

A related problem the user may encounter stems from publication of this book during the twilight phase of the LP record. It took about seven years for microgroove records to completely displace 78s after the introduction of the LP in 1948. Compact discs and, to a lesser extent cassettes, have taken a comparable period of time to supersede microgrooves. Thus, any broad reference work is hampered by the possibility that its comprehensiveness exists only at the time of publication, since new records are constantly being published and old ones withdrawn from sale. Since this book was prepared, two major blues labels are pushing the LP into the past: Rounder and Arhoolie have already abandoned the LP and now publish only in CD and cassette formats. More and more LPs may well become hard to find as this book goes into general circulation.

A third problem arises vis-a-vis archival sets, especially with regard to reissues processed from pre-1950 disc masters or pressings. In many cases, remastering has been performed inadequately, either by amateurs or by otherwise competent engineers who have no idea what a 78 rpm disc should sound like. While preparing this review, I thought about grumping because the book rarely alludes to the problem; on second thought it seemed to me that such attention would be counter-productive precisely because the problem is so pervasive. As CDs grind into second gear in the 1990s, consumers properly expect better sound reproduction, and we can only hope that many of the editions cited in this book will be replaced by new ones of higher quality.

Do not construe the foregoing as criticism of Paul Oliver and his contributors. An ideal time never arrives to publish a guide like this one, which by and large succeeds in what it sets out to do. Oliver and colleagues have written an informative and entertaining guide to the world of blues, with insights which will provoke both new initiates and veterans. *Reviewed by Dick Spottswood*

***A Benjamin Britten Discography.
Studies in History and Interpretation of Music, 31.***

By Charles H. Parsons, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, 247 pp. \$59.95.

The previous issue (*ARSC Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 34) examined the second volume of Michael Gray's *Bibliography of Discographies* for classical music. The key point was put this way: "If one is going to tackle the discography of a composer or performer, it would be smart to look up the previous attempts (the least one can do is improve on them)." I had already made the same point in "Clues to Composer Discography."

If only Charles Parsons had checked Benjamin Britten in Gray's first volume! He might have winced at the fourteen listings up to 1975, but he would have noticed that just one of them had any notation of serious content (i.e., dates of recording and release), and it was 58 pages long. It was compiled by the present writer.

I find too little satisfaction derived from updating a discography for a second edition, so I have ignored Britten while new recordings, even of his late works written after 1975, proliferated. Since someone else has taken my Mahler discography (word for word) and added ten years of new entries to it, Parsons might have done the same thing for Britten without any objection from me, but he didn't. For Britten I listed about 420 items up to 1975; Parsons lists about 620 items up to late in 1989, but he omits 140 items that I had found. That's not counting folksong arrangements, which he omits.

The two volumes are easy to compare, for the arrangement is quite similar. He lists the works in order of composition; I had separated the works without opus number and followed the composer's opus numbering for the rest, but this list is strictly chronological, even if it forces the opus numbers out of order. The arrangement of the listings is similar, but he adds annotators, producers, engineers, and couplings (the artists are somewhat buried among all these names). Both discographies list the recordings chronologically under each title.

Some of the differences between the two works are striking. Parsons lists six new versions of Op. 83, but none of the three earlier items in my work. For Op. 41 he omits the first three recordings ever made. For the composer's masterpiece, Op. 66, I listed three versions; he adds two recent commercial recordings, as well as two private issues from college choirs, but ignores Herbert Kegel's 1969 issue and the earliest college recording (Crane College, 1966, unavailable to me at the time). For Op. 63 he omits six of my thirteen items. The popular Op. 34 is lacking eight of my entries, the equally popular Op. 28 lacks nine of my items, and nine versions of Op. 4 are missing. For *Peter Grimes* he is unaware of the creator's recording of excerpts never released until 1972. He omits the first recordings of *The Birds*, *The Sycamore Tree*, *The Sword in the Stone*, *Scherzo for Recorder Quartet*, and *Fanfare for St. Edmundsbury* (the only ones of each piece in my list). The most egregious example of all is *A Hymn to the Virgin*, for which he omits seven of my nine entries while adding seven new ones.

Parsons's work is more than just a discography. The recordings are cited within a works list, providing exhaustive data about the compositions and their first performances. But nowhere does he mention *The Ship of Rio* (and its 1969 recording), and the 1938 recording of the Irish Reel from *The Village Harvest* is cited only as a cross-reference. He lists *An American Overture* as a second Op. 27 right after *Hymn to St. Cecilia*. He does list unrecorded works, however, including all the radio and film scores.

My discography was an attempt to put in order the early years before they fell into oblivion, so I went out of my way to establish the early recording dates. I thought it was important to give the precise dates for Boyd Neel's three early versions of Op. 10 on Decca, if only to forestall the question of how many distinct versions existed. Parsons lists the issue numbers for all of them under a 1953 release date. He makes the same mistake with Eduard van Beinum's two versions of Op. 33a/b.

I regret that my proudest achievement has failed to endure in the annals of Britten discography, that of publishing the distinction between two recordings of Op. 28 that both appeared as Argo ZRG 5440. I had to find two different tape transfer numbers among several copies in the (then) British Institute of Recorded Sound to explain why some sleeves bore the legend "recorded 1966" for a record that had been reviewed the year before. Another significant entry also omitted is a Decca recording by Eden and Tamir that was announced but not issued (someone will tell that story some day).

Parsons has three false entries, stating in Op. 18 that the renumbering of London LL994 as 5358 involved a different recording with Britten at the piano (!) instead of Goossens conducting, and in Op. 33a (Boult on PRT) and Op. 56a (Guest on Argo) listing reissues as new recordings. He slips up in listing the two pieces of both Op. 23 and Op. 56 separately, forgetting to list the same discs under both

entries. He lists Op. 73 as a work for flute, violin, and piano four hands, then forgets that the Jeney twins do more than play the piano (he also wrongly attributes the playing of the first performance by the twins, listing violin for one and piano for the other).

There are other problems. In Op. 4 under Boris Brodt the date is not "195?," but 1967 (he only conducted the orchestra from 1964 to 1968, as Holmes points out). In Op. 4 on Music Guild, the artists are Karl Ristenpart and the Saar Orchestra. In Op. 4 on Melodiya the conductor is Guzman (also in Op. 29, omitted here), not Rozhdestvensky (in the Prokofiev coupling only). He fails to point out under Op. 7 that neither recording is complete. The conductor of Op. 9 and Op. 24 is Edgar Cree, and of Opp. 4, 18, and 93, Jean-Walter Audoli. Since Op. 23 is for two pianos, John Ogdon should be joined by Brenda Lucas.

Most of the dates for 78 rpm issues are as much as seven years late, but many LP dates are off three years one way or the other, and the worst errors include Op. 15 under Whitney (1962, not 1977), Op. 18 by Micheau (1954, not 1950), and Op. 34 under Bernstein (1961, not 1973). The precise dates of all of these were included in my earlier work.

The volume is handsome, with paper, printing, and binding on the level suggested by the price. There are so few typos as to pass over them in silence, but there are no diacriticals, and the technology is electric typewriter with underlining (a choice of Selectric typefaces was available fifteen years ago). Except for a title page and two pages explaining the format (almost unnecessary because it is so straightforward), the poor child comes naked into the world, with not a word of introduction. The compiler might have told us something about the composer and his recordings, as well as his own approach to his task. The coding is off-putting. It adds nothing to clarity to use "1mlp" or "1slp" or "1scd" to indicate the number of discs, the recording mode, and the format. In case you wondered, there is also "2-78rpm," which is not explained on the format page. The page layout is generous with white space.

This was a good time to put Britten together again. The overall approach is splendid, and it is unfortunate that Parsons didn't stand on the shoulders of his predecessors. *Reviewed by J. F. Weber*

Assessing, Insuring and Disposing of Jazz Record Collections.

Edited by David Goldenberg. IAJRC Monograph 1. Feasterville, PA: International Association of Jazz Record Collectors, IAJRC Publications, 1990. 86 pp. Paperback. \$10.95. (Available from Richard Lagerman, 1300 Clover Lane, Feasterville, PA 19047).

This is the first book which addresses the disposal of record collections. Though some of it is jazz-specific, most of the ground covered applies to records of all kinds. Chapters were contributed by various authors.

The appraisal section discusses the ethics expected of the appraiser, some of which are common sense, and some mandated by IRS regulations and—viewed from their standpoint—also are logical. Various standards of value are discussed. A number of points could be inserted in the discussion. For example, if the appraisal is for a gift made to a tax-exempt institution, frequently the appraiser is recommended by that institution. Should a conflict of interest arise, all parties must be aware the appraiser is working for the donor, not the institution. Appraisal fees are the donor's responsibility; IRS regulations prohibit payment by the receiving party.