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| Multi-track (Le Caine) |
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| With the advent in the late 1940s of acetate-backed magnetic tape for sound recording, a new approach to the composition of music began to develop — recorded sounds could now be altered by cutting tape and re-attaching it in different configurations. Sounds could thus be layered, cut into sections, played backwards, electronically altered, and re-recorded. Compositions were played over speaker systems in concert halls, often without the involvement of performers.  After the NRC programme in electronic music began, the focus of Le Caine’s instruments shifted from performance to composition. The first prototype of this new instrument was able to play six tapes simultaneously, changing the playback speed and recombining the resulting sound into a single recording. The tapes were played on a single capstan at the left of the instrument while the speeds were controlled by a three octave keyboard on the right. Volume was controlled in six groups by six touch-sensitive keys. The instrument was later expanded to play ten stereo tapes, and produce one stereo. The instrument, then, resembled a multiple tape player opposed to a simple tape recorder. |
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