

and was usually released as soon after recording as possible (excluding reissues, of course), so release dates are helpful if more extensive data is unavailable.

Those dates I checked were accurate, and I have no nits to pick. If an issue-dating guide to U.S. popular records issued from 1940 through 1959 is what you need, Mr. Daniel's tome will fill the bill nicely.

Steven J. Smolian

**Denis Matthews, Arturo Toscanini**, with selected discography by Ray Burford. London: Hippocrene Books, 1982. 176 pp. \$17.95.

**Tully Potter, Adolf Busch: The Life of an Honest Man**, vol.

1. Published and distributed by the author, 4 Cherry Trees, Billericay, Essex CM12 9NY, England, 1984. \$6.00.

More has been written of Toscanini than of any other conductor, perhaps of any other performing musician. And perhaps, indeed, more bad writing than about anyone else: not bad prose--although many contain enough of this--but just poor, repetitive, inaccurate borrowings one from another. My own bookshelf contains thirty full-length volumes--of which nearly a half are pretty valueless and half of the remainder so hagiographic as to be embarrassing.

Where in this welter of words stands Denis Matthews' study? Its length precludes the detail of Harvey Sachs' excellent Toscanini, which preceded it by only two years, and to which Matthews acknowledges his debt: just ninety pages, which include many photographs both familiar and unfamiliar, to cover the career, with further short chapters on "Toscanini and the Critics" and a summing-up. The value of the book lies in its accurate synthesizing of much research by others about all the facets of an extraordinary life within the framework of what Professor Matthews calls his "many personal experiences, thoughts and memories." Matthews was a devotee from the age of sixteen when he heard Toscanini give his first four BBC Symphony Orchestra concerts in 1935 and pursued the Maestro's performances thereafter whenever possible; and for him personally this culminated in his meeting with the Maestro at his Lago Maggiore home in 1949, faithfully and touchingly described.

Within this framework Matthews outlines each phase of the career in separate chapters with lucidity and elegance, with the retelling of many a familiar anecdote and the addition of others which will be new to most readers. Often these originate in personal experience: for example, the comments of Walter Legge present at the Philharmonia rehearsal of the Brahms Third at the Festival Hall in 1952--"To my present way of thinking, that is the greatest performance I have

ever heard of anything." Or Dennis Brain's explanation of how, in these same concerts, Toscanini's hand, in the merest flicker of a gesture, seemed to reach across to him saying "take care" whenever he was approaching a passage where the horns usually anticipate a crescendo. This whole chapter on the London concerts, frequently underplayed in biographies of Toscanini, is indeed heightened in value by the author's memories.

It must be said, however, that the book will be of most value to two categories of reader: those who are largely unfamiliar with Toscanini's life and work, and those who are already devotees. To the first, it will provide in a short compass ample explanation of what all the fuss was about; to the second it will reinforce their view of Toscanini's pre-eminence in his art by its apt quotation from contemporaries and the security and musicality of the author's own judgments. To a third category of reader--those who are familiar with the life and work but who are resolutely not devotees--Professor Matthews' narrative and appreciation may appear more than a little hagiographic. It appeared thus to Norman Del Mar in his unsympathetic review appearing in the Times Literary Supplement in November 1982: "Each phase of the fabulous career is glowingly recounted...colored by the expressions of astonished adulation strewn like flowers along his path by the greatest international singers, soloists, and composers. But the picture is too one-sided...." And much more to like effect.

This is unfair. Matthews shows from the outset that he is well aware of Toscanini's limitations and by no means regards the Maestro to have been infallible. Adulatory expressions of opinion by others are of value in assessing the overwhelming impact which he had on his contemporaries. If Toscanini's Hans Sachs at Salzburg, the phlegmatic Hans Hermann Nissen, was moved to remark, "his eyes overflowing with tears as he turned round after the Wach auf chorus in the general rehearsal...: 'My God, how shall I be able to sing now? This damned demon down there has absolutely devastated me with his fire!'"--who is Norman Del Mar to deny the power of such testimony? The views of Klemperer, Monteux, Weingartner, Lotte Lehmann, and others of like eminence are not to be gainsaid by contemporary casuists whose ears, in relation to Toscanini's recorded legacy, are incapable of intelligent selection or of compensating for the often unsympathetic sounds emanating from his later recording venues.

Intelligent selection from the Maestro's recorded legacy will be much helped by Ray Burford's discography, which occupies over a quarter of the book. While drawing attention to the value of the pirate recordings, Burford has confined himself to commercial issues, providing details of nearly

all of them, even if no reissue is currently available, together with a brief assessment of the performance and of the quality of the reissue which he recommends. As regards the latter, Burford's experience is perhaps unrivaled and his judgment sound, even if as time passes revision will doubtless be needed; and as for the former, there is little ground for disagreement save, perhaps, for the barely qualified expression of approval for those performances (such as the 1952 Beethoven Fifth) which some may think do not show the Maestro at his best. This does not set out to be the "definitive" discography, but it is the entirely apt companion for Professor Matthews' study.

That Toscanini did not suffer fools gladly is clear from Matthews' narrative. One for whom he did express unqualified admiration--"Adolf is a saint"--was Adolf Busch, the subject of Tully Potter's study and discography. This is more in the nature of "work in progress": Potter promises a comprehensive biography but the present volume was, I gather, prompted by the impending publication of a Busch brothers discography in Recorded Sound, which had his collaboration but not, in the form it took, his approval. Now that this has appeared, in Recorded Sound 86 (the final issue from the erstwhile BIRS, now the National Sound Archive), one can understand why: it lacks matrix and take numbers, and the details of recordings from other than commercial sources are exiguous.

Potter's own discography of Adolf occupies about half of his volume. It is exhaustively researched and fully documented, sensibly in chronological order of recording sessions which, unlike Recorded Sound's alphabetical progression, demonstrates the growth of the artist's (and his quartet's) recording career and all the elements missing from the other discography are, of course, present.

The other half of the volume contains much of what one might expect to find in the appendices of a thoroughly researched life of an artist of the stature of Adolf: a listing of his repertoire, his compositions and their recordings, and brief biographies of his brothers and close colleagues in the successive quartets, all of which are invaluable. The volume is completed by assessments of Adolf as man, artist, and teacher. It is a pleasure to find Potter's judgments always backed up by such full reference to concrete examples. But, as with Professor Matthews, those who find in the eponymous hero too fallible a fiddler given to disagreeable sounds (such folk exist) may find the encomiums too persistent. The influence of Toscanini on Adolf was, in Potter's view, fruitful and he is clearly right to observe that Adolf, unlike some others, retained his own identity; his account of their parting of the ways has, too, the sorry ring of truth. But he is, surely, not

right, in the face of countless moments which evidence the contrary, to find that, of the two, only Adolf could "express the feminine elements in music."

None of this, nor the unavoidably utilitarian production of the book, with a rather unattractive typeface, will deter the enthusiast from obtaining this work which augurs well for the author's biography of his subject.

Christopher Dyment

The only notice that I have yet seen for Tully Potter's Adolf Busch is a listing in The Gramophone's classified ads. It seemed to be one of those brave but dubious projects that come out of the world of self-publishing, far from the gimlet eye of the editor and the constraints of commerce. Increasing my distrust was the fact that the book was being sold for a mere six bucks American--which in a display of mad fatalism I sent across the ocean as naked cash. About two months later the book arrived, and I am happy to report that my lack of faith was utterly unfounded.

Indeed, the work promises in its acknowledgements and delivers in fact the richest gathering of material about Busch from the widest array of authoritative sources that I have ever encountered. Among those consulted are a good percentage of the (still living) major musicians with connections to the man and his art: Rudolf Serkin (the dedicatee), Yehudi Menuhin, Artur Balsam, Eugene Istomin, Paul Doktor, Antal Dorati, August Wenzinger, (the late) Reginald Kell, and many others. A good many familiar figures from the world of recordings and sound archives are also included among the sources--Richard Warren, Barbara Sawka, Thomas Clear, Leo Mack, Fred Maroth, Thomas Heinitz--as well as all the relevant institutional sources and, of course, a large number of family members, students and friends--and such was the character of Adolf Busch that the last group included Sir Isaiah Berlin, Sir Ernest Gombrich, and Sir Karl Popper among the many friends thanked in the acknowledgements. It would have been easy, no doubt, just to construct such an impressive catalog for the image, but the substance of the book belies any such suspicion; this volume is a magnificent start to what could well be the definitive account of the life and achievement of, in Menuhin's words, "a man and a musician of the highest value."

This is the first of two volumes, the second of which ought to be out shortly; however, it stands very well as an independent work. The author's original intention was to publish a biography with appendices. As he puts it, "the appendices are being published first." But this is more than a collection of appendices: it covers "aspects of Busch's character and career, with short biographies of his princi-