

## A BOULT DISCOGRAPHY

Alan Sanders, Sir Adrian Boult: a Discography. London, General Gramophone Publications, [1980]. xv + 37 pp. \$6.79.

The latest in Gramophone's series of artist discographies is a considerable improvement on the somewhat careless job done on Karajan. The form is unexceptionable: a chronological list of recording sessions, carefully laid out for the eye to perceive the elements of data in each entry. The content is thorough: exact dates, matrix and take numbers (including unissued ones), all issue numbers including all tape formats, precisely identified compositions, and in a minimum number of cases a comment on some singularity (additional comments of this kind are also grouped at the end). Assisting artists are fully identified. There is an alphabetical index of composers and their works. The pamphlet is offset-printed from a very neat Selectric-typed copy. The only improvement I could have suggested would be a few varied type faces.

Boult was a prolific recording artist from 1920 to 1978, though not the only one (as claimed) to have recorded in acoustic and digital processes. He made four recordings of Vaughan Williams's Job, including the first ever. He made Holst's The Planets and the Elgar Second Symphony five times each, though not the first time in either case. A Sibelian, he made the first recordings of two tone poems for the Society series. A Brahms pupil, he made (amazingly) the first recording of the First Concerto (with Backhaus) in 1932 for the approaching centennial. A partisan of native composers, he recorded neglected English works throughout his career, especially a long series for Lyrita in his late years. His early 1925 acoustic version of the Bantock Hebridean Symphony, not released because of the electrical upheaval, was not replaced until three years ago, and even at that late date only by a youth orchestra. Not known for his Mozart, he made the first recording of the Concerto for Two Pianos with Schnabel per e et fils. He even made the first Berlioz Francs-Juges overture.

The discography illuminates his constant work for HMV from 1932 to 1952, the continuing demand for his services on almost a dozen labels (including HMV) for the next decade, and his return to EMI-HMV (with permission for the labors of love on Lyrita) in the final dozen years. It clears up the problem I once had of the unidentified orchestra accompanying Thebom in the Mahler Gesellenlieder in 1950: the work shared two days of sessions with Elgar's Falstaff--which is clearly labelled LPO. It includes such fringe items as a concerto with Myra Hess which Rococo issued from a live performance and the Brian Gothic Symphony which Aries similarly released. The errors (mostly typographical) are so few and trifling as to be not worth mentioning; only the omission of the Angel number (S-36776) for the Christa Ludwig performance of the Mahler Gesellenlieder in 1958 is substantive. The fact that Sanders found a stray East German reissue (Eterna 825764 for the Elgar concerto with

Menuhin) enhances my conviction that he has done a thorough job. The distraction of numbering verso pages with odd numbers could have been avoided by shifting a single blank page.

Judging by similar efforts this degree of completeness would not have been possible without the cooperation Sanders received from EMI, Decca, and Lyrita (though the remaining labels are detailed almost as fully), and the interest of the conductor and his wife. It's a model for emulation, although the reservation about type face stands.

J. F. Weber