

# LASER DISC REVIEW

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Welcome to this somewhat brief new edition of LDR. No complaints, though, it is being sent FREE to all previous subscribers courtesy of the advertising support of Laser Disc Distribution, Thames Valley Laser and Starship Industries to whom thanks. (Most UK readers not on Starship's mailing list should be receiving a copy of their latest catalogue in with this LDR. Where possible, copies will also be sent to overseas readers.) We still do not have firm news of future LDR issues and subscription rates but expect such information to come together towards the end of the year. When known, a notification will be sent to all of you on our mailing list.

## New Release News

**Laser Disc Distribution** - After some delay the first four RCA/Columbia titles - *Ghostbusters*, *Starman*, *Fright Night*, *Platoon* - are expected to go into production in August/September with street availability following shortly on. All will be in the conventional PAL LV format and thus playable on both old and new players. If not already on the market, the outstanding Video Collection titles - *Young At Heart*, *Flying Tigers* - should be available

very soon. (Apologies last time round for announcing the wrong pair of titles to be shipped - *Rio Grande* unexpectedly took the place of the scheduled *Young At Heart*.)

The first four RCA/Columbia titles foreshadow what Laser Disc Distribution hopes to be an ongoing series of releases from the label. The company is exhibiting at the Penta Hi-Fi Show, Heathrow, London on 16/7th September (Room 1202) and hopes to announce further new titles there.

**WEA** - Longform music titles from the Warner-Elektra-Atlantic group of record labels are already out in other European countries (where the penetration of CD Video players has been somewhat greater than in the UK) and are expected to follow on here before xmas. We've put 5 of the known titles on the New Release schedule and they could turn up here at any time in the coming months. The Fleetwood Mac disc reviewed this issue has already (end of July) gone into stock in the company's UK warehouse. Dealers with WEA accounts should be able to advise you as and when the others follow. If all this seems rather vague in the short-term, we can conclude with the more positive news that it is anticipated that every premium video title in the WEA catalogue will find its way onto videodisc as the market picks up.

**PolyGram** - We were still waiting to hear from PolyGram at press time but as of this writing it is expected that there will be a batch of longform CD-V pop music titles to be released in the run-up to xmas. Also in this release period are to be the first movies on the new format. If we learn any further details these will be included in the New Release listing on page 8.

## Pioneer CLD-1450 Details

It was hoped to start off this

edition with news of Pioneer UK's announcement of its forthcoming PAL/NTSC Combi player - the CLD-1450. A press briefing was scheduled for May 31st in preparation for an autumn product launch. However, it wasn't to be. The May 31st announcement was expected to reveal a pre-production sample of the CLD-1450 which was to be exclusively marketed in the UK. Other PAL territories were going to be supplied with a straight PAL-only unit - the CLD-1400 - to follow on from the current CLD-1200 model. But shortly before the end of May the UK announcement was cancelled in favour of a grander Europe-wide launch to coincide with the Berlin Funkausstellung at the end of August. It seems now to be the case that the 1450 will be Pioneer's next model in all PAL territories, right the way round the world to Australia. Though, as we understand it, the multistandard player was instigated primarily by the UK division, Pioneer must now consider it a good enough idea to distribute in every territory.

What we know of the 1450 so far is this. The machine will accept both PAL and NTSC LaserVision and CD Video discs and produce a picture on any PAL TV with a direct composite input. Picture performance will vary from TV to TV, though, depending mostly on age. PAL discs are geared to 625 scanning lines per picture frame of which there are 25 played per second. The colour part of the signal is modulated on the main luminance signal at a frequency of 4.43MHz. NTSC discs contain 525 line pictures refreshed at a rate of 30 per second and the colour signal carried at a sub-carrier frequency of 3.58MHz. Thus there are three main differences to be ironed out.

Making a player to cope with both types of disc, in its simplest form, just involves just putting the circuit boards from a PAL and NTSC player into the same box. However, such a player would not 'do' anything to the signal; it would not act as a standards-converter - a comparatively



expensive piece of professional equipment that can cost tens of thousands of pounds. The 1450 keeps both types of disc signal within their format parameters in all but one aspect (the colour/chroma signal) and relies on the flexibility of modern TVs to lock onto the appropriate scanning rates and frame frequencies. Though sold solely for the PAL TV system, most modern PAL TVs will cope with a 30 frame-per-second NTSC signal, even if it might mean twiddling the vertical hold button to stop the picture rolling. The more recent TVs will also spread the 525 lines of NTSC over the whole depth of the screen. (Older sets will not do this and only fill the middle section of the screen, leaving black strips top and bottom and compressing the height of the image. Everything will look slightly squashed.)

The one thing a PAL TV will not do is reproduce the colour part of the signal. This is the one extra feature that the 1450 must manage all by itself; in the player the 3.58MHz NTSC colour signal is transcoded to the PAL-compatible 4.43MHz frequency. From initial reports there is some loss of quality involved, mostly affecting the registration of the chroma signal. But the 1450 has two video outputs - one PAL and one NTSC - thereby enabling owners of multistandard TV monitors to achieve the optimum picture (without the colour transcoding). And, if any readers are contemplating buying a new TV in the near future, it would still seem prudent to opt for a multistandard model.

## EastEnders On Disc

The latest addition to the BBC's Interactive Television Unit library of discs is *EastEnders Gallery*, a simulation of a television control room designed for media studies in educational and training establishments. As the title implies, the programme is built around the popular *EastEnders* soap and uses actual footage from the series. The disc is designed to be used in conjunction with any one of the Philips 400-series LV players with an RS-232 port and a HyperCard-capable Apple Macintosh computer. Unlike previous BBC interactive productions the disc does not employ the in-built LV-ROM/AIV technology that can only be used with the 415 player.

Despite that the new disc does not run cheap, a fact brought about in part by the heavy burden of the performance rights for the excerpts, plus the obviously limited sales potential of the finished product. (A final price was not determined at press

time - a figure of around £1,000 was anticipated.) Additional television training and media studies discs are being considered as part of the project based, for example, on BBC TV's *Newsnight* and *Tomorrow's World*.

## Philips CDV 495 Specifications

More news of Philips' next combi players which are due to appear in the UK "very late in 1989" (some months after their introduction on the European mainland where the take-up of CD Video has been more successful) according to latest information from the company.

The midi-wideth CDV 786 is designed to match Philips' Series 7 A/V component stack and is to be configured only to replay CD Audio and digital sound videodiscs (though in all sizes).

Of more interest is the full-width CDV 495 which will most likely appear in two versions: a basic digital sound only combi, and what the company refers to as a "stroke" model also able to accommodate analogue sound discs (ie. it will be known as a CDV 495/01 or somesuch - the term is not meant to suggest the machine will have to be caressed to get an analogue signal out of it!). According to a Philips spokesman, confirming an earlier report over the continuance of analogue sound in LDR-20 - "We maintain our commitment to those who want a CD Video player with analogue sound". Exactly so.

Although the first machines off the production line won't have the feature, at some stage during the run Philips also expects to re-introduce teletext retrieval capability on the 495. Prices of the CDV 495 in its various configurations are not yet determined and the previously announced £599 figure will not necessarily still apply.

Philips is also now prepared to talk more openly of a multistandard PAL/NTSC player (in contrast to the confidential manner that has prevented us carrying the news sooner). Such a machine is hoped to be exhibited in prototype form at the Berlin Funkausstellung, with a view to introduction some time in 1990. The Berlin showing is not definite; it depends on progress with the prototype between now and August. As with the Pioneer CLD-1450, the Philips unit will replay NTSC discs into PAL-only TVs as well as multistandard PAL/NTSC ones. In the former case some variation in the picture output is to be anticipated, depending on the design, age and make of the TV etc.

## Marantz CV-60 Announcement

Planned for early 1989 introduction is Marantz' CV-60 second-generation PAL CD Video Combi featuring a new clamping/transport mechanism and several video circuit improvements: a new video signal processor (the Philips TEA 7650H IC) for increased consistency of brightness and colour over the varying speed range of CLV discs and generally improved dropout compensation, plus a new TBC circuit to improve picture stability on off-centre discs. The player makes use of the CDM 10 laser mechanism.

The CV-60 is essentially a variation on the forthcoming Philips CDV 495 and shares the same operational features and the 16-bit 4x oversampling audio circuits. Favourite Track Selection (FTS), whereby Track/Chapter programs can be committed to a long term memory for later recall, can memorise the contents of up to 112 discs - depending on the number of selections on each. The scope of the FTS memory is also governed by how much use is made of an on-screen title (up to 17 characters) generator.

CAV discs are catered for, but as currently specified there is no definite provision for analogue sound video discs. This aspect of the machine that is subject to change as of this writing with possibly an analogue variant being made available as per the Philips model.

## Marantz SP 50 Announcement

Expected for delivery in September is the Marantz SP 50 Dolby Pro-Logic Surround Sound Processor, the first Pro-Logic unit from the company and also one of the first to be launched in the UK. Externally the 420mm width SP 50 is identical to the previous RV 351 unit with only the front panel legends telling the two apart. However, the SP 50 employs digital delay, thus avoiding the phase or amplitude distortion occurring with analogue Bucket Brigade Devices (BBD) as well as considerably improving the overall noise performance of the signal. The Pro-Logic circuit also means that a true 'steered' centre channel can be reproduced, bringing home decoders up to the full cinema specification of the Dolby Surround System. As a result the SP 50 will make a much better job of placing sounds correctly across the sound stage and viewers located off the central axis of the main front speaker pair will experience improved



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CD-V feature film schedule expected soon.

WEA have seven 12" CD-V music titles expected soon.



directionality.

The SP 50 incorporates 2 x 15 watts of amplification for the rear speaker pair but additional amplification is required to drive the centre front speaker. The SP 50 also has a test tone generator to facilitate channel balance and system set-up. No price yet available.

## Crack In The Mirror In Hi-Vision

Over an end of May Bank Holiday weekend the movie *Crack In The Mirror* showed up at the local Cannon cinema. Only four or five punters turned out for the 4 o'clock Sunday screening so there was no problem finding the ideal position (centre seat, four rows back - see the whole screen without having to turn the head) to view this video-originated production made using Sony's 1125-line High Definition Video System that conforms to the impending Japanese Hi-Vision TV standard. Who'd want to go out and sit in 30 degree baking sun when there's movie magic like this in the making?

To our knowledge, *Crack In The Mirror* is the second feature film released using HDVS equipment, though the Italian-made *Julia And Julia* seemed to go straight to video in the UK. As reported in LDR-19, the videodisc release of *Julia And Julia* was something of a disappointment with its display of streaking and its subdued colour. Despite having to undergo a transfer to 24 frames a second (down from 30), *Crack In The Mirror* looked altogether more promising. There were motion defects whenever there was an acrossways pan and visible blur with any fast movement, but an unknowing viewer could have easily been led to believe it was just a normally produced movie. Transferring Hi-Vision to film eliminates the raw video 'look' of the *Julia And Julia* videodisc and there is not the slightest trace of any scanning lines. Most of *Crack In The Mirror* is

studio-bound and seems to benefit from the fact. The few outdoor scenes did not look so good., but having seen full-bandwidth Hi-Vision video on other occasions this shortcoming may be more to do with limitations in the present video-to-film transfer process. It would be wrong to pretend *Crack In The Mirror* outclassed a 35mm-originated movie but the difference is considerably less than might be imagined. Though it's probably too late to catch now, readers are urged to keep an eye out just in case *Crack In The Mirror* comes their way - or any other HDVS originated movie for that matter. One day all movies may be made this way.

## ViDi - Dutch LV/CD-V Disc Supplier

Readers keen to add any Dutch LV titles to their collections can contact ViDi at Dinantlaan 37, 5628 ZH Eindhoven, The Netherlands (Tel: 010-3140 417666 from UK) who have hundreds of discs still in stock. Beyond the movie and documentary titles listed in LDR-8 there are Dutch-subtitled versions of movies no longer available here as well as music titles similarly now deleted in the UK. The current range of CD Video titles can also be supplied. Lists with prices and ordering information are available on request.

(We hope to be able to furnish readers with the details of a German LV/CD-V disc supplier in the next issue.).

## French Report

\* Of all the CD Video launch territories France has shown the most enterprise with several longform and clip titles from independent (ie. non-PolyGram) sources. At the Cannes Film Festival one exhibitor was displaying sleeves for an apparently upcoming porno release - *Fever*. More news as we get it.

\* A trio of Warner Home Video titles is scheduled for CD Video: *Highlander*, *Gremlins* and

*Frantic*. No release date yet known.

\* Movies on CD Video from CBS-Fox France are expected in the autumn but no confirmed titles yet to hand.

## CompactDisc Mail - French CD-V Supplier

A mail-order supplier for French CD Video discs is Compact Disc Mail who are to be found at 136 Rue Du Fbg, St Martin, 75010 Paris, France. Their telephone number (from the UK) is 010 33 1 42.41.22.12. As the proprietor, Mr Brookes, is English, non French-speaking readers should have no difficulty placing telephone orders. (Though it might make sense to write off first for a copy of Compact Disc Mail's list of currently available French CD Video titles.) Payment can be via VISA (possibly ACCESS too) and discs are shipped tax free with VAT payable in the destination country. For the UK that means paying at a much lower level than the prohibitive domestic French rate.

## German Report

\* The first digital sound movies for Germany scheduled for June did not actually show up and July 24th came to be the revised release date for the first three from RCA/Columbia - *Ghostbusters*, *Platoon*, & *Krull*. Scheduled to follow on were *Fright Night*, *Blue Lagoon*, *Papillon* & *Tootsie*. CBS-Fox titles are expected to appear in the autumn, released on the EuroVideo label.

\* In June Sonopress announced it would begin to test-manufacture large format digital sound videodiscs later in the year with a possible entry into full-scale production next year.

\* Teldec (the company that launched the first-on-the-market but vinyl-based, low-tech videodisc back in the early '70s) is suggesting it has put aside DM.50,000,000 to invest in a optical videodisc pressing facility that is expected to be in production by the end of 1990. Proposed location of the plant is in Altdorf.

## Japan Report

**Pioneer CLD-100** - The cut in laser prices continues. Pioneer's new CLD-100 basic combi player (same as U.S. CLD-1070 model) lists for Y79,800 and can be bought at discount for around Y60,000 (c. £260). Machine caters for all 5 LV/CD formats and employs 4x 18-bit digital filter and twin D/A converters





with now-standard 425-line/46dB video resolution/noise specs. Dimensions are 420 x 122 x 416mm, weight 7.5kg.

**Sony MDP-111** - Sony too has a new (and very similar-looking) low-end combi, this time for Y88,000 list. Similar 18-bit audio decoding to the Pioneer is specified but with an optical digital output too. Dimensions are 430 x 110 x 400mm, weight 7.6kg.

**New Hi-Vision LSI** - In early June, NHK (Japan Broadcasting Co.) announced the successful test-manufacture of a new large-scale integrated circuit for use in reduced-bandwidth MUSE Hi-Vision TV receivers. 100 of the new LSIs are sufficient to replace 2,000 of the chips currently being used, reducing 50kg worth of circuitry down to just 1.5kg. The development is seen as being of very significant importance and will allow the mass-production of Hi-Vision TVs at an estimated price of Y 500,000 (c. £2,500) when production quantities of around a million units are undertaken. Toshiba, NEC, Matsushita, Sharp, Sony and Hitachi all co-operated in the development of the new chip and it is predicted that TVs incorporating it could go on sale in 1990.

## Silver Disc Club Takeover

At a meeting with Philips on 5th July, plans were finalised to hand over the running of the Philips Silver Disc Club to Laser Disc Distribution. Since Philips no longer markets consumer LaserVision products (for which the Club was instigated) the company had come to the conclusion that the organisation has run its useful course. However, for the benefit of the many members still actively purchasing discs, Philips was quite happy to pass the running over to those now involved in issuing new LV titles. Mutually acceptable terms for a handover on July 31st were discussed at the meeting, from which date Laser Disc Distribution will be solely responsible for the club which is to function under a new title - The Videodisc Club. The first newsletter from the Videodisc Club was scheduled to be sent out in August.

## Sharp LCD Screen Progress

Sharp Electronics has announced two interesting developments with liquid crystal display technology. While currently colour LCD TVs are only sold in sizes of 75 and 100mm, the company is

now planning to market a 35cm LCD TV only 27mm thick in Japan by mid-1990. Sharp has already publicly demonstrated a prototype.

The LCD projector described in prototype form in LDR-21, p.9 is also expected to become a marketing reality "soon" according to the press release. The XV-100Z (as it will be known) employs 3 x 75mm LCD panels to produce a picture up to 3 metres across.

## USA Report

**Sony To Make LV Discs** - In March Sony announced it would begin to manufacture laser videodiscs at its DADC, Terre Haute plant early in 1990. Spur to the decision would seem to be the signing of a disc manufacturing deal with Image Entertainment. Until the U.S. plant comes on stream, Sony has begun pressing discs for Image in Japan. The U.S. plant is expected to be able to turn out 100,000 discs a month initially.

**Pioneer LD-870** - Listing at a rock-bottom \$500.00 comes the LV-only LD-870 that achieves its low price by (surprisingly) omitting digital sound replay, but the machine retains full CAV capability. Video specs (425-line/46dB) are similarly unimpaired. Compared to the \$550.00 digital sound LD-838D Pioneer had on the market a year or two back, some observers may feel the new player is not the obvious bargain it first appears.

**Sharp MV-D100** - Far from attacking the budget end of the market, Sharp is introducing its MV-D100 combi (detailed LDR-21, p.9) in September at a \$1,499.95 list.

**Image** - Image Entertainment continues to provide interesting news stories. Earlier in the year, in its ongoing search to find adequate disc manufacturing facilities, the company was negotiating for discs to be made in China of all places. At an HDTV conference in New York, Image president, Martin Greenwald, claimed the company would produce the first HDTV discs for the U.S. market by



**New players from Pioneer & Sharp** - Below are further details of the new season's LV and combi players. Both Magnavox (CDV 484/485) and Pioneer (CLD-1070) have combis that are selling for below \$500.00 at discount, underlining the special push being given to the laser format in the U.S. this year.

**Pioneer CLD-1070** - Incorrectly described as a double-side play machine in our Las Vegas report in LDR-21, the new CLD-1070 combi is in fact a standard combi unit that lists for \$600.00. (Equivalent model to Japanese CLD-100.)

**Pioneer CLD-2070/3070** - These are the pair of play-both-sides, digital video assisted combi players, listing for \$1,000.00 and \$1,200 respectively (and are U.S. equivalents of the Japanese CLD-770/970, see LDR-20 p.22). The 3070 has a Y/C output. Both have optical digital audio outputs.

mid-1990 at estimated prices of \$69.95. In addition, Image is also planning to increase its profile in the interactive videodisc market later this year.

**HUGE** - Is the promotional tag Pioneer LDCA is giving its \$12,000,000 advertising campaign to promote the laser format in 1989. Cheaper disc and player prices are seen as additional driving elements behind the format this year, in addition to the ongoing quality aspect that has been re-inforced of late with the significantly improved disc pressing and title availability. An example of how serious Pioneer and the other laser companies are about the push was the July *Video Review* that contained no less than 16 pages of advertising (out of a total page count of 100). TV advertising is also part of the campaign.



# DISC REVIEWS

## FLEETWOODMAC

### Tango In The Night

WarnerBros 938 149-6

PAL 30cm [PDB]

CLV-Ch Colour Stereo Di

1988 59'27"



*Side A: The Chain/Everywhere/ Dreams/Seven Wonders/Isn't It Midnight/World Turning/Little Lies /Oh Well/Gold Dust Woman/Another Woman/Standback/Songbird/ Credits-Don't Stop*

The image quality of *Tango In The Night* is disappointingly poor. Though originated on 35mm, the film's editing and transfer to NTSC, followed by a standards conversion to PAL, has levied a heavy toll. The image is diffuse, grainy and, courtesy of the digital sound encoding of the disc, more than a little noisy in the chroma regions.

The audio is less troubled and seems about as clear as the sound mix will allow. The mix itself is bland and suggests little effort was made to bring out any of the individual instruments; the guitars particularly sound too far back. The audio-visual synch looks about right but doesn't feel it and as a result there is no real immediacy to the sound. The disc will appeal more to those who listen rather than those whose primary interest is to view.

Compiled from two nights' filming at the Cow Palace in San Francisco (12/13th December, 1987) the disc shows the group minus the now-departed Lindsey Buckingham. Guitarist/vocalists Billy Burnette and Rick Vito more than adequately maintain the group's musical strengths

which are further augmented by percussionist Asante and a trio of back-up singers. The apparent harmony of the line-up is dented somewhat by the closing credits where virtually every member of the original group is shown as now having their own separate management representatives. Stevie Nicks even has her close-ups filmed by a different camera crew (and more than probably shot after the concerts and edited in). (At time of review this disc was only available in France and Germany but is expected to be released in the UK in the coming months.)

## Bringing Up Baby

VIDEO COLLECTION LDV 3044

UK/PAL 30cm £19.99 [SWG]

CLV B & W Mono

1938 c.98'

Rated U

*An RKO Radio Pictures feature film starring Cary Grant, Katherine Hepburn and Charlie Ruggles.*

*Produced and directed by Howard Hawks.*



Were it to be a 1989 movie, critics might very well question the frenetic and unforgiving pace of this so-called 'screwball' comedy. With less repeated stars it also might well not have stood the test of time quite as successfully as it has.

The 'baby' referred to in the title turns out to be a tame leopard around which several tiers of confusion are built, to be compounded at a later stage with the introduction of a second whose temperament is nowhere near as amiable. Some trickery is involved in filming the

leopard scenes. The back projections are the most obvious, as are the cutaways to detail shots that don't require the use of the stars; just an anonymous pair of legs. An early shot of Cary Grant and the leopard clearly shows the animal behind a sheet of glass. There are, nonetheless, many instances when what you see on screen is 'for real'.

For fifty years old the print is in fairly reasonable condition. There are some noticeable variations in contrast and the odd section is slightly more diffuse than it would have been originally, but these aspects are not likely to disrupt viewing. The audio is cleaner-sounding than might be expected, with good suppression of the inevitable spits and pops common to movies of this vintage.

## Rio Grande



VIDEO COLLECTION LDV 3015

UK/PAL 30cm £19.99 [SWG]

CLV B & W Mono

1950 c.100'

Rated U

*A Republic Pictures feature film starring John Wayne & Maureen O'Hara with Ben Johnson, Claud Jarman Jnr, Harry Carey Jnr, Chill Wills, J. Carrol Naish, Victor McLagen, Grant Withers and the Sons Of The Pioneers. Directed by John Ford.*

Number 4 in the John Wayne series, according to the sleeve packaging, this western has John Wayne as a cavalry colonel attempting to deal with hostile Apaches evading capture by taking refuge across the Mexican border, out of his jurisdiction. There are no devious plot twists and, as might be expected, the movie offers predictable (and thus enjoyable) entertainment. Romantic interest is provided by Maureen O'Hara, the Colonel's estranged wife who turns up to oversee her (their) son, a new recruit who has just been posted to the remote fort. Western music fans will appreciate a couple of appearances by the Sons Of The Pioneers who deliver a dramatically significant rendition of *I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen* against a



near-static shot of Wayne and O'Hara. Standing side-by-side, the couple act their way through the lyrics in grand fashion, advancing the plot with hardly a word of extra dialogue added.

The image is starting to take on the slightly coarse 'video look' of being too many generations down from the original print but, in the main, it is watchable and the soundtrack listenable. There are distractions. Occasional 'clumps' on the audio coincide with momentary shimmers in the image where the film appears on the verge of slipping. At 8.13 on Side A there is an actual break that loses a word of dialogue. Periodically there are white dropout lines across the screen that indicate flaws on the videotape master.

## MICHAEL JACKSON The Legend Continues

Motown/PMV 080 558-1  
France/PAL 30cm 184.00 FF [PDB]  
CLV-Ch Colour Stereo Di  
1988 53'49"



Playing the disc it soon becomes apparent that the producers of this Michael Jackson video biography had a wealth of archive material from which to make their selections. There are the obvious concert and TV show excerpts and news footage of screaming fans, but more intriguing still are the odd VHS/Betamax originated off-air videotapes of early TV interviews, to say nothing of the black and white audition tape done for Motown in 1968. This last item, blurry as it is, shows the Jackson 5 running through John D. Loudermilk's *Tobacco Road* along with the intimation that label-boss Berry Gordy was an enthusiastic early user of video. This suggests there may be many similar videos of other Motown signings lying in the vaults.

On the early part of the disc there are several live Jackson 5 TV performances: two excerpts from the *Ed Sullivan Show* (1969), the *Diana Special* (1971) and a *Going Back To Indiana Special* (1971), but most of

the later appearances (*Jim Nabors*, *Flip Wilson*, *American Bandstand*, *Cher*, *Motown 25*) are mimed. Mostly, though, the disc is a documentary rather than a music disc and prospective purchasers should be aware that it is not a disc one would pull off the shelf when there is a need to listen to a few songs. Accept also the adulatory and non-critical nature of the programme and do your best to mute the auditory senses during the (fortunately!) brief passages where James Earl Jones provides some appallingly cloying voice-over dialogue.

Various celebrities add their own personal tributes to the star: Katherine Hepburn, Sammy Davis Jr, Elizabeth Taylor, Sophia Loren, Gene Kelly, Cyndi Lauper etc and, on a more relevant musical level, Quincy Jones. There are 13 chapters on the disc, obviously well short of the actual number of segments, but adequate to break the disc into scannable portions.

The programme has been compiled to a good technical standard. Where the original sources are broadcast quality the disc image is good. Most everything is video-originated which helps the transition of the material from NTSC. (Some tour excerpts are obviously PAL-originated and these will have had to endure a double conversion to NTSC and back.) The audio is a mix of mono and stereo sources and quite acceptable too.

(This disc has only been cleared for release in France and, at present, there are no plans for issue in the UK.)

## CDV Test

PIERRE VERANY PV 789032  
France/PAL CD-V 12cm [MPO]  
CLV-Ch Colour Stereo Di/DDD  
1989 6'05"/14'48"



"How to set up your audio video equipment" is how this French originated clip disc describes itself. It is not meant to serve as a showpiece for the CD-V medium and contains no specimen footage. The prime use of the video portion is to test the adjustment and linearity of

one's TV monitor, a challenge beyond the bandwidth and consistency of any current domestic videotape format. The disc has been pressed by MPO and is on the Pierre Verany label, but some collaboration with the French magazine *Stereo HiFi Video* is also indicated in the sleeve-insert. This is a substantial bi-lingual (French/English) booklet and non-French speakers need have no fear of not being able to follow any of the disc contents that are not adequately described here.

The six video chapters (29-34) last 1'00" each. Chapters 29 & 30 provide full-screen white and black signals respectively, followed by a grey-scale (31). With the absolute black and white levels adjusted on your monitor as described the grey-scale will most likely appear as a smoothly-graded series of densities from absolute black to pure white. A series of colour bars is reproduced on chapter 32 which are difficult to exploit fully without the appropriate coloured gel (not supplied) and adjustment is very much by eye in accordance with the notes. The colour bars display a degree of chroma noise (a CD-V characteristic) and certain colours also show the herringbone/fish-scaling effect common to both analogue and digital sound PAL videodisc formats. (No mention of this is in the booklet.)

Then follows a dot pattern (33), designed to test a TV's ability to produce a sharp image, and a black and white grid (34) for the geometry; whether distortion occurs on horizontal and vertical lines. Both these last two chapters will also highlight misconvergence of the TV tube; the accuracy of focus of the red/green/blue guns. But correcting any fault found is really a service shop adjustment rather than something the non-skilled can put to rights.

The audio portion of the disc does include some eight minutes of music and sound samples in specimen-grade hi-fi in contrast to the video omission. Following are test signals for L/R channel identification and speaker phase.

Most of the remaining audio time is given over to a series of noise bursts (from 16Hz - 1KHz) designed to facilitate correct speaker placement. Frequencies exaggerated by the acoustics of the listening room will indicate the need to move the speakers until the non-linearity is corrected or at least improved.

The pressing of the review disc was only fair on the video section, with some noticeable speckling (albeit of a very fine nature).

(Thanks go to Covent Garden Records for the loan of this disc for review purposes.)



## New UK Announcements

DATE	CATEGORY	PRICE	NUMBER	LABEL	TITLE	LA	ST	Di	CX	PRESS	STOCK
.89	Mus-Pop			WEA/	COLLINS, Phil / No Jacket Required						L S Di : PDB =
7.89	Mus-Pop-Live		938 149-6	WEA/WB	FLEETWOOD MAC / Tango In The Night	1988/59'					L S Di : PDB +
9.89	FF-Horror	22.99	LDD 20754	RCA/Col	FRIGHT NIGHT						L DS : CX SWG =
9.89	FF-Comedy	22.99	LDD 20488	RCA/Col	GHOSTBUSTERS						L DS : CX SWG =
.89	Mus-Pop-Live		938 141-6	WEA/Sire	MADONNA / Ciao Italia	101'					L S Di : PDB =
9.89	FF-Drama	22.99	LDD 21107	RCA/Col	PLATOON						L DS : CX SWG =
.89	Mus-Pop			WEA/	SIMON, Paul / Graceland						L S Di : PDB =
.89	Mus-Pop			WEA/	SIMPLY RED /						L S Di : PDB =
9.89	FF-Sci-Fi	22.99	LDD 30682	RCA/Col	STARMAN						L DS : CX SWG =

## New Clip Releases

DATE	PRICE	NUMBER	LABEL	TITLE	STOCK
8.89	4.99	080 990-2	Phonogram	DEF LEPPARD / Rocket	=
8.89	4.99	080 132-2	Phonogram	DIRE STRAITS / Brothers In Arms	=
8.89	4.99	080 128-2	Phonogram	DIRE STRAITS / Sultans Of Swing	=
8.89	4.99	080 136-2	Phonogram	DIRE STRAITS / Twisting By The Pool	=
8.89	4.99			MELLANCAMP, John / Pop Singer	=



## Disc Notes

Readers should refer to previous new release pages for explanatory notes. In brief, though, where no month of release is shown the disc could turn up any time this year. The columns following the title indicate Long/Active Play (L), Stereo (S) / Dolby Surround (DS), Digital Sound (Di), CX Noise Reduction (CX) and Pressing source (SWG

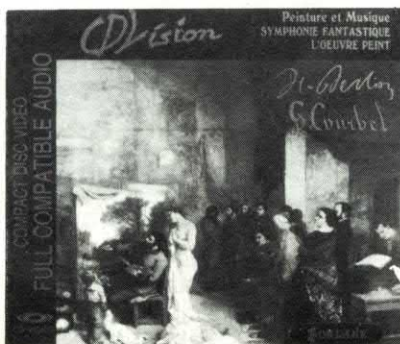
for Sonopress, PDB for Philips-Du Pont). The final Stock column indicates current availability as "+" and to-be-released as "=". In parts of the list blank spaces indicate information not known, as opposed to entries marked with a colon (:) which indicate an absence of the relevant feature.

**Note:** All the above discs will play on any PAL combi player. However, Digital sound (Di) discs will only function on the newer "CD Video" combi units.

## Peinture Et Music

**FORLANE PMV 10101**  
France/PAL CD-V 12cm [MPO]  
CLV Colour Stereo Di  
1988 4'25"/19'51"

This classical CD-V from France on the Forlane label features the *Marche au supplice* from Berlioz' *Symphony Fantastique* set to images from old-master paintings by Gustave Courbet. The video track runs 4'25". Image quality is reasonable and the pressing clean, but there is not the crisp detail in the brush-strokes of similar-in-concept Vivaldi/*Four*



*Seasons* disc (LDR-21); looks like the video has been sourced from photographic stills rather than shot

direct on to videotape.

However, the selection of images and the speed at which they change has been sympathetically harmonised with the dynamics and mood of the music. Along with a reprise of the video track the audio adds a further two excerpts - *Un bal* and *Song d'une nuit de Sabbat* - bringing the total audio to 19'51". The music is by the Orchestre Symphonique de R.T.L. conducted by Louis de Froment. Sleeve notes are in French, English and Italian. (Review copy of this disc was bought from Tower Records, London W.1. in June for £11.99.)