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## NEWS

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### THE BEAUTY OF SOUNDS

... "Are all sounds equally beautiful? Can a sound be beautiful in itself, or does it require a context? And what are the prevailing standards for beauty? Despite the lack of consensus, it seems evident that the nineteenth century concept of tonal beauty (a smooth, opulent, vibrant, intensely rich tone) has lost some of its force. And, in its place, we hear a shift in the direction of leaner, straighter, edgier, more sharply impacted sounds, which I take to be closer to the tonal values of Baroque music as well as a predictable reaction against the tonal preferences of the last century. But, at the same time one must concede that certain genres (notably opera) have proved resistant to these trends, and that large segments of musical society hold the tonal values of Romanticism as

tenaciously as ever. We can legitimately inquire what grounds for preference we may apply to the profusion of electronic and environmental sounds in recent music, other than (as always) our instincts and experience. To dismiss the question with 'each in its own way' seems an evasion. I suggest that a new set of tonal values is gradually coalescing amidst what appears to be the chaos of seemingly endless variety. These values may never be proclaimed by consensus, but they are now being demonstrated, and (perhaps) we will recognise them for what they are" (Reproduced with permission from *Press Digest, Current Contents*® No. 22, May 28, 1984. Copyright by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, PA, USA).

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### 'TALKING' SPECTROPHOTOMETER

The new "Spectronic 1001" from Bausch and Lomb, now available from FSE Scientific, 'talks' to its user through its alphanumeric display: it 'helps the user to the optimum parameter for carrying out any spectrophotometric measurement'. The innovative high-energy split-beam optics are designed to give double-beam stability to all single-beam applications, with high sensitivity and analytical accuracy. The

Spectronic 1001 has a wavelength range of 190–950 nm. The multi-microprocessor control system can store up to 30 preformatted tests. Ten standard programmes including kinetics, absorbance ratio, peak find, multi-wavelength programming, absorbance difference, standard curve analysis and statistics package are available. (John Morrison, *Search*, Lloyd Media, PO Box 340, Mona Vale, NSW 2103)

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