

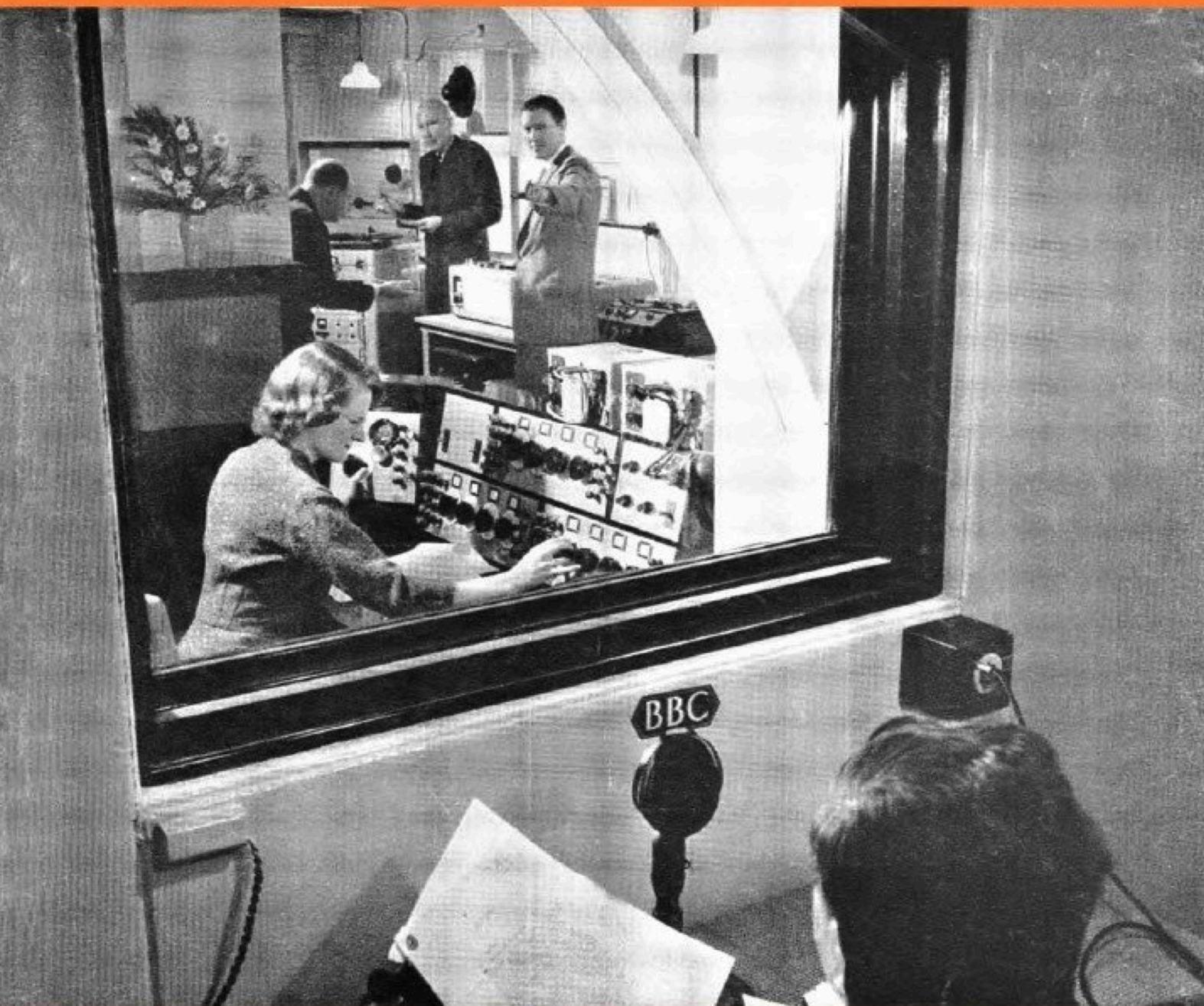
the TAPE

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Vol. 3 No. 4

RECORDER

INCORPORATING "SOUND AND CINE"



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the TAPE RECORDER

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EDITORIAL

NO good ever came from glossing over bad things, from refusing to face important facts, or from pulling punches to protect an unworthy champion. It was in our mind to write in this vein in our last number, directing this column against a really bad state of irresponsibility and carelessness pervading the tape recorder industry; but our April number coincided with the London Audio Festival, and we considered that such writing at such an important moment might do more harm than good. Now that the show is over we can write even more strongly, and with the added knowledge that the show itself has emphasised the urgency of the points we have to make—for there was so much to see that was really first-class.

During World War II, almost incredible things were done on factory production lines—and particularly in the world of electronics. We entered the era thinking and working in terms of Kc/s, and within a couple of years we were mass-producing apparatus that worked reliably in terms of Megacycles. All this was achieved by the application of strict procedure, intelligent initial training of unskilled labour, and ruthless stage-by-stage inspection. And all this we achieved with Time riding against us as the chief enemy. Now let us look at our tape recorder industry in the light of that achievement, and what do we see? The specifications to which audio engineers have to work are as wide as railway tunnels to a needle, compared with the then seemingly impossible demands of airborne radar; yet, day after day, we receive and hear of complaints of stupid and unnecessary failures in simple circuitry, of machines that have obviously never been subjected to the most elementary tests, and even of downright bad workmanship.

Some tape recorder assemblers who were enjoying the prosperity of an outside boom 12 months ago have been heard to complain bitterly that "things are really bad—that the bottom has fallen out of the market". Our opinion is that they themselves did everything to help bring about this state of affairs. If Mr. X takes his new 30-guinea *Flutterwow* to his tape club, switches it on, and allows a dozen other people to see it expire in a coil of smoke, can those people be blamed for diverting their cash towards the purchase of a car or a washing machine?

We spoke to one keen manufacturer at the show, and asked him about factory inspection. His reply: "Our inspection department is beyond the reach of the managing director. If he is stamping his feet to despatch an urgent order, he must continue to stamp until every individual machine has been stamped 'O.K.' We will not tolerate the risk of customer disappointments."

If one or two more companies had adopted that technique a year ago, they might still be enjoying good business, which can only come through good value. Our reputable manufacturers, know this as well as we do. That is why they are thriving today. But those who bought in quantities of decks, hoped wish-

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fully that they were 100% O.K., and joined them up to quantities more of improperly tested electronics before rushing them into bought-in supplies of "arty" boxes—well, they have lost the day; and they deserved to.

This year's show presented us with evidence that the tape recorder market is as keen as ever, and that the rubbish is being thoroughly weeded out. From now onwards we shall see far better workmanship, and far more selective buying on the part of the public. We have a duty to our readers, to see that they buy tape recorders, and not pups. We have a similar duty to our advertisers with good equipment to sell. We have many times refused the advertising of goods that we ourselves would not like to buy, and we intend to continue with this policy.

COVER PICTURE

ELECTROPHONIC music, Electronic music, *Musique Concrète*, or call it what you will, is enjoying an important prominence in the world of entertainment; and it is growing in importance with every passing month, for films, television and radio plays. *Tape Recorder* readers who are not already readers of its sister journal, *Hi-Fi News*, may like to note the fact that in the May number (now on sale) there is the introductory article to a new and most interesting constructional series which describes in detail the building of an electronic organ, with two-manual keyboard and pedal keyboard. This is a fully polyphonic instrument for use in the home. Electronic music, produced by tape recorders, is of course a different branch of the family altogether, though simple electronic oscillators can play a big part in it. Its sounds are already so well accepted that they often pass unnoticed. The B.B.C. now regards it as a necessary accessory, its electrophonic workshop has been established for several years (Front cover, B.B.C. photo).

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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