 13" - 20" range. In fact, for broadcast applications, they just don't make anything bigger than 20". Maybe HDTV will change that.

SONY BROADCAST manufacture (and sell) an awful lot of studio equipment, and their stand tended to be a dominant feature of the show. But then they had the product that points the way for the future of all video. Following several experimental products from various companies in the past, and the more recent establishment of a common standard to which all manufacturers will adhere, digital video, in the shape of SONY's DVR-1000 video tape recorder was launched as a market-ready product. Whereas existing analogue video struggles to cope with even four generations of dubbing without signal loss and noise degradation, this new digital format promises up to twenty, as well as immunity to dropout and tracking errors. The £100,000 machine (not a particularly other-worldly price in the broadcast field) is switchable between PAL and NTSC standards and employs 19mm width tape cassettes that provide up to 94 minutes of squeaky-clean pictures and sound.

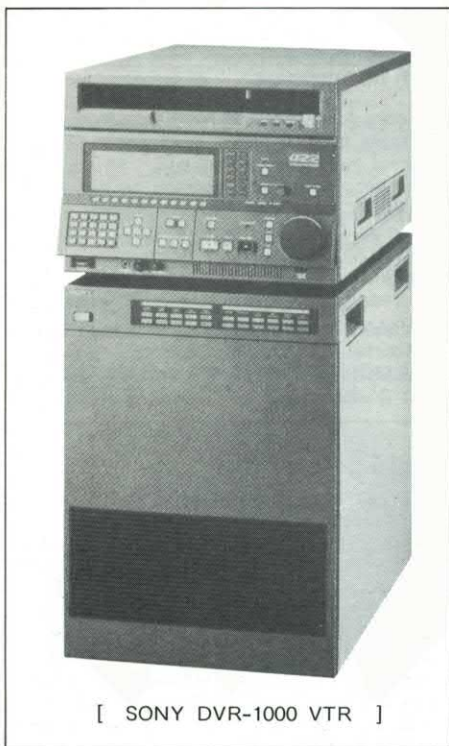
[The intriguing question raised by the development of a digital video product such as the DVR-1000 is just how long it will be before a digital video disc format becomes feasible too? The big advantage of digital video for disc is that truly blemish-free pressings would at last be a practical reality. No matter how tight the quality control, discs based on analogue technology are always going to have a level of defects that cannot be cost-effectively eliminated. Digital video discs promise truly 'perfect' pictures, probably at a lower production cost, and maybe with even greater storage density. It seems a worthwhile goal for the future. Seeing as the disc (the NTSC variety at least) is leading the way with digital audio, the appeal of going the whole hog and adding digital video too must be irresistible.]

While we're still at the halfway stage, though, another unique piece of equipment from SONY, the BVH-2800 'C' Format VTR with PCM audio has arrived to deal with more immediate problems. Existing studio VTRs comfortably exceed current LV video specs - but the audio



[SONY BVH-2800 VTR]

side is a different matter again. There, audio specs are pretty much on a par with disc - and that's before you've done any dubbing that is likely to further degrade the signal. Even with DOLBY 'A' noise-reduction the professional VTR only just matches a CX encoded disc, falls well short of the Hi-Fi VCR formats, and is a complete non-starter compared to the PCM audio on NTSC Digital Sound LV discs. It's about time something better than synching up a separate audio recorder to achieve top-notch sound was necessary, and so, by recording over the linear synch portion of the current 'C' format signal and tagging the 16-bit PCM information on the end of each helical scan track in its place, the new SONY machine can now produce usable CD-quality audio. Audio transfer loss is effectively eliminated - and stereo phase errors too (the edge-of-the-tape audio tracks on the present format are as vulnerable as on their domestic equivalents it would seem - this should mean better DOLBY Surround transfers in future). SONY were claiming early sales of the BVH-2800 to the London facilities houses during the show so we should all be able to hear improvements in the year ahead. (If you want a BVH-2800



[SONY DVR-1000 VTR]

YOND



.... or I do
IBC beside
the seaside

yourself, they're about seventy thou.)

Before leaving the SONY stand, mention should be made of the unexpected showing of the LDP-1500P LV player, tucked away in a corner and demonstrating a short road-safety programme in conjunction with the MSX computer and the Videotizer (details in LDR-9). This was the first opportunity to see this newest player in operation, and while the programme content was not particularly crisp, the monitor revealed some terrifically saturated and stable colours that no doubt owed much to the improved electronics that are in all the newer NTSC machines but, with the exception of this SONY player, have yet to appear in PAL units.

MORE DISCS

HITACHI DENSHI's stand, which mostly featured their camera equipment, contained a small side display with a still video printer (the VY-50A, able to produce colour prints from any video source) and, more importantly, the VIR 10000 Optical Video Disc Recorder - a two-part unit based on 20cm discs offering a 13'20" playing time with stereo sound or 24,000 still frames. It's

an NTSC-standard product and picture resolution is quoted at 300+ lines with 45dB S/N ratio. Access time is between 0.5 - 1.00 secs. While the recorder (write once) is more than an experimental product, there are no plans for a PAL version or to market it in the UK.

3M (Scotch) filled most of their stand with their tape products but featured a PIONEER LD-V6000 industrial LV player showing a sales promotional disc for the company's Menomonie, USA disc pressing facility. This was to announce the availability of the service in Europe too - both NTSC and PAL discs can be pressed and fast turn around times are promised, even taking into account the shipping distances involved. The 3M plant still uses the 2P (photopolymerisation) process and their discs have a high reputation for quality. Prices compare favourably with UK sources. Disc pressing orders and deliveries of mastertapes are through the Bracknell, UK office from whom further details of the service can be obtained - 3M UK, Memory Technologies Division, 3M House, PO BOX 1, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1JU. Tel: (0344) 58860.

INTERACTIVE SCOTCH LASER VIDEODISC.

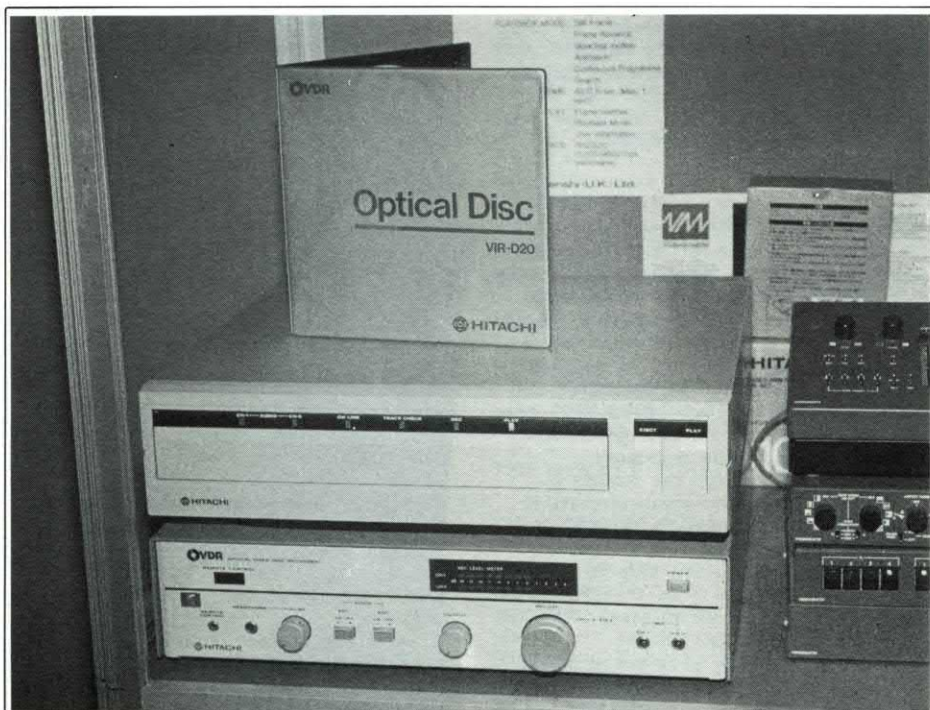
For communications that bring your audience to its feet.



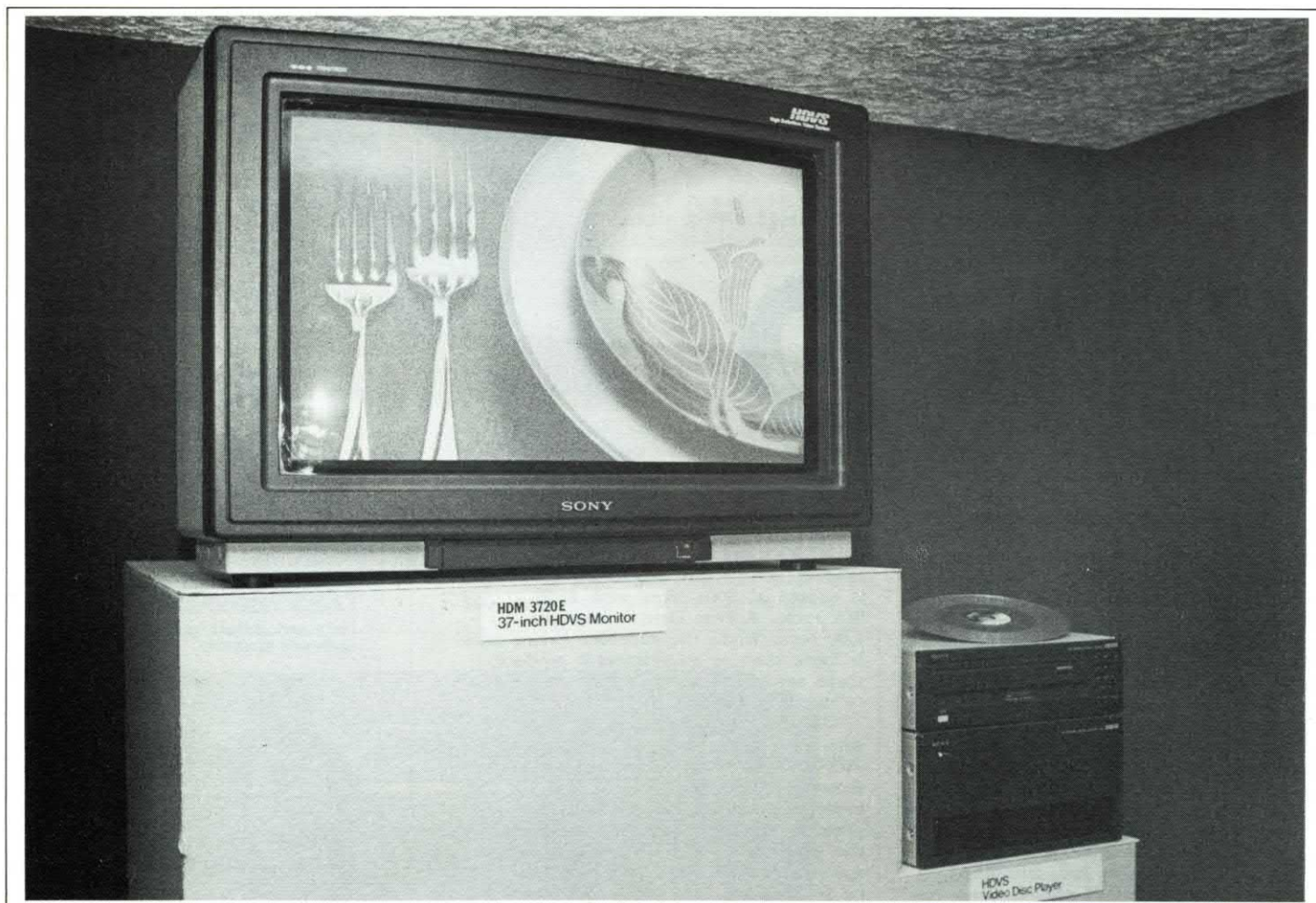
BETWEEN THE LINES

Many of the IBC conference debates were given over to the topic of upgrading the quality of the TV image. PHILIPS are great supporters of the MAC approach (MAC stands for Multiplexed Analogue Components. The signal is split up into its constituent parts - chrominance, luminance, and audio - before transmission, and not sent simultaneously as at present.) The method offers some immediate improvement over such matters as cross colour (rainbow patterning on areas of fine detail) and most of the Europeans appear to favour the idea of a progressive series of MAC upgrades where compatibility with existing hardware is retained. The improvements in picture quality would be enjoyed by anyone who cared to invest in the latest receivers, but the transmissions would still reproduce satisfactorily on the old ones.

Without the ability to see the ultimate result, which promises both wider screens and higher resolution, it is difficult to compare it with the Japanese 1125 line format where the "let's start again from scratch" approach appears more relevant to the many differing demands placed upon video imaging these days, where industrial process monitoring, computer display, and even cinema/home video require every bit of picture detail that can be handled. PHILIPS' persuasive literature promoting MAC was very much biased towards the convenience it offers



[HITACHI VIR 10000 Optical Video Disc Recorder]



to the broadcasters, and possibly more menacingly, the way it suggested the latter stages of MAC upgrading would be introduced. It came over as rather reminiscent of the the promised - but as it turned out unfulfilled - upwards compatibility approach that accompanied the launch of the V2000 VCR format.

The BBC's Engineering Department showed off several of their developments. Of interest here is their research into DATV (Digitally Assisted TV) whereby various forms of signal compression are being developed in order to condense any future TV signal into as small a bandwidth as possible so as to save transmission and storage space - whether broadcast, video or cable. (In spite of the Corporation front-end's obvious need of self-promotion the literature from the Engineering Dept makes specific and unselfish reference to "signal distribution through other media such as videotape, videodisc and cable".)

Methods of encoding only the active/moving parts of the picture (if the information on successive frames does not change there is no need to send it - it can be re-generated electronically from memory.) come into use here as well as the investigation of the nature of the eye's perception of pictorial information.

To this end they had an interesting switchable video display able to show a variety of TV standards that could be accommodated within a 21MHz bandwidth - about four times that in use at present. It was possible to see 625 lines at 50Hz (present PAL), 1250 lines at 50Hz, 625 lines at 100Hz, interlaced vs. sequential scanning etc, etc. The desire to use the highest frequency possible is of greater relevance the bigger the picture display. According to the BBC, you can get away with 50Hz on small screens, but as the size is increased the intrusive effects of flicker become too

disruptive. One of the BBC engineers present personally favoured fewer lines if it meant using the available bandwidth to reduce the flicker. The BBC's research indicates the desirability of something in the 70 - 80Hz frequency range. That element of personal preference mentioned highlights the fact that picture quality is very much a subjective matter and often improved performance in certain aspects of the display demands some trade-offs. A nicely detailed sequential display showing some impressive resolution resulted in 'twitter' (movement) on some finely-detailed parts of the image - such as a five-bar gate. A different display mode eliminated the twitter - but the fine detail went with it! No longer were the bars of the gate individually discernible.

BEST PICTURE AWARD

Throughout the show's four days, SONY were running HDVS (High Definition Video System) demonstrations at the nearby Kingswest Cinema. Regardless of which HDTV system is finally adopted in the various parts of the world (or indeed, systems if no-one can agree) SONY are actively promoting their HDVS 1125 line, 60Hz equipment as a studio production standard, with all the necessary ancillaries to transfer the results to conventional film and video formats if needs be. (The scheduled-for-1987 Kathleen Turner/Sting movie *Julia And Julia* is the first feature film to be shot on HDVS. It will be transferred to 35mm film for cinema release. CBS/FOX have the home video rights.)

At Kingswest the programme began with a 1938 Mickey Mouse cartoon (the one where Mickey is looking after the Town Hall clock with Goofy). This little warm-up was sourced from an HDVS disc,

played on SONY's HDD-1000 disc player - a two-part unit similar to the company's conventional LDP-2000 (NTSC) industrial player, except for the additional box of electronics that is about twice the size of the player itself.

The rest of the show was from an unseen HDVS VTR that showed various programme excerpts that included some remarkably realistic Japanese computer graphics (featuring a robot) and some blue-screen work (where elements of the video picture were removed and added at will - with no visible joins).

SONY's insistence on using the regular cinema screen to achieve the biggest picture possible meant that the whole display was incredibly dark (a good stop too dark in photographic terms, at a guess) and while the picture was impressively clean and well-defined, it was just too dull-looking. No such shortcomings befell the foyer display where a second HDVS disc player was in operation - connected to one of the new 37" HDVS monitors. Now this was worth looking at. In spite of the monitor's large screen the picture withstood detailed close inspection, and in still-frame (the disc was in CAV) it was possible to see how near the format comes to the desired goal of "photographic" picture quality. The disc gave out images totally devoid of any blemishes. The accompanying top photograph hardly does justice to the quality of picture the monitor gave out, but you wouldn't thank us for showing you nothing at all! The right-hand photograph shows one of the discs to best advantage. It is a full-size 30cm disc. It looks deceptively smaller, but this is because of the blank area around the label that cannot be used to contain the higher bandwidth signal. These inner tracks are just too short.

SONY see the use of HDVS disc as a

THAMES VALLEY LASER

HUNTERCOMBE
BANBURY ROAD
BICESTER
OXON OX6 7NL.

TEL: (0869) 242078



MAIL ORDER SPECIALIST

500 DISCS Always In Stock

SEND FOR LIST OF TITLES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

- ★ FACT SHEET COVERING SURROUND SOUND DISCS
MAGNETIC SOUNDTRACKS ON DISC AND FILM STOCK
GENERATIONS ETC. SENT WITH EACH LIST
- ★ QUANTITY DISCOUNTS AND SPECIAL OFFER REDUCTIONS
ON CERTAIN TITLES
- ★ REDUCED PRICE DISCS IN STOCK

cinema distribution format and it fits neatly on the end of their studio production equipment chain. No need to transfer to 35mm film - just bash off a few thousand discs and you can have the movie in every territory in the space of weeks, without the colossal expense of producing a pile of expensive and damage-prone cinema prints as at present. You don't even need skilled cinema projectionists. The playing time of the discs (only 16 mins in CLV) is presently too short, but they see a caddy-changer system as a viable way round this problem that, unlike the present primitive consumer products, could be electronically buffered to avoid any possible loss of picture

and sound continuity. (It should be noted, though, that the present HDVS disc's use of a pair of tracks to achieve an adequate bandwidth means there may be some potential in refining the format to extend playing time.)

All that is needed now is a home system to go along with it. But who knows when that will be! (It would have been **that very evening** if the wretched stuff wasn't just too damn big to go under the jacket when nobody was looking!) Oh well, give them a few years to sort it out. It seems fairly evident that, when they do, HDVS on this level demands more than even 37" of picture display and projection TV is likely to be

the inevitable means of achieving it - though it will have to be top quality to do the system justice.

That, in a show full of good quality video originated pictures, the best should emanate from an optical disc is really no big surprise. There are several developing trends in disc technology that could make future IBC visits equally enlightening. Next time, though, we'll make sure to wear a bigger jacket.



Square Deal TV and Video

SALES — RENTALS — REPAIRS

126 CAUNCE STREET,
BLACKPOOL, FY1 3NE

NORTH-WEST LANCASHIRE'S MAIN
STOCKIST OF LASER DISCS
OVER 500 DISCS IN STOCK



Telephone 0253-27590



OPEN 10.00 - 7.00 MONDAY - SATURDAY

MAIL ORDER SERVICE AVAILABLE

LASERVISION CENTRE

DISC- CUSS- -IONS

Readers have continued to despair at the apparent paucity of care exercised over the presentation of LaserVision discs and the lack of exploitation of the systems' unique access and motion capabilities. To the world at large it appears the various parties involved in the preparation and production of the discs do not understand the format as much as the consumers who use it, but this is not the complete reality of the situation. The technology is understood - but not always in its practical application, and not always by some of those involved in the chain of decision-making leading up to disc release.

This article, coming as it does after an extended drought of CAV and Chaptering - thankfully ended with the arrival of the PMI music titles, and being written in anticipation of achieving what we hope be a continuing flow of film sides in CAV - would hope to build on this encouraging trend by summarising readers' past criticisms and suggestions, in combination with some input from the Editor based on the additional disc facilities offered by the new generations of hardware yet to make an appearance in the UK PAL format.

Rather than a bunch of well-meaning folks sitting round a table deciding what we should have, this wonderfully cheap market research reproduced below is what the purchasers of the product actually want.

CAV

It should always be remembered that originally every LaserVision disc was pressed in CAV and this should be seen as being the 'natural' format for all discs, only to be sacrificed where a programme's extended running time necessitates CLV for reasons of economy or the convenience of fitting it on to fewer sides. Where the running time allows, all disc sides should be pressed in CAV - automatically.

With PAL transfers of film material this is no problem. There has been, understandably, some reluctance by the disc manufacturers to press video-originated material in CAV without field-correlation (a process that generates 'perfect' still-frames, albeit at the expense of definition and 'reality' - strobey motion effects are produced and

the picture acquires an unnatural glazed appearance. Video material pressed in CAV without field-correlation produces jittery still frames, especially where the frames contain fast-moving picture components). This, however, is considered acceptable in both the USA and Japan where, it should be remembered, the disc has enjoyed greater sales success than in the PAL format. 'Perfect' still frames are desirable, but not at the expense of picture quality, and it is difficult to imagine what the advantage is of pressing short-running material in CLV. The priority for most entertainment-related programmes is the ability to have an element of motion control and frame-accurate access. (The forthcoming availability of access to the nearest second on CLV discs is an improvement it must be said, after having played with the LD707 awhile, but CAV control is still better.)

The conclusion must be that any disc or disc side that falls within the CAV running-time limits should be pressed in CAV. Anything short that appears in CLV must be considered a failure. With split CLV/CAV discs the general rule should be for the later side/s to be in CAV. Usually the most important action sequences in films occur towards the end and there is the bonus of actually being able to read the credits at last!

In an ideal world some modification to the present CLV disc configuration might be wished for whereby, on last sides that have sufficient space left, the disc could be switched back into CAV so the end credits could again be read. CAV takes up a lot of space on the outer edges of a disc but, if feasible, the idea would be effective on a good percentage of film titles.

There is good argument for some revised nomenclature to differentiate between 'perfect' and 'jittery' CAV.

["My God - it's full of Chapters!"
The recent Japanese CAV re-issue of
2010 contains no less than 55
Chapter Stops.]

(The whole range of terms used for LV could do with some revision to harmonise the NTSC & PAL formats as well as inconsistencies brought about by the re-unification of LV and CD disc, but this can be dealt with another time.)

CHAPTERS

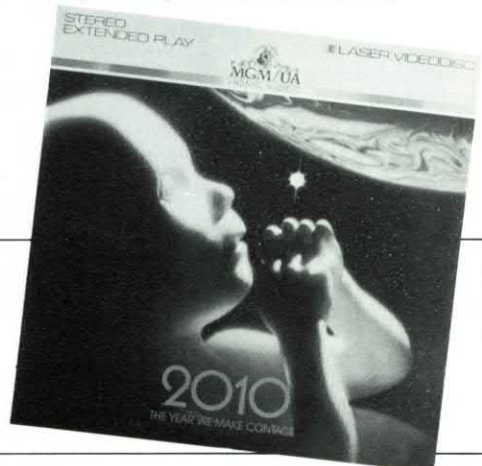
Well! We'd almost given up on seeing any more Chaptered discs - but they must be a good idea - otherwise they wouldn't have been invented in the first place, right? There is hardly a disc that could not be enhanced by the addition of at least a couple of Chapter Stops.

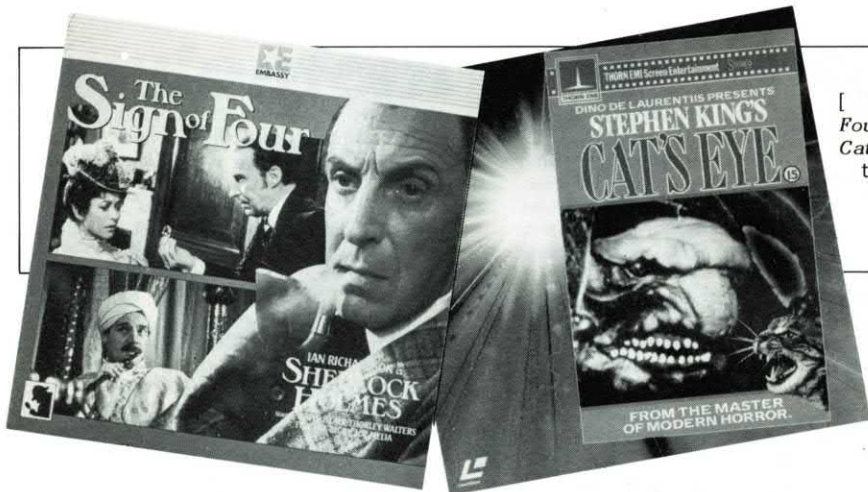
First off, let's get the easy ones out the way. Straight music compilations with no intermediate distractions just need a Chapter Stop at the beginning of each song. Easy peasey.

When it comes to more muddled presentations, where there may be dialogue/interview inserts or even long rambling spoken intros to songs, you start hitting problems with this simplistic approach in relation to programmable LV players such as the VLP830 that can play a sequence of pre-determined Chapters - 7 in this instance, but it's up to 10 on the latest PIONEER models yet to hit these shores. Here, if you key in your programme you find that at the end of the song the player will continue running right up to the start of the next Chapter encoded onto the disc before it takes the hint and jumps to the chosen selection. In film musicals the effect can be even worse as it is quite easy to have ten minutes or more of dialogue following on from a song. If you just program the five or six songs that may be on the side little is achieved in practice because the player continues to play all the dialogue anyway.

What is required is the creation of dummy Chapter Stops - to be inserted at the ends of songs too. The user would never key in these Chapters, they are present merely to fool the player into making its next track selection. Ideally these dummy Chapters should generate a nil or blank on the screen display so as to cause as little confusion as possible by otherwise needing to be given a sequential number in the usual manner. (This would produce sleeve listings that read something like - 1, 3, 5, 7 etc, the even numbers being the song ends and as such rather meaningless.)

The extra dummy Chapter Stops would also serve as extra usable access points on the disc in Scan mode. However, if it is felt that there is a need to play only the dialogue of a musical film in a programmed sequence then it may be necessary to have these additional end Chapter Stops numbered as usual.





[The best and worst of side changing. *The Sign Of Four* concludes side one with a 'natural' fade. *Cat's Eye* shuts off abruptly three minutes before the end of the second episode. There is enough room on the disc to have concluded it properly, leaving side two to start off with the beginning of episode three.]

Thinking about it, the original method of chaptering probably followed the logic one would apply to audio discs, where of course you tend not to have these between-song distractions and each one follows straight on from the last. The typical content of LV discs does not conform to this pattern and some rethink is required therefore.

There has been a lack of 'creative' disc chaptering such as this in the past. There is no hard-and-fast set of rules that can be applied to every title as some feel for the mood of the contents needs to be acquired before a chaptering approach is determined. One such creative chaptering application occurs on the PIONEER ARTISTS *Grateful Dead* disc (the NTSC version, at least) where an extended drum solo performed in the middle of a song has been given a Chapter all of its own. There can be but few music fans who would not approve of such a well-considered decision.

Cartoon compilations, documentary programmes and even many dialogue only feature films can all benefit from a few Chapters. When you consider that the recent Japanese issue of the movie *2010* contained no less than 55 Chapter Stops the small quantity needed to brighten up the majority of UK discs does not seem too much to ask for.

It is occasionally suggested that the Chapter facility should be used to number disc sides and many German titles used this approach. However, disc side identification can now be generated electronically (ie in the CLD909) and so there seems to be no good reason to establish this procedure here now.

What would be more appropriate would be a Chapter Stop at the very start of the actual programme - after the company logo and the prohibition notices. It has been said that the software companies would not willingly tolerate this ability to by-pass these frames, yet such impairment to the contents of audio records is not considered necessary so why should it be inflicted on video users? What consumers want is the ability to engage the disc ready for viewing without it zapping on past the beginning before they get back to their seats or have managed to herd the assembled guests into their respective viewing positions.

Better still (!), if on future players the CAV portion, present at the beginning of all currently produced discs, could be made accessible (which it now isn't - current machines only play it as CLV material), and an Autostop inserted in place of the Chapter the disc would then engage, play the opening company logos and prohibition notices, then go

into still frame at the beginning of the programme contents proper. This would leave the viewer to begin the programme at will at the very beginning of the main feature. (Further exploitation of this CAV portion could come into being by compressing the opening logos and credits on long-running programmes on to still-frames (with Autostops) thereby saving valuable disc space that might avoid the need to run the programme onto a further side when time is tight.)

SIDE IDENTIFIERS

As previously mentioned, it is within the electronic capability of future players to identify disc sides. Therefore it seems an unnecessary expense to prepare side identifiers that tend to be especially disruptive to the flow of feature films. When the player shuts off at the end of the side even the dimmest of viewers knows it's time to turn the disc over. Programmes that continue on to subsequent sides should just carry on uninterrupted at the start of the new side. PIONEER discs are the very worst in this respect, containing audio distraction as well as visual. How we've managed to get this far without having them inflict commercial breaks on us too.....

ENDS OF SIDES

This is tricky. Again there are no easy rules as to how this should be handled. For example, film titles often benefit from a slow fade,

[This Japanese version of *Gone With The Wind* runs to five sides to avoid splitting the movie at the wrong points. The three discs are packaged in a single enlarged sleeve (see next page) that uses the US artwork with a language insert sheet in Japanese.]

sometimes exercised over a still frame, but there are times when this is not appropriate. Most owners can cite examples of previously released discs that just cut off in mid-sentence which obviously illustrates how badly these things can be done. It is rarely possible to gauge the 'correct' moment without a complete real-time run through of the contents, and this is not likely to happen within the confines of a mastering suite where other priorities are the order of the day. This can be the only explanation for the mess that was recently made of *Cat's Eye*.

A specimen end of side example must be the EMBASSY title *The Sign Of Four*

where a black door closing concludes side one beautifully, even though this fade was probably engineered in the original production to facilitate a commercial break when shown on TV. In spite of this, such a device can often be subsequently faked. The most important thing in every case is to judge the pace of the programme so as the cut-off does not fall in a period of rising expectation or excitement - but at a moment of lower energy. A reader once queried the report of the Japanese disc of *Gone With The Wind* fitting onto five sides when the running time indicates four would have sufficed. The reason is simple. Rather than disrupt the continuity and flow of the movie some of the sides run short and though this may be an extreme example of how things can be done it is an indication of how seriously some people respect the contents of a disc.

Although titles appearing on the home video market are promoted as being scoop new releases, in reality there is usually plenty of time available beforehand to sort these matters out, and it only takes someone to preview a time-coded cassette (which carries a frame-accurate time display superimposed over the picture) in the correct environment to come up with the appropriate changeover points, Chapter Stops and general enhancements to the presentation. In the UK, more often than not, we have the additional advantage of having had some of these decisions already sorted out for us by virtue of the titles having been previously prepared for US and Japanese release. Things couldn't be much easier for us really, could they?



SLEEVES

Disc sleeves are of significantly greater importance than might first be thought. After all, the programme is on the disc, and if optical discs are as robust as it is implied, there might even be some argument for not bothering with a sleeve at all - there is nothing to protect. Well, not quite so. Appealing as a silver disc can be to the eye, the value of the product is more often than not perceived in the sleeve and its presentation. (Evidence for this comes from the importance readers attach to

the illustrations that accompany the LDR disc reviews.) Effectively the sleeve has ceased to serve its original function - to protect the contents - and has become the justification for the £20 purchase price. (Again, readers regularly complain about the inadequacy of the packaging methods of many of the mail-order dealers - "I don't like ordering by mail because the sleeves come with the corners bent and creased".) So what makes a desirable sleeve?

A guaranteed way to diminish the appeal of a sleeve is to align it, by implication, to an inferior product. The sort of bastardised VHS packaging on the current CBS/FOX and THORN-EMI/CANNON discs is a prime example of this. If the sleeve looks the outside of a VHS cassette then, presumably, the contents will exhibit comparable picture quality - right?

With the present painfully small size of the PAL LV market, though, there is a problem of origination cost - the sheer expense of producing unique artwork for a product that might only be selling in hundreds rather than thousands. However, what is so disappointing with many of the CBS/FOX sleeves is that the majority of their film titles have had proper artwork prepared for US disc release. We just don't see it here. Thirty years ago, when most things crossed the Atlantic on a boat, even the tiniest of US record companies managed to secure UK release of their product with the same cover art. Funny thing, progress.

PACKAGE TWO-ERS

Similar provocative packaging comes in the shape of the double gatefold sleeves that carry nothing but advertising blurb on the centre display. On the assumption that such double sleeves involve extra expenditure, this is indeed a peculiar practice. Unless someone is going to make a special effort to produce the relevant artwork, we might as well economise on the packaging and use a slightly roomier single sleeve - as is the practice in the US and Japan where it is even possible to find triple disc sets sold in a single sleeve.

Overlooking the quaint local custom for identifying stereo discs as mono (and more annoyingly

- monos marked as stereo), UK discs do sometimes fall down as regards the loss of sleeve notes that are carried on the equivalent US release. WARNER, CIC and CBS/FOX rarely use the same liner notes. What starts out on the US disc as an intelligent, well-written precis of the plot accompanied by some pertinent background information, often degenerates into superficial spiel clearly aimed at enticing the casual UK cassette renter. Let's keep the better stuff for the disc.

Most successful in readers' eyes are the sleeves that show most respect to the original production. Film fans like to see the disc sleeve with something of the character of the cinema artwork. Closest to fitting the bill of late are the CIC and WARNER sleeves. CIC really do seem to have cracked the Atlantic factor most successfully - the majority of their sleeves receiving only minor adaption for the UK market.

(Just about now, if not sooner, some readers may well be querying the need to even print special sleeves for the UK if it costs so much to make them in small quantities. If record companies can just bring in the requisite number of sleeves for small-run titles direct from the USA, why cannot the same be done for the LV disc? Answers on a postcard, please.)

TELL US THE TRUTH

On a pure information level there would be much advantage to purchasers in having the maximum information available on the sleeve of their intended acquisition. Beyond basics such as stereo and colour etc. how nice it would be if some history of the master was given. This is a potentially huge topic that could justify an article on its own, but somewhere between the sparse 'DDD' type of identification of audio discs and a complete historical log of the many generation transfers most titles (unfortunately) appear to endure, there must be some compromise classification that could be worked towards. For example, it would help to know if the programme is video or film originated; whether it is an NTSC conversion or not; the aspect ratio if it's a movie - those kind of things.

What is without any doubt a modest expectation in respect of film titles is

some indication of what exactly one is purchasing. If one is buying *Star Trek: Wrath Of Khan* one should have a fair expectation of getting it - not *Star Trek: Wrath Of Khan With Bits Chopped Out*. This is an issue of increasing significance, bearing in mind the onslaught of the Video Recordings Act. It is not being picky to expect discs (and why not pre-recorded videocassettes? - let's do something for the tape guys here too) to state somewhere on the package "This is the complete cinema version of the film", or "This is the complete UK cinema version of the film which was actually shown in this cut form", or "This film has been cut by the BBFC for home video release", or "This film was cut before we submitted it to the BBFC because it wouldn't have otherwise been passed". That sort of thing.

CARDBOARD & SHINY THINGS

Most folks are fairly happy with the actual physical construction of disc sleeves, though some further observations may be in order. German LV sleeves are arguably slightly more durable than their UK counterparts, being manufactured from a heavier gauge card more suited to optical disc use. UK sleeves are no heavier than those used for vinyl - and they really should be to prevent corner bending and edge breakout when subjected to the rigours of the distribution system. (This is mostly a problem for mail-order purchasers, though it is still possible to see sleeves damaged in some retail outlets.) Japanese sleeves are about twice the gauge of anybody's, but it may not be necessary to go this far. (And we certainly don't want those ridiculous plastic inners used on Japanese discs that can have only been conceived for the purpose of smothering babies, otherwise serving no useful protective function whatsoever. The paper-reinforced inners used in the UK, Germany and by 3M in the US are infinitely better.)

UK sleeves are glossy - a good all-round finish. German sleeves often manifest a slightly semi-matt sheen that seems more appropriate for a lot of 'painted' (as opposed to photographically originated) feature film artwork. In the US and Japan they favour the matter finish, but some recent US PIONEER sleeves have arrived in a super-high gloss laminate that is appealing in its own way.

WHAT YOU DON'T ASK....

It is not 'the British way' to speak up in order to improve a situation. Disc fans are additionally pressured - in the belief that too much criticism will offend, and already-scarce supplies of new titles will be further diminished. On the other hand, deafening silence breeds the impression that everything is ticking along very nicely, thankyou. This article is aimed somewhere in the middle, and readers who feel that it has omitted any views they have previously expressed to the magazine should respond in good time for the next issue. Likewise for those who have additional comments.

When the first paragraphs of this piece were being typed up, only a matter of weeks ago, we still seemed to be caught up on a frustrating merry-go-round, trying to re-activate the use of Chapters and achieving a greater exploitation of CAV. So, things can change, and the combined experience of the mass of LV owners is a unique and valuable resource of accumulated experience that can do much to assist manufacturers enhance the appeal - and hence sales - of the product. Everyone really is a winner.

This Dreamvideo was filmed during the months of December, 1984 and January, 1985. Locations included the states of Colorado, Utah, Nevada and California. The film stock used was Kodak 7291 and 7294. The negative was transferred to videotape (at 30 frames per second) for editing and the final 1" videotape edited master and the 3/4" 1610 PCM digital audio cassette were then transferred to LaserDisc.

Three (3) 16mm cameras were used. The ground photography was done with a high speed Arriflex 16SR (at 30 frames), and a Beaulieu (at 30 frames), while the aerial footage was shot with an Eclair ACL (at 24 frames) from a fixed wing mount of a Cessna 180. Several lenses were used: a fixed 400mm, a 10-150 zoom, and a 12-240 zoom. Various filters were used throughout.

WINDHAM HILL



[Not quite the whole story...

An attempt to furnish the purchaser with some meaningful technical background information regarding the preparation of the master material occurs on this US WINDHAM HILL disc. As the review (on page 37) points out, they didn't quite manage the whole story, but this kind of information does help to inform the potential purchaser of what they are likely to receive in the way of picture and sound quality.]

Equipment Report:

NEC AV-300E

Audio Video Amplifier



NEC's AV-300E is (with the five speakers specially designed to accompany it) a complete video/audio control-centre/amplifier & DOLBY Surround processor contained in the one package. The individual components are available separately, but for the purposes of the review, the whole system is auditioned as one.

AV-300E AMPLIFIER

Understanding the intricacies of the amplifier and its functions is probably best achieved by studying the photographs of the front and rear panels. Most of the inputs and the controls are self-explanatory, but these are the main features.

There is 120 watts of power available in total, and this can be exploited in several ways. Essentially the AV-300E is a 2-channel pre-amp strapped to a four-channel power amplifier whose output in its basic setting provides 30 watts (8 ohms) of power from each speaker. By virtue of its BTL (Balanced Transformerless) construction it can also operate in 2 x 60 watt mode - this being fed to the front or rear speakers and additional amplification brought in to match on the resulting unpowered outputs. Ultimately, the AV-300E's power amp can be by-passed completely should the user wish to employ either different or substantially greater power supplies.

The Mono socket on the back panel is a signal level output to be fed to

the self-powered sub-woofer. Connections are provided for 4 Video inputs (two of which may be VCRs), 1 Audio in/out (tape) circuit, and two Monitor outputs to send the video signal to two displays. (The audio levels on the the video inputs are at the same level as the dedicated audio input and so any unused circuits could be used for other audio components.) All the AV-300E's sockets are standard phono types. Being a 'true' video component there are no RF (aerial) connections on the unit.

The front panel is well filled. The five Audio/Video selectors that correlate to the rear sockets already mentioned function as follows. Power switch-on always causes Video 1 to be selected. Selecting other input sources automatically cancels the one currently in use - with the exception of the Audio circuit which has to be switched on and off each time, thereby making it possible to add a different audio accompaniment to whichever video input has been selected.

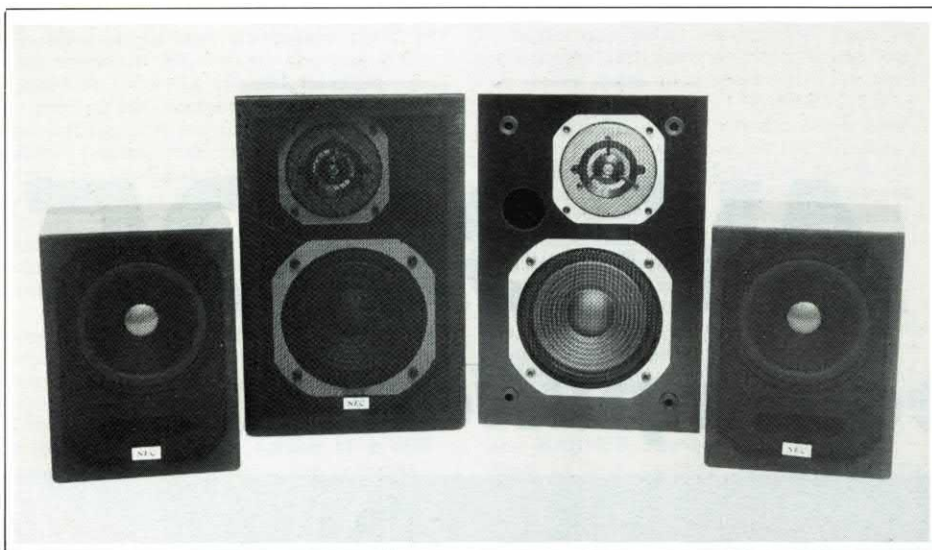
Beneath the hinged flap is a 3/6dB Image Enhancer circuit. The other controls are audio-related; separate Bass & Treble controls for both front and rear outputs, and a level adjustment for the Synthetic Stereo effect. The Hall Echo knob adjusts the amount of echo/reverb from the rear speakers, and the Master Volume is required to calibrate the main volume control.

Switches above the flap are Hiss Cut, Mode (Mono/Stereo), Synthetic Stereo

and Surround Indicator (turns the illuminated display on and off). The remaining switches are duplicated on the I/R remote control but it should be remembered that the AV-300E will handle all functions without it, bar the volume pre-sets and the control functions for some of NEC's VCRs.

The top four buttons on the remote select the surround modes - Hall (recommended for music programmes), Matrix, and Dolby. By-Pass gives you basic front-speaker stereo. The Memo and Pre-Set buttons enable three volume levels to be stored in memory. Re-Set neutralises any previously set speaker balance and Full-Mute is what it says and kills audio output entirely. The main Volume control is a straight up/down push-button device in 34 stepped stages.

The four Balance buttons increase the volume in the positions indicated, but the main unit's 'joyplate' (as NEC call it) is additionally enhanced by four extra balance controls that increase the volumes of the individual speakers. In fact, the AV-300E does not have a true balance option (that should alter the distribution of the sound output at a fixed volume level). All the balance controls actually add volume and so a double switching operation is required to alter the balance and keep the total output constant ie, decrease the main volume slightly - then increase balance in the desired direction. The 'joyplate' does not emulate the function of the



better-known type of joystick control from which it undoubtedly derives its name.

SPEAKERS & SIX-APPEAL?

The pair of **S-300AV** speakers designed for the front stereo image are substantial two-drive units of 15mm chipboard construction with removable front grilles. The cabinets have a black wood-grain veneer finish and this is likely to be compatible with most decors.

The rear **S-150AV** speakers are single drive units of 12mm board. The finish is the same and they come with mounting hooks already fitted to facilitate wall hanging.

More exotic is the **SW-300E** sub-woofer - a self-powered, 300mm drive unit designed solely to cater for low frequencies. Three turnover pre-sets are provided (70, 100, & 150Hz) to marry it with the main stereo pair. The **S-300AVs** have 14cm woofers and the 100Hz setting is suggested as suitable for this. Taking care of frequencies down to 20Hz the **SW-300E** is well able to compensate for any difficulties smaller speakers may have in providing well-defined, low bass. A level control is provided to set the initial balance with the rest of the system, but thereafter the sub-woofer operates in conjunction with the main volume control. It needs its own power supply and has to be switched on (and off!) separately. There is a little green indicator light as a reminder of this. (The sub-woofer can be used with other amplifiers that may not have a mono output by hooking into the front speaker wires.)

The unit itself is designed to double as a TV-stand - it is magnetically shielded and on castors - but while undeniably a substantial piece of carpentry, its dimensions are somewhat too modest to accommodate the likes of the 27" LDR monitor, for example. The sub-woofer does have an output socket to enable it to be twinned with another **SW-300E** for bigger installations (and bigger TVs?!). The human ear's ability to determine the directionality of low-frequency sounds is reckoned to be poor, and as a result the positioning of the **SW-300E** is not to be considered too critical in practice. Its design will enable it to double as a small table, for example. (The unit is not designed to provide the centre channel signal on DOLBY Surround encoded discs. Should this be desired, the other mono signal output from the amp can be used but it will require connection to an amplifier and a full-range speaker, or

one of the self-powered speakers that are available from some manufacturers. Now come on.... we can surely all find room for six speakers if we really put our minds to it.)

OPERATION

It doesn't take long to put everything into operation (that is if you've just dismantled a previous surround sound set-up! - the **MARANTZ** in this case). However, starting from scratch, it is important to keep your cable connections orderly and attention should be paid to wiring + and - terminals correctly. Colour-coded speaker cable is thoughtfully provided with the **NEC** speakers, but if you are tempted to use more substantial stuff, bear in mind that the clamp terminals on the amp only just managed to anchor some **QED 79-strand** cable, and something slightly thinner might be more suitable.

As there is no variable delay available for the **DOLBY** circuit it will be necessary to place the rear speakers a similar distance away from the listening position to the front pair in order to achieve the correct arrival times of the signals. If you do not have too much space available behind your seating some use can be made of room height to solve the problem. A high-up position for the rear speakers seems a good idea anyway in order to reduce their directionality. To this end, the rear speakers are sometimes usefully pointed into the corner to achieve a diffuse, reflected output.

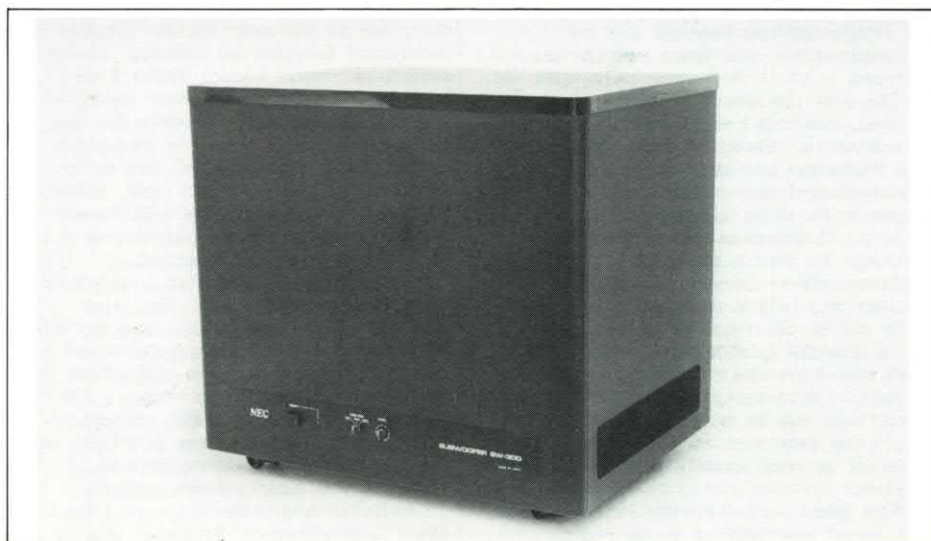
Room layout considerations aside, the lack of variable delay on the **DOLBY**

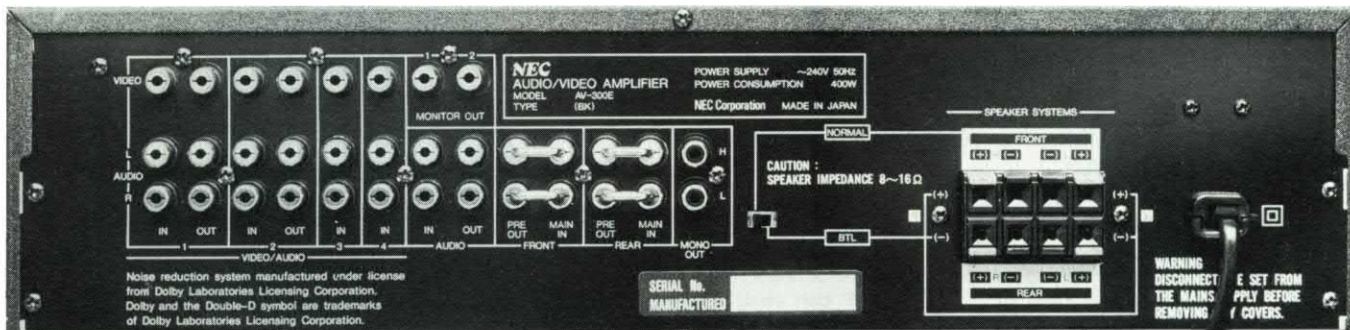
Surround is not a great drawback (there is still the reverb adjustment for the Hall Surround, remember) and, in fact, the **AV-300E** rapidly reveals itself to be a well thought out unit that has been designed to offer convenience as its prime selling point. With the advantage of the remote control it is particularly easy to operate, and in spite of its apparent complexity, it is well suited to the needs of those least technically-minded. There are some criticisms that could be levelled but, in practice, most of these are from the viewpoint of a 'dabbler' rather than a regular user. For example, switching between surround modes is accompanied by a brief muting of the audio output that makes direct comparisons of the different achievable effects difficult. Similarly, it can be quite a rigmarole fading the volume and balance controls up and down to compare front and rear channels in the **DOLBY** Surround mode when what you want to do is just switch the front channels off quickly - but then this is something that one would rarely want to do when just playing discs for entertainment purposes.

Of more practical significance is the previously mentioned limitation of the balance control. Something more akin to a true joystick balance would have been preferable without doubt. When switched on the amplifier also has the habit of retaining any settings from the day before ie, it doesn't neutralise when switched off. That means you have to make a definite routine of checking the indicator lights after switch on in order to see that the likes of Synthetic Stereo, Hiss Cut etc are still not in circuit.

The provision of bass and treble controls for front and rear speakers is admirable but there seems no justification for hiding the front ones, at least, behind the flap. Wish it as one might, software just doesn't come uniformly prepared, and these tone controls do get used more than occasionally and could have well been bigger, better calibrated, and more easily accessible.

Some features that may seem of dubious value do serve a purpose. The Surround Indicator (that flashes a constant volume/balance illuminated pattern throughout a programme) is of some informational value in analysing the output. And it can be switched off if found to be a distraction. Likewise the Image Enhancer, which can sharpen up some discs without adding unacceptable noise levels to the picture. 3dB on *Star Wars* improved it, 6dB was just too grainy. Neither setting enhanced NTSC discs without too much degradation to the





picture. One imagines this enhancement circuit is primarily designed for videotape dubbers, for which the AV-300E is well suited.

The surround modes functioned as would be expected. Suitable DOLBY sources rendered the anticipated effects and the Hall and Matrix options often provided useful embellishment to plain stereo material. Even the Synthetic Stereo feature served some purpose. There may not be much stereo, but used on some fairly grim optical tracks (*The Janitor* springs to mind as one tried) in conjunction with the Hiss Cut (which in itself seems to operate in just the right region to reduce hiss without significant treble loss), considerable improvement to the sound coming out of the speakers was effected. While such devices are never going to make hi-fi out of no-fi, they do go some way towards salvaging what information is present on lesser quality disc titles.

In a world where everybody appears to be an expert over the merits of Japanese speakers it may be best just to say that the main front pair appeared to be free from any particular vices - and well able to show up the limitations of the present PAL disc format! The addition of the sub-woofer filled out the lower registers admirably, and as a result, one would be inclined to suggest that the three speakers do need to be used together to achieve the optimum sound quality. If you don't wish to have the sub-woofer then possibly some slightly beefier front speakers would be more suitable for a truly solid bass effect.

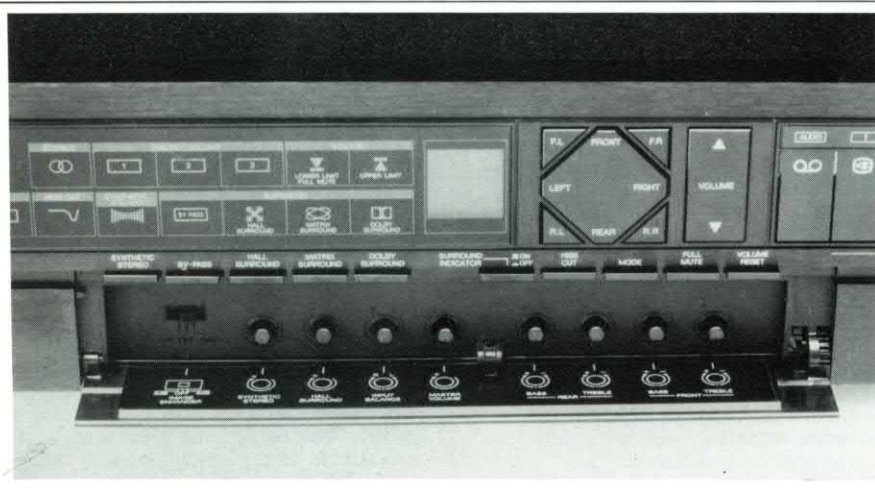
CONCLUSIONS

Considering what you would pay for two stereo amplifiers, a DOLBY Surround processor, a video switcher and a remote control, the AV-300E looks like good value for money without doubt. The option to purchase it without the speakers is a convenience for those who may already be partly equipped in this

direction. While there are minor modifications one might wish for in some of the operational controls of the AV-300E its performance proved faultless, and for someone who wants all (or even some) of the facilities without the bother of assembling or operating a bunch



of separate components, it makes for an ideal purchase. Coming as it does from a company who do not, in the UK at least, have a particularly high profile in the field, it shows a perception of the needs of the user beyond that of products from some more established manufacturers.



MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATIONS

AV-300E AMPLIFIER

Rated Power:

4 x 30W (1KHz 0.045% THD, 8 Ohm)
2 x 60W (1KHz 0.045% THD, 8 Ohm)

Frequency Response:

10Hz - 40KHz (+0, -2dB)

Signal to Noise Ratio (IHF-A):

Audio/video input (by pass) 90dB

Main amp input 100dB

Input Section:

Audio/Video 1-4 Video 1Vpp/75 Ohm

Audio 150mV/47k Ohm

Audio 150mV/47k Ohm

Main Amp Input 150mV/20k Ohm

Output Section:

Audio/Video 1, 2 Video 1Vpp/75 Ohm

Audio 150mV/2.2k Ohm

Monitor output 1, 2 1Vpp/75 Ohm

Pre-Amp Output 150mV/1k Ohm

Mono output, high level 1V/200 Ohm

Mono output, low level 150mV/200 Ohm

Power: 240v AC, 50Hz - 400Watts

Size (W x H x D): 430 x 110 x 340mm

Weight: 9.5kg

Price: £289

SW-300E SUB-WOOFER

Rated Power: 60W (40Hz THD 5%, 6 Ohm)

Input Sensitivity (at 40Hz, t/o 100Hz):

200mV (Pinjack input)/600mV (Spkr input)

Frequency Response:

Turnover 150Hz 20 - 150Hz

100Hz 20 - 100Hz

70Hz 20 - 70Hz

Drive unit: 300mm cone-type

Power: 240v AC, 50Hz

Size (W x H x D): 525 x 455 x 390mm

Weight: 14.5kg

Price: £189-50

S-300AV SPEAKERS

Type: 14cm 2-way bass reflex

Woofer: 14cm cone-type

Tweeter: 3.6cm dome-type

Frequency Response: 50 - 30,000Hz

Maximum Input: 60W / Impedance: 8 Ohm

Output Volume Level: 88dB/w/m

Size (W x H x D): 190 x 290 x 189mm

Weight (each): 5.0kg

Price: See below

S-150AV SPEAKERS

Type: 10cm Full-range bass reflex

Drive Unit: 10cm cone-type

Frequency Response: 90 - 20,000Hz

Maximum Input: 50W / Impedance: 8 Ohm

Output Volume Level: 90dB/w/m

Size (W x H x D): 145 x 195 x 163mm

Weight (each): 2.1kg

Price: See below

System price: The S-300AV & S-150AV speakers are not available separately - forming part of the complete amplifier, speaker, and sub-woofer system at a recommended total price of £599.

NEC HOME ELECTRONICS, 35 Oval Road,
LONDON NW1 7EA Tel: 01-267 7000

日本の報告

From Our Correspondent in Japan
MARC COMFORT

STILL FRAMES ON CLV!

Just where do you start? They bring out more players here than they do discs in the UK! YAMAHA, SONY, and of course PIONEER, have the new products - each with something different to offer.

SONY's three new LV players show a design break from previous models - gone is the rounded front drawer of the 500 series and all the new players are squarer-featured than before.

Top of the line is the LDP-730 model (¥139,800) - the first LaserVision player to contain a digital frame store. There is sufficient memory available to store and display still frames off of CLV discs and some trick effects are possible too. The player is Digital Sound equipped, has a dual-speed Scan feature, and the LED display panel shows Chapter indication plus Elapsed Time in seconds, minutes and..... hours (!).

With some cosmetic differences, the LDP-530 (¥119,800) is again a Digital Sound player, but lacks the frame store ability and the LED display.

The cheapest LDP-330 (¥96,000) LV player actually comes in two versions. The basic model is similar to the 530 but without Digital Sound and there is no headphone socket. The LC model (same price) is designed to mate with a special version of SONY's CDP-330 CD player whose D/A circuitry it uses to

decode Digital Sound LV discs - in the same manner as PIONEER's earlier X710/X707L combination. SONY call their hardware two-some "Laser Compo". (The CDP-330 sells for ¥51,800, making the pair of units competitively priced in relation to a single combination player.)

And talking of combination players - able to take both LV and CD discs in the same drawer - the newest model on the market and the first one from other than PIONEER is the new YAMAHA CLV-1 - which at ¥138,000 is the cheapest combi player yet. It's a very small player too, being only the width of the LV loading-drawer and about the same depth as the current PIONEER model.

PIONEER itself, now five years into the whole LaserVision thing in Japan, have come up with something special to commemorate the event. The LD-S1 is a LaserVision-only player with Digital Sound, and fits into the company's Reference Series line of components that features top-end components offering state-of-the-art performance. The wood end-panel styling matches that of the C-90/M-90 pre/power amplifiers

(that are also available in the UK).

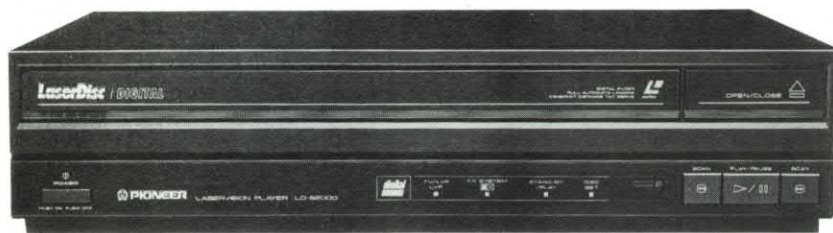
The LD-S1 sells for a hefty ¥250,000 (around £1,000) and boasts the best video specs of any NTSC player so far with its 420-line horizontal resolution and 48dB signal-to-noise ratio. The machine has a special floating disc drive and focus system to aid performance. On the audio side, use is made of twin D/A converters and separate transformers are on hand for the audio and video circuits. All this no doubt accounts for the meaty 16.5Kg the LD-S1 weighs in at.

Back down to the realms of normality are the two other new PIONEER players, both LV-only models, and offering slight price trimming over what went before. The LD-8200D is a Digital Sound player styled after the 9200D (described last issue) - minus the LED display and with a different remote. Unlike the 9200D, though, the new model has Scan, Play and Pause functions available on the player as well as the remote. The LD-8200D sells for ¥119,800. At ¥99,800 is the LD-7200 - a very similar player but without the Digital Sound circuitry and onboard function controls.

There are many other companies selling LV and LV/CD combination players but these are usually clone models from the PIONEER factory. Recent converts to the LV disc format are SANYO and there is talk of MATSUSHITA (PANASONIC) joining in too, in spite of their previous heavy VHD commitment.

Both PIONEER and SONY have new top-end monitors tucked in the back of their LV player catalogues. (Most of the Japanese companies are now promoting ultimate resolution/large screen monitors.) SONY's KX-21HV1 & KX-27HV1 - 21" and 27" models respectively - claim 560-line horizontal resolution and from PIONEER comes a similar performance SD-28 (28") monitor. They also have a 29" SD-29 PRO model promising 600-line horizontal resolution (¥320,000).

There isn't much room left to detail the recent LV disc releases. December's list showed up with nigh on 100 new titles on it. The balance of local and foreign product is pretty much as usual though Digital Sound discs continue to increase.



[Top: PIONEER's new flagship LV-only LD-S1 player with 420 line horizontal resolution. Middle: A new Digital Sound LV-only player from PIONEER - the 8200D. Bottom: SONY's new LDP-730 LV player that offers still-frames from CLV discs. The top of page leaflet shows SONY's complete new range.]



5000 MORE DISCS

Time has come for an update on the original NTSC article from 1985. While the prospect of improved PAL software availability is indeed real (when we get a new PAL player that is!?) it is fairly obvious that there is never likely to be a situation where all discs are available in all formats. Minority tastes are minority tastes - and catering to those hardly coincides with the concept of a mass medium such as the disc. It is for this reason the article has been prepared.

All UK consumer discs are manufactured in the PAL format - the 625 line/50Hz TV system shared with the broadcast medium. Though there are many different broadcast PAL formats a PAL disc is compatible with them all, and can even encompass the less common SECAM system. In Japan and the USA, where a 525 line/60Hz TV broadcast system is in use - known as NTSC, a different type of LaserVision disc is produced that will not function on a PAL player (and vice versa). The ability to play NTSC discs requires the following:

- An NTSC-standard LaserVision player.
- An NTSC-capable TV monitor (or a multi-standard PAL/NTSC monitor).

THE NTSC LV PLAYER

NTSC LV players are commonly used in industrial/professional applications here but these machines are usually endowed with features not required in the domestic environment and are unnecessarily expensive as a result. Consumer-level players are sometimes available through the various European PIONEER sales divisions, though, as of this writing they appear not to have available stock in any quantity. The Japanese parent company lists the CLD909 LV/CD combination

player in its export catalogue in a multi-voltage (110 - 240 volt) version, but this only seems to be available in the Far East at present.

In the absence of a local European means of supply, probably the easiest source is one of the US mail-order dealers. Currently available in the US is the PIONEER CLD909 (\$900 list) and, to a lesser degree, the LV-only YAMAHA models - the LV-X1 and LV-X1 Digital (\$599 and \$799 list). Dealers are selling off discontinued models such as the PIONEER LD700 and CLD900 at reduced prices. (In November these were going for \$300 and \$500, but stock at these prices may not last out till publication date.) These models often appear as own-brand machines under the TEAC, SANSUI, and MAGNAVOX names but they are all really the same PIONEER models. All US players (and Japanese ones for that matter) function on a lower voltage than pertains in Europe and you will need a small transformer to make them work. LV players do not require more than 50 watts of power and the transformers (available locally) only cost £10 - £15.

multi-standard form as a matter of course. There are even firms that can modify certain other models of TV for NTSC video use (details in LDR-5), or maybe more proficient electronics types might find it feasible to do their own TV modifications. Subscriber Guy Dobson did this and reckons the total materials cost came out to around a tenner.

A word of caution here. There do exist in the UK some multi-standard NTSC-capable monitors - but with the colour signal frequency set at 4.43 MHz. These non-standard TVs will not produce a colour picture and should be avoided. To obviate error, ensure that any set you are interested in is made to function on an NTSC 3.58MHz input.

THE NTSC DISCS

These are what we do it all for! US disc prices are now very much in line with UK titles (unlike the previous occasion we ran the article when they were about 50% more expensive). Music titles are generally in the \$25 range, film titles \$30 - \$35 (multiple discs \$35 - \$40), and some more specialised discs

If you are prepared to pay the extra for speedier airmail shipping it makes little difference in which part of the country you select your supplier. For surface mail, though, European readers are advised to favour East Coast dealers, and those in Australia and other Pacific locations the West Coast. Surface shipments from the East Coast and Chicago to London routinely take four weeks door-to-door and mailing costs for, say, a three disc parcel are approximately \$6 - \$7. Larger orders can bring mailing costs down to near \$1.50 a disc. Air mail tends to be pretty pricey on the first disc (you pay mostly for the box - you should see US disc boxes!) but softens thereafter.

PAL vs NTSC

The inevitable question to be asked after persevering thus far to equip oneself with an 'alien' format is how NTSC discs shape up compared to the PAL ones we all know and love. This is both an easy and difficult question to answer, affected as it is by matters of personal taste as much as quantifiable technical issues.

What is fairly straightforward to deal with is the improvement brought about by the 60Hz based TV standard that gives NTSC a noticeable 'stability' to the picture in comparison with PAL. Though the flickeriness of PAL is often commented upon, it is obviously tolerable to most European eyes. You may not notice the reduced flicker on NTSC as much as the apparent 'solidity' of the image. (Having said that, the computer screen this article is being displayed on while being written flickers like mad!)

NTSC's marginally lower bandwidth is most noticeable in its lower resolution of fine detail. The lower number of scanning lines obviously limits the vertical resolution and the structure of the picture is slightly coarser as a result. To offset that the signal to noise ratio is greater, and NTSC has a much more saturated look to it than PAL - which tends to look very noisy ('grainy') in comparison. (This is of more significance the larger your monitor.) This noise aspect of PAL video often deceives the eye into an apparent perception of greater fine detail, which is not always the case.

The characteristics of the NTSC colour signal are again different, with a more pastely spectrum of colour and a certain lack of accuracy on some of them. However, the fact that the colour on many PAL discs is rarely up to scratch diminishes the significance of this in practice. It is possible to find endless examples of PAL disc whose colour is a near-perfect match with the NTSC disc. *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Star Trek III*, and many of the American film titles on CBS/FOX fall into this category and there is damn little difference in the colour signal between NTSC and PAL versions when viewed side by side. When standards do slip on NTSC discs the colour accuracy does tend to be a bit disappointing, but in no way should you be misled into confusing such comments with the general standard of terrestrial NTSC broadcasting which, by general consensus, is of poor colour quality.

What seems to be of major importance on the visual appearance of NTSC disc is the apparent tendency to limit the absolute level of resolution available. There could be several reasons for this - ranging from the desire to discourage piracy to the need to avoid the habit of high resolution images causing confusing



The state of the art - PIONEER's CLD909 NTSC LV/CD player

Shipping players in involves certain additional expenses. Obviously there are the freight charges (either post or air freight) and, in the UK at least, import duty and VAT charges. UK duty rates on LV players run to 14% (Import Tariff reference: 9211-9910), and VAT is then added to the total. That is presently 15%. As a very rough guide, you will end up paying something approaching the direct numerical equivalent of the US price, but in UK Sterling, ie \$900 US price will end up £900 UK landed price, freight and tax paid.

One point of advice worth bearing in mind comes from STARSHIP INDUSTRIES' man at the helm, Gregory C. Streeter - "Problems arise out of the customer not knowing the limitations enforced by their own country's postal service. The limits of weight, size, insurance etc can be different with each country. For example, we received an order for a 30 pound player from a country that had a 24 pound weight-limit."

THE MULTI-STANDARD MONITOR

This is easier. While virtually all UK TVs are only capable of displaying the output of PAL video equipment, there is an ever-increasing number of multi-standard monitors or receiver-monitors able to handle NTSC. Such models are available from GRUNDIG, JVC and (via a simple modification) PIONEER (see New Products page). The two SONY Profeel monitors (in 20" & 27" sizes) are the best known multi-standard displays on the market. (US readers interested in setting up for PAL LV might find SONY models the most easily available equipment locally.) Most of the projection TVs sold in the UK are in

anything up to \$100. The UK import duty on software is 5.1% (Import Tariff reference: 9212-3999) and VAT, again 15%. Most US mail-order retailers appear to do a 10% discount on disc prices as standard, and discs shipped via surface mail can end up costing only 20 - 25% more than comparable UK product - even after having paid all the relevant extra costs! (Bear in mind though that you are always prey to changes in the \$/£ exchange rate. To this end, the recent fall in the value of the US Dollar against the Yen has made Japanese discs extremely expensive of late and even US dealers are tending to stock them only to special order.)

With the burden of the Video Recordings Act, 1984 now with us, this effectively eliminates the possibility of UK dealers carrying NTSC discs - other than the most innocuous music titles (though if they're cutting WALT DISNEY films here it's difficult to imagine innocuous meaning anything other than a blank screen!). The VRA does not exercise any control over the personal importation of discs and so mail-ordering is likely to be the only realistic source of supply for some time to come, unless you maybe have friends States-side or are an occasional visitor yourself.

Fortunately the major US suppliers are fairly organised in their methods, and once some form of relationship has been established things can run quite smoothly. Payment for goods via credit card is to be favoured as this incurs no currency conversion charges and is altogether more efficient - inasmuch as unnecessary paperwork is not generated with out-of-stock items and you are only charged for goods as shipped.

THE LASER DISC NEWSLETTER

Covers American and Japanese NTSC releases.

The popular monthly publication is now in its second year, bringing video disc owners timely news and reviews of laser video discs. We cover both American releases and Japanese releases, and rare or unusual discs. You don't want to miss what we have to say! A sample issue is \$1 and a year's subscription of 12 issues is \$30 outside of North America. Write:

The Laser Disc Newsletter

Suite 428, 496 Hudson Street, NY, NY 10014, USA

high, especially with CX encoded titles that have a dynamic range and absence of hiss we are rarely privvy to. When it comes to the PCM-encoded Digital Sound discs we don't even talk the same language. (And Digital Sound discs are really beginning to appear in quantity now - the November US Release Sheet listed 15 Digital Sound titles out of a 36 disc total.)

SEX & VIOLENCE CORNER

Of relevance to UK readers is the unacceptability to the Customs and Police authorities of certain video titles. For the most part, any disc listed in the main PIONEER catalogue is unlikely to meet with disapproval. The one exception is *I Spit On Your Grave* which is on the list of horror titles, possession of any of which will render you subject to prosecution under section 2 of the Obscene Publications Act, 1959. Unlisted in the PIONEER catalogue - but also prohibited - is BUDGET VIDEO's disc of *Blood Feast*. This is also released in Japan along with the similarly disapproved of *Warhol's Frankenstein*. There may be other 'unsuitable' titles in the Japanese catalogue, such is their predilection for such material, and we will warn you of such if we come across them.

H.M. Customs also take exception to the sex/porno product available in the US on disc - none of which is listed in the PIONEER catalogue and is mostly on the IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT label. Not all dealers handle what they call "X-rated" or "XXX-rated" discs, but those that do usually make such titles sufficiently clear, and you are unlikely to order one by mistake. Do not be confused by the fact that some of these titles have been openly on sale in the UK as videotapes. Apparently the UK versions are heavily censored and contain none of the 'explicit' content of the US product. (This we found out when HM Customs pounced on our copy of *Inside Desiree Cousteau*. We've been holding over an interesting little article about the outcome of that and the ensuing court case for the last two issues due to shortage of space. We really will try and run it soon.)

Readers in countries other than the UK will have to determine for themselves what their own particular authorities consider is acceptable.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

There is a lot to be said for making an effort to keep in touch with the general world of video in the USA and two consumer magazines VIDEO (£2.20) and VIDEO REVIEW (£1.40) are often to be found in the more specialist UK newsgroups. If you have difficulty obtaining them then try persuading your local newsgroup to put in a special order for you through the UK distributors. VIDEO comes in via SEYMOUR and VIDEO REVIEW through COMAG. While these are essentially general video magazines they do give a pretty good idea of the current software output and occasionally run articles and equipment reviews on LaserVision.



More dedicated and up-to-date information on the new releases and extensive review coverage is obtainable via a subscription to THE LASER DISC NEWSLETTER, which is published promptly at the beginning of each month. This is possibly the most reliable way of finding out what discs have actually appeared - as opposed to what is just scheduled for release in any particular month. (Yes they have late discs there as well!) Annual subscription to this newsletter is \$30 outside the USA (Air) Write: THE LASER DISC NEWSLETTER, Suite 428, 496A Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014, USA.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

When we originally ran the NTSC article in Issue 5 it was couched in somewhat cautious terms as it seemed like a fairly lavish indulgence all round. But considering the not insubstantial amounts of cash folks willingly spend on marginal-value audio equipment, the expense of an NTSC disc player seems quite modest. It isn't for those who are maybe just impatient to see titles that will (we hope!) eventually see the light of day here, but more for those who have more specialised interests that, let's face it, just aren't going to be catered for. Anyone who has ever bought an obscure audio disc on import will understand this situation fully. Special interest titles, obscure music and films - these are the main incentives for having an NTSC player, plus of course the sheer quantity of titles that are available on a whim. There is a lot to be said for having what you want when you want it, and this is surely the crucial factor in any software-based medium.

ADDRESSES

U.S. dealers in LaserVision discs and equipment able to execute export mail orders. Lists are usually free to serious enquirers, but some may require a couple of dollars towards postage costs:

STARSHIP AUDIO INDUSTRIES
605 Utterback Store Road, Great Falls, VA 22066, USA. Tel: (703) 430-8692

Lists institutional discs not in main catalogue. Equipment & Discs sold. Air shipment only. Has offered to send own catalogue free on request.

THE INSTANT REPLAY
479 Winter Street, Waltham, MA 02154-1216, USA Tel: (617) 890-5384

Japanese discs available to order. Also carries XXX-rated product. Air & surface mail. Equipment & discs sold. Own catalogue published.

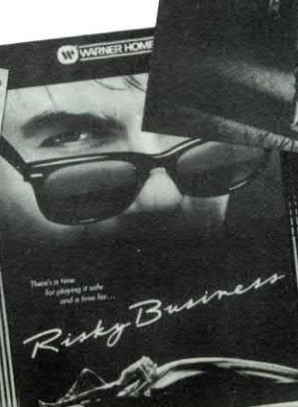
KEN CRANE'S VIDEO DISC
4900 West 147th Street, Hawthorne, CA 90250, USA. Tel: (213) 973-7373

Large West Coast disc dealer. Worth contacting even if you have a supplier already as they run occasional unique cheap disc sales. Air & Surface mail. Own catalogue published.

These three dealers are established companies with whom readers or the magazine itself have had satisfactory dealings. Other dealers will be added to the list if they provide the relevant information.

JAPAN - At present we have no Japanese dealers' names we can reliably pass on. The address on the PIONEER Export Catalogue that lists the multi-voltage CLD909 player is: PIONEER NO-TAX SHOWROOM & SERVICE CENTER (Tokyo, Akasaka) - Hosokawa Bldg. 2F, 12-8 Nagata-cho 2-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100, Japan Tel: (03) 581-3598

NATIONAL
AIR & SPACE
MUSEUM



DISC REVIEWS

For new readers some explanation of the approach to the disc reviews is necessary. LDR disc reviews are biased towards the various aspects of picture and sound quality of the product - the sort of information that you will not find elsewhere, and the information that is of most significance when you are standing in the store contemplating shelling out £20 or so for a piece of software that can, in those respects, be very much an unknown quantity. You may well know what the contents of a disc are about, but there is no way to know the quality - unless you are fortunate enough to have access to a disc rental facility prior to purchase.

Many existing readers find our reviews on disc quality quite severe and demanding, but in spite of that fact, there are still occasions when people intimate we've gone soft on a particular title. There is an undeniable level of subjectivity involved in assessing any product, but we use the achievable potential of the LV disc as our constant guideline and titles are judged on the basis of how far they fall short of that standard. The LaserVision disc is a very good product - it is in fact too good a product for much of the material that ends up on it. It is not a perfect product - it has its share of blemishes and defects that intrude on the enjoyment of the final presentation, but the technology of disc pressing rolls on and, in the main, it improves with each passing year.

The same cannot always be said of the quality of the master material that is put on the discs. Video originated product - TV programmes and many music titles, both pop and classical - are easier to transfer to disc. There is no problem in transferring between media. You start off with video - and you end up with video. Additionally, the music industry's decades of experience in the presentation of its product to a discerning consumer has engendered a respect for the integrity of the video medium comparable to that conferred on the audio one.

With feature film material the situation is unfortunately quite different. The software companies do take more heed of the video market these days but we are yet to see them really service the LaserVision disc with a suitable quality of master. Too many discs exhibit master defects that do not show up on the lesser home video formats (due to their severely limited bandwidth), and we have to put up with far too many film titles that have suffered excessive transfer loss (too many copy stages) and even conversion from an original NTSC video master. (This latter practice undermines the whole concept of a PAL disc format when you think about it.) And, of course, there is that percentage of feature films - always the big multi-million dollar blockbusters - that somehow turn up on disc in a diffused and otherwise diminished state. But, as long as the LaserVision disc offers the counterfeiter an ideal signal source from which to run off endless illicit videocassette copies, this is a situation that is, regretfully, likely to endure.

Whatever the causes, the standard of film masters appearing on PAL disc is disappointingly low. Consider this point. Our US readers see movies on NTSC disc in a better condition than they are ever likely to see them outside of a cinema - certainly better than their broadcast TV transmissions can offer. In the UK we have a better TV transmission system, with a greater bandwidth, that is aggravated by the likes of the BBC who actually possess 35mm prints of some of the films they show. As a result, PAL disc is often seen to be second-best in such an environment.

When there is a new generation of LV players available here, there will probably be some modification to the style of the disc reviews. At present the majority of players in circulation do not reveal the true picture potential of the LV disc. That sounds too good to be true, but even the best of discs looks better still on the latest hardware. Sharp discs are even sharper than you possibly thought, and it could well be that your TV is the limiting factor to achieving the full potential of the LaserVision signal. A well-pressed disc sourced from a good quality master really will produce a near flawless picture on the best of TV displays. But until the new hardware arrives, readers will probably find many of the faults noted in the reviews are of less significance than the importance we attach to them. Bear in mind, though, that when you upgrade your player and your TV you will still have those same discs in your library, and at that moment all those minor faults will turn into major ones. Likewise the comments as to the cleanliness of disc pressings. Fortunately, most of the UK-pressed discs we have seen in 1986 have been of dependable cleanliness and you are only likely to encounter sample defects in this area. There were previous periods of disc manufacture of which the same cannot be said and it can be difficult, even impossible, to find adequately clean pressings of certain older titles. Now we are some way down the LaserVision road, there might be some advantage in giving a release date (maybe with a note of pressing type) of discs to help give the reader some better idea of how the disc will look. More and more titles are coming to exist in several types of pressing, spread over a period of years, and this information is of much help when discussing older titles. (Discs pressed after 1985 are so much crisper and brighter than what went before.)

That last comment is one of the reasons we stopped, if only temporarily, giving gradings to discs some issues back. There is an overlap between disc pressing/mastering and the fidelity of the master that can confuse the assessment of the finished product. We may not return with a letter grading system as before, though, as there are so many more factors that are relevant (in judging film masters in particular).

So, for now, the thing to appreciate is that the content of the disc is described in isolation from its technical presentation aspects. These are

usually divided between comments on the quality of the master material and the disc pressing. A fault on the master will be on every disc pressed - without exception. When they occur, pressing faults can be restricted to the actual disc under review, or can indicate the likelihood of you maybe encountering problems obtaining a serviceable disc at a first attempt. Master faults, of the kind apparent on *Star Trek: Wrath Of Khan*, *On The Town* etc., indicate that you will never find a fault-free copy of these discs. (Unless a new master is secured for disc release, that is.)

Readers will find it most useful to develop an awareness of label identity to make the best use of the reviews. In this respect, some labels are more consistent than others, but as a rough guide one disc will look and sound very much like another from the same company. For this reason the reviews tend to describe those that deviate from the norm more fully. It also saves endlessly repeating the same complaints - that can make the review pages slightly depressing reading at times.

Make sure to differentiate between any disc that is "recommended", whether it is on the basis of its content (where the opinions of the reviewer should be taken into account), or its picture and sound quality.

Most of the abbreviations used in the review pages should be comprehensible by disc owners. MP indicates the presence of DOLBY MP Surround Sound encoding, extractable with the appropriate decoding equipment. The running times are usually always checked - and for this reason they are invariably at odds with the manufacturers' timings. Now that the Video Recordings Act is with us it is possible to have the same title with different ratings. Some of those titles certified under the new arrangements are indicated by the letter V (for "Video") after the rating. If it is an older cinema version then it may have a C after it. Some titles we don't know.

The ratings in the USA (that apply to the NTSC discs) are different to ours, but as we are a bit short of space and do not have any NTSC film titles reviewed this issue we'll cover them on another occasion. The NTSC page (which should be correctly identified this time - the printers removed the NTSC labels in error last issue) some other abbreviations crop up. DS stands for Digital Sound - the PCM soundtrack available on some discs - and CC indicates the presence of Closed Captioning - a type of Teletext sub-titling for the hearing-impaired.

We are in a bit of a dilemma over the future reviewing of NTSC discs. Coming up with a meaningful set of parameters that are in harmony with both PAL and NTSC discs is likely to be an ongoing exercise, but more problematical is the sheer quantity of product being issued in NTSC that makes it impossible to give anywhere near the coverage we would like. So, for now, we'll restrain ourselves from continuing pondering such weighty matters (another day, another issue) and make way for this lot....

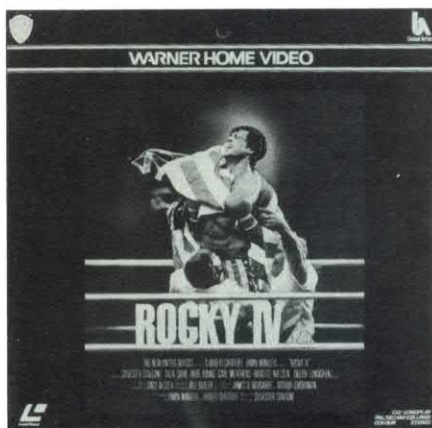
Rocky IV

WARNER PEL 99555 £19.99
CLV COLOUR STEREO MP
1985 88mins Rated PG

Starring: Sylvester Stallone, Talia Shire, Burt Young, Carl Weathers, Brigitte Nielsen, Dolph Lundgren
Writer & Director: Sylvester Stallone

The picture quality on *Rocky IV* is better than *I*, *II*, and *III* all put together. It takes a few minutes to reveal its true potential and doesn't always cope 100% with some of the darker scenes, but most all the rest of the time you find yourself looking at the disc more than the movie. It looks that good. Just wait till you see Apollo Creed's red and blue top hat outfit.

In fact, inspite of of the somewhat groaning acceptance of the continuation of the series past its supposedly rightful conclusion, *Rocky IV* is quite an entertaining little movie - this time with Balboa pitted against the Russian super-man, Drago (played by the unfortunately named Dolph Lundgren - Dolph sounds far more appropriate for the role than does Drago, don't you think?), and all the nationalistic fervour that entails.



There is virtually no script. In its place good use is made of the eye of the camera to actually **show** what the characters are thinking and saying (to themselves). Besides, after three previous stories it wouldn't do for these folks to come on with too much intellectual chit-chat. All the important stuff has probably been said and turning the characters into articulate intellectuals would hardly be in keeping with real-life. The film is a bit cartoony - but that's no demerit either. The thing does tend to run out of steam a little when it comes to the climactic Rocky vs. Drago punch-up. The fight endures longer and more energetically than it should to remain anywhere near credible - "C'mon, Dolph, keep laying into me while I try and think up and end to the movie".

The presence of some well-known hit records is a clever way of drawing the viewer into the film - you feel you already like it without having seen it. Survivor's *Eye Of The Tiger* is the obvious hook tune. Somewhat unexpected was the sizeable chunk of James Brown - seen performing *Living In America* without any dialogue interruption on the Las Vegas stage, just before the Creed bout. There is a lot of music, quite a few flashbacks to the previous films (which are not as good quality as the main feature but

streets ahead of the way they appeared on the earlier discs) and the whole outing only lasts 88 minutes.

But it's still a better film than its reputation might have you believe and any disc that looks this good is worth buying regardless. The audio is much dynamic and the music tends to thunder out of the speakers. Even at modest volume, though, you notice some distracting hissiness in the quiet dialogue passages (of which there aren't many, admittedly) that would seem to be a limitation of the disc format's audio capability rather than a deficiency of the master.

DURAN DURAN - Arena

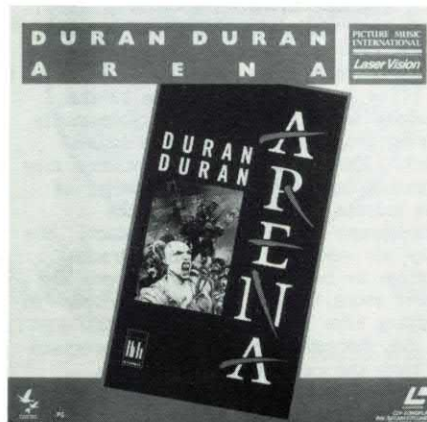
PMI MLP 99 1099 1 £14.99
CLV-Ch COLOUR STEREO
1985 58mins Rated PG

Side 1: Tiger Tiger/Is There Something I Should Know?/Hungry Like The Wolf/Union Of The Snake/Save A Prayer/The Wild Boys/Planet Earth/Careless Memories/Girls On Film/The Reflex/Rio

The programme starts out as though it is going to develop a style beyond that of a fairly routine blend of music and concept video, but it never quite makes that final leap into the unknown. The longish *Wild Boys* track feels like the point you expect it to wander off into uncharted territory, yet it ends up staying very much locked on course. Throughout, the music is interrupted by the goings on in the embracing video story - so it doesn't really count as a music disc. If you turn the picture off people's voices and odd sound effects intrude at random.

The inserts are plucked from a story that re-incarnates the Duran Duran character (with vague *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* overtones) from the movie *Barbarella* (NTSC LV disc pic on page 25) - out of which comes the group's name. Milo O'Shea plays the part, as in the original, and generous clips of the movie itself appear on various screens seen around and about. But, apart from tying together the videos associated with the songs, no great conclusion is reached. He doesn't come down and zap them off the stage or anything like that.

The music is mostly more of the concert material from *Sing Blue Silver* - though spared the dull documentary footage of that specimen *Arena* makes for a much more viewable experience altogether. It doesn't quite manage to bridge the gap sufficient to appeal to someone not taken by Duran Duran's music - but then that may not have



been the intention.

The Disc: The sound is excellent and the image crisp. The picture is a touch noisy and requires careful monitor adjustment to minimise that one slight flaw. In this respect it is a bit similar to *Sing Blue Silver* - which looked equally good when viewed on a small monitor, but showed the presence of noise when moving up to the present 27" job in use at LDR. Avoid too much contrast and keep the picture fairly dark for the best effect. On the other hand, neighbours will be suitably impressed - however approximately you set your controls.

JOHN LENNON Imagine/ The Film

PMI MLP 99 1011 1 £14.99
CLV-Ch COLOUR STEREO
1972 56mins

Side 1: Imagine/Crippled Inside/Jealous Guy/Don't Count The Waves/It's So Hard/Mrs Lennon/I Don't Want To Be A Soldier/Power To The People/Give Me Some Truth/Oh My Love/How Do You Sleep/How?/Oh Yoko!



When you split the shrink-wrap of *Imagine: The Film* to remove the disc you should not be too disappointed that a fold-up poster of John Lennon playing his white piano does not tumble out on to the floor too. The picture is on the disc. It's difficult to recall seeing any frames of the man tugging at a pig, so the vinyl package will still fill a place in the collection - that is if you haven't lost the little postcard after all this time.

Imagine: The Film (which one imagines should be more authentically pronounced as "Fil-m") is a 16mm documentary-cum-music programme that features songs from John Lennon's *Imagine* and Yoko Ono's *Fly* albums. It is in colour all the way through. There are some additional sound effects and some original dialogue, but all the music is already-recorded studio material that you will probably have heard before. The disc functions as an audio-only programme as well as an audio-visual one.

The camera follows John & Yoko around their swish commuter-belt home, on a London peace march, and through various cavortings in a New York park. There are some arty touches but the significance of what you see is solely dependent on the presence of the duo. It isn't the sort of disc that would have a lot of appeal to other than those who already own the audio album/s, and as a consequence, won't mind the fact that the narrow-gauge film stock produces

only a marginally crisp picture - with its fair share of spots and crud in some sequences (well, it's not that noticeable really, but it should be made apparent that those spots that do appear are on the film - not the disc). They will appreciate the historical significance of the programme as it stands and disc is the most suitable medium on which to place such an artefact. The audio is acceptably clear. It was tempting to say "just like the records" before realising that the absence of clicks and scratches would invalidate a comparison of that nature. For old times sake, though, some of the music would seem to have been dubbed from vinyl - witness the faint surface noise towards the end of *Mrs Lennon*. Well, at least it won't get any noisier than that the more you play it.

DIANA ROSS - Visions

PMI MLP 99 0049 1 £14.99
CAV-Ch COLOUR STEREO
1986 30mins

Side 1: Why Do Fools Fall In Love/Chain Reaction/Eaten Alive/Swept Away/Muscles/Mirror Mirror

This disc **really** is in CAV. At one point it even became necessary to turn the lights on so as to see just which button on the player managed what function - it's been that long!

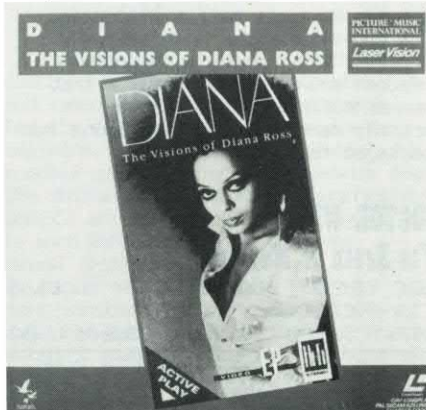
Some history. The reason we don't get more CAV discs than we do is that to produce a 'perfect' still frame (ie, one that doesn't jitter) an additional field-correlation process stage needs to be carried out on video-originated programmes before they are mastered on to disc. This extra process stage costs money - too much money to be returned in additional disc sales. Obviously, special interest titles that involve examining moving sequences on disc frame by frame or in slow-motion have to function without any picture disturbance, but in entertainment programmes, while a desirable feature too, such still frame perfection is not the only advantage of having a title in CAV. In CAV, access to any part of the disc is easier, more precise, and faster - and Scan and Fast Play functions are possible in colour too. So, if one is prepared to tolerate erratic still-frame/slow-motion performance from a CAV disc, there is then no longer a cost disincentive to producing any disc side that runs under 37 minutes in CAV.

It's not as if you don't get any still frames at all from un-correlated video in CAV. Because the video signal is made up of a series of separate fields running in a fixed cycle, such a disc will produce perfect stills intermittently during certain stages of the sequence. The many editing points in a programme, possibly in combination with standards conversion processes can all contribute to throwing the field sequence out, and the achievement of good still frames can be very much a hit-and-miss affair.

But CAV in this diminished form still seems a better deal than just having the side in non-participatory CLV. And besides, there is a drawback to field-correlation in that it does degrade the image, giving the picture an undeniable softness, as well as breaking up the natural smoothness of

motion in normal play - movement in real-time on correlated CAV discs always looks a little strobey.

This first UK manufactured disc to be made under such conditions (the PAL PIONEER CAV discs pressed in Japan for the UK market have always been made this way) is a 30 minute compilation of Diana Ross video promos.



The lead track *Why Do Fools Fall In Love* is a 1957 song made a recent hit and the video is set against a backdrop of a present-day Las Vegas. *Chain Reaction* is a new song - shot in what could almost be a 1957 TV studio location. (Well, '64 would be closer to the mark really, but one takes these liberties with the truth to make the reviews read a bit slicker). Come to think of it, the *Chain Reaction* video looks like it was made in the UK. The same goes for *Swept Away* - the video supposedly set in a French bar whose patrons, despite their authentic garb, look decidedly stiff-English types brought up on British restaurant and pub hospitality and accordingly totally unable to convey any convincing level of conviviality whatsoever.

Eaten Alive is in black and white, is set on a tropical island, and will appeal to any reader triggered by the merest mention of words such as voodoo, zombie and cat-person. The video for *Muscles*, with Diana's slim

body reclining on those of a quartet of sculptured hunks, is enjoyable in itself but reveals the limitations of trying to present some songs in pictorial form. [Oh blimey, the proof reader will probably alter that to pectoral.] The track is so perfectly produced (by Michael Jackson as it happens) that it stimulates - both visually and emotionally - to a far greater intensity without this embellishment. (It seems shorter on this disc too.) No visual enhancement could in any way detract from *Mirror Mirror* - a track that amply demonstrates how to mix a record badly (assuming it was not the intention to create an aural image of the entire backing group - brass section and all - being crammed into a telephone box). Even Diana looks bored.

The quality of the images on the disc is not particularly stunning - the mixture of sources and the liberal use of soft-focus isn't the best route to video perfection. But they're all watchable and there are the odd crisp frames (ie 10654 - 10674) to indicate they tried. *Chain Reaction* is the most successful as far as achieving the largest percentage of good stills. With the other tracks you have to take it as it comes. The audio is very good with plenty of activity in the treble regions - it doesn't sound as though they dubbed these off LPs.

Hey, this is a long review for such a short disc. But then we don't get discs like this every day of the week. The last UK-made CAV music disc must have been *Rush/Exit-Stage Left*. Sexist or not, this is better, believe you me.

AND MORE TO FOLLOW - Scheduled for January release is the first mixed CLV/CAV disc to appear in the UK catalogue. If all goes according to plan, the double-disc of *Prizzi's Honour* will arrive with the third side pressed in CAV, and in this instance - due to the fact it is originated on film as opposed to videotape - it will produce perfect still frames in the conventional manner.

LASER
DISC REVIEW

PO BOX 526
LONDON SW10 9AB

Subscriptions

A one year, four issue subscription to LASER DISC REVIEW sent anywhere in the world costs just £5-00 - saving £1-00 over the single issue price. The Air-mail rate for readers outside Europe is £8-00.

*** SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER - Take out a new subscription NOW and claim any back issue FREE (list alternate choices).

Back Numbers

Issue 4 - Reviews of VLP830 & LD700. Surround Sound. How LV is sold in the US. German & Dutch disc lists.
Issue 5 - Guide to NTSC LaserVision. Player Survey. Summary of all previous disc reviews. Includes '85 Philips list.
Issue 6 - Looking at future LV developments. Japanese Report 49 disc reviews, including some PAL imports and porno discs.
Issue 7 - Reviews of PIONEER CLD900, LD707, & PX-7 Computer. The American Space Discs.
Issue 8 - Forthcoming '86 A/V products. Japanese Report. Dutch Space discs. Dutch catalogue update.
Issue 9 - Towards a Combination LV/CD player. The Video Recordings Act. Dolby Surround with the Marantz RV353 - (Includes complete list of Dolby discs).

Back issues normally cost £1-25 but subscribers may purchase them at only £1-00 each. Air-mail rates on request.

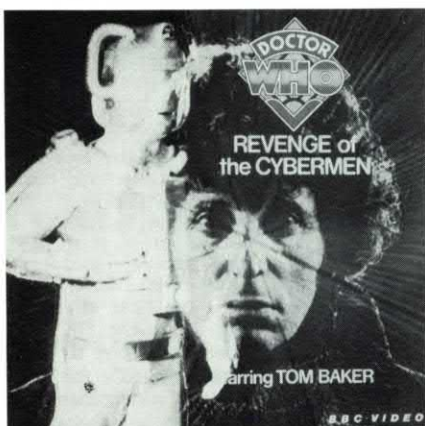
DOCTOR WHO Revenge Of The Cybermen

BBC VIDEO BBCL 2003 £4.99
CLV COLOUR MONO
1975 90mins Rated U (V)

Featuring: Tom Baker, Elisabeth Sladen, Ian Marter

As a long-running TV series *Doctor Who* has grafted its popularity onto a captive audience over some decades, and provided you are none too fussy about the amount of science in your science-fiction the two discs presently in the catalogue provide a good opportunity to re-view programmes from an era before most people had access to a VCR. And besides, on a disc, you're likely to see more too.

In *Revenge Of The Cybermen* the Doctor is up against the robotic Cybermen who are out to destroy the planet Vog - a rich source of the mineral, gold, to which they are so vulnerable. The episodic nature of the production makes the plot a little difficult to follow - it's either well-detailed.... or badly written.



The production values are in some conflict. On the credit side the Vogans' make-up is convincing - more so than, say, the rather cardboard-looking face masks of the Klingons in *Star Trek III*. The hardware side - the stuff that counts - is pretty laughable. Ignoring the spaceship exteriors, that are understandably difficult to manage on a low budget, the brazen use of a PHILIPS N4303 reel-to-reel tape machine (c.1970) as a flight-logging recorder takes some swallowing. And.... the vital component missing from the Transmat turns out to be nothing less than a module from a BBC vision-mixing desk. The good Doctor calls it a Pentallion Drive. Others might call it a rip-off. But of course, you need to have the programme on disc to be able to catch them out. (They did think to invert the module so as to make the panel legends difficult to read, but even a quick glimpse on a CLV disc is enough.)

Picture quality is much as would be expected on BBC video-originated material. The master exhibits good definition and only falls down where camera focus limitations of the original production are revealed. There is an element of noise in the picture, but then most BBC video shows a fair amount of that (or is it that we are only seeing their older output on disc up to now?). Quite a bit of 16mm film footage comes into

use in the location sequences and, in comparison, its poor quality is something of a distraction to the continuity.

While completists will probably disagree, side two of the disc would have undoubtedly benefitted from some editing to tighten up the pace, but at a price of £4.99 one feels guilty about being picky over such matters. The end of side one is an elegantly managed still-frame - with a super-imposed end-of-side identifier - that leaves the impression someone actually cared how the programme was packaged for disc release.

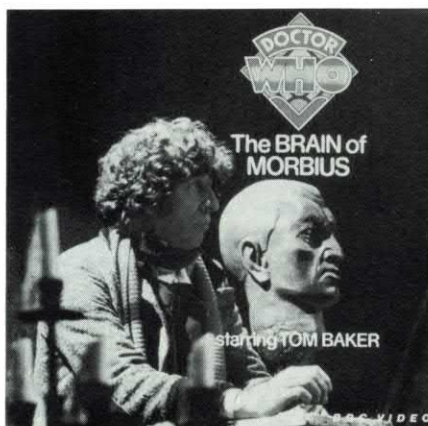
DOCTOR WHO The Brain Of Morbius

BBC VIDEO BBCL 2012 £9.99
CLV COLOUR MONO
1975 59mins Rated U (V)

Featuring: Tom Baker, Elisabeth Sladen, Philip Madoc, Colin Fay, Gilly Brown, Cynthia Grenville

The Brain Of Morbius is something else again, and while twice the price and two-thirds the running time, the value for money is infinitely greater.

On the planet Karn Professor Solon (Philip Madoc), and his one-armed hunchback assistant, Condo (Colin Fay), are searching for a head to transplant on to the dead body of Morbius, the exiled Time Lord, now nearing final re-construction in Solon's lab. That's right, the script is a straight lift from the *Frankenstein* story, and while the faithful Condo doesn't quite get round to uttering the likes of "Shall I connect the electrodes now, Master?" he does come up with a few gems. The best one occurs in the opening scene where he's just sliced the head off a pretty-scary-looking Karnian insect about the size of your average shetland pony. It's much too puny for the task in hand and vocal disapproval of his efforts by the Professor provokes the charming response "But the big-heads (do) not come, Master, not to Karn". Ahhh...



Just after, Condo is shot by the tyrannical Professor - for knocking Morbius' brain off the lab table - but survives, probably motivated by the desire to reclaim his own arm that the Prof has previously found some feeble excuse to amputate in order to stitch on to Morbius' cannibalised hulk.

Failing in his efforts to acquire the Doctor's head, the now-desperate Professor botches up a sort of fish-bowl arrangement to contain the

brain, so enabling the body to be brought back to 'life'. Morbius thinks the result is so dopey-looking he lays into the Prof with some vigour (Hey, Morb, you're prejudicing your malpractice suit here!) and various scuffles ensue, even poor Condo wading in again in the vain hope he'll get his arm back.

By this time any tiny tots in the household will probably be cowering behind the settee, and indeed, for a supposed U Certificate, this is pretty strong stuff. Assuming the BBC to be a source of 'safe' material the BBFC more than likely passed it on the nod without even the briefest of viewings. A PG rating would have been far more appropriate (and helpful).

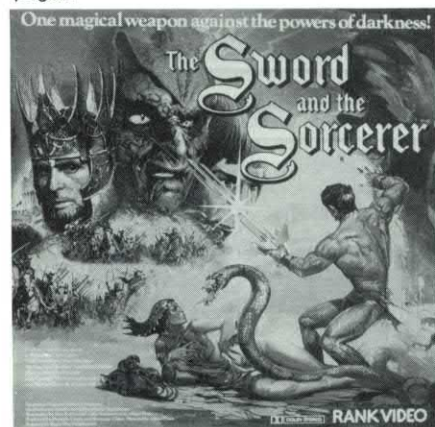
Picture and sound quality compares well with the previous disc although it does tend to look a bit grainier because most of the programme is gloomily lit. There are no filmed inserts here.

The Sword And The Sorcerer

RANK VIDEO LVRK 0124 £6.99
CLV COLOUR MONO
1982 95mins Rated PG

Starring: Lee Horsley, Kathleen Beller, Simon MacCorkindale, George Maharis, Richard Lynch
Director: Albert Pyun

Were all movies so aptly titled - it saves a lot of space in the review pages.



Evil King Cromwell (Richard Lynch) summons the gruesome-looking sorcerer, Xusia (Richard Moll), from the grave (good effect here with the wall of 'stone' faces coming to life) to help him invade the Kingdom of Ehdan. The Queen (Nina van Pallandt - remember Nina & Frederick and *Little Donkey*) attempts to escape with the children to avoid Cromwell's advance. They don't make it but favoured son Talon tries to save them with his triple-bladed, rocket-powered sword. Time passes. Talon (Now grown-up and played by Lee Horsley, with echoes of Errol Flynn) is drawn into a revolutionary plot to overthrow Cromwell. The prize is Alana (Kathleen Beller). The obstacle is Xusia - thought to have been bumped off by Cromwell some eight years back but who has returned in the guise of Count Machelli (George 'Route 66' Maharis, looking vaguely like Spock the way they made him up) with mischief on his mind.

One slightly sour note is struck as a result of noticing a prematurely cut cliff-top leap by Xusia on side one

(0.11) where the trajectory is clearly insufficient to clear the protruding rockface lower down. While this is a soon-forgotten episode, the end credits showing the movie to be "dedicated to stuntman Jack Tyree" can't help but put a totally different complexion on the sequence.

The end credits also suggest an imminent follow-up - *Tales of The Ancient Empire*. Did they ever make this film?

On *The Sword And The Sorcerer* the production values are high and it's indeed a shame that the disc has only appeared in mono - it is a DOLBY Stereo film but there isn't a hint of separation anywhere here. The optical audio is a bit brighter than the usual RANK soundtrack but there is more hiss than would be ideal. The video transfer is basically in keeping with other RANK titles (fairly contrasty; from a print) though it is noticeably grainier than the norm and tends to look rather un-filmy. Watchable, but nowt special.

For some reason, side two of the disc is a bit darker than side one - sufficient to require some brightness adjustment on changeover. The review disc was not the original 2P pressing, but a later injection moulded re-press that had a few blue spots and drop-outs. Without the benefit of a look at one of the earlier discs (that could still be in circulation) it is difficult to be too precise about the nature of the pressing you might receive.

The Boston Strangler

CBS/FOX 1015-70 £4.99
CLV COLOUR MONO
1968 111mins

Starring: Tony Curtis, Henry Fonda, George Kennedy, Mike Kellin, Murray Hamilton
Director: Richard Fleischer

Much of the earlier part of *The Boston Strangler* is constructed of multi-images - not split-screen in the conventional sense but often a patchwork of different sized picture shapes thrown up on the screen together. Needless to say it doesn't transfer to the proportions of the TV screen very well. In fact it's a hazy mess a lot of the time though, for once, you can sympathise with the problems there must have been in doing the transfer.

What is left is best considered documentary picture quality. There's no way you can accept it as a 35 mm production - it's almost as if a film-maker of the cinema verite school



was on hand to capture the story as it happened. There isn't a lot of colour present but the disc will take more without picking up an excessive amount of noise. The sound has some clarity and is only mildly affected by the odd moments of distortion, though it is a bit hissy and of limited range.

Now that some time has passed few people are likely to remember the intricacies of this true story of a series of rapes and strangulations perpetrated on women in New York in the early '60s. The film treads a fine line between dealing with the tempting salaciousness of the story and offering a sympathetic analysis of the hunt for the murderer - identified mid-way as an average Joe with little cause to carry out the savage killings.

Tony Curtis takes that part, at the time considered an adventurous choice of role for an established star of the Hollywood smooth-school. Without intending any criticism of his efforts, his presence is only really felt in the latter part of the movie when much of the energy has receded.

It is the preliminary build-up - the 1-2-3 sequence of pointless killings that strongly features the work of both George Kennedy and Henry Fonda - that generates most viewer interest. When their suspicions of Curtis (Albert de Salvo in real life - a non-descript boiler attendant with no obvious motivation for his wrong-doings) are raised the pace of the movie slips back and it appears to take no side. In its time this re-enactment of a real-life series of events would have been sufficient, but without a certain amount of background knowledge, today's viewer might appreciate a slightly neater conclusion.

The Postman Always Rings Twice

GUILD GHLV 1351 £6.99
CLV COLOUR MONO
1980 116mins (3 sides) Rated 18(C)

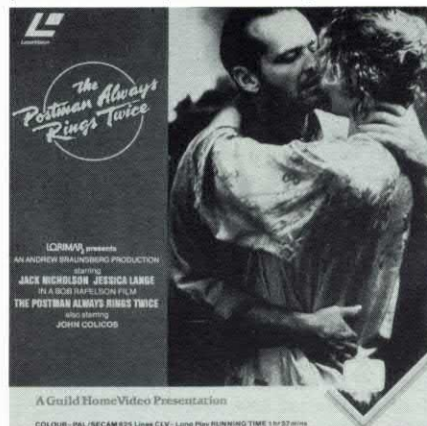
Starring: Jack Nicholson, Jessica Lange, John Colicos
Directed by: Bob Rafelson

When Cora Papadakis (Jessica Lange) shoves the entire morning's bakery onto the kitchen floor to clear the kitchen table for a moment of unbridled lust with the new mechanic, Frank (Jack Nicholson), you realise that the marriage to her successful Greek immigrant husband and owner of the rural restaurant/garage where the action is centred is not likely to endure. Killing him becomes an expedient convenience for the amorous couple.

Set sometime in the '30s, the mood carefully evoked with the aid of Bergman cinematographer, Sven Nykvist, there is more to this version of *The Postman Always Rings Twice* than is often the case with remakes. (There is an Italian 1942 Visconti version *Ossessione*, and the better-known 1945 Hollywood 'original'.) Fitting the widescreen frame into a TV format does devalue much of the pictorial value of this outing, as does the harsh grainy nature of the transfer. The dark scenes suffer the most but the disc is at least watchable on a level with other GUILD transfers of this vintage. The optical audio is quite clear but a

little hissy and liable to grittiness in moments of peak volume.

Being an older disc it fits on three sides - an unfortunate inconvenience but necessary for the disc mastering specifications of the time. But while it is only a two-hour film with, apparently, most of the action out of the way by the time the first side is over, intriguing twists and turns to the plot are introduced that are in no sense indulgent and it still remains plausible on repeated viewings.



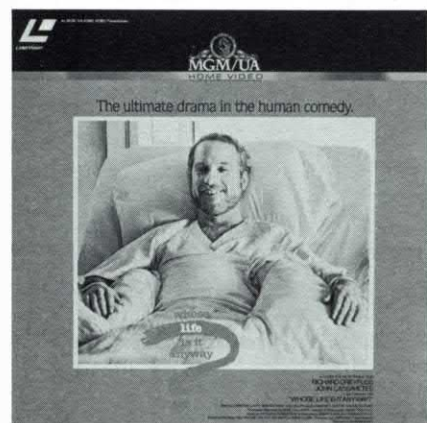
The film thrives on the fact that the viewer is forever in sympathy with the wrong-doings of the errant couple - even to the extent of justifying their attempts at cold-blooded murder. It is an interesting film.

Whose Life Is It Anyway?

MGM/UA UMLV 10140 £4.99
CLV COLOUR MONO
1981 114mins

Starring: Richard Dreyfuss, John Cassavetes, Christine Lahti, Bob Balaban
Director: John Badham

Some aspects of *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* suggest touches of TV movie presentation, but the reason the energy comes in shortish bursts probably owes more to the movie's origination as a stage-play.



As a film it starts right in at the deep-end and wastes little time on the fripperies. Ken Harrison (Dreyfuss) goes from boisterous sculptor to a bed-ridden quadriplegic (via a run-in with an articulated lorry) and by the time twelve minutes of screen time has gone six months have passed - and he's still bed-ridden with little hope of ever regaining mobility. Everyone is very bright and there is a surfeit of strained humour - but these are just devices to help ease the

awkwardness of the situation. It doesn't take much longer for him to decide that his incurable condition is something he doesn't want to live with, yet the hospital administration - in the forceful shape of Dr Michael Emerson (Cassavetes) - sees things in a different light and isn't about to let him end it all then and there. The film turns into a fight for death.

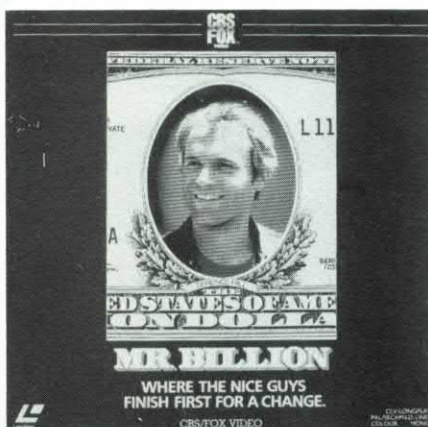
Regardless of the outcome this is a disc with somewhat dubious repeat value - on an entertainment level at least. That's not to say it isn't worth having though. The script is sufficiently detailed to cover all the 'difficult' aspects of the drama and the still mentally alert Ken is usually offering up perceptive solutions to questions the viewer is only just starting to ask.

The Disc: The scanning of the wide-screen image is a bit more obtrusive than might be desired and the TV frame is often crammed to the last millimetre. Picture quality is a bit pastelly and softly defined (though there are some occasional nice close-ups) and the colour is marginally out of register with the luminance signal. The resulting picture is pleasant if of somewhat low resolution. The audio is very bright and forward-sounding but mild distractions occur in the manner in which the background hiss fluctuates in some passages - rising and falling in the same sentence even. At lowish volume you will probably not notice this.

Mr Billion

CBS/FOX 1198-70 £4.99
CLV COLOUR MONO
1977 89mins Rated PG(C)

Starring: Terence Hill, Valerie Perrine, William Redfield, Slim Pickens, Chill Wills, Jackie Gleason
Directed by: Jonathan Kaplan



The film was made in stereo and should have appeared on disc with DOLBY Surround too. It didn't, and the reason it didn't is most likely something to do with some profanities that have been skilfully muted, presumably in order to produce a palatable TV version of the movie. And TV hasn't, until recently, needed stereo. It's a pretty tacky transfer too, with all the hallmarks of an NTSC conversion. Some rather poorly handled dark scenes exhibit large expanses of grain. The audio, though, is quite clear for an older optical track.

The film has little redeeming merit - being a formula chase cum rags-to-riches caper featuring Terence Hill as

an Italian garage mechanic inheriting a fortune that somehow or other requires a trans-American chase to reach its conclusion. It has its moments. A too-brief encounter with a hospitable black cowboy and his rebellious black-power son (Sam Laws & Johnny Rae McGhee) shows sparkle and wit out of keeping with the bulk of the production.

In better condition it might have made for more involving viewing.

The Catherine Wheel

ARTS INT 04 AI 017 £19.99
CLV-Ch COLOUR STEREO
1982 88mins

Featuring: Sara Rudner, Jennifer Way, Tom Rowe and performers of the Twyla Tharp Dance Co.

Music produced, composed and performed by David Byrne

Director & choreographer: Twyla Tharp



The Catherine Wheel is a single disc comprising the ballet itself (72 minutes) and an interview with Twyla Tharp (15 minutes).

Although there are no formal acts in the ballet the breaks would appear to be Act I on side one and Act II - The Golden Section - on the first part of side two. The interview fills the second part of side two. The end of side one is a bit abrupt.

The plot of the ballet illustrates by way of dance, mime and music the deterioration of the American family. The dancers are divided into two groups - the family and the chorus - and the family is gradually reduced to ruin by selfishness and infighting, which is reversed in the Golden Section. Considerable use is made of computer graphics and camera tricks in the production and all of them may not have been used in the original stage presentation, but they are effective nonetheless in this studio-type production. The Catherine wheel appears as a symbol of destruction and martyrdom at intervals throughout the ballet by being superimposed on the action.

This is a modern ballet without a strict formalised progression of acts and for background detail and a description of the *raison d'être* behind it viewers may find it useful to play the interview with Twyla Tharp first - it has its own chapter number on the disc. The music for the ballet is by David Byrne, better known for his work with the group Talking Heads.

[TONY WELLS]

The Disc: Unlike most ARTS INT. productions the programme is not

originated on video, having been shot on 16mm film instead, and lacks visual immediacy as result. It is a bit grainy. The soundtrack has reasonable separation and some pronounced bass but is still not quite as bright and dynamic as one might have expected. It could well be just the film's original optical track. The review copy of the disc was a clean pressing.

Falklands Task Force South

BBC VIDEO BBCV 6016L £11.99
CLV COLOUR MONO
1982 109mins Rated 15 (V)

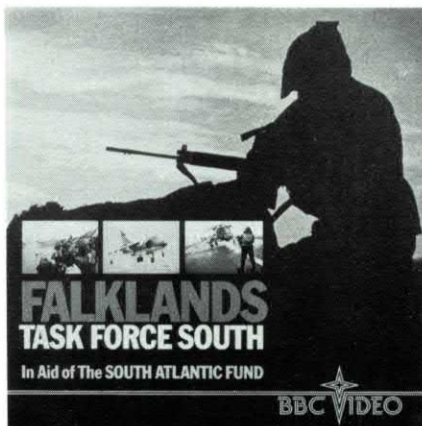
A documentary compilation with narration by Richard Baker & location reporting by Brian Hanrahan

Difficult as it must have been to prepare so soon after the event, this documentary still remains relevant and watchable these four years on. The programme is not littered with an undue amount of flag-waving.

The conflict unfolds at a rather different pace to how you might remember it. The seemingly endless period before the actual engagement off the Falklands coast is rapidly expedited whereas the overland trek leading up to the final recapture of Port Stanley is extensively covered. The balance of history is not affected by this. It is just different. The question that is raised about 'video history' is how events come to be represented - is it really just down to the chance presence of a camera? Writers can record events through the experience of others, to be mixed in unobtrusively with their own witnessed observations. Any producer working in a visual medium is always likely to be tempted to go for the strongest material available. Talking heads count as second-best.

For all that, the programme uses both BBC and ITN sources, as well as footage from Argentinian (both mainland and Falklands) sources. That means the disc contains both PAL and NTSC video, as well as 16mm film. There is even some 8mm home-movie footage taken by a sailor when no official crew was present. It all blends together well but the video material has the most immediacy and comes closest to putting the viewer on the spot - or at least as much on the spot as anyone in their right mind would want to be.

The disc is a fairly early one and the review copy had a few spots that showed on occasion. There is not quite the vibrancy to the pressing that



we might expect nowadays, but it is adequate.

The sleeve lists other BBC discs, one of which - *Graf Spee & Battleship Bismarck* (BBCV 6012L) - was never released.



MAIL ORDER SPECIALISTS

WE HAVE IN STOCK SEALED COPIES OF MOST OF THE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE LASERVISION DISCS AS WELL AS MANY HARD TO GET ITEMS. SEND FOR OUR LISTS.

WE OFTEN HAVE SECOND-HAND DISCS TO SELL, AND AT PRESENT SOME NEW REDUCED PRICE DISCS TOO.

AS ESTABLISHED DEALERS IN CINE FILMS, WE CAN ACCEPT THESE IN PART-EXCHANGE FOR LV DISCS.

PINEDENE FILMS
99 HILL LANE
SOUTHAMPTON
HAMPSHIRE
SO1 5AE

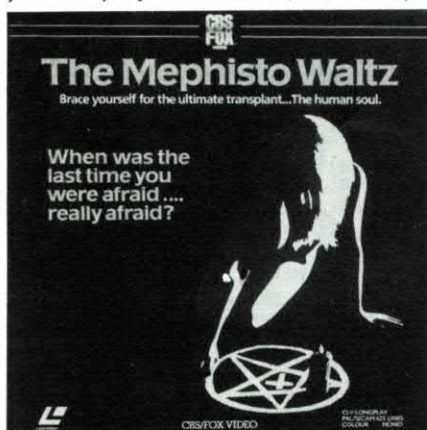
SOUTHAMPTON 631680

The Mephisto Waltz

CBS/FOX 1200-70 £4.99
CLV COLOUR MONO
1982 104mins Rated 18(C)

Starring: Alan Alda, Jacqueline Bisset, Barbara Parkins, Brad Dillman, Curt Jurgens, Kathleen Widdoes, Amelyn Ferdin, William Windom
Directed by: Paul Wendkos

Mephisto is the devil. *The Mephisto Waltz* is a piece by Liszt that Duncan Ely (Curt Jurgens) plays to visiting journalist, Myles Clarkson (Alan Alda),



come to interview him. Ely is impressed by Clarkson's hands, and lo, said journalist turns out to be a failed musician taken to the pen by means of a substitute, but is seduced back to the keyboard by the ageing maestro. To be more precise, the maestro is dying and there are doubts as to how his expertise is being transferred to the younger man. Wife, Paula (Jacqueline

Bisset), notices odd changes in his mannerisms while he is rapidly transformed into an accomplished concert pianist (Alda tinkles the ivories in a most convincing manner throughout) and her suspicion is that something more than conscientious practice is responsible for this dramatic musical turnabout.

There are hints of TV-movie production standards (it's a QUINN MARTIN job) though the occasionally-glimpsed naked female breast and the subject matter justify an 18 certificate here. It is difficult to believe it was made as recently as it was and there is the stylistic feel of something a good ten years older.

The Disc: Pastelly hued, the transfer has the look of an NTSC conversion but is sharper than many CBS/FOX discs of the type. However, it's still a bit murky, obviously video and therefore below disc standard - merely watchable. The sound is quite clear (though there are a couple of glitches along the way) but is spoilt by a high-pitched whistle.

Cocoon

CBS/FOX 1476-70 £19.99
CLV COLOUR STEREO MP
1985 112mins Rated PG

Starring: Don Ameche, Wilford Brimley, Hume Cronyn, Brian Dennehy, Jack Gilford, Steve Guttenburg, Maureen Stapleton, Jessica Tandy, Gwen Verdon, Herta Ware, Tahnee Welch
Music by: James Horner
Director: Ron Howard

At a time when almost every other film you see concerns either the efforts of a group of teenagers to lose their virginity, or Charles Bronson (or Eastwood etc, etc) blowing every criminal brain in existence from here to kingdom come, it is refreshing to note that one of the popular successes of the year concerns a group of octogenarians who accidentally stumble across the fountain of youth in the swimming pool of the empty house next door. *Cocoon* is the film and it is directed by Ron Howard, who seems to have an affinity for watery subjects - being the director of the hugely enjoyable *Splash!*.

Don Ameche, Hume Cronyn and Wilford Brimley play the ringleaders of the group who live in a twilight home in Florida. The house with the pool which they regularly break into is rented one day by Brian Dennehy, who plays an alien (no, not one of those aliens - more like E.T.). The pool is quickly filled up with strange ancient-looking cocoons brought up from the ocean floor with the assistance of boat-owner Steve Guttenburg, and it doesn't take Ameche & Co long to discover that the pods give the water in the pool rejuvenative powers. Of course, many humorous situations occur as the old boys' ailments are lost and all their bodily functions are restored to perfect working order! There is also a sub-plot about the Guttenburg character's relationship with the female alien - played by Tahnee Welch, daughter of Raquel.

Cocoon could be described as a sort of mixture between *E.T.* and the Spielberg-directed segment of the *Twilight Zone* movie, from which the three aged protagonists could have been



directly lifted (although his group want to keep their youth once they've found it). Ron Howard has had no difficulty in extracting some very good performances from his lead actors, despite being only in his late twenties himself. He has also assembled a good technical team, including George Lucas' effects outfit INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC who make sure such matters do not dominate the film but enhance the mood and further the plot. The music is also rather good, with a recurring semi-jazz theme to accompany the oldsters' antics and an orchestrated score for the more dramatic second half.

Cocoon is a nicely accomplished and unusual piece of cinema whose many elements gel perfectly to produce one of those movies that you might imagine leaving the cinema after with a daft grin on your face and a spring in your step. Warmly recommended as a film.

[PETER MOVERLEY]

Disc Quality: The sound is very good, obviously magnetically sourced, with good ambience and separation. It is let down by the grainy picture - the price one pays for having the disc sourced from an NTSC conversion - and the level of detail is fairly low. The opening scenes set in space do not stand out well and the overall picture quality is really no better than many of the previous indifferent CBS/FOX masters that have turned up on older American sourced discs in the UK LV catalogue.

Sidewinder Video

MAIL ORDER SPECIALIST

SIDEWINDER VIDEO (L),
17 CHURCH LANE, SUTTON COLDFIELD,
WEST MIDLANDS, B76 0BJ

PLEASE NOTE.... WE WILL SUPPLY ANY BRAND NEW VIDEO CASSETTE OR VIDEO DISC THAT IS AVAILABLE ON RELEASE.

OUR LATEST COMPREHENSIVE CASSETTE /DISC CATALOGUE... HAS OVER 6,000 VIDEO TITLES LISTED.

SEND £1.85 UK, OVERSEAS £3.00.

IF YOU PREFER SEND A 9 x 4 S.A.E. FOR ONE OF THE FOLLOWING LISTS...

*LASERVISION DISCS FROM£4.99
*VHS CASSETTES FROM£9.99
*BETAMAX CASSETTES FROM£9.99

PLEASE REMEMBER TO GIVE YOUR VIDEO FORMAT

U.S.A. REPORT

ANOTHER DISC FORMAT

Ever resourceful in the various ways to exploit the optical disc, the LASERDISC CORPORATION OF AMERICA (PIONEER's new name for its US LV marketing operation) launched the new 'Compact LaserDisc' (CLD) format last August 12th aboard a yacht on New York's East River. By combining the audio portion of a CD with a handful of video clips the company have effectively upstaged the forthcoming CD-V concept that will do very much the same thing on the smaller CD. But the PIONEER disc is now, and software support for the product is already promised by CAPITOL/EMI, MCA, WARNER, RCA, ARISTA and WINDHAM HILL - with the likelihood of ATLANTIC, A & M and POLYGRAM following on behind.

The initial CLD disc, Jefferson Starship's *Knee Deep In The Hoopla*, is basically a 50 minute, 30cm CLV disc containing the regular CD's audio contents in both analogue CX and PCM digital sound, along with a couple of the group's video promos to kick the programme off. While the audio-only portion of the disc plays, the TV screen displays the album sleeve as a still picture. The discs list at \$16.95 and other early releases include titles from Chicago, A-Ha, Dream Academy, Mr Mister and Colonel Abrams.

MORE & BETTER DISCS?

Delays in recent LV disc supplies from LDC AMERICA's Carson, California plant are the result of a major revamp of the facility, involving the addition of new quality control and manufacturing equipment that will also enable a greater quantity of discs to be produced. Up to now the majority of the new Digital Sound discs have continued to be sourced from the company's Japan production base - a situation that is likely to change with the completion of the rebuild.

A good 80 titles - many of them steady-selling major films - were deleted from the catalogue at the end of September. However, a major proportion has been scheduled for re-pressing, though *The Blues Bros* is not one of them. 1941 is.

LV disc sales for 1986 are likely to be 50% up on the previous year, with a possible 2,000,000 units being shifted. (That works out to about 10 discs sold for each player.)

Collector film titles continue to enrich the US LV disc catalogue. MCA have released a restored 235 minute version of the 1927 *Napoleon* movie - the film fitting on to two CLV discs with an extra one-sided CAV disc containing production stills and selected film excerpts. The price is \$89.98.

Meanwhile, VOYAGER/CRITERION the producers of those innovative CAV versions of *King Kong* and *Citizen Kane*,

have a slew of further CAV specials imminent. *High Noon*, *Invasion Of The Bodysnatchers* (in widescreen), *The Magnificent Ambersons* (this includes the Mercury Theatre radio play on one of the disc sides as well as stills and storyboards for the missing footage), and *Lola Montes* (widescreen) all feature on the list. The label also has the rights to *Help!* and *Hard Day's Night*.

OUT FOR THE COUNT?

PHILIPS' US subsidiaries SYLVANIA & MAGNAVOX now completely out of LV hardware sales in the USA. Following the initial 1978/9 launch, when MAGNAVOX sold NTSC versions of the VLP600/700, the company took to badge engineering the PIONEER LD1100, and until recently the LD700. Even the professional VP935 (an 830 variant in NTSC) is being faded from the scene leaving PHILIPS with no market presence whatsoever. Professional customers can expect the new 400 series to be launched some time in 1987, and there are even rumblings of a combined LV/CD player eventually.

RECENT LV DISC RELEASES

AUGUST

FILMS - ENEMY MINE, INTERMEZZO, THE PRIVATE LIFE OF HENRY VIII, TROUBLE IN MIND, A STAR IS BORN(1937), BLACK MOON RISING, DELTA FORCE, HOUSE, POWER, BRAZIL(DS), BUCK PRIVATES, A SONG TO REMEMBER, CASINO ROYALE, NINJA TURF, QUICKSILVER, ANIMAL FARM, DANCE WITH A STRANGER, SMOOTH TALK, AFTER HOURS.

MUSIC - MOTOWN'S MUSTANG, PATTI LABELLE/THE RAINBOW TOUR(DS), HALL & OATES/SEVEN BIG ONES(JR), RATT/THE VIDEO(JR), SUPERTRAMP/BROTHER WHERE YOU BOUND(JR), WHITNEY HOUSTON/#1 VIDEO HITS(JR), STING/BRING ON THE NIGHT(DS), ALL STAR SWING FESTIVAL. **OTHERS** - AYERS ROCK/TAKA TIMURA(DS), NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/GORILLA, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN MACHINE, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/YUKON PASSAGE, STEVE MARTIN/LIVE!.

SEPTEMBER

FILMS - THE MUSIC MAN, WILDCATS, CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF(1984), SUDDEN DEATH, HEAD, CROSSROADS, THE CHASE, ANATOMY OF A MURDER, THE SPOILERS (CLV/CAV), MIAMI VICE II/THE PRODIGAL SON(DS), SAGEBRUSH TRAIL/RANDY RIDES AGAIN(Both on one disc).

MUSIC - MOTOWN TIME CAPSULE/THE '60s, RAY DAVIES/RETURN TO WATERLOO, GAP BAND/VIDEO TRAIN(JR, CAV), HOT ROCK VIDEOS/VOL 1(JR), VIDEO A GO-GO VOL 2 (JR), JE TE VEUX(Satie music, DS).

OCTOBER

FILMS - THE CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR, TARGET, THE DIRT BIKE KID, R.A.D., JAKE SPEED, P.O.W. THE ESCAPE, SANTA CLAUS THE MOVIE, NAPOLEON(3 discs, CLV/CAV & \$89.98), OUT OF AFRICA(DS),

THE RAVEN/THE BLACK CAT(One disc), THE MAGIC FLUTE(DS), 16 DAYS OF GLORY (DS), SAY YES, ALWAYS, LILY IN LOVE, POLICE ACADEMY III.

MUSIC - TOSHIYUKI HONDA/NIGHTSONGS (DS), ELTON JOHN/BREAKING HEARTS TOUR, MTV CLOSET CLASSICS, A-HA/HUNTING HIGH & LOW(CLD), CHICAGO 17 (CLD), DREAM ACADEMY(CLD), MR MISTER/ WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD(CLD), STARSHIP/KNEE DEEP IN THE HOOPLA(CLD) **OTHER** - BIG CITY COMEDY, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/AFRICAN WILDLIFE, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/ATOTCHA, QUEST FOR TREASURE, NATIONAL GEOG./SAVE THE PANDA.

NOVEMBER

FILMS - LATINO, CODENAME: EMERALD, RUNNING OUT OF LUCK(DS), SAVING GRACE, DUCK SOUP(CLV/CAV), GOING MY WAY(CLV/CAV), THE MONEY PIT(DS), THE HAUNTING, FREAKS(DS), HOW THE WEST WAS WON(DS), MOTEL HELL(DS), ROCK AND RULE(DS), RUNAWAY TRAIN(DS), ANGELS OVER BROADWAY, BAND OF THE HAND, AT CLOSE RANGE, SPACE CAMP(DS).

MUSIC - COLONEL ABRAMS(CLD), RICHARD THOMPSON/ACROSS A CROWDED ROOM(DS), HEART(JR), POINTER SISTERS/SO EXCITED (JR), PAUL MAURIAT/CLASSICAL ELEGANCE (DS), BILLY JOEL/VIDEO ALBUM VOL.1 (DS), BOB DYLAN & TOM PETTY/HARD TO HANDLE(DS), WHAM IN CHINA(DS), SEXY SHORTS, DEJA VIEW, BOBBY'S SHORT/LIVE AT THE CARLYLE(DS), ERIC CLAPTON/LIVE '85, NEIL DIAMOND/I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE.

OTHER - BILLY CRYSTAL/DON'T GET ME STARTED, STAR TREK TV #36/42, STAR TREK TV #46/49, STAR TREK TV #48/45, STAR TREK TV #51/52, STAR TREK TV #50/54

DECEMBER

FILMS - 8 MILLION WAYS TO DIE, 400 BLOWS, JULES & JIM, TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL, NIGHT PATROL, FRANKENSTEIN, LEGEND, BELLS ARE RINGING(DS), KISS ME KATE (DS), POLTERGEIST II(DS), THREE MUSKETEERS, CLUE, DON'T LOOK BACK, GUNG HO, INDIANA JONES(DS), INDIANA JONES (CAV), PRETTY IN PINK, WHITE CHRISTMAS(DS), FUNNY LADY, JOLSON STORY, ONE MORE SATURDAY NIGHT, VIOLETS ARE BLUE, SALVADOR, TURTLE DIARY, COBRA, JO JO DANCER: YOUR LIFE IS CALLING.

MUSIC - AMERICAN BALLET, CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS, MESSIAH, HOT ROCKS VOL. 2, COLOR ME BARBRA, MY NAME IS BARBRA, TAMMY WYNETTE.

OTHER - STAR TREK/THE CAGE.

UNSCHEDULED

ROYAL OPERA/ROSENKAVALIER, LABRINTH, ROD STEWART CONCERT, WINCHESTER '73 (with James Stewart narration on the spare audio channel), SWEET LIBERTY, APRIL FOOL'S DAY, ADVENTURES OF MARK TWAIN, WELL DEVELOPED VOL. 1, MONTY PYTHON VOL. 1, MONTY PYTHON VOL. 2, YOUNG SHERLOCK HOLMES, BLUE CITY, LADY JANE, GODLEY & CREME/HISTORY MIX, WILLIE NELSON/GREATEST HITS, GRP ALL-STARS/LIVE AT THE RECORD PLANT, UNDER THE CHERRY MOON.

Scream Greats - Volume 1

Tom Savini

PARAMOUNT LV 2368 (USA) \$29.95
CAV-Ch COLOUR STEREO CX
1986 52mins

Now, there are documentaries - and there are **documentaries!** With chapter titles such as "Bayonettes, Machetes & Throats", "Is Splatter For The Whole Family", "Zombie Eating Habits" and "101 Ways To Use Pig Intestines" you might just twig this programme has something a little different to offer the jaded disc fan. *Fangoria* magazine are responsible for it - the first in a series of discs featuring the work of the special effects artists who make the impossible possible - and here the focus is on Tom Savini.

Charting his work with clips from *Martin* (in 1977), through *Dawn Of The Dead*, *Knightriders*, *Maniac*, *Friday 13th* - *The Final Chapter*, *Day Of The Dead*, up to the 1985 *Tales From The Darkside* one is still left wanting for more, but what there is is tantalisingly adequate. Most of the programme features Savini and his co-workers talking about how it's all done and the motivation for getting into the special effects business in the first place.

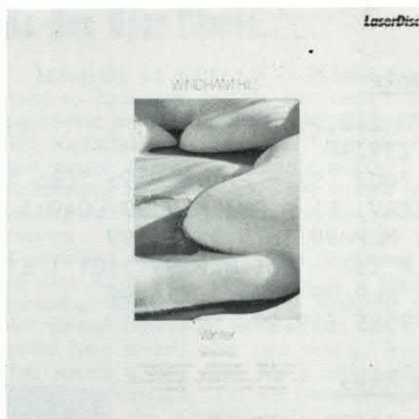


The nicely crisp videoed interview sequences contrast somewhat dramatically with the rather rosey film clips - their quality is variable indeed and includes some on-the-set hand-held video of only domestic quality - but all the important stuff makes for nicely steady still-frames and the general production values are high. The disc looks good even to PAL eyes.

And talking of such matters - we could well do with presentations such as this on PAL disc too, and being a documentary one would hope that it could be presented in this complete form - without falling foul of the censors' scissors. George Romero, who is heavily featured in the interview footage, puts such matters into the best perspective when he replies to the oft-made criticism (in the form of the disbelief of the fans' penchant for laughing at someone being torn in half) with the response "I guess you can't understand that - unless you're into it, you know". Yes, George, we know.

Windham Hill - Winter

SIGNATURE PS-85-004 (USA) \$24.95
CLV-Ch COLOUR STEREO CX DS
1985



Featuring the music of Alex de Grassi, William Ackerman, Mark Isham, Cyrille, Verdeaux, Darol Anger, Paul Dondero, Barbara Higbie, Michael Manring, Bill Oskay, Micheal O Domhnaill, Shadowfax, Liz Story

The fashionable 'New Age' music of WINDHAM HILL finds its way onto video in a series of four discs. This one is called *Winter* and features lots of seasonally appropriate snow and ice scenes. Others in the series are entitled *Autumn Portrait*, *Water's Path* and *Western Light*. All are presented as prestigious releases on the SIGNATURE label (a PIONEER ARTISTS spin-off) and combine restful scenic footage accompanied by state-of-the-art Digital Sound. This is 'Image Music'.

The sleeve write-up on this disc gives the impression of state-of-the-art video too - but it doesn't turn out to be the case. Admittedly it's only been shot on 16mm film, but consideration to the final video medium dictated a 30 frames per second shooting speed to allow the most accurate NTSC motion transfer and maintenance of picture fidelity. (Film would normally be shot at 24fps. Sometimes, for PAL video, it is shot at 25fps for the same reason.) The trouble is, though, that the telecine transfer has been degraded by the introduction of a limiter of some description that gives the viewer the impression of the entire disc being watched on a TV with a dirty screen - it's almost like a piece of ground glass has been placed between the viewer and the picture. There is no sparkle to the image either - the highlights being accordingly dulled in the process.

The music - soundwise at least - is still impressive. And that's without the opportunity to audition the disc in Digital (no DS player at present, sorry). But while the ear can examine the depth of the audio imagery with some pleasure the picture (in spite of the flawless pressing) remains a frustrating two-dimensional embellishment of no real benefit. If you have a liking for the WINDHAM HILL style of music the CDs still remain the best medium with which to experience it.

Randy Newman At The Odeon

PIONEER PA-85-102 (USA) \$24.95
CLV-Ch COLOUR STEREO CX
1983 57mins

Side 1: *I Love L.A./Burn On Big River/Simon Smith And His Amazing Dancing Bear/Marie/Christmas In Capetown/Short People/Texas Girl At The Funeral Of Her Father (L.R.)/Linda/Real Emotional Girl (L.R.)/Rednecks/*

Baltimore/Sail Away/Mama Told Me Not To Come (with R.C.)/Let's Burn Down The Cornfields (with R.C.)/Political Science/God's Song/My Life Is Good/Rider In The Rain (All)/I Think It's Going To Rain Today/It's Lonely At The Top

There are fewer people in the audience here than would normally constitute the basic union film crew necessary to record it - intimate might be an apt description. The setting is a New York restaurant and it suits the strengths of a solo Randy Newman performance well. As it happens, it is not quite a solo gig - dinner guest Linda Ronstadt joins in for a song or two, as does singer/guitarist Ry Cooder. Everyone has a good time. The choice of songs is right and there is humour. The disc functions both as an audio programme (the sound is acceptably clear for a live performance but there is some slight sibilance) and a video



one. In this latter respect the video origination is good but the low light levels do not always make for the best of pictures and the review disc, while acceptable, did manifest just a little too much blue flecking to be ideal.

BINDERS

BINDERS FOR
LASER DISC REVIEW
ARE AVAILABLE FROM:

BINDERS,
(LASER DISC REVIEW),
78 WHALLEY ROAD,
WILPSHIRE,
BLACKBURN,
LANCASHIRE
BB1 9LF

These binders can hold up to 24 issues of the magazine, depending on the thickness of future issues, and are furnished with an adhesive gold-blocked label carrying the LASER DISC REVIEW name.

The total cost, which includes UK postage and packing, is £4.25 per binder. Allow a few weeks for delivery when ordering.

The Laser Calendar

New LV releases, now available

COCOON (S) - CBS/FOX 1476-70 £19.99
 MAD MAX - WARNER PEL 61170 £19.99
 TINA TURNER/PRIVATE DANCER TOUR (S) - PMI MLP 99 1085 1 £14.99
 DIANA ROSS/THE VISIONS OF (CAV, S) - PMI MLP 99 0049 1 £14.99
 QUEEN/LIVE IN RIO (S) - PMI MLP 99 1079 1 £14.99
 JOHN LENNON/IMAGINE:THE FILM (S) - PMI MLP 99 1101 1 £14.99
 DURAN DURAN/ARENA (S) - PMI MLP 99 1099 1 £14.99
 ROCKY IV (S) - WARNER PEL 99555 £19.99

New LV releases, due before Xmas

SPIES LIKE US - WARNER PEL 11533 £19.99
 REVOLUTION [S] - WARNER PEL 11532 £19.99
 POLICE ACADEMY III - WARNER PEL 20022 £19.99
 THE SUPERGRASS [S] - CBS/FOX 3039-70 £19.99
 LADYHAWKE [S] - CBS/FOX 1474-70 £19.99
 BIGGLES [S] - CBS/FOX 3789-70 £19.99
 LEGEND [S] - CANNON TLY 90 3651 1 £19.99
 SWEET DREAMS [S] - CANNON TLY 90 3734 1 £19.99

New LV releases, scheduled for January

EMERALD FOREST [S] - EMBASSY ELV 2179 £19.99
 PRIZZI'S HONOUR [CLV/CAV] - EMBASSY ELV 1855 £24.95
 A CHORUS LINE [S] - EMBASSY ELV 2183 £19.99
 CLOCKWISE - CANNON TLY 90 3956 1 £19.99
 SILVER BULLET - CANNON TLY 90 4000 1 £19.99
 WEIRD SCIENCE [S] - CIC LVG 1193 £19.99
 EXPLORERS [S] - CIC LVG 2177 £19.99
 INDIANA JONES & THE TEMPLE OF DOOM [S] - CIC LVG 2185 £19.99

New LV releases, scheduled February onwards

BACK TO THE FUTURE [S] - CIC LVG 1204 £19.99
 COMMANDO [S] - CBS/FOX £19.99
 9 1/2 WEEKS [S] - CBS/FOX
 JEWEL OF THE NILE [S] - CBS/FOX £19.99
 HIGHLANDER [S] - CANNON £19.99
 HITCHER - CANNON £19.99
 COBRA [S] - WARNER £19.99
 THE COLOUR PURPLE - WARNER
 KATE BUSH/THE WHOLE STORY [S] - PMI £14.99

Import LV discs, now available in the UK

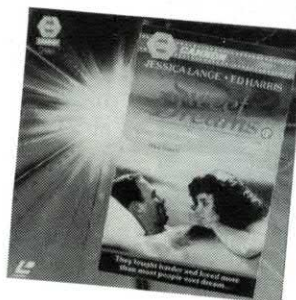
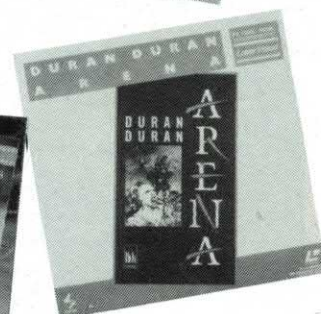
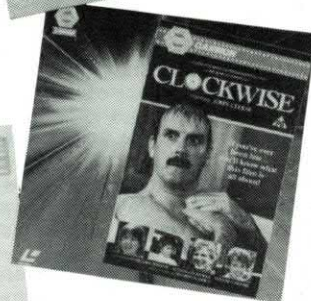
EDDIE GRANT/NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL (CAV, S) - VCL 405.3112 £9.99
 TINA TURNER/QUEEN OF ROCK'N ROLL (CAV, S) - VCL 405.3113 £9.99
 CHARLES AZNAVOUR/AN EVENING WITH (CAV, S) - VCL 405.3111 £9.99
 VARIOUS/MEETING OF THE SPIRITS (CAV, S) - VCL 405.3115 £9.99
 VARIOUS/REGGAE SUNSPASH VOL.2 (CAV, S) - VCL 405.3114 £9.99
 QUEEN/WE WILL ROCK YOU (S) - EMBASSY 405.3150 £9.99

Status in () confirmed. Status in [] is likely but unconfirmed.

Titles now back in stock - GISELLE, SLEEPING BEAUTY, IL TRITTICO, KING & I, LITTLE BROWN BURRO/TUKIKI, 9 TO 5, LORETTA LYNN

Titles recently deleted - FLASHDANCE, TRADING PLACES, ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA, THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT, THE COMPANY OF WOLVES, BBC CHILDREN'S FAVOURITES, THE SOUND OF MUSIC, MY FAIR LADY, SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER, SOLDIER BLUE, ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, 10 TO MIDNIGHT, 2001, TOM & JERRY I, CLASH OF THE TITANS, ELVIS ON TOUR, KELLY'S HEROES, ABBA THE MOVIE, BLUE HAWAII, ATLANTIC CITY, ABSOLUTION, AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON, XTRO, ROXY MUSIC, DIRE STRAITS/ALCHEMY LIVE

As stocks of MGM and POLYGRAM discs are exhausted the titles will become deleted as no contractual arrangements currently exist to enable their re-pressing. PIONEER has announced it does not intend to maintain its existing catalogue of discs and these too will be deleted as they go out of stock.



LASER LIBRARY

'Play and try before you buy'

Join the

LASER LIBRARY

Specialist APPROVAL Service for the FULL RANGE of Silver Discs

OVER 1000 Albums usually in stock

ALL UK and Pioneer Titles Available

Frequent Special Offers to Library Members

Price Lists constantly updated with availability details

Send for Library Membership details

The LASER LIBRARY, Richmond House,
Richmond Road, Ipswich IP14DL



The Laser Library Limited · Richmond House · Richmond Road · Ipswich IP1 4DL



Silver Disc Club

Free membership for
all UK LaserVision owners

The Club sends regular mailings to its members, has its own free magazine, makes special offers on discs, and keeps members up-to-date on new releases on LaserVision. Membership is entirely free. To apply, simply send us your name and address.

Silver Disc Club, SP & M Limited,
313 Boston Manor Road,
Brentford, Middx TW8 9LU

HIRED KILLERS BY DAY.
DEVOTED LOVERS BY NIGHT.
BUT THEIR NEXT ASSIGNMENT IS EACH OTHER.

JACK NICHOLSON

KATHLEEN TURNER



PRIZZI'S HONOR