

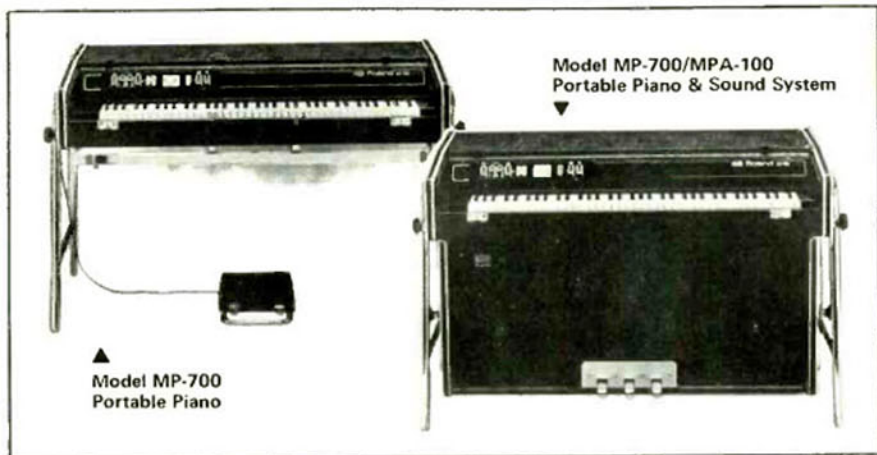
MUSICAL

NEWSICALS

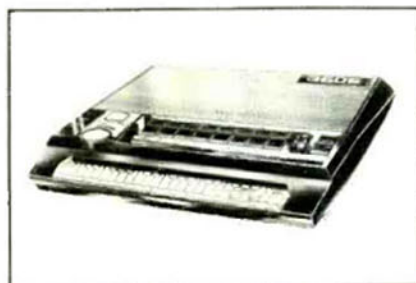
INSTRUMENTS. . . One of the most remarkable new products shown at the National Association of Music Merchants trade show held in Washington, D.C., back in March, 1976, was the all-electric Piano Plus from Roland Corp, US (P.O. Box 22289, East Los Angeles, Ca. 90022). At that time, the instrument was only available in a contemporary spinet-type cabinet, but company spokesmen indicated that a portable version was in the works. Roland recently announced that the portable Piano Plus, officially called the MP-700, is finally available, and that the home version will be made available in a variety of cabinets, including the HP-763 in Italian Provincial, to complement any decor. All the Roland Piano Plus models are purely electronic instruments which have been carefully engineered to have the same sensitivity, touch and dynamics as an acoustic piano and to sound like an acoustic instrument. The 75-note keyboard uses special piezo-electric elements to generate a control voltage proportional to the force with which the individual keys are struck, making the Piano Plus fully touch sensitive. Besides the acoustic piano voice, which is remarkably lifelike in sound, the Piano Plus has tab selected voices for jazz piano, harpsichord and bass. In addition, electronic controls are provided for variable decay time, glide and Roland's much-used "chorus" effect, and two foot pedals for sustain and damper.

The biggest advantages of an instrument like the Piano Plus over the various electro-mechanical keyboards come from the fact that it is purely electronic and doesn't have strings, tines or reeds to break or go out of tune. Tuning stability is consequently excellent, and occasional retuning is accomplished by a simple series of precise screwdriver adjustments. The HP-763 model is completely self-contained with its own solid-state power amp and exclusive Revo Sound speaker system housed in the finely crafted hardwood veneer cabinet. The MP-700, as befits a portable model, is a separate keyboard unit with tubular steel supporting frames for use with external amplification equipment. Available from Roland is the MPA-100, an amplifier/speaker system specifically designed to fit under the MP-700 keyboard unit, and which also houses the

sustain and damper pedals for the keyboard. Roland calls the MP-700 Piano Plus "the instrument the world has been waiting for," and while that is probably an overstatement, the instrument is nonetheless a significant advancement in the state of the art in electronic keyboards.



News of an interesting and, we dare say, unique synthesizer comes to us from Audio Arts, Inc. (5615 Melrose Avenue, Hollywood, Ca. 90038). The new instrument, called the Stylophone 350 S, is made in London by Dubreq, and is a very compact (five pounds) 44-note synthesizer with a total range of 6½ octaves counting the upper and lower voices. The unique feature of the Stylophone is that it lacks a conventional keyboard, but rather is played by touching one of the 44 "keys" printed on a flat metal plate with a special pencil-like stylus provided with the unit. Also provided is a second stylus which



allows the user to play two-note harmonies. Above the touch-plate is a row of eight 3-position rocker switches. Three of these switches control the three "expression" functions of vibrato, reiteration and decay, and four of them select the various voices of the instrument (4 "woodwind," 2 "brass," and 2 "strings"). The eighth switch selects the function of the unique photo control, which is operated by placing one's hand over the control to block the light hitting

it; the selectable functions of the photo control are swell, vibrato or waa-waa.