
CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Tim Brooks

As readers by now are aware, the purpose of "Current Bibliography" is to locate research on recording history that has appeared recently in small circulation collectors' journals, most of which are not indexed elsewhere. It also includes news about those publications.

To be indexed here an article must be in English, be reasonably substantive, and deal with recording history. Articles focussing on musicology, sociology, or current matters such as reviews of new LPs, record prices, and current artist activities are not included. If an article is accompanied by something remotely resembling a discography this is indicated by "W/D" or "discog." A ten-year cumulation of "Current Bibliography" is planned to contain about 6,000 citations and many added listings not originally published in the *Journal*; however, the form in which this will be published has not yet been decided.

Issues covered this time are those received between August and November 1989. Most should still be available from the publishers at the addresses indicated below. If you contact one of these publishers or authors, please mention ARSC and "Current Bibliography."

NOTES

The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society has announced the naming of its first Patron in more than 50 years, Oliver Berliner, grandson of the famous inventor. The only previous Patron of the society was none other than Emile Berliner's arch rival, Thomas A. Edison, who held the position from the society's founding in 1919 until his death in 1931.

In the new publications department, *Record Finder* has launched a new magazine called *Record Proprietor's Monthly* aimed at retail and mail order record dealers. Its goal is to provide a marketplace for items primarily of interest to dealers--bulk lots, wholesale, new products, store fixtures, etc. We also make note of the British quarterly *The Historic Record*, established in 1986 and mentioned briefly in the last installment of "Current Bibliography." Editor John R. Wrigley has kindly consented to an exchange of publications with ARSC, so *The Historical Record* will henceforth be indexed here (most prior issues are included in this installment). Articles to date have been primarily about British subjects, including a fine series of

dating guides by Peter Copeland for the English Zonophone, Regal-Zonophone, Columbia, HMV and Decca labels.

The most venerable of all specialist record collectors' publications, *The Record Collector* (est. 1946), has suffered the loss of another editor with the sudden death of Clifford Williams in March 1989. He is succeeded by Larry Lustig. In the field of soundtrack recordings, *CinemaScope*, a U.S. publication dealing mostly with current subjects, has been absorbed by Luc Van De Ven's more historically oriented *Sound-track!*, which will now contain elements of both.

Not indexed here, but perhaps of interest to some readers, is the *AMICA International News Bulletin* published by the Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association, 191 Riverview Drive, Woodville, OH 43469. AMICA was founded in 1963 and is dedicated to the restoration and enjoyment of player and reproducing pianos and rolls. Its substantial (ca. 50 pages) bimonthly contains many historical articles; currently a complete "rollography" of the QRS Autograph label is being serialized. Although ARSC has never addressed the subject of music rolls, they do qualify, I suppose, as "sound recordings." AMICA annual dues are \$22 in the U.S.

Meanwhile, up in chilly Vermont, *The New Amberola Graphic* has announced a facsimile reprint that will be of interest to antiquarian collectors. It is the January 1899 issue of *The Phonoscope*, one of the earliest industry trade papers, and is filled with ads, record listings, and record news of that day. One ad shows a large picture of Estella Mann, the first woman to operate her own record label (and a lady with a formidable proboscis!). The oversized, 20 page quality reprint is available at the Graphic's usual economical rates: \$2.99 plus \$1.05 postage (U.S.).

Gospel expert Doug Seroff (an ARSC non-member--somebody recruit him!) has supplied copies of the programs for two of the annual "Gospel Arts Day" performances he has organized at Fisk University in Nashville. These slick, illustrated booklets are filled with meticulously researched historical articles about gospel groups, many of whom recorded, and are recommended to anyone interested in that field. A few copies from recent years are available from Doug at 2422 Gideon Road, Greenbrier, TN 37073.

LIES THAT WILL NOT DIE

Bogus historical "facts" are like the weather--everybody complains about them, but hardly anybody seems to do anything about them, at least in print. Recently I've noticed three well-known howlers begin to crop up again, long after they were supposedly laid to rest. What is particularly interesting is the reactions of the authors of these inaccuracies, when advised of their errors.

Bogus fact number 1 is the story that the first black recording artist, George W. Johnson, was hanged for killing his wife. This canard seems to have originated in Fred Gaisberg's none-too-accurate 1942 memoirs, and was corrected as long ago as 1971 by Jim Walsh in an article titled "In Justice to George Washington Johnson." Unfortunately, justice continues to elude poor George. The story has been repeated in at least three places during the past year--in the February issue of *The Hillendale News*, the May issue of *In The Groove*, and the liner notes for the English CD "Emile Berliner's Gramophone."

What happened when the authors were advised of their error? I wrote to *In The Groove* myself. The editor forwarded the letter to the author, who did not acknowledge it, announced in a later issue that *he* had discovered the 1971 Walsh article, and then

let stand several other errors about Johnson's life which I also had mentioned. ARSC member Quentin Riggs contacted the author of the *Hillandale News* piece, but no correction has appeared in print there. Member William Shaman wrote to the producer of the CD, who said he would issue a correction sheet with future copies; however, a copy subsequently obtained contained no such correction.

Bogus fact number 2 involves rock star Buddy Knox, born in 1933, who has long claimed that he wrote the 1911 hit "Hula Love" (he had a hit version in 1957). I wrote short articles about this remarkable case of prenatal achievement for *The New Amberola Graphic* in 1977 and *Goldmine* in 1984. Nevertheless, *Goldmine* repeated Knox's claim in a 1987 article, and refused to correct it afterwards. Knox made the claim again in an August 1989 interview in *Rockin' 50s*. This time, however, the interviewer asked the singer about allegations that he hadn't actually written the song. Taken aback, Knox replied "Oh yeah, 'Hula Love'... I put that together in 1947. The original idea was not mine, it came off an old Edison disc... I changed the lyrics and changed the beat. I actually finished it up..." (In fact, he copied it word-for-word, and copyrighted it in his own name.) A movie based on Buddy's life is supposed to be in the works. Perhaps we will see the teenage genius "putting together" this clever little song in the school gym? (The editor of *Rockin' 50s* says that he will print a letter about the true origin of the song.)

Bogus fact number 3 is the oft-repeated claim that the 1924 Victor recording of "The Prisoner's Song" by Vernon Dalhart--the first big country music hit--sold "six to seven million copies." This bit of puffery appears to have originated in a Victor promotional flyer in the late 1940s. The figure is ludicrous; no record of that era sold in such vast quantities, and Victor's own internal data, published in a number of places, documents sales of about one million. But the September 1989 *DISCOVERIES* repeats the "seven million" figure, in answer to a reader's question. The source is given as Joel Whitburn's 1986 book *Pop Memories*. Someone else can write to the editor about that one.

Readers are invited to send in other examples of "bogus facts" that will not go away, no matter how often they have tried to correct them. I'd be glad to mention them here. (Remember, these have to be documentable facts, not simply an opinion.) And remember the three "facts" mentioned above. You'll probably see them repeated again... and again... by authors and editors who won't correct themselves.

AND IN CONCLUSION...

Finally, this issue's "CB Awards." For the most succinct subscription rules, to the highly irregular *Old Time Music*, which ends its rate listing with the proviso "a subscription implies that the magazine will be sent to the subscriber until one of the three expires." (Think about that.) For the best fake-out-the-customers maneuver, to the label that accidentally issued 10,000 Sex Pistols CDs mislabeled as a Lawrence Welk "Polka Party." Welk fans were reportedly outraged. (*DISCOVERIES*, November 1989, p. 10).

Thanks to Doug Seroff, Patricia Turner and Don McCormick and the staff of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives, New York Public Library, for contributing listings this time.

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Goldmine, 700 East State St., Iola, WI 54990

Gramophone, The, 177-179 Kenton Road, Harrow, Middx. HA3 0HA England

Hillandale News, c/o D.M. Field, Hon. Treasurer, City of London Phonograph & Gramophone Society, 116 Tanhouse Lane, Malvern Link, Worcs., England WR14 1LG

Historic Record, The, 185 The Wheel, Ecclesfield, Sheffield S30 3ZA, England

Hobbies - see *Antiques & Collecting Hobbies*

IAJRC Journal, International Assoc. of Jazz Record Collectors, c/o Gil Erskine, P.O. Box 800, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

In The Groove, Michigan Antique Phonograph Society, 2609 Devonshire, Lansing, MI 48910

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Record Research, 65 Grand Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11205

Resound, Archives of Traditional Music, Maxwell Hall 057, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405

Rockin' 50s, 3022 56th St., Lubbock, TX 79413

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Sound Box, The, Calif. Antique Phono. Society, Box 67, Duarte, CA 91010

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