

FOR THE RECORD

by Michael Biel

Entries represent information gathered from a number of sources and do not represent endorsement by ARSC but are chosen at the discretion (or whim) of this columnist. (Now that we have gotten the disclaimer out of the way . . .)

PART I THE "I APOLOGIZE" DEPARTMENT

It is nice to be missed, and thank you for all the nice comments of concern when you have noticed the absence of this feature from the last two issues of this Journal. It has been a busy year here in the Kentucky hills. But you have noticed that for the first time in many years this Journal is back on schedule. The front of this issue says 1981 and, by golly, it is 1981. I work slowly, as my friends (and the editor) have discovered, so this column has been the sacrifice to get the show on the road.

But I have something else to apologize for, and I want to get it out of the way and out into the open before we get into the new business. I made a mistake. Twice. Yes, friends, I am not perfect. I will admit it. And it is up to you to keep me on my toes. In fact, I am a little annoyed that only one reader caught me on the mistake--and even he missed it the first time around. It is time we settled once and for all the matter of the spelling of Edison's workman who made the first phonograph. His name is John Kruesi. Note that spelling. It is absolutely correct. K-R-U-E-S-I. I first made a mistake back in my first column when attempting to spell it the way it was in Read & Welch (Kreusi) I spelled it Kruesci. (Vol. IX, No. 2-3, p. 88) Then in my last column I accidentally spelled it right twice when I thought it was wrong, and spelled it wrong--Krusci--when I wanted to be correct. (Vol. XI, No. 2-3, p. 241)

Before you make your corrections in the latter column, I should explain a little about the confusion over the doctored Aug. 12 '77 drawing of Edison's phonograph. The Popular Mechanics article by Hans Fantel did spell Kruesi's name correctly, but was incorrect in citing that drawing at all--and the August 12 date. There is good reason for my confusion in thinking the spelling was wrong without checking. I had not yet realized that the drawing had appeared in four different forms, including one where the name was spelled correctly!

As far as I have been able to determine, with a little help from Ray Wile, the drawing had originally been made for J.U. McKenzie by Edison after 1877, and was loaned by McKenzie to W.K.L. Dickson in time to be reproduced in the 1894 The Life and Inventions of Thomas A.

Edison. That initial publication showed no inscription. By 1917 Edison had added the well known inscription. A reproduction of it in Popular Science Monthly, September 1919, p. 26, shows it reading "Kreuzi / Make this / Edison / Aug 12/77". That's right, Kreuzi. With a "Z". Somewhere along the line the spelling had gotten changed to make the "Z" into an "S". It appears as "Kreusi" in the first edition of Read and Welch, and in many other places. But there is yet one other version of it--correctly spelled as "Kruesi". This first was seen in Menlo Park Reminiscences by Francis Jehl, Vol. One, page 162, in the year 1937.

So there you have it, three different spellings of Kruesi all on the same drawing: Kreuzi, Kreusi, and Kruesi. And the original drawing without the inscription. And none of these four drawings are really legitimate "First" drawings of the phonograph.

Although I have added to more utterly ridiculous spellings to the lexicon--Kruesci and Krusci--I am not in bad company when it comes to misspelling John Kruesi's name. Edison seems to have made a habit of it, and my good friend Ray Wile has done it several times in his original copies of his famous research articles and talks. But I promise never to do it again. I have even sat down and written out "I will never misspell Kruesi again" five hundred times. I also will not talk in class again nor throw spitballs at the ARSC President during business meetings at the conventions.

By the way, if you want to know the secret of spelling the name correctly, memorize this slogan: "Krue is True, and I See no C". Kruesi, Kruesi, Kruesi, Kruesi, . . .

My thanks to Gerhard Buecken of Uster, Switzerland for pointing out my spelling error. He also makes one other point concerning my comments about the use of styrene for injection molded records (Vol. XI, No. 2-3, p. 239). He had never heard of the injection molded process being used in record pressing and was sure that records were made of vinyl. His source of information was Gary Stock's article in Audio, June 1980, "How Records Are Made". He further stated that records "can never be made of styrene, styrene is a liquid."

Right you are, Mr. Buecken, styrene is a liquid, but Polystyrene is the substance which hardens to a solid when cooled. It is usually called just styrene as polyvinyl chloride is usually called just vinyl. I suggested that he look up the article on record pressing by Joseph Ruda and record materials by S.K. Khanna which appeared in the famous centennial issue of the Journal of the Audio Engineering Society, October-November 1977. These give more complete and authoritative information, although the use of styrene is not as fully detailed. I might also state that I have listened to the tape I made during the tour through the Columbia Records Pittman, N.J. pressing plant during the 1974 ARSC Convention. Never once was the term "polystyrene" used--only "styrene." And as Ruda states in his article: "Approximately half the 7-inch records produced in the United States and Europe are molded by the

injection process. In the United States these are all molded in styrene; Europe's product is vinyl." That might explain why a man in Switzerland might not be aware of the use of polystyrene, but not of the lack of knowledge of injection molding.

He is not alone. Very few collectors and archivists are aware of the extreme differences between these two processes of record pressing. All we know is that some records are stiffer than others, seem to wear out faster, and have pasted-on labels. These are the symptoms of a polystyrene injection-molded record. Might I add an observation at this point: my experience as a broadcaster taught me to shun those stiff records with the glued-on labels. Just a couple of times cueing these records up by backtracking and the start of the recordings were hopelessly covered with noise--known as "cue burn" or "cue scratch." But further observation of many, many thousands of 45's has led me to the conclusion that styrene records were always very, very quiet pressings the first few times they were played. On the average, they were quieter than most vinyl compression-molded 45's--these usually being made with a high proportion of noisier regrind vinyl. Styrene records might be damaged and worn more quickly, but they start out quieter. I would like to hear the opinions of others who have had experience comparing the noise levels of a large quantity of new 45 r.p.m. records.

## PART II NOTEWORTHY DISCOGRAPHIC WORK FROM NORTH OF THE BORDER

I have become aware during the last year of three rather excellent and thick pieces of discographic work being undertaken by individuals up in Canada. What is striking is that all three are based mainly on recordings and records from the United States. All of the work is still ongoing, and readers will have to arrange with the individuals in question to obtain Xerox copies of the typescripts.

Mirtle, Jack. "Spike Jones Bio-Discography." Victor:  
unpublished, 1980. 106 pp.

While this is really not a bio-discography, it is a discography of all of his commercial recording sessions with a chronological listing of all of his broadcasts and their musical contents. No biographical details are included. A ten-page title index is included, as is a personnel list with the names' first appearance indexed.

Mr. Mirtle began with the information included in a bibliography from a book by Hering, and has not yet had personal access to the artist file in the RCA New York Listings Department. Just coincidentally, I had looked through the Spike Jones file last time I was up at RCA--and that file is absolutely fascinating. Mirtle has the matrix numbers, dates,

and times of the actual recording sessions, but in addition to the absence of take numbers, the Mirtle discography does not yet include information of re-recording and re-mastering sessions. In case you have all wondered why the sound quality of most of the Jones Victors are not very crisp, most of them are dubs. There were many fix-up sessions required to overcome the blasting of adjacent grooves due to a gunshot or two, or some other problem the Victor engineers usually did not have to contend with in Toscanini or Perry Como sessions. It is hoped that Mirtle will eventually incorporate this illuminating info into his work. Until then, this is still an excellent reference work and a must for all fans of musical craziness.

Inquire: Mr. Jack Mirtle, 822 Beckwith Ave., Victoria, British Columbia V8X 3S1, Canada.

Legere, William J. "Record Collectors Guide of Country LPs." Mississauga: Vintage Country, June 1977. 333 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. "E.T.'s: Transcription Library of Bill Legere, Part 1 A Country Artists." Mississauga: Vintage Country, n.d. 141 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. "E.T.'s: Transcription Library of Bill Legere, Part 1 B Country Artists - Vol. 2." Mississauga: Vintage Country, n.d. 147 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. "E.T.'s: Transcription Library of Bill Legere, Part 2 All Others." Mississauga: Vintage Country, n.d. 205 pp.

These are relatively unsophisticated discographies, yet prove to be quite useful. The Country LP guide is arranged by artist and lists only the title, label, and album catalogue number. The list is exhaustive and includes many obscure artists on small labels--but it is possible that country collectors would be better able than I to note significant omissions. We might be getting into problems defining just what a country artist is, but Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter) is represented by just one album (Midnight Special on Victor Vintage LPV 505), John Lomax also by one album ("American Folk Songs" Folkways FA 3508), and Frank Luther by eight albums (my copy of the 1965 Decca Dealer Aid lists twenty.) Perhaps Legere decided the others weren't "country" but the listing of even these albums is stretching the definition a bit already. It is, however, a handy reference source to go to first to find some numbers before spending more time going to other less comprehensive catalogues.

The three Electrical Transcription catalogues are a good

start to filling a very important need in what many of you realize is a major area of my research--broadcast recordings. The main emphasis in these listings is music library service and syndicated program pressings. The titles of the selections are included for most of the listings, but--very unfortunately--the only identifications of the discs themselves are the company name and disc catalogue number. Matrix numbers and possible airing dates are not included for any of the listings.

As the titles indicate, the E.T. listings are based on Legere's own collection, and the items he possesses are marked with an "X". But, as I found out when I requested physical descriptions of the Asher and Little Jimmy discs on 16" Gennett's, many of the marked recordings are in his collection via tape dubs--and not always directly off the discs. The listings are extensive in the music library companies like World, Standard, Thesaurus, SESAC, MacGregor, Capitol, and Lang-Worth, but discs on over 75 labels are included. Syndicated programs with various artists on each disc are listed under each artist with the individual song titles.

There is no way to ever begin to measure the completeness of a catalogue listing of E.T.'s. Legere has had access to the catalogues of many companies and this is as good a unified source of information as we are likely to have for quite a while. Some of these discs are so hard to come by it is unlikely that more than a small percentage of matrix numbers will ever get filled in. But it indicates that a start should be made whenever we come across a file of discs from music library services. Early catalogues which contain information on the discs that were later deleted are most urgently needed. If only there was some way to convey the importance of documenting label and matrix information when tapes of programs are made and traded. (But what can you expect from the tape traders--they're the ones who alphabetize people by their first names!)

Legere's catalogues are a good start, but further documentation should have been included when the discs were available.

Limited amounts of the four catalogues have been duplicated and are available from Bill Legere, 1219 Ogden Ave., Mississauga, Ontario L5E 2H2, Canada. The L.P. catalogue is \$10.95, and the three E.T. catalogues are \$5.95 apiece. You can also inquire about his auction lists, want list, numerical lists of individual performers on 78 and 45 singles, and his taping service.

Henderson, George F. "Checklist of Recordings of Historical Events by Edward R. Murrow." unpublished.

George has been compiling this listing for a number of years after checking with all of the major archives of broadcast material, including CBS itself. He recently participated in a panel about Murrow chaired by myself at the 1981 ARSC Convention, but I must admit that things were so hectic that I was unable to look the manuscript over before George returned to Canada! But I did not want to pass up this opportunity to comment on the existence of this work.

The section that we did correspond about concerned the commercially released recordings of Murrow and a number of mass-produced limited editions of special CBS programs. More details on the recordings themselves were needed, especially concerning all of the different forms that the recordings were available in. It is not enough to indicate that the I Can Hear It Now albums were "Also issued in 78 rpm 5-record series." The album numbers must be given--they are as significant as the L.P. numbers. The 3-disc boxed set was not mentioned, nor were the 45 r.p.m. issues of Vol. One. All of these details have been forwarded to Henderson, and most were contained in the discography handed out at the ARSC convention.

Most of the checklist concerns the individual recordings made of the Murrow broadcasts and which institutions hold a copy or an original. Other than the published catalogues of the KIRO collection at the Milo Ryan Phonoarchive at the University of Washington, individual inquiries would have had to be made to locate the existence of any other broadcast in the other likely collections. Now the work has already been done for us. Direct inquiries about the checklist to Mr. George F. Henderson, R.R. 2, Odessa, Ontario KOH 2H0, Canada.

### PART III MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS OF INTEREST

Clee, Ken G. The Directory of American 45 R.P.M. Records. Philadelphia: Stak-O-Wax, 1981. 3 vol.  
Vol. 1--Artist Discography Section. 504 + 6 pp.  
Vol. 2--Small Label Discography Section. 1062 + 3 pp.  
Vol. 3--Major Label Discography Section. 372 + 1 pp.

This loose-leaf bound work is really the third edition of what had formerly been called "A Discography Collection of Artists and Labels." The first edition in 1977 contained about 150 discographies. The 1979 edition had grown to almost 500. Purchasers received additional supplements to increase that number. The current edition contains 400 artist

discographies--the author feels that artists who recorded for only one label are fully represented in the label discography section. Perhaps an index to those individuals would have been appropriate.

The amount of information included is substantial, yet each listing contains the bare minimum of information: title and catalogue number. No dating or matrix information is included. The title itself is a little too all-inclusive. Only "singles" are included. No E.P.'s or multi-disc sets are mentioned. Classical, original cast, and special series are likewise excluded. So what we have is a guide that was designed mainly for collectors of popular 45 singles oriented more towards the tastes of rock devotees.

One striking feature is the tabulations included in the table of contents for the smaller labels section. The total number of releases covered in the list is stated as are the number of items where information is missing. Considering that these labels have a habit of skipping numbers or cancelling releases, there are very few holes to patch up in most of the listings. This section of the work is the most useful because most of these labels have not been well documented elsewhere, and rarely had ever issued a numerical catalogue themselves. Even if you are not interested in rock music there are always other artists of interest who pop up unexpectedly here and there.

Although there have been many discographies of particular artists published that have been amazingly complex, complete, and well documented, Ken Clee's work serves to show how primitive much of the discographic work being done by rock collectors is, since it is based solely on catalogues and observation of the released records themselves. This was roughly the state of affairs for jazz discographers 30 to 45 years ago. Discography of early recordings is now based on the master recording ledgers which have been either discovered or re-constructed. Date of recording and the order in which the recordings were made are now considered the main way to compile discographies, not listing the order of catalogue numbers. While tape mastering has changed the way recording sessions are structured--which, in turn, has affected how these sessions can be documented--artist discographies must progress beyond being merely lists of an artist's released recordings. Clee's work is nothing more than that. If you are satisfied with just having a list of what was issued, then fine. There is a lot in these three thick volumes to keep anybody busy for quite some time. But the mainstream of rock discography must progress further and take an example from the work of the modern style of discography pioneered by people like Brian Rust, D.R. Connor, Walt Allen, and others. Perhaps we would have been better served by a computerized indexing of the label listings. Then every artist would have had their discography compiled. Title indexing could come next. All that information is there in its raw state just waiting to be compiled. But there is no data in this work on unissued recordings, recording dates, and matrix information of any significance. True, much of this information is not yet available, and the inclusion of even the available data of this kind would have delayed and enlarged

the publication to an extent that would have been counterproductive. This work may have these shortcomings, but at least it is here, available, and waiting to be used.

The three volumes are available separately (\$35, \$45, and \$40 respectively); as a set (\$80); or each of the discographies are available individually (50¢ each from Vol. 1 & 2, \$3.00 to \$8.50 from Vol. 3 depending on length.) The pages are typescript, reduced 50% with two pages side-by-side on each 8½x11 sheet. They are available from Stack-O-Wax, P.O. Box 11412, Philadelphia, Pa. 19111.

The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress. Vol. 37, No. 3-4. Summer-Fall 1980. 231 pp. illus. soundsheet.

This extra thick double issue of QJLC is devoted exclusively to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division of LC which had been created in 1978. This issue is a bargain (\$4.50) considering all of the great and authoritative articles it contains. There is something for everybody in here--this issue is a must for every library and collector. Here again is another of those cases where I feel that each of you should stop what you are doing and order this item now.

In our own particular area of sound recordings we are treated to Jim Smart's detailed history of Berliner, Sam Brylawski's analysis of the war years of the Armed Forces Radio Service with a list of selected programs contained in LC's collection (and how they got there), and a revealing report on the fine achievements being made by LC in their fine collection of television programs. This last article by Arlene Balkansky has reassured me that LC is commencing to do as fine and as thorough a job in collecting and preserving television programs as it has been able to do in other areas. They are not content to just select one or two episodes from a series and feel that they have given researchers a documentation of the series. That might satisfy a nostalgia buff on his lunch break who wants to see an old show, but a researcher needs much more. Balkansky and the LC staff realize that their holdings of six episodes of "I Love Lucy" and three of "The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show" is a low representation and they are looking for more. In fact they do have 14 episodes of "The Lucy Show" 58 episodes of "The Amos 'n' Andy Show" and all the original negatives of "The Ed Wynn Show" and "Naked City." That's right, they will preserve the original item--not just keep a 3/4" cassette--if the original is available to them.

The major part of this issue is concerned with motion pictures, but there are some articles that are must-reading for all sound archivists as well. Music in the movies is covered in two articles by Jon Newsom and David L. Parker. The former article details the history of scoring music for animated films; the latter researches motion pictures made by opera singers. Jean E. Tucker shows how important a role oral

history is playing in reconstructing the history of silent films. Eric Barnouw shows similar values in the diaries of pioneer filmmakers like Arthur H.C. Sintzenich.

But most important of all are three articles concerning the unique problems of film preservation and restoration that have lessons of value to all archivists and researchers. Gosta Werner details his painstaking methods of reconstructing the entire history of early film in Scandinavia through practically the only artifacts left: paper prints of individual frames that had been deposited for copyright. Lawrence F. Karr reminds us of all of the problems that the American Film Institute comes up against in their search for films to restore. Our cylinders might get moldy, our discs might crack or grow crackly, but at least they don't disintegrate and blow up in our faces like nitrate film does! His analysis of their dealings with private film collectors is worthy of reading by all of us, because as he notes: "Collectors in general, whether they collect beer cans, barbed wire, or first editions, have common traits, although the variation from individual to individual can be enormous." Their workings with these private collectors and the film industry are models for all of us. Don't miss the story of how they bartered a Carson City Silver Dollar and a Nazi helmet for two films!

But the gem of the issue is "Authenticating Films" by David Shepard. I feel that it is so important that I am going to lobby to have a law passed that requires every researcher who writes about any film or recording to sign an affidavit stating that they have read this article and pledge that they have followed the guidelines of the article. This article is just that important. He shows that many well-meaning researchers have often based their theories and conclusions on film prints that are many generations removed from the original and have been re-edited. He tells horror stories like the paper presented in 1978 by a University of Cincinnati professor who "found" subliminal messages in individual frames of two classic Russian films, "Potemkin" and "Mother." What he had really found were abrasions from worn printing masters, and a title indicator which showed editors where to place a title in the German language version. He also cited how the 1902 Edison film "Life of an American Fireman" had been "admired for its sophisticated editing--because early scholars of the film were not aware that they were looking at an altered print." And that a noted researcher on John Ford had not realized that some of the "family resemblance" he saw in Ford's first film "Straight Shooting" might be the result of the hindsight brought to the 1969 reconstruction of the film by the author of this article, David Shepard.

We record collectors and archivists often feel that all we have to worry about are alternate takes, whereas the film historian has to worry about the possibility of thousands of altered feet of film. But if we extrapolate these problems to our own we realize that we always have the problems of the speed, filtering, and equalization of our recordings. This problem is greatly accentuated when we consider all

of the writing that is based on re-issues and the multi-generation tapes circulated by the tape traders. Martin Williams noted at the 1981 ARSC Convention that some jazz historians have already been led to believe that early jazz musicians had poor sense of meter--just because the de-clicking done by tape editing for L.P. reissues had changed the tempi of the originals. (It is hoped that future researchers will realize the alterations made in some of Williams' Smithsonian L.P.'s--such as having Gershwin repeat a phrase on the piano to cover up a groove skip on a disc transfer of the original celluloid instantaneous discs.)

Also at the 1981 ARSC Convention, Joe Pengelly and Bill Storm reminded us that we can have many different sounding transfers of early recordings due to equalization, filtering, reproduction techniques, and monitor speakers. When we had a chance to hear some of the Stokowski recordings made in Western Electric Wide Range Recording by Arthur C. Keller in 1931 and 1932, we had to trust that Ward Marston had made a representative transfer because instead of playing an original pressing or the stamper he had brought, Keller had the Bell Labs L.P. played for us. Additionally, as I pointed out in my talk about Edward R. Murrow's "I Can Hear It Now, Vol. 3, 1919-1933," when an excerpt is re-recorded and re-used in other documentary recordings by unknowing producers, it can sometimes be difficult to recognize if the recording was phony or where it originated.

David Shepard's article should be a model to us on how important it is to do research using original materials whenever possible, and to completely document any transfers, re-constructions, and copies made that might be used by researchers in later years. The moral is: do not trust statements made in research unless you know that the researcher is basing his conclusions on a reliable or original source material.

(To be continued in Vol. XIII, No. 3)