

## Book Reviews

*Heat Wave* is yet another splendid contribution to popular music research from Pierian Press. This fine reference work should be acquired by all sound recording archivists and popular culture teachers and scholars. It is a masterful organizational achievement. *Reviewed by B. Lee Cooper*

*Swinging in Paradise*. By John Gilmore. Montreal, Vehicule Press, 1988. 322 pp. \$16.95.

The role of Canada in the history of jazz has always been somewhat marginal. A number of internationally-known jazz musicians were born within Canada's borders (Georgie Auld, Paul Bley, Gil Evans, Maynard Ferguson, Kenny Kersey, Tiny Parham and Oscar Peterson) and its cities have been on the itineraries of touring jazz musicians as long as they've been touring. But most of the musicians born in Canada matured and made their real contribution in the United States, and most touring musicians were probably only vaguely aware of anything special about the Canadian cities they played in. The exception was Montreal, where the wide-open atmosphere, lack of overt racial strife and the warm welcome of French-Canadians caused American jazz musicians to seek out bookings in the city and, in some cases, to stay.

John Gilmore's book documents live jazz in Montreal from the earliest ragtime to the break-up of the Quatuor du jazz libre du Quebec in 1974. Using painstaking research and extensive interviews, he pieces together the social and political background of the city, which supported such famous jazz spots as L'Amorce, the Black Bottom, Cafe St. Michel, Chez Patee, Rockhead's Paradise and La Tete de l'Art, which welcomed visits by musicians as diverse as Pepper Adams, Louis Armstrong, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Jackie McLean, Fats Navarro, Charlie Parker and Lester Young, and which provided lengthier employment to Brian Barley, Paul Bley, Walter Boudreau, Willie Eckstein, Lou Hooper, Vernon Isaac, Pierre Leduc, Louis Metcalf, Oscar Peterson, le Quatuor de jazz libre du Quebec, Herbie Spanier, Mynie Sutton, Nelson Symonds, Harry Thomas, Rene Thomas and the legendary Benny Winestone.

Gilmore takes us through each period in the city's social and political history. He describes its impact, positive or negative, upon the jazz musicians and the places where they played as they witnessed the continual struggle between mobster and reformist, bootlegger and prohibitionist.

Each major North American city has made some special contribution to jazz, but few have had the benefit of someone like John Gilmore to seek out and describe their contribution in such an accurate yet readable manner. Supplementing the excellent text are numerous rare photographs of musicians, bands and sites, plus appendices of organizations and the addresses of clubs cited in the text. *Reviewed by Ron Sweetman*

*Laughter on Record: A Comedy Discography*. By Warren Debenham. Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1988. Illus. 369 pp. Hardback \$35.00.

*Film, Television, and Stage Music on Phonograph Records: A Discography*. By Steve Harris. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 1988. 445 pp. Hardback \$49.95.

Warren Debenham and Steve Harris have assembled two wonderfully detailed, thoughtfully organized discographies. Although their subjects differ, comedy recordings for Debenham and film, television and stage music soundtracks for Harris, the quality of their work is universally high. These volumes will undoubtedly be useful to record collectors, sound recordings archivists, biographers, historians, and numerous popular culture scholars.

Rather than repeat the traditional recording format information (album titles, record numbers, composers or performing artists) featured in these two discographies, it is more instructive to note their unique features and their unexplainable omissions. Debenham's lengthy anthology, listing alphabetically by performer's names more than 4,300 comedy LPs issued since 1949, contains two exceptional items. His "Index" (pp 347-369) features a topical catalog of subjects covered in the recordings listed. Thus, a student may examine jokes, stories, skits, put-ons, and takeoffs on "advice to the lovelorn columns," "birth control," and "breasts" by performers ranging from Amos 'N' Andy, Lum and Abner, and Ozzie and Harriet to Edgar Bergen, W. C. Fields, and Rusty Warren. Debenham even offers beneficial sub-topic citations. For instance, under the major theme "medicine" he includes references to recordings dealing with "dentists," "doctors," "gynecologists," "hospitals," "hypochondriacs," "illness," "nurses," and "physical examinations." The other unique feature of *Laughter On Record* is a brief "Directory" (pp. 342-346) with the addresses of two dozen record companies along with 55 stores in 13 different states which specialize in locating and marketing out-of-print records. The omissions in Debenham's study are visual and subjective. It would have been especially informative to see at least one album cover reproduced for each performing artist listed. In comedy recordings, jacket art is frequently outrageous. Although the author includes three pages of glossy publicity photographs (including Shelley Berman, Bill Cosby, Homer and Jethro, Spike Jones, and Jonathan Winters), more cover illustrations would greatly enhance this discography. Similarly, a critical assessment by the knowledgeable Debenham of the foremost comedy albums, presented either as an introductory essay or as annotations within his text, would be particularly helpful to the novice investigator. *Film, Television, and Stage Music On Phonograph Records* also has several distinctive features. It offers breadth (11,761 citations) along with clarity and conciseness. The introduction by Harris features a marvelously detailed set of recording terminology and identification codes that permit him to achieve thoroughness, accuracy, and brevity in this compilation.

Finally, Harris presents a huge composer index that should be immensely valuable to music researchers. Once again, omissions in this study fall in the realms of historical perspective, visual material, and qualitative judgment. First, Harris needs to offer a broad bibliographic essay on the history of film, television, and stage music, as well as on previous soundtrack discographies by D. Richard Baer, Jack Raymond, Steven Smolian, and others. Next, he ought to persuade his publisher to include at least one hundred pages of album art. The Pierian Press excels at combining such discographic and artistic formats. Finally, Harris ought to enlarge upon his own caustic one-liner, "Unfortunately, while the quality of the sound has improved, the quality of the music has declined," (p. 1) by providing a 20-25 page analysis on the evolution or devolution of scores for film, television, and the stage.

Warren Debenham and Steve Harris deserve rich praise for the years of work they have dedicated to their distinctive discographic pursuits. Librarians, researchers,

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teachers, and fans alike will benefit from the information available in *Laughter On Record and Film, Television, and Stage Music on Phonograph Records*. But with a few additions, these good works could become great ones. *Reviewed by B. Lee Cooper*

*HIS MASTER'S VOICE / LA VOCE DEL PADRONE: The Italian Catalogue. A Complete Numerical Catalogue of Italian Gramophone Recordings made from 1898 to 1929 in Italy and elsewhere by The Gramophone Company Ltd.* Compiled by Alan Kelly, with the cooperation of EMI Music Archive. Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1988. 462 pps.

It seems hard to realize that over fifty years have passed since the publication of the first editions of Julian Morton Moses' *Record Collector's Guide* (New York: 1936) and Robert Bauer's *Historical Records* (Milan: 1937). Thus, it has been at least 50 years since this writer began, in a very amateurish way, the attempt to revise and correct these early record collecting bibles, and 42 years since results from that effort were seen in the 1947 publication of Bauer's *The New Catalogue of Historical Records*. Such corrections and revisions were based on old catalog listings, records located in private collections, and "finds" reported in such periodicals as *Hobbies* (USA) and *The Gramophone* (UK).

Working with G&T/HMV catalog and matrix numbers, it became obvious that they were assigned according to some well-established codes which inquisitive collectors began trying to sort out from the evidence at hand. Unfortunately, similar interest did not seem to be a part of the make up of the self-appointed doyen of British collectors, P. G. Hurst, who conducted the monthly "Collector's Corner" in *The Gramophone*. He touched briefly on the matter of the language code for Gramophone Co. catalog numbers in the June 1931 issue of that periodical, but in the same issue noted "the matrix numbers have so far completely baffled me and I should be most obliged to any reader who could supply the key." Aside from a single repeated request for reader assistance in the August issue of the same year, no further word about these basic concepts ever again appeared in his columns, which ran through March 1937. In spite of the fact that Fred Gaisberg of the Gramophone Co. still could be consulted, and even supplied an occasional letter to Hurst's column, no one was interested enough to ask the one real authority to contribute a full explanation of the G&T/HMV catalog and matrix numbering systems.

Looking back, in his 1946 book, *The Golden Age Recorded*, Hurst did admit that some of the "Collector's Corner" discussions were conducted "at times with greater enthusiasm than accuracy," a major understatement! In his first column (May 1931) Hurst informed his readers that "it may be news to some that, although their original labels stated they were recorded in Milan, Caruso did, with the exception of the *Mattinata*, make his 'Milan' recordings in London." He states that the 12" recording of "Mi par udir ancora," copies of which are clearly marked with a Gramophone Co. matrix number, had been made by Victor! He further informs us that the May 1, 1909 Gadski-Homer duets were recorded in 1916! Some of his "authoritative" statements unfortunately have become fixed, by repetition, in the literature, in spite of having been discredited by later indisputable research. On the other hand, others of his pronouncements (e.g., in April 1934, that it was "an open secret that [the name of Enrico di Primo] was a pseudonym for Caruso") were quickly expunged before any serious harm was