Akai GX-1900

Test Report *(Australian Hi-Fi Stereo Buyer's Guide, 1974)*

Two in one! That's what this Akai Tape deck is all about. It offers Reel-to-Reel and cassette functions in the one unit. Akai are pioneers of this set-up after having established a lead in straight reel-to-reel and cassette units. Space-age design and superb reproduction is what you get with the GX-1900 model. It's a very handsome unit with a creditable performance.

Description
Looking at the unit from the front, starting at the bottom left corner - MIC inputs provide connections for left and right microphones. Next to these, the headphone socket marked PHONE. Then there are two push-buttons for the transfer functions, cassette-to-reel and reel-to-cassette.

On the far bottom right is an equalizer switch for the two tape speed of 3¾ and 7½ ips

The cassette unit with its controls takes up roughly a third of the left-hand side. It features a glass and crystal ferrite head and employs a 4-track stereo recording/playback system. One of the advantages of having cassette and spool facilities on the one machine is the possibility of transferring recordings (material on a spool can be put onto a cassette for car use for example).

To the bottom right of the cassette section is the push-button for power. Alongside this are volume and tone controls.

Directly on top of the volume controls are the VU meters side by side.

Next to the VU meters, in the left, are two buttons:- the cassette recording safety button and the reel recording safety button. They are separated by the recording indicator lamp which lights up when recording mode is effected.

Just under the right-hand spool are two levers, the left one for record/playback and the right one Fast Forward/ Rewind. Underneath them is an automatic shut-off switch.

To the right of the function levers is the Pause lever; shifted upwards it momentarily stops tape travel during recording or playback. Under it is the start button which is pressed to release the Pause lever.

To the left of the function levers is the Pinch Wheel, Capstan and automatic shut off lever. Squeezed between the two reels is a Cycle Conversion switch for 50Hz or 60Hz. Directly above, at the top edge of the machine is the tape speed selector for the two speeds of 3¾ and 7½ ips.

Operation
After we had plugged in (very straight forward) we pressed the power-on push-button control and a power

monitor lamp above the button glowed green, simultaneously the dial lamps on the twin VU meters came to life.

We popped in a pre-recorded cassette and set the transfer buttons, (as simple as operating the power on/off button), in the cassette to Reel Transfer position.

Transfer of the cassette information took place smoothly and we now arrived at the rather interesting position of being able to play back either open reel or cassette, from the original cassette source.

We felt that this would give us an opportunity of examining the effect of the high quality heads used in this model. The cassette unit employs a glass and crystal ferrite head and a precision-made glass erase head. The cone of this head is made of the gem crystal ferrite and is mounted and set in glass.

The reel unit is equipped with precision recording/playback and erase heads with one shielded for high signal to noise ratio. So we played back both cassette and reel recordings briefly through the built-in monitor speakers, before feeding the sound, firstly from the cassette unit; through a Leak Delta 70 Amplifier and a set of Wharfedale speakers and finally, the sound from the open reel unit through the same system. We were impressed with the sound from both units and considered the effect of the cassette unit's glass and crystal ferrite head in equalising between cassette and open reel performance noticeably. We particularly liked the two large front panel VU meters, which not only facilitate erasion operation but add to the attractive design of the unit.

Internally illuminated and expanded scales provided us with a quick and accurate determination of recording and playback levels. The mechanical performance of the GX-1900 Was good, with smooth but positive controls over all modes of operation.

Laboratory Performance

On test the GX-1900 proved to be a competent performer in the open reel department. Frequency Response (reel) was 20Hz to 20,000Hz (□ 1.5 dB) at 7½ ips, 20Hz to 20,000Hz (□ 3 dB, at 3¾ ips. Signal to noise: 7½ ips. 52 dB (weighted) 3¾ ips. 54 dB (weighted). Cross Talk 34 dB T.H.D. record and playback at - 10 dB VU 7½ ips"/sec. 2.6%.

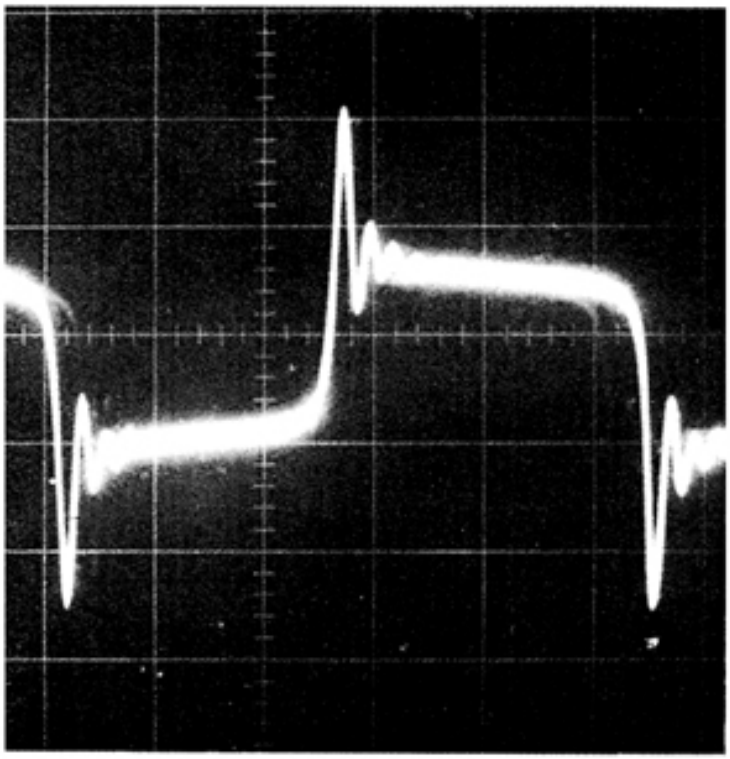
Conclusion

The GX-1900 combination unit has all the advantages of two complete recorders even where space is limited. In both open reel and cassette department the model performed competitively but was not outstanding. The GX-1900 is a competent performer with a lot of built-in convenience.

test results

Manufacturer's Specification

Model: Akai GX-1900
Frequency Response:
7½ ips: 30-22,000Hz ± 3 dB
3¾ ips: 30-15,000Hz ± 3 dB
Signal to noise: 50 dB
Wow and Flutter:
7½ ips: 0.12%
3¾ ips: 0.15%
Total Harmonic Distortion:
0 dB VU, 1000Hz: 2%



TEST RESULTS

Model: Akai GX-1900
Frequency Response:
7½ ips: 20-20,000Hz ± 1.5 dB
3¾ ips: 20-20,000Hz ± 3 dB
Signal to noise:
7½ ips: 52 dB
3¾ ips: 54 dB
Crosstalk: 34 dB
Total Harmonic Distortion:
at 7½ ips, −10 dB VU: 2.6%

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