

CASSETTE DECKS TESTED:

Advent Model 200
 Ampex Micro 54
 Bogen CRP
 Fisher RC-80
 Harman-Kardon CAD-4

Harman-Kardon CAD-5
 JVC 1660
 Kenwood KX-7010
 Lafayette RK-760
 Norelco 2401A
 RCA MZD563

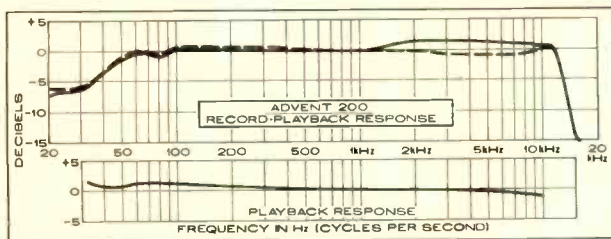
Realistic SCT-3
 Roberts 95
 Standard SR-T178DK
 Teac A-24
 Vivitar RC-710
 Wollensak 4750



ADVENT MODEL 200

The Advent Model 200 holds a special position among cassette decks. It is the most expensive (\$260), the most "professional" in its operating features, and—although it is very difficult to rank the tested machines in any order of quality—our test data and listening evaluation clearly indicated that the Advent Model 200 is "the best" of the currently available cassette decks. Its margin of superiority in any one characteristic is slim, and on occasion it was outperformed in a particular area by one or another of the lower-price decks. Nevertheless, in its totality, the Advent Model 200 is a most impressive device.

The frequency response of the Model 200 proved to be outstanding—comparable in flatness to that of the finest reel-to-reel recorders, though not as wide. It had an exceptional freedom from noise and coloration of the recorded



material, even with its Dolby circuits switched off. With the further noise reduction afforded by the Dolby system, the Advent Model 200 can record and play back stereo FM broadcasts with absolutely no audible increase in distortion or degradation of frequency response or signal-to-noise ratio. When we taped the STEREO REVIEW Demonstration Record on the Advent machine, the only difference we could hear in the playback was a slight increase in hiss level. With its Dolby circuits on, the hiss in the output of the Advent Model 200 was comparable to that of pre-Dolby stereo discs and definitely lower than we have ever been able to receive in our considerable experience with stereo FM broadcasts.

Advent supplies a standard-level (200 nanowebers/m²) Dolby test cassette with the Model 200. With this, and its internal Dolby test oscillator and the adjustments in the rear, the user can speedily verify (and adjust, if necessary) the recording and playback levels that are so critical for

proper Dolby operation. The single VU meter is the largest, most accurately calibrated, and most legible meter available on a cassette deck. The frequency response of the meter is boosted at high frequencies to reduce the possibility of saturating the tape or overdriving the recording amplifier with loud high-frequency passages. The meter can be switched to read the level of *either* channel, which is then set with its individual level control. Then, for normal operation, the meter is switched so that it indicates the higher level coming through *either* of the two channels. A master gain control adjusts the recording level for both channels simultaneously. A single playback-level control in the rear affects both line and headphone outputs.

The tape-loading system is type B, and the end-of-tape system is type 2—there is also a flashing light to indicate that the motor has shut off. The transport controls are fully interlocked, and all are of the latching type. A second row of piano-key switches controls power, stereo/mono recording, Dolby operation, and tape bias-equalization. The last of these, a two-position switch (REGULAR/SPECIAL), is responsible for much of the Model 200's performance. In its REGULAR position, recording bias and recording *and* playback equalization are set for standard cassette tapes such as 3M Type 271. In the SPECIAL position, the record bias is increased and equalization changed for optimum results with chromium-dioxide tapes such as Dupont's Crolyn. (Advent is now marketing Crolyn cassettes under the Advocate brand name, and other companies will surely follow suit.) By recording with the SPECIAL setting and playing back with the REGULAR setting, improved performance can also be obtained from TDK SD tape.

In our tests, we obtained excellent and very similar results with low-noise BASF (solid curve) and TDK SD cassettes with the Dolby circuits switched in. We also checked the record/playback response with an Advocate Crolyn cassette (dashed curve, Dolby out). Advent has planned sufficiently ahead in the design of the Model 200 so that it should be able to realize optimum performance from almost any tape type likely to be available in the years to come. Incidentally, Advent also supplies with the recorder a demonstration Crolyn cassette duplicated at normal playing speed with the Dolby circuit, both as a demonstration of the performance potential of the system (which should convince the most skeptical listener) and to provide guidance as to the best operating levels to use for various types of program material.