

artists. The pages are neatly typed like the best of the Voices of the Past volumes.

There are a few flaws. Karajan's first Choral Symphony appeared on a Columbia Entré LP (not EP!) as EL 51. The familiar typing/typesetting error of "Philharmonic" for Philharmonia occurs at least twice (pp. xiv, 122). Is a kind of judgment involved in spelling expatriate (on p. 87) as "ex-patriot" (unfairly, for Barbirolli left Britain in peacetime and returned in the middle of the war)? But in general the work has been carefully done, and this will be a ready reference for many discographers who will use its data for their artist or composer discographies. In that regard, I couldn't help regretting that it has appeared after so much of its content--Beecham, Karajan, and other artists--has been researched for discographies already.

J. F. Weber

**John Squire and John Hunt, Furtwängler and Great Britain**. bound with **John Hunt, The Furtwängler Sound**. 2nd ed. London: Wilhelm Furtwängler Society (Flat 6, 37 Church Way, London SE11 4 UR, UK), 1985. 128 pp. No price given.

In effect, two books are bound together here: a new one devoted to Wilhelm Furtwängler's activity in Britain, and a revision of John Hunt's Furtwängler discography, first published in 1982. Both prove stimulating and useful, though we shall see that neither completely fills the need it addresses.

The professed purpose of Furtwängler and Great Britain is "to show that even in those dark days [i.e. 1927-64] there were many enlightened writers at work, as well as a British public ready to welcome and appreciate Furtwängler's recreations of the musical masterpieces with which he was concerned." I'm not sure that this rather polemical aim is entirely achieved (nor do I greatly care); some of the pro-Furtwängler writers quoted seem not greatly more informed--or informative--than the authors' bête noir, Ernest Newman of the Sunday Times. Nevertheless, there is much of interest here. The prewar section includes documentation of the BBC Symphony's repeated, apparently unsuccessful attempts to engage Furtwängler (some of the correspondence is reproduced in facsimile, as are a number of programs, including those for the four Ring cycles at Covent Garden in 1937 and 1938). An interesting "orchestral player's point of view" by Thomas Russell is reprinted from Musical Opinion (September 1938). Since there is not yet a compilation of Furtwängler's prewar programs comparable to Henning Olsen's postwar chronology,<sup>1</sup> the details here of his British concerts, though incomplete, add something to our knowledge. (He often programmed

Stravinsky's Firebird Suite, and what a surprise to see Rachmaninoff's Isle of the Dead!)

The postwar section is preceded by a transcript of an interview Furtwängler gave for the BBC during his 1948 Beethoven cycle with the Vienna Philharmonic in London, containing many characteristic remarks. (The interview took place in English, and Furtwängler must have prepared his responses in advance, to judge from the sound of the recorded excerpts that have been published; the confusing references to "three-five time" in the discussion of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony on page 38 are present in the original.) A curious combination of idealism and pragmatism emerges in a statement such as the following: "...there is only one correct conception of a Beethoven symphony, though one can only hope to approximate to it. A good deal will always depend on the acoustics of the hall and the individuality of the conductor, the chance of the hour." It's not hard to identify the targets of this metaphor: "Many conductors work, so to speak, with the technique of Duerer or Ingres. Will that do if our task is to render a work that depends on colour, like a picture by Rembrandt or Titian? Can one do justice in a line-drawing to a work whose significance lies in its vision of colour?" And Furtwängler's comments on the damaging effects of "routine" are almost a prediction of the contemporary crisis in the performance of the Classic-Romantic literature.

One point of potential interest in such a compilation would be the possibility of comparing reviews with recordings of the events reviewed (or with recordings made in conjunction with the performances reviewed)--providing a check upon the relative reliability of reviewers, among other things. Unfortunately, the reviews selected (the preponderance of them from the Times of London and unsigned, as was that paper's custom in those days) don't overlap with available performance recordings--for example, no detailed review is quoted of the recently released May 1, 1937 Beethoven Ninth. More surprising, perhaps, is how few of Furtwängler's postwar British performances apparently survive in live recordings: only the Second Symphony from that 1948 Beethoven cycle and the premiere performance of the Strauss Four Last Songs have so far been traced.<sup>2</sup> Again, there's no specific comment on either performance.

Another useful function of reviews is confirmation that concerts actually contained what the programs announced. I note two discrepancies between Olsen's listings and Squire/Hunt: In the October 5, 1949 Beethoven Ninth, Olsen lists the soprano soloist as Hilde Zadek, whereas the new work names Joan Hammond--but no review is cited and we don't know what the discrepancy may mean. However, when it comes to the identity of the Siegmund in the concert version of

Act I of Die Walküre on March 9, 1951, Squire/Hunt quote a review confirming their substitution of Ludwig Suthaus for Olsen's Günther Treptow. And Squire/Hunt do identify the concert halls, as Olsen doesn't.

This section of the book also includes some posthumous evaluations. Both Andrew Porter's Gramophone obituary and Hans Keller's tribute in Opera speak of what one might (with apologies to Lorenz Hart) call the "unphonographable" aspects of Furtwängler's art--and thereby provide the link to The Furtwängler Sound, which begins with John Hunt pointing out that the gradually increasing circulation of live-performance recordings has done much to render these aspects audible again. For all that some such recordings have hardly enhanced the conductor's reputation, they at least contribute to the picture of his unpredictability, while the fact that the highly personal and improvisatory character of some Furtwängler performances wears poorly on repetition is certainly no reflection on their success as performances--it may even be an affirmation of their having specifically (and successfully) come into being for a unique occasion!

The Furtwängler Sound carefully--and honestly--avoids the term "discography" in its title. This is more properly described as a handlist, which for each recording intends to give only "the very first issue,...important republications and the most recent issues." (One could quibble about the consistency with which this principle is applied, but never mind.) The list is organized alphabetically by composer, though the sequence in which works are listed is somewhat eccentric: quasi-classified (symphonies usually come first, then concertos and other works) yet sometimes antialphabetical within genres (e.g., Freischütz precedes Euryanthe). I don't suppose this will trouble anyone very much. Some niceties are overlooked: the number of discs in a set is not always inferable from the catalogue numbers (e.g., recent Deutsche Grammophon album sets and most Melodiyas), and 78s are not clearly identified.

Sensibly enough, "highlights" selections from Furtwängler opera broadcasts are given short shrift, nor has any attempt been made to track excerpts included in anthologies devoted to singers and the like. But those who don't have access to the French Furtwängler Society edition of the 1947 Berlin Tristan would surely like to know that Fonit-Cetra FE 43 contains a great deal more of the performance than do the other two partial releases listed. (I don't know the French set, which Hunt describes as "Acts Two and Three," but the annotations with FE 43 claim that the passages it lacks are missing in the source, and leave us wondering whether Hunt has accurately described the contents of the French set.) Though generally sound in tracking the well-documented commercial recordings, Hunt's listings are by no means

entirely reliable in charting the rougher terrain of live performances.

Even when the listings are correct, they can be confusingly reticent about crucial matters of authenticity and ascription. "On the whole, I have resisted suggestions to include records of doubtful or uncertain authenticity," writes Hunt in his introduction, "one exception being the Beethoven Eighth and Haydn 'London' Symphonies originally published by Melodiya and later by MRF and Discocorp respectively in the USA, and about which there still seemed to prevail a certain amount of confusion." In the case of the Beethoven, The Furtwängler Sound doesn't exactly reduce the confusion. The main listing (p. 87) cites five performances of the Eighth Symphony (I add the serial numbers assigned in the second edition of Olsen's discography<sup>3</sup>):

- 1) Olsen 29: December 20, 1932, Berlin Philharmonic (two movements only)--an untraced Reichsrundfunk recording
- 2) Olsen 140: November 13, 1948, Stockholm Philharmonic--the one issued by Unicorn and EMI in 1972 and frequently since
- 3) Olsen 437 (in the appendix of "Alleged Furtwängler recordings"): "Berlin 1953"--the problematic one. But the listing contradicts the statement in the introduction that this was originally published by Melodiya and later by MRF; MRF and BJR numbers are listed first (and correctly so--these recordings appeared in the 1960s and were questioned even then), followed by Melodiya M10 37145/6, dated 1975, and Discocorp RR 413, also dated 1975
- 4) Olsen 330: April 14, 1953, Berlin Philharmonic--issued in 1979 by the German Furtwängler Society, by the Japanese Society in 1983, and by Nippon Columbia in 1984
- 5) Olsen 422: August 30, 1954, Vienna Philharmonic in Salzburg--issued on Cetra LO 530, Discocorp RR 522, and on two Japanese labels.

I have yet to hear any of the issues of Olsen 330, but even so there's a basic problem with Hunt's listing: the performance on Discocorp RR 413 (which in fact carries the April 14, 1953 date) is different from the one on the MRF/BJR recording. Given that Discocorp usually latches onto Melodiya historic issues with remarkable rapidity for domestic recycling, I'll wager that those two prove to be identical--and I will not be very surprised if they also turn out to be identical to the German and Japanese recordings that carry the same date, probably also derived from the Melodiya disc.

Actually, the MRF/BJR performance is the fishy one in the lot, since it's the only one to take the exposition repeat in the first movement. My impression is that in such matters

Furtwängler was consistent--but the basic problem of establishing the authenticity of his undocumented recordings is that he was a ceaseless improviser in most other matters, that two performances, even on successive days, could be wildly different. Thus, we're not really much better off when we have alternative performances for comparison with a questionable one than when we don't--as we don't in the case of the Haydn 104, first sighted on the other side of the same Melodiya disk and also promptly picked up by Discocorp. The Haydn purports to be a 1944 performance, and we still don't have an accurate list of all Furtwängler's concerts during and before the war, comparable to Olsen's after 1947. (Doubts have also been expressed in some quarters about the Dvorak Ninth Symphony on Relief REL 813, but Hunt doesn't qualify this at all.)

Another problematic item unmentioned in Hunt's introduction is the Allegro "Eroica," originally billed as the work of that prolific star of the Allegro roster, "Fritz Schreiber," and long touted as a Furtwängler performance. Although Hunt mentions the "pseudonyms," he nowhere specifies what is the external evidence (if any) for the attribution to Furtwängler. I agree that it "sounds like" a Furtwängler performance--but in the absence of direct evidence (presumably another tape of the same performance with convincing documentation), this belongs in the Anhang of "alleged Furtwängler recordings."

This matter of evidence, though central to accurate discography, is still too often ignored, especially in the area of performance recordings. On the one hand, we need to know the pedigrees of such recordings to determine their authenticity; on the other, we need to know which published editions represent which performance. In the latter area, Hunt also proves deficient, or at least credulous. For the 1950 Salzburg Don Giovanni, Olsen's discography gave two listings: 213, the premiere performance on July 27th, apparently preserved by RIAS Berlin but not then available on disc; and 214, a performance with the identical cast on EJS 419, which he says is "not derived from the RIAS tape." Hunt adds to the latter entry several more recent issues (Discocorp RR 407, Turnabout THS 65154, and Olympic 9109, also noting that "at least part of side 3 in the Olympic issue derives from the 1953 Salzburg performance") and under July 27th he lists Melodram MEL 713, presumably because Melodram gives that date. But the Melodram recording is identical to the EJS, right down to the slightest audience cough, not to mention such goofs as Gobbi's early entrance in the first scene of Act II. Probably the folks at Melodram just grabbed for the date of the premiere; European pirate entrepreneurs tend to assume that the first night was broadcast (when they do this with Metropolitan Opera broadcasts,

they are usually quite wrong, of course, and they are by no means always right on European events). It may even be that Olsen was wrongly informed about the nonequivalence of the RIAS tape and the EJS discs. What's certain is that Hunt has not examined the Melodram recording before listing it--and I think he owes his readers an indication that this "fact" in his list is merely an hypothesis. The eager Furtwängler collector who already has one of the earlier issues and rushes out to buy the Melodram on the strength of Hunt's listing will find himself sorely--and expensively--disappointed.

Sometimes, when Hunt ascribes a live recording to an occasion different from that specified by the manufacturer, he tells us that he is doing so. He specifies that the Seven Seas LP of the "Eroica" is "incorrectly labeled 8 December 1952," but doesn't say that the earlier Cetra LO 530 was attributed to a concert a day earlier. Both are, in any case, the same performance, which Hunt assigns (on what authority we are not told) to June 20, 1950 (Olsen 208)--and both come out a semitone sharp (as does the Seven Seas CD version, more troublesome to adjust than the LP). And they are certainly different from Discocorp RR-520, billed as the December 7, 1952 performance. Confusions over the 1953 Don Giovanni, sometimes misdated 1954, and the 1953 Franck Symphony, which via a Melodiya mixup has several times appeared flying the colors of the elusive 1945 concert performance (originally Vox PL 7230), are made specific in notes, but the various "mislabeled" Wagner recordings,<sup>4</sup> listed as genuine in the first edition, have not been assigned to their correct dates (or, when appropriate, omitted altogether) without comment--a procedure sure to confuse readers benighted enough not to subscribe to this Journal. (Hunt also fails to mention that some of these recordings have been doctored in the "mislabeled" editions.)

The book is reproduced from typescript, as was Hunt's earlier edition, but the use of some display type has made it dressier and easier to use than before, while the matte paper takes pencil annotation more readily than the hard finish used previously. With the Furtwängler centenary upon us, we may hope most of all for a third edition of Olsen's much more detailed and meticulous discography; in the meantime, Hunt's list will be useful for sorting out the numerous reissues of the commercial recordings and also, if less reliably, the live performances.

David Hamilton

## NOTES

1. Henning Smidth Olsen, Wilhelm Furtwängler: Konzertprogramme, Opern und Vorträge, 1947 bis 1954 (Wiesbaden: F. A. Brockhaus, 1972).

2. On p. 68 reference is made to other Flagstad recordings of these songs. She actually recorded two of them, not one, with piano accompaniment, "September" and "Im Abendrot." Incidentally, contrary to the label on the published edition (Melodram 221), the incomplete recording conducted by George Sebastian omits "Frühling," not "Beim Schlafengehen"--and perhaps on this occasion Flagstad simply omitted "Frühling," the high tessitura of which had caused her to transpose it even at the premiere.

3. Henning Smidth Olsen, Wilhelm Furtwängler: A Discography, 2nd rev. ed. (San Francisco: Panjandrum Press, 1973).

4. See High Fidelity (April 1982): 58, and ARSC Journal 15:2-3 (1983): 98-109, and 16:1-2 (1984): 75-76.