

And, of course, there is no evaluation or editorial commentary on the reliability or years-in-business of any of these "dealers." This reviewer recently had an unfortunate experience with one of them, a well-known Florida dealer. He simply didn't send the \$45 worth of merchandise I had won on his auction, after I had paid for it. Inquiries to other collectors revealed that probably this was not due to larceny, just ineptitude. Unfortunately, there was no way to reach him. He does not answer his mail, his home address is not given (only a post office box), and his phone number is unlisted. The number was obtained anyway, but the party who answered said curtly "he's not here" and hung up. After four months of fruitless attempts to reach him, I finally wrote to the regional Postal Inspector. My merchandise arrived shortly thereafter, with an amiable apology.

The dealer is listed here, as you might guess, with a post office box and no phone. Many others who are listed have excellent reputations and are completely reliable. Unless you have another source of information, you are on your own.

Given these limitations, the *National Directory* does its simple job well enough. If you want names and addresses, all presumably current, they're here. *Reviewed by Tim Brooks*

The Decca Hillbilly Discography, 1927-1945.

By Gary Ginell. New York, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989. xxiv, 402 pp., intro., indexes, photographs, \$49.95.

With the continuing absence of a generic country music discography, those of us wishing to document recordings have been forced to resort to magazine articles, old catalogs, LP covers, and other catch-as-catch-can sources. Those lucky enough to have a copy of Brian Rust's *Victor Master Book, Volume 2* (1969; other promised volumes were never published) have found it an indispensable guide to the company's 1925-36 country music output. Twenty years later, Gary Ginell has given us a comparably useful work documenting the life span of Decca's first country record series which spanned the years 1934-45 and totaled 1,113 releases (numbers 5000-6112). The central part of his book consists of alphabetically arranged artist discographies which chronologically list all released and unreleased material made by individuals and groups for Decca's country catalog. Each entry provides the master number, main and alternate titles, release number(s), session personnel, and date and place of recording. Mr. Ginell also surveys Decca's 1935-36 Champion label series, which combined original material with reissues of masters acquired from the Gennett Company of Richmond, Indiana, covering the period 1927-1934. Decca/Gennett/Champion material also was pressed for sale by Montgomery Ward at reduced prices, both through retail outlets and by mail order through the company's ubiquitous catalogs.¹

As a bonus, the book includes an accounting of Decca's 17000-17059 Acadian French series (higher 17000 numbers were devoted to Trinidad calypsos) on the reasonable assumption that Cajun material is also of interest to country collectors and scholars, and because Cajun bands recorded English-language performances which appeared in the 5000 series.

Like any book-length discographic study, this one has its material arranged in ways that will take some getting used to. The artist discography chapter is preceded, and to some extent duplicated, by a 131-page numerical listing whose only additional information is the A/B side designation of each release and the descriptive

legends copied from the three o'clock position on the original labels. Assuming the latter is accurate, which is not always the case, this information could have been incorporated more efficiently into the artist section, with the numerical list reduced to an index. A useful matrix/location index takes advantage of the company's matrix block numbering system to show a chronological and geographic breakdown of material in the discography, including earlier Gennett masters and even a few sides from English Decca which found their way into the catalog. Three further indices cover release dates, composer credits and titles. The latter is both welcome and essential; release and composer information could have been more useful as part of the artist discographies, making for both easier reference and a saving of space. This arrangement also means that no composer data is provided for unreleased items.

All Decca pressings from the period show master numbers and take letters (-A, -B, etc.) found in the wax, except for early pressings which give only takes beyond -A. Despite a statement to the contrary in the introduction, alternate takes do show up, although so-called -C and -D takes invariably seem to be studio transfers or dubs of lower takes. Ginell gives almost no take data, claiming that multiple takes were issued only in rare instances. Other parts of the Decca output include a number of multiple takes, and I find it difficult to believe that the country series did not also have its share. Take designations are a basic component of discography and it is disappointing that they have not been included.

A further problem exists with material by these artists released in series beyond those covered in the book, particularly in grey areas where country music overlaps with other genres, like polka or Irish music. Polka outfits, like the Roman (Romy) Gosz Czech band or the Swiss Hill Billies, also appeared in the label's popular series and in a post-war 45000 polka series. Gosz recorded more polkas for Decca a year after those cited here, but since they were released in the popular series no mention is made of them. The Swiss Hill Billies' session also saw material released in the popular and polka series, but everything not published in the 5000 series is listed either as unissued or not shown at all. Bradley Kincaid and Tex Ritter both had records in Decca's 12000 Irish series; Ritter's one release is cited but not Kincaid's, despite relevant titles like "Down by the Railroad Track" (12035) and "I'd Like to be in Texas" (12053). There is also material made within the 1934-45 period which remained unissued until Decca's 46000 country series began in 1946. Mr. Ginell's focus on the 5000-6000 series precludes listing of material made during the pre-1946 period if it appears only on 46000 issues; in some cases these masters are listed and shown as unissued; in other cases they are omitted. It would have been helpful to cite all country material recorded within the chronological scope of the book, even if a record's release falls slightly beyond its stated scope, simply because such records are of related interest.

The difficulty in enumerating problems of this sort lies in the fact that the space required to discuss them suggests that they tend to outweigh the overall value of the book. In this case, nothing could be further from the truth. In the main body of his work, Gary Ginell documents over 2,500 performances in thorough fashion, supplementing information from Decca's files with the results of numerous performer interviews which have helped elicit recording locations; he even cites hotels where recording took place during field trip stops in places like Houston, New Orleans and Dallas. Mr. Ginell also has done an amazing job of identifying sidemen, both from working bands and from units put together for specific studio dates.

The *Decca Hillbilly Discography* will be indispensable to any collector with an interest in country music from the period and to all institutions with recorded sound archives. *Reviewed by Dick Spottswood*

¹ Pop music star Les Paul received his first inauspicious exposure on record through two Decca-made Montgomery Ward releases in 1936, calling himself Rhubarb Red!

A Discography of Tudor Church Music.

By Timothy Day. London: The British Library, 1989, 317 pp., £35.

This is one of the finest presentations of discography I have ever had the pleasure to use. Timothy Day, curator of Western art music at the British National Sound Archive (NSA), has chosen the body of polyphony running from the Eton Choirbook to Weelkes and his contemporaries, an appropriate block of musical history even if it extends somewhat beyond the Tudor monarchs.

After a preface which clearly sets forth the solutions to the discographic problems he has created for himself, he offers a 36-page appreciation of the music and its revival in the twentieth century which tells us as much about his own love for the subject as it does about the music itself. Packed with illustrative examples and quotations, he begins with Henry Davey's *History of English Music* published in 1895, detailing precisely how much (rather, how little) Davey could have known at the time about the sixteenth century music that he enthused over. He follows with the revival of Tudor music at Westminster Cathedral in London by Sir Richard Terry, choirmaster there from 1902 to 1924; the publication in ten volumes of *Tudor Church Music* under the lead of E. H. Fellowes; the widespread observance in churches, broadcasts, and recordings of the Byrd tercentenary in 1923; the influence of the BBC Third Programme after 1946, following earlier BBC broadcasts of some regularity in the previous decade; the interest of professional choirs after the war, the improvement in church singing resulting from the pressure of the radio audiences listening to broadcast service, and the major shift in performance practice which began with David Wulstan in the 1960s and spread to several other conductors. All of this places the discography in proper perspective.

The main part of the discography is a chronological list of 729 records and broadcasts containing various amounts of Tudor church music, for this book comprises not only commercial records but BBC transcription discs and the NSA's own off-the-air recordings of BBC broadcasts. All entries are identified by the author's own CL code number, and if the disc or broadcast consists entirely of Tudor music the code number is underlined. The list, beginning in 1921, starts off with seven discs of Fellowes' own group, the English Singers, and closes at the end of 1988.

The second part is an alphabetical list of composers, their works arranged alphabetically, with the recordings of each arranged chronologically; this is not an index but a complete discography with citations of the CL numbers. Next comes an index of performers listed alphabetically, citing their CL numbers with dates and composers. An appendix lists nineteen talks on the subject given on the BBC and taped at NSA, with an informative précis of each talk.

For LPs, CDs, and broadcasts running over half an hour, Day provides the dates of recording. I regret this limitation, for he was in a position to obtain a great many more dates from EMI and other sources close to hand. Even if he did not track down the last elusive date, he could have found most of them with much less trouble than most other discographers.