

Jean-Michel Nectoux, Gabriel Fauré. Phonographies: I. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1979. Pp. 263. Price unknown.

Frederick P. Fellers and Betty Meyers, Discographies of Commercial Recordings of the Cleveland Orchestra and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. Discographies (unnumbered series). Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978.

Two discographies, one devoted to a subject, the other to performers, demonstrate several important points. They show a good understanding of the materials that ought to be included in a discography; they demonstrate a thorough amount of research; they exhibit special devotion (a French librarian for the French composer, an Ohio librarian and a colleague for "Ohio's two leading orchestras").

The Fauré is the first of a new series coming from the Phonothèque Nationale in Paris (coming slowly, to be sure: although I saw a fairly complete manuscript over two years ago of the second number, Poulenc, it hasn't appeared yet). It is typeset, printed, and bound, and it begins with a lengthy preface which surveys the recording history of the composer (and the interpretations which might have been recorded but weren't), the sources and methods used by the compiler, and an explanation of the layout, which is straight alphabetical.

Nectoux, who works at the Bibliothèque Nationale, has consulted all of the major discographical surveys (e.g., WERM), the national catalogues (Schwann, its foreign equivalents, and the Soviet catalogue with its monthly supplements), the reviews (Disques, Diapason, Harmonie for France, as well as Gramophone and Fonoforum), MLA's Notes, the important archives (BIRS, NYPL, Yale, as well as several in Paris and Brussels), and the record makers (four of the largest provided quantities of recording dates).

One acknowledgement is missing. This is a subject which has been covered adequately before (nothing is perfect), and Nectoux certainly knew of Steve Smolian's discography of Faure which appeared in 1969 as the appendix to Emile Vuillermoz's biography of the composer. He seems not to have referred to it. The new work is on a more elaborate scale, and the end result is certainly worth the effort, noting the decade elapsed as just one justification. But Smolian sensibly divided the compositions into six broad categories, and I don't think the simple alphabetical arrangement is an improvement (I can live with either book). On the other hand, under each title Smolian arranged the recordings alphabetically by artist, and I emphatically applaud Nectoux's chronological arrangement. Smolian made a serious effort to determine dates of issue, but Nectoux seems to have researched the dates even further, and in many cases he furnishes dates of recording as well.

Nectoux is primarily concerned with commercial discs. But he includes piano rolls, some underground discs, and archival tapes of works not readily available and of performances of unique interest. Thus the

complete Pénélope and Prométhée are preserved in each case only on several broadcast tapes (one of the former is noted as available on the underground EJS series of discs). Smolian was content with one or two issue numbers for each disc, but Nectoux gives every number he can find, an issue date for each separate number, and a siglum for each archive which reported copies of each number. This last is not a frequent feature of discographies, nor is it the most important item, but it can serve to indicate degrees of rarity.

A lot of new issues have appeared in the last decade. Smolian listed 13 versions of the Requiem, surprisingly overlooking three others (Cluytens' old version, Emile Martin's Nonesuch release, and Willcocks' version, which was then on H.M.V. and later on Seraphim). Nectoux has all 16, plus nine new versions and three archival broadcast tapes. Nectoux is a little weaker in the Russian sector than elsewhere; his data are less complete and his date estimates are more variable than usual. He lists versions of Elégie by Villerouche and Stoline on Melodiya without any dates at all (1963 and 1973 would be close). But anyone who tries to improve on his Russian data won't get very far: I looked for piano accompanists and couldn't fill in any missing names. As for minor details, Nectoux doesn't repeat Smolian's error of adding La bonne chanson to Camille Maurane's collection of 23 songs on Erato LDE 3068.

A decade ago there weren't many composer discographies as complete as Smolian's Faure, and it was justly praised at the time. That Nectoux could do so much better now is a measure of how far the standards in the field have advanced. The reason for that is evident: the discographic principles, the extensive research, and the devoted care that went into this work are not optional but essential for success. There is a complete index to all performers in one alphabet.

Turning to a different category, the other book is an entry in Greenwood Press's series, Discographies, which started out not long ago with a raft of reprints of most of the worthwhile out-of-print materials that existed, even if they were of variable worth. The new title is one of the original works that are rapidly increasing the significance of this series. For performer discographies the requirements are different than for subjects. There is a finite body of data waiting to be uncovered, and with enough effort and patience a definitive job may be possible. (The Furtwängler discography is a tantalizing indication of how far short even the most dedicated discographer can fall if the data just don't exist any more.) Fellers and Meyers have not been content with the main body of recordings attributed to these two orchestras. They include the Cleveland Pops, the Columbia Symphony sessions using Cleveland members, and even the Gabrieli record on which the Cleveland brass section joined brass players of two other orchestras. The Cincinnati list includes the Cincinnati Summer Opera on Decca, since the orchestra's players were involved. Needless to say, the acoustic sessions of both orchestras are included (I had never heard of Eugène Ysaÿe's Cincinnati recordings).

Everything you could possibly want to know about these sessions is included. The arrangement for each orchestra is chronological (hoorah again!), with dates, matrix numbers, issue numbers (including some foreign issues without a determined effort to get them all), issue dates, tape numbers in all formats, and any peculiarities worth noting. There is a general note at the beginning summing up the recording venues, since there is only an occasional departure from the customary concert hall for each orchestra, as part of a brief essay summing up the history of each orchestra.

The typewriter produced an acceptable offset master, although a cloth ribbon seems to have been used. Since the overall job is on a high level of excellence and the book is hardbound, I might suggest the additional attractiveness that would have been possible with an IBM typewriter and a selection of typefaces. But I don't mean to compare the clean, roomy layout of these pages with the crowded layout, careless typing, and worn-out machine evidenced in early volumes of Voices of the Past.

With chronological arrangement indexes are necessary. There are two indexes for each orchestra, one by composer and title, the other listing assisting artists. The ratio of space devoted to the two orchestras, by the way, is about 4:1. I will be turning back to this book not just for information about these orchestras but for the insight it gives into numerical series and similar data which shed light on parallel recording activities. It is also worth reading through once just to pick up such oddities as the dubbing of Judith Blegen's voice onto the completed Carmina Burana conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas.

In short, I find very little to object to in either work. It looks like the best discographies are setting the standard for newcomers, and that's the way it should be.

J. F. Weber