

The major problem some people will have with this book involves the criteria for inclusion. But even here it is not too difficult to fault Stambler's reasoning. The major names are here, and covered well. The lesser-known artists are for the most part not included, or mentioned in other entries. However, there are some admirable examples of influential but lesser-known, bands or artists given full coverage, (e.g., The Blasters, Willy Deville, Nils Lofgren, Greg Kihn, Richard Hell and others). And some attempt has been made to include representative heavy metal, rap and punk artists, though not many appear.

While it is obvious that in such an all-encompassing work there are bound to be some errors of omission, how could Stambler leave out a band such as R.E.M.? And how can there be an entry for Ian Matthews' semi-obscure band Southern Comfort, yet nothing for Richard Thompson or Fairport Convention?

While the book seems to be mainly accurate and fact-filled, some errors did creep in. In the Mike Bloomfield entry, the late guitarist was credited for a solo album by his cohort Nick Gravenites; The Byrds' 1971 LP "Byrdsmaniax" appears without the final letter, and at one point Nils Lofgren's pro-solo band Grin is referred to as Grim. There are no doubt a few others, but admittedly none of these errors are fatal.

And though the inclusion of 110 pages of appendices in the form of Gold/Platinum Records and Grammy/Oscar winners is nice, I think most of us would prefer an index. The photos are not particularly attractive, mostly black and white publicity shots.

It's been more than a decade since the previous edition of this work. Let's hope that with improved technology (and don't forget that Stambler's background is in engineering and aerospace), the next edition will not only come sooner, but with revisions to take us comfortably through the early '90s. And, will it (or even this) be the first multi-media, CD-ROM pop encyclopedia? *Reviewed by Bruce Rosenstein*

Canfield Guide to Classical Recordings. By David Canfield. 2nd Edition. Bloomington, Indiana: Ars Antiqua, 1989. Unpaginated. \$25.00.

Although its title is not explicit, this book is basically a price guide. Evidently a computer-generated by-product of Ars Antiqua's sale catalogs, it assigns to every listed record both a proposed retail price (for a mint-condition copy) and a "demand code" (representing the number of requests the Ars Antiqua received for a record minus the number of copies it had available for sale). The latter, an objectively derived number, is offered as a rough index of market activity. The price is apparently arrived at by a more subjective process; the preface suggests that if the demand code is 5 or higher, the record's price will probably rise in the book's next edition.

To the extent that they represent the product of an actual marketplace, these prices can claim a certain authority. The preface describes Ars Antiqua as "overall the largest dealer in the world for classical records," but notes that specialist dealers with specialized clientele may be able to get higher prices. A horseback survey of current prices at New York second-hand LP dealers and in a newly-arrived dealer's catalog, plus my own (successful and unsuccessful) bids in recent auctions turned up, not surprisingly, fairly wide variations, both up and down. (A rough impression: demand continues to drive up the tags on fairly rare items, while the gradual shift to CD is probably increasing the supply of widely-circulated discs.) Ars Antiqua stands behind these prices, in a sense. The book includes an offer to buy any listed item with a zero or positive demand code at a percentage of the given price, and notes that anything with a negative demand code may

still be in stock. Thus it's a want list and catalog as well as a price guide.

What about coverage? Canfield includes 78s, 45s, LPs, reel-to-reel and cassette tapes, CDs (at least in principle, all except LPs are coded as such). The prevalence of LPs reflects the catalog's (and *Ars Antiqua's*) classical emphasis (show music and other "classy" popular genres also are represented); LP has been the main medium for such recordings. Consequently, one might expect the 78 prices to be less "accurate." But the coverage of LPs, even those of several decades ago that have entirely vanished from the current catalog, is by no means complete. For example, 79 of the first 100 numbers in the RCA Victor LM-1000 series are here; the missing numbers include important recordings by Toscanini and Stravinsky, among others. This simply means that *Ars Antiqua's* data base hasn't yet encountered them. And, of course, recent issues are spottily represented, having hardly yet reached the second-hand market.

Appropriately for a price guide, Canfield's listings are "object-oriented" rather than "content-oriented": records are listed by label and then by catalog number (ignoring the prefix). However simple in principle, that mode of ordering is fraught with complexities, though fewer than the alternative of listing by content (composer, performer, title), as anyone acquainted with the "science" of record description already knows. Record companies have rarely pursued consistent policies in labeling and numbering their products.

Let's start with labels. Canfield's preface warns that "labels of different countries which happen to have the same name are interfiled. Thus, American and English Decca are combined. The knowledgeable collector will be able to distinguish among these like-named labels generally by the prefixes, or in some cases, the contents of the records." That's a warning of general import; much in this book may be opaque to any but the "knowledgeable collector." Not only are like-named labels interfiled, but all formats as well. Thus all Columbias--American and European, LPs and 78s--are dumped into one numerical sequence. As the preface points out, some subsidiary labels are treated independently, some not: Seraphim is listed separately from Angel (likewise *Odyssey* from Columbia, *Crossroads* from Epic, and *Turnabout* from Vox), but *Melodiya*-Angel, which also had a distinctive label design and numerical series, is lumped together with Angel (except for one stray: SR-40188 ended up among the "real" *Melodiyas*).

There is no clear dividing line showing when such distinctions become real differences, of course. Yet one might have wished for a more serious attempt at cross-referencing, beyond the scattered instances cited in the preface where we are told to look for "UORC" under "Unique Opera Record Company," but not warned in a parallel situation treated the opposite way that "EJS" is the preferred *locus* for "Golden Age of Opera," though a single errant listing remains under the latter heading. The "experienced collector" tracing a pre-war product of the Deutsche Grammophon firm may have the wit to look under Deutsche Grammophon, Polydor, and Siemens, but cross-references would have increased most people's odds of finding the record. Or what about Aeolian Vocalion and Vocalion, where at least one record is listed under both headings and the whole might usefully have been merged (the Vocalion entries include two LPs of Hispanic music, obviously another label)? Occasionally things have simply ended up in the wrong place; the first four listings under "Gramophone Concert Record" belong under "Gramophone Shop."

Other ambiguities arise from layout and format errors. Two apparently independent lists for Classics for Pleasure are really the result of a duplicate heading, and the same happens with Belcantodisc where all the Belcantodiscs with EB prefixes are 45s,

though not all are so labeled. In one case the identical record receives two adjacent listings under slightly different label names (cf. Ohmit and Ohmit Recording Service)—obvious, of course, but it suggests the degree to which the results of computer sorting and human input benefit from extensive eyeballing before publication. Such eyeballing is more easily and accurately carried out by the publisher's staff examining full-size printer output than by readers dealing with the severely reduced, four-pages-on-one final product, which is legible but not a lot more.

The next problem is the definition of "prefix," another somewhat arbitrary matter and inconsistently carried out, but important since whatever is designated as prefix is ignored in the computer sorting. For example, some Columbia records from the short-lived all-numerical 8-digit (2+2+4) series appear at the beginning of the list, with the 2+2 digits treated as a prefix, the rest as catalog number (minus leading zeros, which may be computer-convenient but sure can make familiar numbers look strange!); others are at the end of the Columbias, with all eight digits (minus spaces and hyphens, another Canfield convention) run together as an unprefixed catalog number. Any librarian, archivist, or discographer will recognize the problem; it isn't easily solved, nor is this the occasion to discuss it at length. Users of Canfield will learn to be wary, and perhaps the compilers will work harder in future editions at being consistent.

To this user, one organizational change seems highly desirable, the segregation of 78s in a separate listing. For one thing, the markets, though overlapping, are essentially distinct. Individual buyers and sellers either do or do not want 78s, and the Canfield user looking for a price will know whether the record in hand is a 78 or not. For another, 78 and post-78 numbering systems are almost totally unrelated, so the system of sorting simply on catalog number produces all kinds of clutter, whether for users seeking only LPs or those only after 78s. Interfiled at the beginning of the Columbia lists are 10" LPs (AL prefix), Entré LP multiple sets (EL prefix; note that this is not treated as a separate label), 78s from Britain (LX), France (LF) and American 78 sets (M and X), full-price LP sets (SL), reel-to-reel tapes (MQ), even a stray BC which really belongs under Epic. At least some LP numbering systems are related (e.g., mono and stereo series that differ only in prefix) so that such juxtapositions occasionally actually are helpful.

To the manufacturer's prefixes, Canfield adds a few of his own, not only the codes for formats other than LP, but also others that distinguish label states regarded as indicating particularly desirable pressings (for RCA, Mercury, and Everest LPs—though none to differentiate, for example, between British pressings of Angel discs and the inferior American Capitol editions).

One major consequence of Canfield's object-orientation is likely to affect utility to certain secondary users. The descriptions of the recordings' contents (as distinct from their identification by label and catalog number), evidently recycled from *Ars Antiqua* catalog copy, have been uniformly truncated after 51 characters, often in mid-word. That's fine when the description is "Beecham: Mozart: Symphony 31, 35, & 38. RPO" (priority in the listings for performers, composers, or whatever, evidently depends upon what section of the *Ars Antiqua* sale catalog the listing derives from). But if you don't know on which of his Polyhymnia records Kjell Johnsen plays the Bach trio sonata you want to hear him play, you're out of luck here; the listings don't get that far.

In other words, this isn't really a discographical reference work, however much it may look like one (an impression perhaps encouraged by the insufficiently specific title), and however much discographical information it incidentally contains. Not a few classical-LP mavens are likely to find it indispensable browsing, despite the tiny type.

Here are minor, private, and one-shot labels one has never encountered, and unfamiliar recordings galore. Compilers of label discographies may be able to fill some gaps. Those primarily interested in specific composers, works, or performers often will be frustrated, since their interest is focused on that truncated description field.

Further caveats for browsers. The number of discs in multiple sets is never indicated, though it can sometimes be inferred from the prefixes. Even in cases where the issuing company used multiple numbers (e.g., OL-50021/2), Canfield's practice is to enter only the first number. No great hardship for buyers and sellers who have access to the physical object, this puts casual readers at a disadvantage. For example, the verbal description may not get far enough to distinguish an opera highlights disc from a complete recording. Similarly, mono/stereo distinctions, let alone fake stereo, are never made explicit, though again inference is often effective, especially with "M" or "S" in the prefix, and some companies such as Angel and RCA used the same numbers with different prefixes, so the alternatives turn up side-by-side in Canfield. But you have to be a *Kenner* (or of a certain age) to remember, for example, that in the aforementioned Columbia and Odyssey 8-digit series, odd numbers were mono, evens stereo or fake stereo. And so on.

Obviously, the book's principal utility is for pricing a specific record, though its inconsistencies of execution may stand in the way of locating that record's listing, and also may make one wonder if the data base has actually taken into account all the relevant information for pricing it. Purchasers should remember that any other reference values have been subordinated to that main purpose. *Reviewed by David Hamilton*

Discografie van het Concertgebouworkest. By Jan van Bart. Zutphen, The Netherlands: De Walburg Pers, 1989. hfl 35; \$US24.00 (sea mail) 117 pp. (Zaadmarkt 84A-86, Postbus 222, Zutphen 7200 AE)

Jan Van Bart has been for many years a representative of Deutsche Grammophon in The Netherlands. His compilation is of great interest for those who admire the great Dutch Orchestra (officially now the "Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam," by Royal decree early in 1989, in honor of the Orchestra's 100th Anniversary).

The discography lists all of the commercial recordings of the Concertgebouw, as well as many, but not all, of the "live" concert recordings made by the Dutch radio and issued on various labels. Listings are chronological, with each entry identified by year, then by number, with specific dates, whenever possible, for each listing.

As one might expect with a project of this size, and going back more than a half-century, much of the information is non-specific with many sessions identified only by month and year. Record identification is only on initial English and Dutch releases; hence the many Philips recordings issued in the United States on Epic, the London black discs issued in the United States, and the British Ace of Clubs reissues, are not mentioned. If you are searching for a specific recording, you might be able to find it on a label not included in this discography.

The first Concertgebouw recording was made in May 1926, Wagner's *Tannhäuser Overture*, with Mengelberg conducting. The Mengelberg era continued on Columbia until 1936 when he began to record with the Orchestra for Telefunken. The first non-Mengelberg release was recorded in November 1941, Van Beinum conducting the Brahms *Haydn Variations* and Sibelius' *Swan of Tuonela*.