

## Auto care

# Wired for sound

## Choosing a car stereo system that will not leave you flat

BY DEAN CARROLL  
Copley News Service

Add up the amount of time you spend in the car singing along with the radio or tape player and you'll probably discover that most of your music listening is done on the road. For many of us, in fact, the car is the only place where we have the opportunity to really enjoy music.

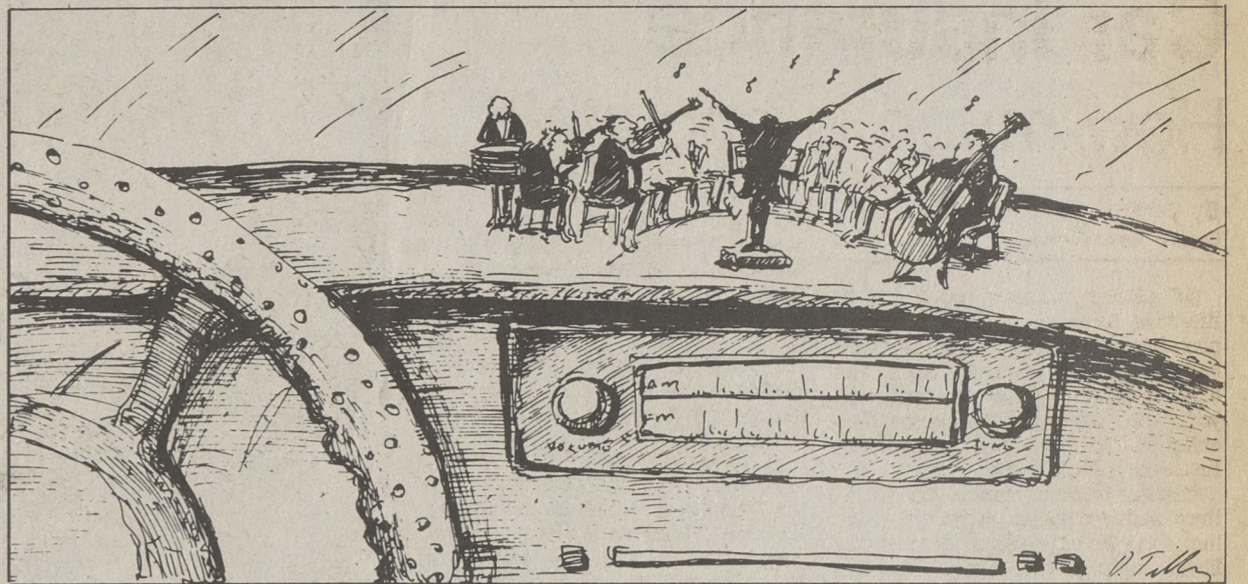
But we may not be enjoying that music as much as we could. Reception or tape difficulties may prevent a sound system from performing at its optimum level. Following are suggestions for improving the sound of any mobile music rig from a spokesman for Pioneer Electronics, a manufacturer of sound systems.

An ounce of prevention. Although most of us are fussy about cleanliness when it comes to keeping our home stereos clean and tidy, very few of us take the time to practice a regular program of car stereo hygiene.

Tape players are especially sensitive to dirt, dust and smoke. If tapes start to sound dull and lifeless, dirt is suspect No. 1. To remedy the situation use a commercial cleaner, preferably one that comes housed in a cassette shell. Just moisten the cleaner's pad with cleaning fluid and insert the device into the player. A second or two of normal play should remove all sound-robbing deposits from the tape head.

A thorough cleaning also may reduce the possibility of the tape sticking to the player's moving parts and unraveling. If that problem persists after cleaning, the tape player probably needs an overhaul - a job best left to a car stereo dealer.

Keep cool. Summer is a particularly hard time for cassettes. Never leave a tape sitting on the dashboard on a hot day. If you do, the tape probably will warp and become unplayable. Also, tapes will stick to heated surfaces, so never pop a cassette into a tape player until the deck itself has had time to cool off. You can speed up the cooling process by wedging open the door that covers the tape slot.



### Car stereo

You can buy a good-sounding car stereo that won't break your bank book.

Reception remedy. Modern car radios are great at dealing with the problems of radio reception on the road, but no radio can operate properly without a good antenna. For the best radio reception, install a retractable whip antenna. If vandalism is a problem in your area, use an antenna with a suction-cup mount that can be removed for safekeeping when you leave your car. T-shaped wire antennae bonded to the

windshield are immune to theft and vandalism but they simply can't do a good job in areas with weak broadcasts.

Noise control. The whines and buzzes that sometime creep into a car stereo are difficult to remove, but if you're willing to experiment, try the following procedure:

# Finding a mechanic you can count on

By ERIC JUDE  
Copley News Service

Anyone whose car has ever broken down can appreciate the relief of finding a reasonably priced and skilled automotive mechanic.

Your pick of a mechanic should be as prudent as your choice of a personal physician. Certain problems require a specialist while others can be handled by a generalist.

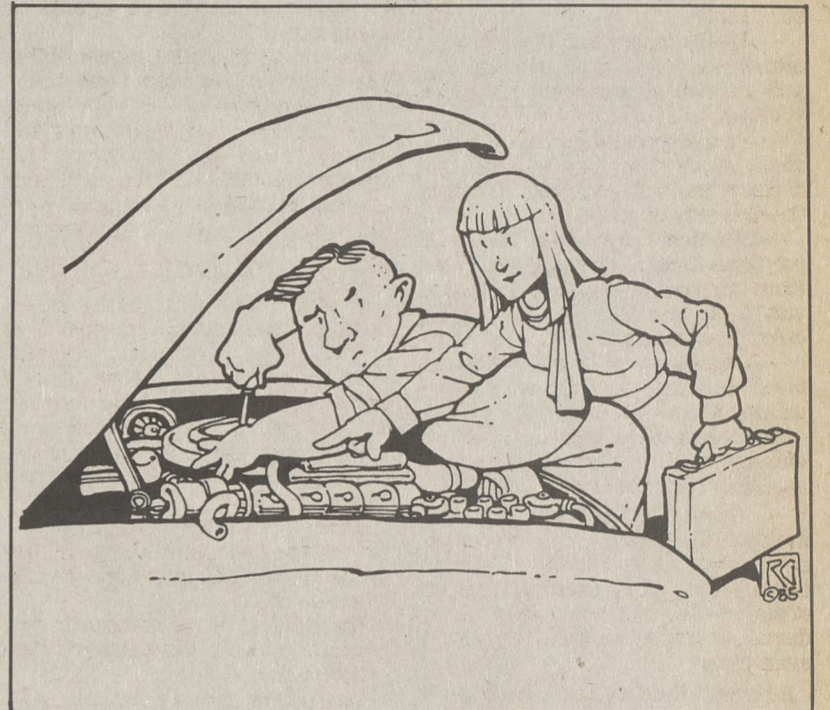
John Stanwood, a 20-year veteran of the automotive trade, offers some pointers for selecting the right mechanic every time. Stanwood is the chief automotive instructor at the IIT Technical Institute in Fort Wayne, Ind., one of a nationwide network of private technical-career training centers operated by IIT Educational Services Inc.

-Ask a prospective mechanic if he has an associate degree or a certificate in automotive technology, having completed a minimum of one year of postsecondary school training.

-Try to find a mechanic with enough field experience to handle your car's particular problem. It usually takes two years to become proficient at routine service and repairs and an additional one to two years to perform advanced repair work. A difficult specialty, such as automatic transmission repair, requires even further training.

-A few states have licensing boards that accredit automotive mechanics who pass state-issued written tests. A mechanic should post his license if the state in which he is practicing has mandatory licensing requirements.

-Voluntary certification by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence is widely recognized as the standard of achievement for automotive mechanics.



### Have faith

Choosing an automobile mechanic in whom you have faith is half the battle in car repairs.

# Rust problems on your car can be avoided

By CAROL ROBERTS  
Copley News Service

Are you one of those folks who thinks that all rust does is make big ugly holes in car fenders?

Here are two true stories about what uncontrolled rust can do to a vehicle, according to car expert Robert Appel, whose syndicated radio feature "Cartalk" is heard in both the United States and Canada.

"A friend's 10-year-old Dodge Dart collapsed on its front suspension while it was sitting peacefully in his driveway and its wheels fell off.

"Amazingly, he had used the car the previous day for a high-speed trip. If the rust had eaten through 24 hours earlier, the story would have had a much different conclusion," Appel said.

"Another buddy had recently purchased a used Toyota Corolla and returned to the shop to complain of a strange noise in the front end. He was informed that the front sub-frame (to which the steering hardware was secured) had cracked. The damage was considered unrepairable. To continue to drive the car would be suicidal - steering control could be lost at any moment."

It's true, Appel said, that newer cars may rust at a slightly slower rate because of improved technology. But all cars rust, he said.

The basic cause of rust can be traced to the chemical action, or interaction, of oxygen and water when they come in contact with steel and other ferrous metals.

Although surface rust on scratches and dents is unsightly, it is not a major problem, Appel said. Rust is most damaging when it starts on unprotected metal surfaces located inside an automobile, such as doors, rocker panels, hoods and trunk lids, Appel said. And it begins in the tiniest seams, welds,

cracks and crevices. By the time rust reaches the flatter, more exposed areas of sheet metal, the irreversible damage may have been done.

The best way to avoid rust?

Take the car to a reputable, qualified rust protection dealer whose trained personnel will uniformly apply rust-inhibiting sealants to affected interior metals.

Despite development of factory coated or plated metals, no automobile can withstand the corrosive effects of salt and water without proper maintenance, which includes the professional rustproofing by qualified technicians.

# Keeping your car looking shiny

By DEBRA COOPER  
Copley News Service

From the first day a car is used, it is exposed to conditions that work against keeping it attractive. The shiny finish that first attracted you to the car can quickly become dull and weathered from exposure to something as simple as sunlight.

Although today's car finishes are more durable than they used to be, they can be destroyed by rainwater, salt spray in winter, exhaust smoke, industrial contaminants and other airborne pollutants, according to the Chemical Specialties Manufacturers

Association. Obviously, not every car exposed to these threats has its finished ruined - there are plenty of shiny cars on the road. The difference? Frequent cleaning and polishing, says the association.

According to the Automotive

Information Council, most cars should be waxed at least twice a year and more frequently if the car is parked outside.

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