Sex Scene

Schaefer, Eric

Published by Duke University Press

Schaefer, Eric.
Sex Scene: Media and the Sexual Revolution.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/69056

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=2496716
Part III: Media at the Margins
In 1966, a man named Joe Davis was convicted by a federal jury of sending obscene materials through the mail. Davis was fined $1,000 and given a suspended sentence of six months in jail despite the fact that the items he had mailed contained no explicit images of bodies or sexual activity, and in some cases no discernible verbal content at all: Davis had been dealing in erotic phonograph records. In historical surveys that discuss the role of the media in the sexual revolution, little mention has been given to sexually explicit phonograph records, despite the fact that the recording industry enjoyed unprecedented prosperity and cultural influence during the decades of the sexual revolution. Beginning in the early 1950s, a lively home market existed for long-playing (LP) recordings not only of music but of poetry readings, children’s entertainment, dramatizations, sound effects, and comedy performances. Adult-themed records made between the 1950s and mid-1970s provide an overlooked case study of mass-media erotica meant for home consumption before cable television or the explosion of porn on video and DVD.

Under-the-counter recordings of erotic material—referred to as either “blue discs” or “party records”—have circulated since at least the 1930s, but attained a new degree of cultural visibility in the 1950s and 1960s. Party records were often intended for a culture of male hi-fi aficionados, but the home stereo was not solely the domain of men. During the same era, records made by female comics such as Rusty Warren presented bawdy material from a female perspective and reached legions of female fans. Warren’s records were intended for mixed-gender social gatherings; however, LP phonograph albums also functioned as a form of family sex education and home sex therapy for couples. In all of these cases, the LP was well suited to the frank discussion and performance of sexuality, a point that performers often made by contrasting party records with network radio and television.

The examination of party records fills a gap in the historical record of media consumption from this era, and also illustrates a variety of approaches to the vocal performance of erotic material. As such, one of the
concerns of this chapter will be to examine the different ways that were found to “speak sex” for various home-listening audiences. Indeed, one of my goals is to explore how media performances work to construct the contexts of their reception. Scholars of film reception such as Robert C. Allen have argued that cinema audiences are discursively constructed by industry advertising, the design of movie theaters, and the like.1

In her study of audiences in Africa, Karin Barber describes the role of performance in the formation of audiences: “Performances do not just play to ready-made congregations of spectators which are out there awaiting address; they convene those congregations and by their mode of address assign them a certain position from which to receive the address. Thus performances, in the act of addressing audiences, constitute those audiences as a particular form of collectivity.”2 Following Barber, I take the performances heard on party records as one form of evidence by which we might infer details of their reception. Before I begin a discussion of specific artists and LPs, I will situate party records in a postwar debate about “obscene” phonograph records, a topic that was the source of growing concern for law enforcement officers and legislators throughout the 1940s and 1950s.

The New York Times reported on November 1, 1942 that a police judge in Newark, New Jersey, ordered a campaign against “dealers in indecent phonograph recordings” after four owners of radio and music shops were charged with possessing obscene records. The fact that the judge also ordered a warrant for the arrest of a record distributor alleged to have “10,000 objectionable records in stock” reveals the extent of mass production and distribution in the operation.3 Press coverage suggests that distributors of risqué records were increasingly at risk of prosecution toward the end of the 1940s. The Lincoln Journal reported on October 1, 1948, that the FBI had arrested a Kansas man on a charge of “illegally transporting obscene phonograph records between states.” An FBI Special Agent stated this was “the first case of its kind handled by the bureau.” The man was the operator of the Kansas City Music and Sales Company, and had sold the records to “select customers on an under-the-counter basis.”4 As in other cases during the 1940s, law enforcement officials targeted music shops and record distributors who sold adult records to an exclusive clientele.5

Such was the case with Alexander L. Alpers, a San Francisco “record-shop operator,” who was fined $200 by a district court in December 1948 for sending packages of allegedly indecent records out of state.6 Alpers’s conviction was overturned in June 1949 by the Ninth Federal Circuit
Court, which stated that the law forbidding the shipment of obscene “matters” did not apply to phonograph records. That ruling was later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court on February 7, 1950. In United States v. Alpers, the court held that obscene phonograph records were within the prohibition of the United States Criminal Code. In the wake of this decision, President Harry Truman updated federal law to include “obscene phonograph recordings and electrical transcriptions” in the ban on the interstate shipment of obscenity. An article in the May 3, 1950, issue of Variety indicated that arrests continued after the new legislation: in a case called “the first of its kind” in Philadelphia, Albert L. Miller, owner of Palda Records, was indicted by the Federal Grand Jury on charges of “shipping pornographic recordings.” Although reports in the press suggest that the peak of law enforcement activity relating to obscene records was in the late 1940s, the pursuit of them continued. For example, the Syracuse Herald-Journal reported on April 2, 1958, that six music shops in Queens and a Manhattan record distributor were raided and eight men were arrested on charges of selling “obscene phonograph records”: “Hundreds of records, some selling as high as $50 each, were seized.”

Press coverage thus indicates a thriving market for under-the-counter risqué recordings in the 1940s and 1950s. But who was buying and listening to these records? Under what social circumstances were they played? What kinds of erotic performances did they contain? How did party records fit into broader postwar discourses about gender and sexuality? How did the content of adult records change during the era of the sexual revolution? Information about these records is difficult to find, but one way we might begin to answer questions such as these is by reference to the Joe Davis court case mentioned above. One of the records that Davis sent through the mail was Erotica: The Rhythms of Love (Fax Records, ca. 1960). Before I describe the performances heard on this record, I would like to consider the dust jacket, which can provide some clues as to the nature of the audience for “obscene” records. The liner notes explain, “Erotica” was “the culmination of more than two years of research, utilizing today’s most advanced electronic techniques and the talents of sound engineers who have pioneered a host of technical achievements.” They go on to explain that a portion of the record was made “on a Magnecorder PT6AH, using an RCA 77DX microphone, and taped at 15 IPS (inches per second),” with the help of an “Ampex 300 tape recorder.” Perhaps these esoteric technical facts were included in order to fend off obscenity charges by demonstrating that the record
held some kind of scientific merit. Nevertheless, reference to such minutiae also suggests an address to a certain type of audience: male hi-fi audio enthusiasts.

**Hi-Fi Hardcore**

Many American men developed an interest in high-fidelity audio equipment after World War II, in part because of the extensive electronics training they received in the armed forces. Writers such as Keir Keightley, Pamela Robertson Wojcik, and Barbara Ehrenreich have connected the “masculinization” of hi-fi audio equipment at this time to larger trends in postwar consumer culture. As men began to question their traditional role as breadwinner, the home hi-fi stereo became a male status symbol to rival more traditional status objects that men had consumed vicariously: the family home, car, and so on. Ironically, though the hi-fi became an emblem of a new kind of male consumer spending, magazines marketed to audio enthusiasts often defined their media consumption as a “high, masculine, individualistic art,” in contrast to watching television, which was glossed as a “low, feminine, mass entertainment.”

Similar arguments can be heard on party records made during the era of high fidelity. Consider *Stag Party Special Number 1* (Fax Records, 1959), one of a series of records released in conjunction with the men’s magazine *Adam*. Comic Buzzy Greene begins his burlesque club act by announcing “You are now about to be the recipients of the last form of show business in the world today that has not been seen, or probably never will be seen on television—unless you have a very vivid imagination, and can picture Dr. Ross Dog Food or Texaco Gas sponsoring something like this, man! Huh, that’d be something wild!” Greene’s comments illustrate how stag party records—like the audio tech magazines discussed by Keightley—presented hi-fi as an alternative to corporate advertising. In fact, risqué records might have held a particular appeal to hi-fi enthusiasts because they so bluntly transgressed the standards of network broadcasting.

Risqué records could also provide a means of bringing frank discussions of sex and the rough language traditionally associated with men into the home. Elsewhere I have described how 78 rpm “blue discs,” heard in homosocial spaces such as the tavern, often featured joking traditions associated with male organizations. Similarly, some postwar LPs advertised their ability to capture the language used by men at stag parties, military barracks, burlesque clubs, and other homosocial spaces. In the words of the liner notes for Fax Records’ *Wild Party Songs Num-
ber 1: Saturday Night Riot (1960), the “bone-tickling ditties of sin, sex and seduction” found on the album were “an important manifestation of our cultural heritage”: “They are the lusty songs of men under stress. . . . In army barracks, in ships at sea, at Rotarian smokers, campus dormitories, now in ‘polite’ society, we hear these lusty refrains.” Fax advertised some of its stag party records as documenting “private club dates and ‘smoker’ specials,” where comedians could unleash “scorching gems of heavily-spiced ribaldry” that were “too bold for large night club audiences.”

These records were thus representations of exclusive male social spaces as much as of a certain kind of language. In fact, “Saturday Night Riot” is among several Stag Party records to feature an ambient soundtrack running between musical numbers that includes the sounds of coughing, laughter, the clinking of glasses, and conversation. These ambient sounds make one wonder if “party records” were so named because they were meant to be played at parties or because they simulated a party atmosphere for isolated, suburban men.

Recall that the liner notes to the “Wild Party Songs” record had mentioned army barracks as one of the places where one could hear such “lusty refrains.” In fact, military themes are prevalent on postwar party records: from Fax’s series of “Wild Service Songs” albums to blue discs that dramatized the experience of American soldiers. For example, a record from the late 1940s entitled “Lt. Rudder” features a routine that circulated amongst soldiers during the final years of World War II. The routine was described in a 1945 Associated Press article:

Someone got weary of reading the honeyed accounts of America’s returning air warriors and wrote a parody account of the homecoming of such a gay, cocky, young flier that has half the European theater of operations in stitches. The pilots, themselves, think it is wonderful, because they think the acclaim that greets their exploits is sometimes false and foolish and smacks of mock heroics.

The newspaper article could only reprint what it called a “heavily censored” version of the routine, with apologies to the original anonymous author, “in whatever pub or opium den he lies dreaming.” The under-the-counter recording of the routine however, was free to unleash Lt. Rudder in all his gay, cocky glory.

The “Lt. Rudder” skit articulated soldiers’ ambivalent feelings about reintegrating into civilian life, where very different social rules held sway than in the homosocial context of the military. The record begins as an elaborate send-up of radio: following a fake commercial, we hear an earnest announcer declare that he is taking us to LaGuardia Air-
port for a special broadcast to welcome home Lt. Ronald Rudder, one of “America’s leading aces” overseas. During a long buildup to the hero’s arrival, we are introduced to Lt. Col. Eager Beaver, an army public relations man and liaison to Lt. Rudder. As side one of the record spins to a close, a crowd cheers and Rudder steps to the microphone. “How do you feel on being back in the United States again?” the reporter asks at the start of side two. Rudder replies in a matter-of-fact tone: “Uh, pretty damn pissed off.” The army PR man anxiously interjects: “Lt. Rudder means his eyes were misty when the outlines of the States and Statue of Liberty—symbol of American faith and the fight for freedom—loomed into sight.” The reporter poses a second question: “What’s the first thing you’re going to do in New York?” Rudder replies: “I’m going to go out and get laid.” Again, Lt. Col. Beaver hastily cuts in to translate the flier’s words into language fit for broadcast radio: “Uhh, he intends to say, he will fly back to his home and see his Mom and all his folks.” The record continues in this manner until Rudder announces: “Well, I’m sorry fellas, but I gotta get outta here before the bars close and line up a piece of ass, ya know?” Making one last attempt to clean up Rudder’s statements, Lt. Col. Beaver quickly adds, “Yes, uh, Lt. Rudder can’t wait to get back to a piece of his mother’s apple pie, the girl he left behind, and, and, the old Main Street where he played Indian as a small boy.”

The “Lt. Rudder” record mocks the platitudes and clichés of “false and foolish” accounts of male wartime experience, accounts that are associated both with feminized domestic life and broadcasting. Unlike radio and television, bawdy phonograph records such as *Lt. Rudder* (ca. 1948) and *In Hawaii* (ca. 1948; a blue disc that dramatizes the adventures of two “lovable Marines” on leave in Honolulu), could present the rough, frank talk of soldiers, while also providing a means of virtual escape from a postwar domestic space increasingly devoted to family togetherness.16

We have seen that party records simulated spaces such as the burlesque club and the army barracks for a male audience. Party records were also released that represented another postwar male space: the “playboy” bachelor pad. *The Sweetest Music* (ca. 1965), an anonymous LP released circa the middle to late 1960s, begins with a monologue by a man named Phil:

> She worked on my staff at the office for several months. Cute little chick; nice shape; well dressed; but very, very naïve. Dedicated? Uh! Last bird to leave the office almost every night. You know, babes are a dime a dozen for a swinging bachelor with a decked out pad. But Sheila played hard to get. “No time for guys,” she said. She was strictly the career-girl type.
Phil invites Sheila to help him celebrate his twenty-sixth birthday with “dinner and a night on the town.” When she arrives at his apartment, Phil greets her with “Come on right in, doll.” “Hi, handsome,” Sheila answers in a breathy whisper, and then “Hey, dig that sexy purple bathrobe.” Phil whistles appreciatively and says, “My, aren’t we dolled up and lookin’ groovy.” After toasting to his birthday (“Here’s cheers to our birthday boy. May the next twenty-five swing as madly as the first”), Sheila asks, “What are all those knobs sticking out of the wall, Phil?” “Little thing I had installed a few months ago,” Phil boasts, “stereo, FM, AM, the whole hi-fi bit. Music in every room in this pad, baby.”

_The Sweetest Music_ thus provides an audio representation of the playboy apartment that indicates the centrality of the hi-fi to the sexual arsenal of men such as Phil (or those who fantasized about being like him).17 Steven Cohan has described the playboy apartment as a “theatrical backdrop” for the performance of male sexuality, a “fantasy playpen” that used modern technology for the single purpose of seduction.18 Indeed, Cohan, Bill Osgerby, Ehrenreich, and other scholars emphasize the importance of the playboy apartment as a site of male consumerism.19 In fact, we should note how seduction and consumerism are combined in _The Sweetest Music_, since it offers a commodified enactment of sexual seduction to be consumed via the preferred medium of the playboy apartment: the hi-fi.

_The Sweetest Music_ dramatizes seduction with a type of erotic vocal performance that distinguishes adult LPs made during the era of the sexual revolution from their postwar predecessors. After treating Sheila to the “electronic pleasure provider” on his sensual reclining seat, and dancing to music from his hi-fi, Phil lights a Tibetan candle and orally pleases Sheila, signified by the smacking of kisses, sighs, moans, and heavy breathing. This is a type of verbal performance that Rich Cante and Angelo Restivo have called “porno-performativity.”20 Blue discs of a previous era only rarely attempted to depict the sex act with that kind of unrestrained vocalization. Instead, 78 RPM blue discs typically featured double entendres, riddles, and short burlesque sketches that suggested, but did not explicitly state, erotic ideas and situations. The extended porno-performativity heard on _The Sweetest Music_ is made possible in part by the introduction of long-playing 33 1/3 RPM records, first widely produced by Columbia Records in 1948. Long-playing records provided the time to develop longer erotic narratives and to enact extended sessions of hardcore sexual action. However, during the moments of porno-performativity on _The Sweetest Music_, we are often unable to distinguish who is vocalizing, or even who is doing what to whom. We are left with
only the vague outlines of a sex scene, as if the action were obscured by the pungent smoke of Phil’s Tibetan candle.

A similar attempt at LP hardcore can be heard on Erotica: The Rhythm of Love (ca. 1960), one of the records involved in the Joe Davis obscenity trial in 1966. The recording comprises two overlapping tracks, one featuring an erratic bongo drum performance punctuated by occasional nonsensical vocal exclamations, and the other the sounds of a squeaking bed over which we hear a woman’s periodic gasps and grunts. As with The Sweetest Music, the effect is more disconcerting than erotic. In fact, the legal discussion surrounding Erotica reveals considerable ambiguity about whether the record was obscene at all. In a U.S. Postal Service investigation of Fax Records in 1959, it was stated that the “exclamations, cries, moans, sighs, words and other sounds” heard on Erotica captured “every possible sound made by the parties or by the bed on which the act of sexual intercourse takes place” and so left “no doubt in the mind of any listener” as to what was being recorded. The post office declared the record to be obscene because it left “nothing to the imagination as to what is going on, [and] set forth the act of sexual intercourse in its most lustful aspect.”

Circuit judge Sterry R. Waterman, however, said that the records in the Joe Davis case failed to appeal to his prurient interest, adding “I must say that they bored me.” Likewise, Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, in his dissenting opinion, called the title Erotica a “gross misnomer.” We might understand these comments as evidence to support Linda Williams’s claim that “there can be no such thing as hardcore sound.”

Unlike the visual depiction of male orgasm, vocalizations such as those heard on the Erotica LP did not count as irrefutable proof that sex had taken place. In fact, the attempt to produce indexical audio evidence of intercourse in the case of Erotica was deemed by some to be ridiculous. Ironically, it was when phonograph records were purporting to capture hardcore sexual action that they became less threatening to the prosecutors of obscenity. At a time when hardcore visual images in magazines and theatrical films were becoming more prevalent, and when 8 and 16 mm adult films made for home consumption were a growing concern of the U.S. Postal Service, the content of these records must have seemed comparatively less prurient and not the pressing concern that obscene records had been a decade earlier. The trade in small-gauge home movies and erotic LPs shared a site of intended reception in the home, and so both of these enterprises would have been encouraged by the 1969 Supreme Court Stanley v. Georgia decision, which distinguished between public exhibition of pornography and home consumption. If,
in the words of Justice Thurgood Marshall, the state had no business telling “a man, sitting alone in his own house, what books he may read or what films he may watch,” neither did it have any business telling “a man” what records he could listen to on his hi-fi.

The sexist language in Marshall’s statement is, of course, a product of its time, but also points to gendered assumptions about the consumers of adult material. I have been arguing that *The Sweetest Music* and *Erotica* were intended primarily for a home audience of men that overlapped with a culture of hi-fi audiophiles. Records such as these experimented with the LP as a means of erotic escapism and audio voyeurism for men in the 1950s and 1960s. But as Pamela Robertson Wojcik has argued, postwar phonograph culture was not the sole province of men. In fact, other party records released during the early 1960s—records far more popular than *Erotica* and *The Sweetest Music*—featured a female perspective on adult material, and were made for a largely female audience.

**Knockers Up**

During the 1950s, female performers such as Belle Barth, Pearl Williams, and Ruth Wallis delivered bawdy material in nightclub appearances and on live recordings of their acts. In the early 1960s, the most successful female performer in this style was Rusty Warren. Born Ilene Goldman in New York in 1931, she graduated from Boston’s New England Conservatory of Music in 1952 and began playing in upstate New York lounges. By the end of the decade, she had developed a risqué act and was selling records of her club performances. “At that time those records were not sold in stores,” she said in a 1994 interview, “I was constantly touring in cities and towns, working in little lounges. After the show people would come up and I’d sell them an album, take a card and put them on a mailing list.” Her first record, *Songs for Sinners*, was released in 1959, followed by *Knockers Up!* a year later, and both *Rusty Warren Bounces Back* and *Sin-Sational!* in 1961. By the early 1960s, Warren’s records were available in stores, and we might gauge her popularity by looking at the Billboard charts. *Knockers Up!* debuted at no. 31 on November 7, 1960. It was still going strong at no. 26 on April 7, 1962. In fact, Warren had four LPs in the charts that week: in addition to *Knockers Up!, Bounces Back* was at no. 35, *Sin-Sational* was no. 79, and *Songs for Sinners* was no. 128. As these chart positions indicate, she was certainly selling records: an advertisement in *Parade* in December 1961 claimed that she had sold two million albums, and a 1963 newspaper ad stated that “in recordland she’s a living legend—3,000,000 LP sales in little over a year.”
Warren was even featured in *Time* in January 1963, albeit with an unfavorable review. “She is just another dirty comedian who deprives sex of all its grace and sophistication,” wrote the reviewer, “while she claims to be helping inhibited females to enjoy themselves.” That statement indicates an important fact about Warren’s audience: it consisted largely of women. In fact, the *Time* review focused more on her audience than her act:

The incredible thing about Rusty Warren is the crowds she draws. She has just left Mr. Kelly’s in Chicago, where Greyhound buses arrived every day from assorted plains cities full of jolly, plump, graying matrons dying to see their goddess. Car pools came in from Iowa and far Missouri. “The women are usually 40 to 50 or more, and hefty,” she says. Many women regularly bring their husbands to hear her, blue-suit and brown-shoe types that have never seen a nightclub. Like Rusty, they all seem at home in a barnyard. They sit there and roar happily as Rusty expresses her desire to become the first woman to make love to an astronaut in space. The women fans wear Knockers Up buttons. They know her first LP albums by heart (more than 3,000,000 sold so far). They have made her a $5,000-a-week nightclub star, outdrawing Mort Sahl and Shelley Berman.29

The writer clearly had disdain for Warren’s audience members because of their age and social class, but most of all because of their gender.

Warren was very aware of her appeal to women, as can be gauged by the manner in which she addressed her audience. For example, on *Knockers Up!* she begins by stating “As I look around I see a lot of married couples in the audience tonight, so if I may, I would like to talk to the wives, about what they brought with them.” Furthermore, her material often pointed out male sexual inadequacies. On *Bounces Back*, she talks about men’s loss of sexual vitality after marriage:

He was young, insistent, vital, strong, passionate. Yes, he was a youthful sex maniac! And ladies, here we sit; ten, twelve, fifteen years later, with him. Where did he go? Where is the mad sex maniac today when we want it? Have we not had our basic training? . . . And now that we know what we know, where the hell is he?

At another point, Warren describes a newlywed couple in their honeymoon suite. The bashful wife emerges, wrapped in a towel. “My dear,” the husband says, “we’re married now, you can drop the towel.” He is so struck by the sight of her naked body that he asks if he can take a picture of her, saying “I want to carry it close to my heart for the rest of my
The wife then asks the husband to remove his robe, after which she asks, “May I take your picture?” The husband flexes his muscles and says, “Yes, what do you want to do with it?” Warren delivers the punch line: “Have it enlarged!” This joke was dramatized on an earlier 78 RPM blue disc called “Newlyweds”: an indication of how a frank discussion of male inadequacy was always present on blue discs. Warren brought that type of bawdy humor to a more mainstream, largely female audience.

Despite that Warren deflated male pride and made female sexual desire explicit, the showcase of her act was a burlesque of female social action. At the close of her set on Knockers Up!, Warren adopts a serious tone and delivers this recitation: “We girls figure that we have a lot to project in this world today. . . . These men are campaigning to give the best they have. Then we, of course, must campaign to give the best that we have. So if I may, I would like to do a number for the young ladies to prove that we do have something to give. Are you girls ready?” What follows is a military march on drums and piano, with Warren shouting: “Knockers up! Come on girls, throw those shoulders back and get your knockers up!” Some women did march through the room when Warren played this song; she stated in a later interview, “Women used to march outside, around buildings and all over the place!” On the follow-up LP, Bounces Back, Warren presented a spin-off of the successful “Knockers Up!” routine. Again, she takes on a mock serious tone, shifting from a sexual to a political register: “These men, their ancestors have given us our political freedom. There is no reason today why we should not have sexual freedom.” Patriotic music swells as Warren explains, “You know girls, it’s great to live in a democracy today, where freedom is everywhere. But girls, we often take this freedom for granted. . . . Proclaim your freedom! Stand at attention! Pledge allegiance, and . . .” On cue, jaunty music begins, with Warren singing “Bounce your boobies, get into the swing!” “Loosen the bra that binds you,” she shouts. “Take it off if you feel like it!”

These spoofs of female empowerment can make contemporary listeners a bit uncomfortable, as they seem to both objectify and condescend to the women in her audience. It is as if the critical moments in her act needed to be defused, laughed away as the harmless expression of female silliness. Nonetheless, we shouldn’t dismiss the transgressive pleasure that Warren’s routines clearly provided to her female fans. In fact, Warren’s conflation of “knockers” and politics simply exaggerated the prevailing national obsession with large breasts. On Bounces Back, Warren quipped that “you have to have big knockers to be a star” and listed Jayne Mansfield, Gina Lollobrigida, Marilyn Monroe, and
Elizabeth Taylor as evidence. The fact that Warren’s “Knockers Up” and “Bounce Your Boobies” (1961) routines equate breasts with power, freedom, and social agency (“we do have something to give”), draws attention to prevailing standards concerning the female body and so perhaps registered as a subtle social critique.

We should note that Warren’s transgressions were counterbalanced by her tendency to portray herself in a grotesque manner: she often referred to her less-than-ideal sex life and sadly inadequate “knockers.” In this, Warren was similar to “unruly” female burlesque performers such as Mae West, Sophie Tucker, or Bessie Smith: performers whose transgressive power “was channeled and defused through their construction as grotesque figures.” We should note that Warren’s transgressions were counterbalanced by her tendency to portray herself in a grotesque manner: she often referred to her less-than-ideal sex life and sadly inadequate “knockers.” In this, Warren was similar to “unruly” female burlesque performers such as Mae West, Sophie Tucker, or Bessie Smith: performers whose transgressive power “was channeled and defused through their construction as grotesque figures.” We should note that Warren’s transgressions were counterbalanced by her tendency to portray herself in a grotesque manner: she often referred to her less-than-ideal sex life and sadly inadequate “knockers.” In this, Warren was similar to “unruly” female burlesque performers such as Mae West, Sophie Tucker, or Bessie Smith: performers whose transgressive power “was channeled and defused through their construction as grotesque figures.” Warren also disregarded standards of femininity with regard to her voice. This is not the place for an exhaustive history of female vocal etiquette, but suffice it to say that since at least the turn of the century, American women had been encouraged to consider their voices as a potential problem and urged to keep their voices low, and free from a raspy or nasal tone. We might note that the most iconic “erotic voice” of the era belonged to Marilyn Monroe, who presented a breathy whisper similar to Sheila’s on The Sweetest Music. By contrast, Warren presents erotic material not with a demure, sensual whisper, but with a loud, full-voiced rasp (figure 7.1).

Warren’s approach was influenced by earlier bawdy female comics who transgressed the cultural rules of female vocal production. Pearl Williams, for example, delivered her jokes with a harsh, raucous laugh. In an insightful essay on female comics, Michael Bronski argues that Williams and Belle Barth were part of “a distinct Jewish show-biz culture” descended from “Yiddish shtetl culture,” which he argues had “long appreciated publicly assertive women.” He continues, “After all, while men were expected to stay at home and study the Torah, women were in the public sphere, the marketplace, and the street. Such publicness often lent itself to outspoken candor—especially after immigration to the US.” The brash voices of these female comics served to project their bodily presence and assert themselves as sexual subjects. More than this, Warren conveys a remarkable sense of freedom through her gymnastic vocal ability: one minute she has the exaggerated high-pitched tone of a child, the next she delivers a salty punch line in a throaty rasp, and later she belts out a song with a chest voice that is deep and powerful. Warren said in an e-mail interview (September 7, 2006) that she “played an androgynous role, yelling, shouting, being un-ladylike,” but added that she “had to be careful not to cross over into vulgarity.” “I was extremely
careful never to veer into that zone at all. My worst words were hell, damn.” Here then, is an indication of the importance of vocal inflection as a means of managing the risks involved in delivering erotic material.

Despite the fact that Warren’s “un-ladylike” vocalizing added to her self-presentation as a grotesque figure, many of Warren’s fans perceived her act in socially progressive terms. In fact, Warren was sometimes billed in the later years of her career as the “Mother of the Sexual Revolution,” a claim that we might understand in several ways. First, Warren’s records were an early example of an increasingly frank discussion of sex by women in the mass media, a trend that would become more pronounced later in the decade. Consider that David Allyn begins his history of the sexual revolution with the release of Helen Gurley Brown’s book, *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962), arguing that the American public adored

**Fig. 7.1** The “ladylike” image of Rusty Warren on her album covers, such as *Sin-Sational* from 1961, provided a contrast to the LPs’ tracks, which featured her transgressive vocal performances.
Brown’s “breezy style, forthright manner, and pragmatic attitude about premarital romance.”

Barbara Ehrenreich, Gloria Jacobs, and Elizabeth Hess note that Gurley Brown’s book was a bestseller at a time before “feminism” existed in “the American political vocabulary,” and demonstrated that “extramarital sex did not have to mean ruin.”

We should note Warren’s presence on the entertainment scene in the years immediately before and during the release of *Sex and The Single Girl*, as well as the fact that she presented a similarly “breezy” and “forthright” message about female sexual desire and the limitations of traditional courtship and marriage.

Warren stated that women in the early 1960s were “admitting that they liked sex, and that they liked men looking sexy. They were coming out of their shell of sexual inhibitions—the way they’d been trained.” “That’s why I was titillating them,” she said; “they were trained not to talk this way, and here I was doing it!”

On a fan website dedicated to Warren, an essayist argues that the comedienne “used humor to deliver her message that women do have sexual appetites,” and did so at a time when female sexuality was “extremely repressed.” Note how the author describes what the nightclub audiences heard on Warren’s records from the 1960s:

> These couples are the heads of suburban households, the mom & pop of nuclear families—or they are on the path to being such. The women sit in clothing that today seems glamorous, at least to me, but underneath their cocktail dresses, their lives are more restrictive than their foundation garments. They chafe not from underwires and rubber, but from the reality of being “Mom” even to their husbands. They dressed that night with hopes that “Daddy” would see them, once again, as a woman. They hoped the alcohol would loosen inhibitions just as they had when they were dating—and that they’d find themselves steaming up the backseat of the car, or at the very least, they’d get some action once they got home. Oh, pray that he wouldn’t drink too much and the only activity she’d see would be removing his clothing as she tucked him in.

The author understood Warren’s records as historical documents of a time when women were waking up to the consequences of cultural double standards relating to sex and marriage, and it even situates Warren as the female answer to Hugh Hefner and *Playboy*: “Rusty exposed male hypocrisy, gender stereotypes, and the female libido to a conservative American public.” These are dramatic claims, and authors such as Michel Foucault have taught us to be wary of the suggestion that sexuality has been repressed. Nevertheless, accounts of her legions of female
fans, sellout performances, and chart-topping LPs indicate that Warren undoubtedly struck a nerve with a generation of women.

In fact, it is in generational terms that we might understand the claim that Warren was the “Mother of the Sexual Revolution”: she was literally entertaining the mothers of the generation that would become sexually active in the 1960s. Consider that on her LP More Knockers Up! Warren tells the parents in her audience not to worry about their children. “It is now 9:15,” she says, “and all your teenagers are home in front of the television set watching the Beatles. So mothers, don’t even call home for the next hour because if the phone rings they won’t answer it.” Indeed, the boisterous female audience-members who can be heard on Warren’s LPs should be placed in the history of popular culture beside the screaming female fans at performances by rock bands such as the Beatles. Ehrenreich, Jacobs, and Hess argue that the screams of female Beatles fans were a form of cathartic release from sexual repression: “Adulation of the male star was a way to express sexual yearnings that would normally be pressed into the service of popularity or simply be repressed. The star could be loved noninstrumentally, for his own sake, and with complete abandon. Publicly to advertise this hopeless love was to protest the calculated, pragmatic sexual repression of teenage life.”

Although she had a much different relationship with her fans, Warren served a similar function for older women who were, in their own way, obliquely protesting the repression of married life. Here then, is an explanation for the dismissive portrayal of the middle-aged female audience at Warren’s club appearances found in the Time review cited above. Beatles fans and “single girls” were carving out a cultural space for the expression of a certain female sexual agency, but this was confined to “girls.” Warren’s misbehaving middle-aged audiences did not fit with that emerging cultural script, and so seemed aberrant and troubling in the eyes of the article’s author.

Warren’s quip about the kids at home watching the Beatles on TV can be heard as another instance of a rhetoric that contrasted adult phonograph records and broadcast entertainment. In fact, Warren’s Banned in Boston? (1963) LP contains a musical number called “Pay as You See TV,” in which she imagines a future where viewers would be able to “put a dollar in the slot for the shows that you want to see.” Warren suggests that the “password” for such a service would be “sex.” “They say there’ll be no boring commercials, a little more zest and zip,” she sings, “if we could see what we want to see without any censorship.” She then describes how she would be a “rising star” on this “naughty network,” which would also include such programs as “lusty lurid scenes from confidential maga-
zines” and “an hour of bawdy songs on Sing Along with Mitch.” This gag points out the restrictions of broadcasting, which, as we have seen, is a recurring theme of party records of the era.

In fact, Warren’s records were intended for social gatherings that were an adult alternative to television’s “family circle.” Warren wrote in an e-mail interview of September 7, 2006, that her fans were mostly young suburban couples who were “busy building their families.” “You first caught my show at your local lounge,” she wrote, “took the record home and that weekend you had the neighbors over for a barbecue.” In fact, Warren stressed in another interview that her records were “always a shared experience”: “You never sat alone and listened with headphones like people do today,” she said, “I was a ‘party record’ concept—you shared my records with friends at a barbecue or party.” The use of the home hi-fi by groups of young suburban couples for titillating entertainment represented a marked contrast to both the television family circle and the hi-fi as means of escape for male audio enthusiasts. Later in the 1960s, sexually explicit LPs were marketed to serve yet another function: home sex therapy for couples.

The Sensuous Phonograph

David Allyn has referred to the 1960s and 1970s as the “Golden Age of Sexual Science” due to the many influential books on sex published at that time. Long-playing records provided a medium for bringing the changing content of sexological literature into the home during this period, and can reveal the different ways in which listeners to such material were constructed as audiences. Before the “Golden Age” to which Allyn refers, those seeking information about sex often turned to “marriage manuals” and advice books for teenagers that provided a mixed message of “sexual conservatism and enthusiasm” and reinforced “traditional concepts of marriage and gender roles.” Some LPs of the 1960s presented lessons in sex education that worked in a similar manner.

The Illinois State Medical Society released a record entitled Sex and Your Daughter in 1965 that featured one side for parents only, and another to be heard with both parents and children present (figure 7.2). Sex and Your Daughter was concerned with enforcing traditional gender roles as much as with discussing sexual science. For example, parents are told on side one that their daughter’s sexuality should be defined in terms of her future role as a mother. “Above all, emphasize the importance of being able to have children,” the narrator states. “For the young woman approaching womanhood, it is essential that she fully understand the
process she will experience in preparation for this sacred responsibility.” The side to be played in the presence of the daughter features a dramatization in which “Dr. Sims” visits a family in order to speak to the daughter “Betty” about growing up. Dr. Sims explains to Betty that the meaning of love is best illustrated by her mother and father: “Father works hard to earn a living . . . so you can have food clothing and a home” whereas “Mother takes care of home [and] shopping.” The record illustrates the “mixed message” provided by many marriage manuals: parents are encouraged to be more open with their children about the “sacred responsibility” of sex, but only in the context of the traditional family ideal.

Although the content of the Dr. Sims record was meant to train children to be future parents, the act of listening to the record was intended to fortify the family of the present. Parents were given suggestions on side one as to how to structure the listening event. The child was to be seated between the parents, with all three looking at diagrams that ac-
accompanied the LP. The sexual content of the record was thus experienced within the context of a family gathering: “During the playing of the record, do not hesitate to put your arms around her with affection,” parents are told. “When the record has been played it should be a natural impulse of the child to turn to you and kiss you. The record has been worded in such a way that she will follow this natural impulse. So don’t hesitate to encourage this display of affection.” Parents were also told how to structure the time immediately after playing the record: “You might have a little snack with ice cream and cake. Let the conversation flow normally and naturally. This time is extremely important, so put her at ease and act normally.” The record was thus intended to function as the focal point in a ritual of postwar family “togetherness” at the same time that it conveyed traditional values about sex and gender to the next generation.

The narrative of a doctor’s intervention in the sexual development of a child can also be heard on Stanley Z. Daniels’s *Sex for Teens (Where It’s At)* (Carapan, 1969)—a record that has become a camp classic, famously sampled by alternative rock hipster Beck on his track “Where It’s At” (1996). *Sex for Teens* was part of a series of sex education LPs released by Daniels. One, *Sex Explained for Children*, was nominated for a Grammy in 1972. On the LP for teens from 1969, we hear a dramatization featuring Sue, her hysterical brother Bill, and their unnamed and all-knowing therapist father. Much of the record’s camp appeal stems from its strained attempts at using the slang of the counterculture. Bill is outraged that Sue is “hung up” on her phony new boyfriend—“Wow, what a loser!”—whereas Sue thinks he’s groovy; Bill says he’s freaky. “That guy doesn’t relate to anything,” Bill complains. “Man, did you see his hair? My hair’s long, but it’s all washed and combed.” Beneath Bill’s long hair resided the mind of a conservative ideologue, as demonstrated by his concerns about the welfare state: “If he doesn’t find out where it’s at, I’ll probably have to support that slob and some dumb chick that he’s knocked up and their kids, all on welfare, living off the establishment. He doesn’t have what it takes to make it on his own.”

In fact, despite cosmetic concessions to the counterculture and some frank discussion of contraception, the introduction of the father of Bill and Sue quickly makes the record resemble television sitcoms of the 1950s, with sage advice delivered by the basso-voiced patriarch. After hearing Bill’s rants, “Dad” describes how his medical practice has taught him that the “greater freedom among young people” was linked to a high frequency of “bad relationships” where sexual pleasure was taken selfishly: “Those who give a damn and are not afraid to relate. . . . They are
the beautiful people.” “You’re right,” Sue responds. “Dad, that’s beautiful.” Besides such warnings, it becomes clear that Dad’s enthusiasm for the sexual revolution is limited to the heterosexual couple. When Bill confesses that he finds homosexuals to be “freaky,” his father laments that “unfortunately, some homosexuals may make you feel uncomfortable in their presence.” He continues: “Many are social misfits because they’re often psychologically unstable. In my practice I’ve rarely treated a satisfied or happy homosexual man or woman. Although one may occasionally come across some who seem to have adjusted into this type of life and make the best of it.” Later, Dad explains that with the help of therapy, homosexuals can be converted and “attain” a heterosexual life, where they have “more of a chance for happiness and emotional maturity.” Homosexuality it seems, was not “where it’s at.” As was the case with the Dr. Sims record, Sex for Teens illustrates how the hi-fi could bring a patriarchal and heteronormative perspective akin to “marriage manuals” into the home, perhaps in a context of reception similar to that suggested on Sex and Your Daughter.

This style of sex literature faced competition in the mid-1960s from sexologists who attacked the credibility of marriage manuals and offered their therapeutic services as a more scientific alternative. William Masters’s and Virginia Johnson’s Human Sexual Response (1966) and Human Sexual Inadequacy (1970) were at the forefront of an expansion in the development of clinical programs designed to “inform, educate, and actively assist couples to overcome sexual problems.” In contrast to the mixed messages that came before, this new sex therapy was “positive and enthusiastic about sex,” conveying what Irvine calls an ideal of “hypersexuality—a ‘more is better’ model of performance” that helped to make sex therapy a “viable and valuable product” in a consumer culture where sex had become increasingly commoditized. Long-playing records that offered advice on sexual technique were one commodity outlet for the new sex therapy.

Consider an LP called The Art of Sexual Lovemaking, released by Helicon Enterprises in 1967. The record’s liner notes refer to its creator, Frank S. Caprio, MD, as “a world renowned authority on sex and marriage,” formerly on the staff at the Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC. The record is said to provide “a frank discussion of the love relationship in all its beauties and pleasures” as well as “the secrets of successful lovemaking”: “For the first time, in the privacy of your own home, you will be able to: listen to intimate case histories, learn numerous sex techniques, become a better lover.” The Art of Sexual Lovemaking presented that information in the form of a male announcer whose polished, antiseptic
delivery resembles the narrator of the social guidance films of the 1950s, and so feels awkwardly out of sync with the intimacy of the material: “Be mature in your behavior and thinking,” he intones, “and keep yourself well groomed.”

Two years later, Atlantic Records offered a different approach to the recorded sex manual with its release of an audio version (figures 7.3 and 7.4) of the bestselling book *The Sensuous Woman* (1969). *The Sensuous Woman* was released anonymously, with the author known only as “J,” but the publisher quickly succumbed to pressure and revealed “J” to be Joan Garrity, a thirty-one-year-old former advertising copywriter. A 1970 *Chicago Tribune* review described *The Sensuous Woman* as “a steamy little sex manual,” whose contents were “so sexily far out” that it had “girls gulping, guys gaping and husbands bringing it home to their wives tucked into the folds of their newspaper — after they have read it themselves.” Ehrenreich, Jacobs, and Hess claim that *The Sensuous Woman* offered an “iconoclastic” style that represented a “radical departure” from mainstream sexual technique in its discussion of topics such as oral sex. Instead of sober moralizing about the hazards of premarital sex or homosexuality, Garrity cheerfully presented techniques such as the “butterfly flick” and the “hoover.”

The book became a runaway bestseller, and was released in LP form by Atlantic Records in 1971. *The Sensuous Woman* LP features a solo monologue by “Connie Z,” who recites some of the most memorable passages from the book as well as additional material that took the form of vocal enactments of sexual excitement. These added sections of pornoperformativity demonstrate how Garrity’s book blurred the lines between instructional manual and pornography. In fact, the LP found some success on the latter front, judging by a *Screw* magazine review that concluded that it was “a jerk-off product disguised as an instructional guide.” “The record is so good that you are guaranteed at least three erections (I had six and one intercourse),” wrote the reviewer. “The language is clear, forceful, and very straightforward. You will find yourself leaning back against a chair, and you suddenly have an uncontrollable urge to seduce the sexy voice, or almost anything you can get your hands on or around.” Although *The Sensuous Woman* LP was ostensibly marketed as a sex guide for women, here is evidence that the album could succeed where the *Erotica* LP had found only mixed success, and stimulate the prurient interest of men.

There was thus an underlying uncertainty about the intended addressee of *The Sensuous Woman* LP: Was it an instructional guide for women or a “jerk-off product” for men? In 1974, the *Chicago Tribune* re-
Fig. 7.3 and 7.4 The cover of *The Sensuous Woman* record album (1971) mimicked the austere cover of the bestselling book, first published in 1969.
viewed a new LP that had avoided that kind of confusion by presenting sexual information emphatically to a couples audience. The review argued that unlike books such as *The Sensuous Woman* and *The Joy of Sex* (1972), in which “an individual gathers new insights alone,” this new LP allowed two people to “listen together and share observations.” The record was *The Pleasures of Love* (Life Workshop) and was largely the work of Don M. Sloan, MD. Trained as a workshop fellow at the Masters and Johnson Institute in the early 1970s, Sloan went on to become the co-director of Sexual Therapy at New York Medical College, as well as the first president of the Society for Sex Therapy and Research, from 1975 to 1976. Sloan claimed in an e-mail interview that *The Pleasures of Love* was an outgrowth of his approach to therapy, which he described in the 1983 article entitled “The Dual Therapy Approach to the Treatment of Sexual Dysfunction.”

Originally conceived by Masters and Johnson, the dual therapy, or St. Louis approach to sex therapy consisted of two therapists, one male and one female, working with a committed couple. Sloan stressed that sex was to be understood as a form of communication, with sexual problems best seen as a “breakdown in communication between two people”: “Sex is looked upon as a means of ‘speaking’ . . . [one] that is as descriptive and as pointed as any communication can be despite its subtlety.” Thus it was the communication between the couple that became the entity for healing, and the goal of therapy was to “remove the barriers of communication” that had been set up by the couple. After an initial phase of interviews, therapy began with a series of “sensate focus exercises,” in which the sense of touch was used as “a means of animal communication.”

Sloan’s first sensate exercise involved “nongenital body touch,” as the couple took turns in the roles of “doer” and “receiver.” The doer was to “actively proceed through various manipulations on the nude body of the receiver,” while the receiver remained passive, but was instructed to verbalize acceptance or rejection of the doer’s touching. The second sensate continued turn-taking bodily touch, but added the genitals. After this came the first guided coitus between the couple, with the female in the top position, followed by a second session of coitus, in which more positions were allowed. *The Pleasures of Love* LP enacts the stages of the dual therapy approach, presenting the voices of a male and female actor who describe the sensate and coitus exercises. On side one, the actors describe their bodies while looking at themselves naked in a mirror. The couple takes turns getting to know the intimate anatomy of their partner in the sensate exercises on side two, with the genitals in-
cluded by side three. By side four, the two are engaging in guided sex, their verbal descriptions of the act accompanied by “wah-wah” guitar reminiscent of hardcore porn soundtracks of the time.

The LP medium was particularly well suited to communicating both an understanding of sex as a form of speaking, and a therapeutic technique in which erotic sensation was to be translated into verbal utterances. Indeed, Sloan’s LP is a vivid illustration of the Western compulsion to “speak sex” that has been discussed by scholars such as Michel Foucault and Linda Williams. The Pleasures of Love also represents the exploration of a type of media interactivity akin to a dance instructional record, where the actions of home listeners are meant to coincide with the spoken words of prerecorded performers. Sloan’s record is thus an inversion of karaoke: instead of supplying the backing tracks for a live vocal performance, listeners are invented to synchronize the movements of their bodies with a prerecorded voice. As such, The Pleasures of Love represents a vivid example of Angela Carter’s oft-quoted assertion that pornography “has a gap left in it” so that the reader may “step inside it.” However, the therapeutic strategy of Sloan’s record is short-circuited by the fact that the actors end up speaking in place of at-home listeners. Since the actors on The Pleasures of Love must constantly verbalize their experiences, there is never enough of a gap left for the couple at home to complete the verbal component of the exercises. In order to step inside the prerecorded therapy session, listeners had to let the LP do the talking for them.

Regardless of how well they succeeded in their therapeutic goals, the release of LPs such as The Pleasures of Love indicates the changing status of the home hi-fi during the late 1960s and early 1970s. By that time, home stereos were no longer primarily the domain of affluent professional men or a culture of male hobbyists. Throughout the 1960s, high-fidelity stereo components and LP records reached a growing number of households due to technological developments and the record industry’s realization that LPs provided a more dependable source of income than the pop singles market. The proliferation of affordable stereo sets during the late 1960s has been linked to the success of post-Beatles progressive rock bands such as Yes; Emerson, Lake and Palmer; and Pink Floyd. Sloan’s gatefold double-album would not have seemed out of place beside similarly packaged rock records of this period. Progressive rock LPs—with their long, complex narratives; fantasy themes; and high production values—would have lost much of their impact if heard on the 78 or 45 RPM monophonic record players of a previous era. In fact, such studio-driven conceptual LPs were often consumed from beginning
to end in a “cinematic” manner, suggesting that the stereo was an important precursor to the VCR as a form of home media consumption. I have argued that party records were often defined in opposition to radio and television broadcasting, but ultimately adult LPs such as The Sensuous Woman and The Pleasures of Love represented early experiments with home media erotica aimed at the same couples audience that would become a market for cable television services with explicit content and adult films on videocassette by the end of the 1970s. It is fitting then, that one of the latest examples of an adult LP I have discovered is Erotic Aerobics (1982), which offered a half-baked attempt to ride the coat-tails of one of the earliest and bestselling videotapes of the 1980s: Jane Fonda’s Workout (1982).

In this essay, I have suggested that sexually explicit records convened the home audience in several different configurations, and played a part in three overlapping “sexual revolutions”: stag party records were used by postwar men seeking to preserve homosocial forms of talk and find escape from the spaces of suburban life; the records of sexually explicit female comics on the periphery of second-wave feminism were heard in mixed-gender social gatherings of the early 1960s; and LPs helped bring new forms of popular sexology to couples in the early 1970s. We might note a tendency in these records to increasingly frame sex as a private, therapeutic endeavor. Hilary Radner has argued that the sexual revolution articulated a “new cultural arena” around the assumption that individual fulfillment rather than reproduction was the goal of sexual activity. That “new cultural arena” was shaped in part by the new sexology popularized by Masters and Johnson—and heard on Dr. Sloan’s LP—which, as Irvine argues, failed to address larger social relations:

Sensate focus and the squeeze technique are potentially important therapeutic tools, but they don’t touch the source of the most intractable sexual problems of heterosexuals: fear, anger, boredom, overwork and lack of time, inequality in the relationship, prior sexual assault on the woman, and differential socialization and sexual scripts. . . . In sex therapy, the “cure” is orgasm, not social change. And this is vital, because orgasms can be marketed in a profit-making system, while social change cannot.

As we have seen, LPs played a role in that “profit-making system,” often by marketing the vocal performance of orgasm. Although the material heard on adult-themed records became more sexually explicit during the postwar era, that material was increasingly performed in ways suggestive of intimacy. Where once risqué material was accompanied by
the ambient party track heard on Fax’s Stag Party records, the sounds of Rusty Warren’s boisterous audience, or even Dr. Sims’s enactment of family togetherness, the vocal performances on records such as The Sweetest Music, The Sensuous Woman, and The Pleasures of Love were dominated by what Michel Chion calls the “I-voice”: a dry, clear voice implying subjectivity and the address to an intimate interlocutor.58 The fact that the LP circulated such intimate performances in the public marketplace stands as a demonstration of the media’s role in the destabilization and recalibration of public and private space that characterizes the era of the sexual revolution. What is certain is that sexuality could be performed and consumed in the home on LPs in ways that it could not on network radio and television during this era and in ways that reveal the interplay between the performance and consumption of erotic material. In fact, erotic records stand as a powerful example of how media performances convened and constituted audiences around discourses of sexuality at this time and, in so doing, helped to convene and constitute the sexual revolution itself.

Notes

A longer version of this essay appears in Smith, Spoken Word: Postwar American Phonograph Cultures (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).


5. In earlier eras, law enforcement targeted artists such as Russell Hunting, who recorded small batches of “blue cylinders.” See the CD Actionable Offenses (Archeophone, 2007), which contains examples of risqué recordings from this era, as well as insightful liner notes by phonograph scholar Patrick Feaster.


14. This advertising copy was offered as evidence in a postal service investigation of Fax Records 1961.
16. See Keightley, “‘Turn it Down!’ She Shrieked,” 150.
17. The bachelor pad typically contained gadgets such as the hi-fi stereo, which have been described as “phallic accessories that could shore up a sense of masculine power.” See Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 133.
27. In 1962, a writer for *Billboard* stated that though party records had been “steady sellers for years and years, it is only recently that they have turned into blockbusters.” See Bob Rolontz, “After Hours, Surprise Lends Spice, Sales to Nation’s Record Markets,” *Billboard*, October 23, 1961, 1. See also Bob Rolontz, “Those 42d Street Record Shops: Where the Belle Tolls for Thee,” *Billboard*, July 28, 1962, 8.
35. Gurley Brown also released a series of LPs of her own in 1963 on Crescendo Records.
39. We should note that Warren’s records were marketed to both men and women. One approach to promoting her to men was through offering “certificates” for a Playboy-esque “Knockers Up” club. Warren stated in an e-mail interview that her record company “thought up the ‘Knockers Up Club’ stuff. The guys bought the certificate, the gals marched around the backyard, and the party was on.”
42. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 188.
50. Sloan, “The Dual Therapy Approach to the Treatment of Sexual Dysfunction,” 11. Sloan’s program closely resembles that devised by Masters and Johnson, who worked with couples, stressed that “the ‘relationship’ is considered to be the patient,” and included a “sensate focus” involving “a series of massage-like exercises implemented by the couple in their hotel room.” See Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 193–194.
54. On X-rated videocassettes for couples, see Frederick Wasser, Veni, Vidi, Video: The Hollywood Empire and the VCR (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 94.
57. Irvine, Disorders of Desire, 199.