

TEN TIPS FOR OBTAINING STUDIO-QUALITY

- 1 Make microphone recordings in perfectly quiet surroundings.**

A microphone inexorably picks up all sounds including the unwanted ones. Therefore you must not set up the microphone to close to the recorder. When both the microphone and the recorder are placed on the same table, even the inaudible vibrations from the recorder motor might penetrate to the microphone.
- 2 Make sure of the acoustics of a room or hall.**

The resonance-effect, particularly annoying in an empty room, should be kept at the lowest possible value when speech or singing by a soloist is recorded. Consequently, it is best to make your recordings in a well-furnished room. Close the curtains, if necessary and drape the hard, reverberating walls with sound-absorbing cloth. Remember, however, that choral-singing or some instrumental music may require resonance. In this case the curtains should be open and sound-absorbing objects, such as cloth-covered armchairs and large carpets should be removed.
- 3 Instruct the speaker or soloist carefully.**

The microphone wants to be treated as a normal listener — speak in a normal voice and at about 1 foot from the microphone. Speaking, singing or playing over-loudly or too close to the microphone will affect the quality of the sound. Avoid too much moving about in front of the microphone.
- 4 This is how you speak under unfavourable conditions.**

Annoying background noise or acoustics that cannot be improved can be compensated for to a reasonable degree by speaking softly into a microphone held close to the mouth.
- 5 Make sure of the best recording volume.**

Here, the magic eye is a valuable help. We have pointed it out before: at the loudest passages the luminous green sectors must just barely be prevented from touching. Keep an eye on the magic eye when recording!
Very soft passages may be given a little more volume, but never increase the volume suddenly, easy does it!
- 6 Choral singing and ensemble music require a special microphone arrangement.**

Place the microphone in front of or in the centre of the singers or musicians (or suspend it above them), with the front of the microphone facing them. Soloists may step forward temporarily, but it is better to use more than one microphone and a mixing box. See the list of accessories on page 14.
A test-recording is the best way to determine whether the recording volume is correct.
- 7 Solo instruments require test-recordings.**

The best distance between the microphone and the solo instrument depends on the type of instrument and on the strength of the sound which it produces; it may be anything between 2–7 feet. The best position for the instrument can only be found by making testrecordings!
- 8 Accompaniment should be soft!**

Accompaniment of a solo instrument or of a singer should always remain in the background and never be dominating!
- 9 Allow a cold recorder to warm up for a few minutes.**

The lubricants used are suitable for normal operating temperatures and will remain fully effective even in tropical climates. If, however, the recorder has been in a cold place for some time, it is best to allow it to warm up for a few minutes by having it switched on without recording. After a few minutes you can then be sure of an absolutely constant speed of the tape (and consequently of perfect sound).
- 10 Keep experimenting!**

Try another microphone arrangement if you're not completely satisfied with the results. Sometimes a voice comes over well only when the performer sings into or past the microphone. Make tests with other acoustical arrangements. Use your imagination and talk over your problems with other recorder-owners... it will make all the difference to the results you obtain.