

John Hunt and Stephen J. Pettitt, From Adam to Webern: The Recordings of Von Karajan. Philharmonia Orchestra: Complete Discography. London, John Hunt, 1987. pp. 539. Price £9.00 (£13.00 overseas), postpaid from John Hunt, Flat 6, 37 Chester Way, London SE11 4UR.

As the subtitle puts it, these are "two separate discographies." Hunt, well known for his Furtwängler discographies, compiled the Karajan; he also edited Pettitt's Philharmonia Orchestra work, which occupies three-quarters of the pages. Karajan's dominant position with the orchestra during the decade it reached the pinnacle of acclaim is excuse enough for grouping the two subjects, even if they hardly overlap outside of that period.

Karajan first. In reviewing the previous Karajan discography by Anthony Williams in these pages (X:2-3), Walter Pate made a number of excellent and discerning observations, but he concluded: "I do hope the editors will abandon the chronological format in favor of an alphabetical one." While I appreciated Pate's factual corrections, I disagreed with that recommendation; Steve Smolian would disagree as well (this Journal, VII:3), as would Desmond Shawe-Taylor. Now, alas, we have an alphabetical Karajan discography, with all the dubious advantages of that format; in most other respects it is a very fine work.

Fortunately, the month and year of recording (so far as known) of each item is given, and the arrangement is chronological within each title. Consistency seems to prohibit giving exact dates where known because some are known only to the month or year. It's strange, then, to find the exact dates of all of Karajan's Philharmonia recordings further on in the book! Unlike the Williams discography, this one includes recordings of concerts released without the artists' permission (we used to call them "pirate," but most of these are now legal in the country of origin). The exact dates are often printed on the sleeves, but here we are given only month and year. There are also some unpublished E.M.I. recordings listed (two Sousa marches for instance).

From a non-British point of view, I find the choice of issue numbers quite inconsistent and inadequate. Hunt writes in the Foreword: "These numbers are the British rather than the continental or USA ones, the guiding pattern being a record's first issue number (and any subsequent LP issue of a 78 rpm original), important re-issues (often in less expensive editions) and the most recent incarnations including, where applicable, the Compact Disc version, which is indicated by being underlined. Overseas numbers are included for certain re-issues or where an item was never published in UK. EPs ...have been ignored, except in cases where they constituted the only issue of a title." Now that is carefully reasoned and consistent; it is also much more arbitrary than I care to defend, with enough exceptions to drive a truck (lorry) through. Taking the U.S. Columbia and Angel numbers as a group, without reference to the insular thinking just quoted, the occasional

appearance of one of them but not others is inexplicable, and it can be confusing. There are some instances where Angel issues didn't correspond to English couplings. They are much more important than the oversize (hence expensive) Toshiba sets, which could hardly be in wide circulation.

Hunt goes on in the subsequent Introduction to point out the inclusion of the two Toshiba albums of mono Philharmonia recordings ("important" reissues to him), but he might have mentioned that he has also included Toshiba's mono Vienna album. (These were reviewed in this Journal, XI:2-3 and IX:1.) The most inconsistent lists, then, involve recordings not released in Britain, as the Kurt Leimer piano concertos (he cites WCX 1508 and SME 91793; my catalogues show WCX 508 and SME 91753, as well as C 90282), or not released there on LP (so ML 4456 gets in for the Bartók Music For Strings...), or only released there late (so the Stravinsky Jeu de Cartes and Roussel Fourth get the French FCX 163 as well as the English XLP 60003). Among the U.S. numbers you will not find the German Requiem, first released here in 1948 on 78s, later on LP, although it must have been the conductor's first major record issue in this country.

I must exorcise a discographic ghost. Under the Vienna Brahms 2nd of 1949, Angel 35007 is listed along with Italian (78 rpm), French, and Japanese numbers. Since there was no British issue, this just passes under the definition quoted above. Unfortunately, the Angel was never issued, and its mistaken listing in Kurtz Myers' Index to Record Reviews cites only the review of the French issue in Disques as reference.

Finally, the "index" of assisting artists is only a list of full names, not an index. An appendix of video issues and a subjective list of the compiler's favorite recordings complete the section.

Now for the Philharmonia, a chronological list with composer/title index. This might seem to overlap the Walter Legge discography (this Journal, 17:1-3), but in fact the orchestra did all sorts of recordings outside of Legge's field of interest while he was active, and it has remained active for the many years since he retired. The beginning of the "New Philharmonia" and the resumption of the old name are precisely specified. The final date is June 1987. Here, too, unissued recordings are included, notably Klemperer's own Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4, which he recorded shortly after the Second, and unauthorized, live recordings (Toscanini's Brahms symphonies will come to mind at once).

The arrangement is easy to follow. The object has been not to reconstruct the session activity but to give recording dates for each work. While a group of short pieces may be listed under one date, a string of dates for a protracted recording (Klemperer's Messiah and Das Lied von der Erde, for example) listed at the first occurring date. Only the last names of conductors and assisting artists are listed, as in the first section, and only the conductors are indexed, leaving assisting artists unindexed and inadequately identified.

The standard of inclusion for issue numbers is the same as in the Karajan section. In both halves, issue numbers are not characterized by speed, taxing the grasp of newer collectors who aren't thoroughly familiar with WERM. Even under the inadequate standard adopted here, the Milhaud-Honegger coupling on MGM E 3041 should also have its original ten-inch number, E 122. The Gieseking-Galliera Beethoven Fifth and Fourth have an English cassette number and (for the Fourth) a German Columbia number, but not Seraphim S 60069 for the Fifth. In the area of Japanese-sponsored recordings, there are some inconsistencies: Toshiya Eto made Brahms, Bruch and Lalo works for Japanese RCA, the Brahms number being cited, but not the Bruch (JRZ 2530; R4C 2018); the Lalo escapes me, if it was ever issued. Another violinist named Wanami (surely this must be Takayoshi Wanami) made the Tchaikovsky, Bruch and Mendelssohn concertos for the Trio label, the first being cited but not the other two (PAC 2801).

Within the parameters adopted by the compilers, these discographies have been carefully assembled and beautifully produced. The laminated paper cover and perfect-binding appear durable for continued use. A curious batch of illustrations (record sleeves, concert programs, advertisements, testimonial letters, a press release, a photo montage, a substandard xerox of a Karajan photo) is sprinkled through the book. Though this will not be the last word, I hope, on either subject (Karajan is more likely to receive future attention than the orchestra), this will be an essential addition to any discographic reference collection. Discographers who fail to mine the orchestral listings for parallel compilations will have only themselves to blame.

J.F. Weber