

## RECORD REVIEW INDEXES

Kurtz Myers (compiler and editor), INDEX TO RECORD REVIEWS. 5 vols.; Boston: G.K. Hall, 1978/80. Pp. xlv+2465. \$365.00.  
Antoinette O. Maleady, INDEX TO RECORD AND TAPE REVIEWS, 1979. San Anselmo, Calif.: Chulainn Press, 1980. Pp. xi+762. \$52.50.

Four volumes of the Myers set were shipped to pre-publication purchasers more than two years before the recent appearance of the last, or index, volume, so many readers must be familiar with it by now, although I don't know of anyone who has attempted to review the incomplete set. The Maleady book is the ninth annual volume in a series of publications which tries to cover precisely the same field in much the same way. That field is serious music on records, and hence Myers omits the folk collections (included in the first cumulation) which used to take over an issue of Notes every couple of years.

Kurtz Myers' magnum opus must be reviewed first of all for what it tries to be, and only then for what it might have been. Myers (in partnership with Richard S. Hill until his death in 1961) has been preparing the "Index to Record Reviews" for the MLA quarterly, Notes, since June 1948. After two preliminary cumulations had been published, Crown Publishers came out with Record Ratings, gathering all the entries from 1948 to 1954/55. The new set includes all the serious music in that volume and in Notes through December 1977. Each entry includes a fairly thorough discographic description of the record, citations of reviews by periodical, date, and page, and a coded analysis of the critic's opinion. Records are divided into two sections: those devoted to one composer are indexed under his name, while composite issues are indexed under the label name and issue number. Hence there is just one citation for each issue (although there are separate complete entries for each reissue).

The existing typography has been pasted up and offset-printed, while the index volume has been offset-printed from a very neat typescript. The compiler and publishers have done an admirable job of presenting this three-decade compilation to the public, printed on acid-free paper, bound in buckram. Although no corrections or improvements to the material in Notes were contemplated, we should be grateful that some attempt has been made to insert some corrections. For all this, the editor and publisher are to be praised and thanked for giving us an indispensable research tool.

But as a matter of fact, we will all inevitably use this set for much more than a short-cut to rummaging through a hundred issues of Notes. After all, it is the largest record catalogue ever published--30,000 LPs in one bicameral house, larger than WERM, larger than any national catalogue, larger than any manufacturer's catalogue (though all of these generally blend composer and composite issues in a single sequence). Most American issues listed in Schwann are here, many obscure

issues of local importance and a lot of foreign imports are here because they were reviewed, and a lot of reissues and MHS issues are entered even though they were never reviewed. It's necessary to evaluate the purposes for which many people will use it, especially if no other reference source serves those purposes half as well.

Not even the avowed purpose of the compilation--to find record reviews--is fulfilled completely. Since Notes appears quarterly, an entry is written when enough reviews have appeared. Any later reviews are lost, and no attempt has been made to supply them here. The presence of Gramophone and Disques reviews should not suggest that a comprehensive list of British and French issues will be found here. If a record has been reviewed in American periodicals, the foreign review is cited, even if the label and number are different, but the other reviews in those periodicals are ignored.

The most obvious weakness of the publication as a reference source is the lack of running heads. It can be frustrating to open at random and search for a name in its alphabetical place. The easiest way to start is to refer to the composer names in the table of contents of each volume, at least until you can leaf through the pages knowledgeably. Most names of composers appear in the same typeface as in Notes, but some major composers are listed in large type with categories of their works headed in the same type. At the other end of the spectrum, there are at least fourteen composers represented by a single entry whose names appear in the large typeface, a jarring lack of consistency with no apparent explanation.

There are several obscure sections of the work which must not be overlooked. At the end of the composer section are over eight pages of addenda, some typeset, others typewritten. At the end of the composite entries are three pages of typeset or typewritten addenda to that section. In the index volume are thirteen pages of errata, some significant, most of them fixing piddling typographical errors. It is important to notice that the last three columns of these errata are corrections to the index to composite entries in volume five. There is a composer entry under Anonymous which is so short (ten items) as to raise the question whether so few LPs containing entirely anonymous music have in fact appeared in thirty years (at least the composer listed as "Worcester fragments" could have been added to this group).

Despite Myers' demurrer, he has tried to make corrections to the entries still standing as they first appeared in Notes. He has done this on a typewriter which produces a pica letter much larger than the type used in Notes. Most of these were accidental omissions of either label name and issue number or performer(s). The effect is so shabby that I wonder why Myers couldn't have typed out all his corrections, sent them to a typesetter, and pasted up all the little pieces of errata along with his clippings from Notes. It shouldn't have cost all that much. Nor were all of the needed corrections caught, either. Columbia's Handel Ode for St. Cecilia's Day and Haydn Society's Haydn Missa Cellensis

specified no orchestra or conductor, and neither have been supplied.

Some entries are simply missing. In a comprehensive group of "Historical Surveys" at the end of the composite section (not in their expected places under label and number), one quickly misses Haydn Society's second Norton anthology, "A Treasury of Early Music" (ST-HSE 9100-3), which was in fact reviewed (HF 3-64 p88). The Tallis list would be complete if his Mass for Four Voices on Argo RG-91 were included (ARG 12-59 p277). The entry for VIGS-1294 (II-326) is erroneous; the correct entry follows it immediately. The entry for LLST-7213 (II-278) refers to LLST-7190 erroneously. The entry for MG-134 (II-277) erroneously includes a Mass from the different coupling reviewed in Gramophone. High Fidelity's DH is identified as David Hall rather than David Hamilton (I-161). Boult is named where Sargent is meant, as the citation already indicates (II-69). In the course of three pages, four clippings get mixed up (IV-552 to 554). And so it goes, as one gradually discovers in the course of using the work.

The index volume has three main parts. Half the space is devoted to a composer index to the composite entries. Unfortunately, there is a notable difference compared to Notes and Record Ratings. Not only were these cross references embodied in the alphabetical list of composer entries, but they cited the label and number. If one is familiar with the matter being researched already, it may not be necessary to look up the entry. But this index gives only volume and page, and you really learn nothing until you find each page cited and search for the solitary title buried somewhere. Adding label and number would have made the index somewhat more voluminous, but the added usefulness would have been considerable.

The other two indexes cover the whole set, not just the composite entries. The performer index has separate alphabetical lists of instrumentalists, vocalists, speakers, conductors, and organizations, a useful breakdown. The other is a complete index of every record by label name and issue number. This is a quick short-cut to finding an entry if you have the record already. It also provides a pretty sizable group of numerical lists, although Myers states clearly that he has made no attempt to expand the index into any complete numerical lists. Reissue numbers are included parenthetically, but this is by no means a complete cross reference of such numbers.

What can be said after Myers' disarming preface ("one of the last manifestations of cottage industry...all my own work")? This will be his lasting monument long after we have all accommodated ourselves to its quirks. It costs a fortune (I know individuals who have bought it), but for a few dollars more it could have been a thing of beauty. It's a major research tool, but with a little more help it could have been even more. It's not a completed reference project, and any discographer who blithely assembles its contents into new shapes and forms without rechecking, pursuing further sources, and completing his own research will deserve the scorn he receives. You've accomplished a herculean task, Mr. Myers, and we're looking forward to Supplement A!

There is an alternative to the work of Myers. Less frequent than the quarterly Notes, but not a cumulation as the above work is, there are some significant differences in this alternative index. Maleady, who has been in charge of this annual ever since the first volume (reviewed here by Michael Gray in Vol. IV, pp. 60-64), indexed 16 periodicals in the first 234-page volume, which was typeset and published by the Scarecrow Press as Record and Tape Review Index. Since the second year, which jumped to 510 pages, there has been a performer index. The fifth volume marked the switch to offset printing of typescript, to the present title and publisher, and to a big jump to 29 periodicals. The size of type has changed several times, and a slightly larger page size was adopted in 1977. The latest volume includes 39 periodicals and the steady increase in pages has now reached 762. By comparison, the Myers set indexes 50 periodicals in the course of its 30-year coverage, but the 1977 coverage included only 15.

Although the content is equivalent to Myers' approach, Maleady does seem to exercise greater care in including all the reviews, especially since an entry in any volume is a cumulative listing of any reviews cited in earlier volumes. She regularly includes foreign numbers (Shostakovich's The Nose has American, British, German, and Russian numbers on four different labels). She systematically includes tape numbers. She identifies each record by an entry number, and (like Notes) cross references works in collections by citing them in the composer sequence. But (like the five-volume set) citing them by entry number is as uninformative as the volume/page reference is in that set. One slip I noticed was the treatment of the French and German Harmonia Mundi labels as one; whatever the present connection might be between these sister labels, they should be treated as separate companies. I find the appearance of the typed page somewhat less appealing than its rival, a matter mainly of the layout and arrangement of the material.

I can't imagine a music library passing up the five-volume set, and most of them will probably subscribe to Maleady's continuing series. Myers' work in Notes is more up-to-the-minute (if that's the right way to refer to a quarterly publication). Private collectors will have to weigh their need for the reference material against their access to a library. I know how much work these books have saved me.

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