LETTERS

The *ARSC Journal* encourages signed, typed, comment on current issues and matter of general interest to association members. Letters beyond 250 words may be edited to fit space. Letters can be sent to the editorial office.

To the Editor:

It has been brought to my attention the fallow comments of Tim Brooks concerning Charles K. Harris in the latest *ARSC Journal* (Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 134-141). According to Issac Goldberg in his book *Tin Pan Alley: A Chronicle of the American Popular Music Racket* (New York: John Day) issued in 1930, "The commercial insight of Harris—and there must, in some dim way, have been a modicum of that intuition through which all artists labor beneath the crust of acquired technique—entitles him to the honor of an adjective. Let us, then, christen his day and generation as the Harrisian age of our popular song." That statement to me is closer to the facts about the enormous contribution Charles K. Harris made to the development of popular music than Brooks' portrayal. Harris wasn't your average itinerant composer; he was one of the leading publishers of his time, one of the first to employ branch offices and no doubt gifted in hype as can plainly be seen by the ingenious use of his picture adorning the majority of his single sheets and song books. And if "After the Ball" was the catalyst for the mass marketing techniques, albeit primitive by today's standards, which Harris pursued over a forty-year career, he was still prominent enough in 1914 to be one of the founders of ASCAP. And lo and behold Tim, he did not escape the attention of the record manufacturers. First of all, I would venture a guess that Harris sold more copies of sheet music for "After the Ball" than all of the discs and cylinders pressed in 1892 combined. Secondly, a good fifteen years from the issuance of "After the Ball," he was given italicized credit on many a Victor recording of the time. One close at hand is Victor 31548, a tune called "Somewhere" featured by Harry Tally and the Haydn Quartet. Further along in the more recent book *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America*, (New York: Norton, 1979) Charles Hamm pays homage to Harris.

> Charles K. Harris (1867-1930) epitomizes better than any other songwriter the attitude and methods of the first generation of Tin Pan Alley composers. His career as a composer spans the entire period; his "After the Ball" was the first spectacular demonstration of the market potential of popular song, and his book with the same title is the best contemporary verbalization of the philosophy of both songwriters and publishers of the time.

I'm not privy to the sources of Brooks' venomous critique but as the author of a new book, *The Illustrated History of the Wisconsin Music Trades 1840-1990*, I feel a strong need to express myself in regard to one of its most eminent founding fathers. *Michael G. Corenthal, Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Tim Brooks Responds:

I'm afraid that Mr. Corenthal, in his ire, has missed the point of my reference to Charles K. Harris. In the context of evaluating the claims of *Pop Memories* to chart best selling *records* of the 1890s, I cited Harris' "After the Ball" as an example of one whose popularity was greatly exaggerated. What I said was that contemporary accounts indicated that (1) the song was indeed popular in 1893, but quickly faded and was equalled or exceeded by scores of later, less-remembered hits; and (2) it has virtually no impact on record. (*Pop Memories* nevertheless imagines one recorded version as the third biggest seller of the decade.)

Like the author of *Pop Memories*, Mr. Corenthal quotes secondary sources and anecdotes, in this case to "prove" that Charles K. Harris was a great man. I didn't say he wasn't. Only that "After the Ball" was not the overwhelming hit in the 1890s that Harris later claimed it was. Its continuing sales in later years are another matter. Thanks to Harris' constant plugging, it probably did continue to sell, slowly, long after most of its contemporaries were forgotten. However, it wasn't the dominant hit in the 1890s that later writers made it out to be, and it never was a hit on record. Recordings of "After the Ball" from any period are uncommon.

Incidentally, I should make one small correction to a statement in my review. I said that "After the Ball" was popular in late 1892 and early 1893. The song was published in 1892, but according to references in *The Clipper*, *The New York Dramatic Mirror*, *Musical Record* and other contemporary sources, its vogue was from the spring until the fall of 1893. By early 1894 it was already "over."

I hope that Mr. Corenthal and the author of *Pop Memories* will stop throwing stones at anyone who challenges the industry hype they so embrace, do some solid research in primary sources, and tell us what really happened in history. *Tim Brooks, Greenwich, Connecticut*

To the Editor:

I am always delighted to read your journal which contains the best in-depth reviews of "historical" reissues that I am aware of.

I was particularly pleased—and saddened—by Gerald Parker's review of recent CD releases of Gounod's *Faust. Pleased,* because I have for long maintained that this is the best, and the only, authentic recording ever made of this opera. It is the only recording to have a first-class, all-French cast. It was made by the Paris Opéra forces, who had the music in their blood, and conducted by a disciple of Gounod. *Saddened*, because I have been urging my company to reissue this recording for over 10 years, but in vain. I have the CDs which Mr. Parker reviews; they are appalling: incorrectly pitched (78 rpm instead of 77), badly transferred, awkward side-joins, and no ballet music (HMV C2138/9, matrices CF 3061/4 inc.). We at EMI have most of the metal masters. In addition, we have a reputation for reasonable transfers, and now have a splendid tool for noise reduction in EMI's CEDAR computer. Opportunities lost, alas! Can you lend your voice to EMI's release of the Pauzera "Damnation" and the Luccioni/Bouvier "Samson" before these, too, are "pirated?" *Keith Hardwick, Kent, England*

To the Editor:

Ah, a controversy! On page 41 of the *ARSC Journal*, Volume 21, No. 1, I said that "ARSC member Brad Kay has produced a number of stunningly successful stereo restorations from [pairs of] 1930s disc pressings," and I specifically mentioned Victor set M/DM 85, Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony playing Tchaikovsky's 6th Symphony.

In connection with the very same recording, on page 113 of the same issue, Edward D. Young said that "it is impossible at least with the technology currently at our disposal to synchronize the speed of the two discs ... to the extent necessary to create anything like 'real stereo.'" He also said that "definite conclusions cannot be drawn" as to whether two discs known to be recorded at the same time (as was Victor's practice, to provide a safety backup) were made using different microphones and constitute true stereo.

Mr. Young's discography is generally excellent, confirming and explaining a number of details about Koussevitzky's recordings which are familiar to me from listening—but he is wrong about stereo 78s.

First of all, it can indeed be proven objectively whether a pair of recordings is identical. If this is the case, when combined electrically into mono, they produce audible phase cancellations.

Achieving the necessary degree of synchronization to demonstrate this takes no unusual skill. The cancellations work and sound the same as in combined playback of a mono tape over two channels of a stereo tape deck with a head azimuth error. They are even more dramatic if the phase of one of the channels is reversed.

On the other hand, if the two channels of a stereo pair are combined, no cancellations will be audible, since the differing microphone positions randomize phase relationships. One exception is if the recordings share one or more ("center-channel") microphones but not others. This is common with modern stereo recordings but unlikely with 1930s music recordings.

When listening to a pair of identical recordings over separate channels, the entire auditory image will drift from one speaker or headphone to the other as they slip through synchronization.

There will be no separation between sources. The effect is the same as when you walk from one side to the other past a pair of stereo speakers playing a mono source. On the other hand, when you walk past a pair of speakers playing a stereo source, the auditory image will "bloom" with separation and ambiance midway between the speakers, and this will also occur with a pair of stereo 78s as they drift through synchronization.

Synchronizing to achieve a steady stereo image is tricky—but it is possible. Remember, 1930s wax masters were made on lathes with turntables as massive as millstones, and the pressings are direct moldings of the masters. There is very little wow and flutter between two properly-centered and unwarped directly-mastered 78 rpm pressings—as little as between the channels of a typical cassette tape.

Synchronizing must be achieved by ear, using headphones. It requires playback equipment with low wow and flutter, and a variable-speed adjustment ten to 100 times finer than usually provided. Holding the two channels in sync is the auditory equivalent of walking a tightrope; learning it takes weeks of practice, and the

listening cues are different in every recording—but Brad Kay and I both succeed in holding sync for extended periods. Mr. Young's failing to confirm unintentional stereo merely indicates a deficiency in his equipment or technique. By the same logic, Mr. Young or I could try to play a violin for the first time and decide that it is impossible to conclude that Heifitz produced the sounds he did on a violin!

Advances in digital signal processing will make the synchronizing process easier by allowing correction and refinement of the first try, but the basic process of listening and adjusting will remain the same.

You will all soon have the good fortune to hear and evaluate stereo 78 pairs for yourselves, because Brad Kay plans to release a CD of them soon. Please don't dismiss unintentional stereo before you get to hear it for yourself! *John S. Allen, Waltham, Massachusetts*

Edward Young Responds:

John Allen's article, "New Possibilities in Audio Restoration" presents much to look forward to. While I look forward to Brad Kay's forthcoming CD (mentioned by Mr. Allen) I do not share their confidence that what we have here is actual stereo sound. Kay's demonstration of this phenomenon on a NPR "Audiophile Audition" program, aired in September 1987, left me cold. While this evaluation is completely subjective on my part, initially I did think that the recordings presented had a stereolike quality. However, after a while I became aware of a monotonous "ring," or echo in their sound. It seemed to me that where authentic stereo recordings have a convincing sense of space, "stereo 78s" have only this ring or echo. It is easy to get the same effect by roughly synchronizing any two identical 78s on the separate tracks of a stereo tape recorder. This is similar to Professor Walter Welch's demonstration, at the Syracuse University Audio Archive, of two identical Edison Diamond discs that he plays independently and with rough synchronization to achieve a stereolike effect.

The 1987 NPR program on "stereo 78s" included an excerpt from a talk by EMI's Keith Hardwick, in which Hardwick stated that he had been in touch with a retired EMI engineer who stated unequivocally that their company had never recorded 78s with completely independent channels. This was the opinion of a technical representative of RCA records. I related my own investigation into the "stereo 78s" phenomenon in the "Notes On Recordings" section of the Koussevitzky discography, on page 114 of the last issue of the *ARSC Journal* (Volume 21, No. 1). However, perhaps, as Mr. Allen suggests, lining up a pair of "stereo 78s" with the precision afforded by a computer may shed new light on this subject.

While I have my doubts about "stereo 78s," Mr. Allen makes an excellent case on behalf of the possibility that some 78 record pairs are genuinely stereophonic. I will try to keep an open mind on the subject, and look forward to the new computer synchronized systems described by him. *Edward Young, Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

To the Editor:

As a long-time fan of the U. S. Marine Band and a musicologist who has researched turn-of-the-century American band music extensively, I wish to comment on two remarks by Steven I. Ramm in his otherwise excellent review of "From Fife and Drum . . . Marine Band Recordings 1890-1988," printed in the spring 1990 *ARSC Journal.*

Mr. Ramm castigates the writers of the liner notes for misattributing the conductors of the first two Sousa marches (*Washington Post*, recorded 1890, and *The Thunderer*, recorded 1896) on this compact disc. Whether or not Sousa conducted any of the more than four dozen cylinders made by the U. S. Marine Band for Columbia by October 1, 1890 (the date of that firm's earliest extant catalogue) will probably always be in doubt. Throughout his career, Sousa often disparaged "canned music," realizing (correctly) that it would eventually lessen the demand for live music. Therefore, the assumption that he did not conduct any of these Columbia recordings could be correct. However, Sousa's oft-quoted 1906 testimony before Congress regarding copyright legislation is devoted to his (and his band's) relationship with The Victor Talking Machine Company. Sousa stated, "I am the director of that band, but I have no personal part in the performance (meaning recording) of those pieces. I have never been in the gramophone company's office in my life." Notice that he never denied being in any gramophone company's office, but only in the gramophone company's office (meaning Victor's).

Therefore, music critic Paul Hume's statement on track one of this disc that Sousa conducted this recording of *Washington Post* may be accurate. At any rate, the liner notes state only that Sousa was director of the Marine Band at this time. Then, as now, the music director of an organization is not always the conductor, either of concerts or recordings. Since Sousa was highly interested in furthering the Marine Band's reputation, as well as promoting his own compositions, in 1890, he could have been the conductor for this recording. However, since at that time no available method for the multiple reproduction of wax cylinders existed, Sousa may not have been present for this or most of the other tedious sessions. My feeling is that he probably felt his time could be spent more profitably composing—in 1890 he produced seven compositions, including the marches *Corcoran Cadets* and *The High School Cadets*, as well as the song *You'll Miss Lots of Fun When You're Married.*

The reviewer's comments regarding *The Thunderer* reflect his lack of understanding of Sousa's career. On July 30, 1892, Sousa was discharged from the Marines to embark upon a new career as conductor of his own civilian band (at four times his Marine Band salary, plus a percentage of all profits). This organization, first billed as Sousa's New Marine Band (even though it was an entirely civilian outfit) and later just Sousa's Band, toured extensively from September 1892 until shortly before Sousa's death in 1932. Arthur Pryor and Henry Higgins were the assistant conductors of Sousa's Band in 1896. Since neither Sousa, Pryor, nor Higgins had any connection with the U. S. Marine Band in 1896, there would not have been any reason for any of them to be conducting a recording by that organization at that date, as Mr. Ramm implies. In all likelihood, the Marine Band director in 1896, Francesco Franciulli, was the conductor of this recording of *The Thunderer*. The first recording of *The Thunderer* by members of Sousa's Band was not made until June 20, 1902, when Arthur Pryor conducted a Philadelphia recording issued as Victor 1437. *Craig B. Parker, Manhattan, Kansas*

Steven I. Ramm Responds:

My review was written from the point of a researcher who might read the liner notes in a library (since the CD is not commercially available), and think that Sousa was conducting the actual recording. Mr. Parker states in his second paragraph that whether Sousa actually conducted on the cylinders "will probably always be in

doubt." He also states that "the assumption that he did not conduct . . . . may be correct." If this was what the liner notes said, I would not taken issue. I don't know if he conducted or not, and neither does anyone else. Therefore, the implication of fact should not have been made.

Mr. Parker appears to be an expert on Military Bands. I do not hold myself out to be such. I wrote the review from the collector's perspective and am glad that Mr. Parker was able to expand on the details of Mr. Sousa's career. *Steven I. Ramm, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

To the Editor:

There were two discrepancies I was a bit curious about in regard to Koussevitzky's recordings:

— Brahms Sym. #1: *Fanfare* Magazine (Issue XIII:4) lists a performance on February 11, 1945. I don't find that in the discography.

— Beethoven Symphony #9: Mortimer Frank in *Fanfare* (same issue) lists the date of the French Radio S. O. performance as July 26, 1950. Edward Young lists a performance on May 25, 1950, with the Orchestre de la Radiodiffusion et Television Francaise (I'm not sure if the ORTF is the same as the "French Radio Symp. Orch."). The two dates are different, which suggests that these **might** be two different concerts; however not only is the orchestra possibly the same but (and this is the most curious thing) last names and first names of the various soloists seem to be all mixed up! (Charles Cambon/Michel Cambon/Charles Solange/Solange Michel/George Joiatte/George Fouatte/Jeanne Micheau/Jeanine Michaud.) One of these two sources has to be wrong. I'm sure you can understand how perplexed I am. I would be grateful for any help. *Paul Miller, Los Angeles, California*

Edward Young Responds:

The As Disc CDs mentioned by Mr. Miller give some incorrect information. Regarding the date of the broadcast of Brahms First Symphony from 1945, the correct date is February 17.

With regard to the Koussevitzky French radio broadcast of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, I obtained the date of May 25, 1950 from the French Radio Service. The date of July 26 cannot be correct because newspaper clippings show that Dr. Koussevitzky returned to the U.S. from his 1950 guest conducting tour on June 14. However, he was in Paris on May 25 of that year.

The names of the soloists that I listed in the Koussevitzky Discography were also obtained from the French Radio.

I believe that ORTF is an abbreviation of "Orchestre de la Radiodiffusion et Television Francasie," which is usually referred to in shortened form as "French Radio Symphony Orchestra," from "French Radio and Television Orchestra." *Edward Young, Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

To the Editor:

What follows comes under what *New York Magazine* would call "Department of Amplification." Both Edward D. Young's *Serge Koussevitzky: A Complete Discography, Part I* and Christopher Dyment's review of the late B.H. Haggin's *Arturo Toscanini: Contemporary Recollections of the Maestro*, as published in Volume 21, No. 1 of the *ARSC Journal* touch on projects in which I have been personally

involved.

I await eagerly Part Two of Mr. Young's discography, but at the risk of being premature, hasten to clarify one or two matters.

The first pertains to the Columbia recording from the February 2, 1934 Carnegie Hall, New York, performance of the Roy Harris *Symphony 1933* (Symphony No. 1). The William D. Curtis Roy Harris discography published in Volume XIII, No. 3, of the *ARSC Journal* indicates correctly that Side 5 (MX no. 230628/cat. 68185-D) as issued was recorded at Columbia's New York City studios under BSO concertmaster, Richard Burgin, this to correct musical shortcomings from the concert performance. The date was March 2 and entailed the final third of the slow movement. Harris's letter to Koussevitzky following the session, which also included the recording as a Side 8 filler of *Four Minutes, Twenty Seconds* for flute and string quartet, tells the story: "We made the recording with your men with Burgin conducting, and the last record of the slow movement is now one of the best. We also made the eighth record with the Burgin Quartet and Laurent." I discovered this letter at the Library of Congress while researching a study of Roy Harris planned for publication by the Smithsonian Institution Press. Curtis states in his discography that there also was a February 14 public performance recording of the entire work, but this date does not jibe with the BSO concert schedule of that time. It would seem reasonable to suppose that the February 14 date taken by Curtis from the Columbia record log refers to what Young designates as "recuts."

A further point of amplification pertains to the Karl (*recte* Carl) Philipp Emanuel Bach "Concerto in D Major" arranged for modern orchestra by Maximilian Steinberg. R.D. Darrell in the 1936 *Gramophone Ship Encyclopedia of Recorded Music* (p. 25), British musicologist Charles L. Cudworth in Music Library Association NOTES (p. 534)*Ye Olde Spuriosity Shoppe, or Put it in the Angang-Conclusion*, and p. 844 in Volume 3 of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* all have got it right in stating that the "Concerto" was actually a concoction of Henri Casadesus (1879-1947) for his Société des Instruments Anciens Casadesus. There was a recording of the Casadesus "instruments anciens" scoring issued as part of Victor album M-271 under the title Suite in D Major, as performed by the Philadelphia-based American Society of Ancient Instruments directed by Ben Stad—the instruments in this instance being viols.

A missing item from the broadcasts listing is the Roy Harris *Celebration Variations on a Theme of Howard Hanson*, premiered under Koussevitzky and broadcast October 25, 1946.

The Christopher Dyment review of the B.H. Haggin Toscanini Compendium I found of more than passing interest inasmuch as it explained for the first time the ferocity of Haggin's letters to me in the spring of 1977 on the subject of my annotation for the RCA Victor five-disc album of the 1941-42 Toscanini Philadelphia Orchestra recordings. Ostensibly he was objecting to what he felt was my acceptance of Charles O'Connell's story in *The Other Side of the Record* concerning the below par technical quality of the original 78 rpm masters. But it now becomes clear that it was Haggin's animus against Walter Toscanini that stirred up his venom—inasmuch as the first three paragraphs of my notes comprised a detailed account of how, in the days when I was doing program annotation for the NBC Symphony Orchestra, Walter asked me to audition at home the first test pressing of the Tchaikovsky *Pathétique* Symphony, Debussy *La Mer*, and Berlioz *Queen Mao*. Most likely it was

this that put Haggin's nose out of joint. Let me say that while I have thoroughly respected Haggin's likes, his dislikes are something else again insofar as they appear to stem from a mindset that claims a total monopoly on truth. *David Hall, Castine, Maine*

Edward Young Responds:

I wish to thank Mr. Hall for calling to attention to my error and omission, with regard to side 5 of the recording of Harris's "Symphony 1933," in the Commercial Recording Detailed Listing of the Koussevitzky Discography.

I also thank him for noting the typographical error in the listing of Hanson's Seranade for Flute Harp and Strings, in the Main Listing Section. While this recording is mistakenly listed there as a "broadcast" (it should have been listed as "RCA"), it is properly included in the Commercial Recording Detailed Listing of the discography.

With regard to the K. (C.) P. E. Bach Concerto in D, I was aware of the disputed authorship of this work, but opted to omit mention of it because the matter seemed confused. Both musicologist Charles Cudworth (writing in Music Library Association Notes) and Grove's Dictionary, as noted by Mr. Hall, ascribe the "Concerto in D" to Henri Casadesus. However, a footnote on page 10, Volume 1 of the World's Encyclopedia of Recorded Music states, "The provenance of this work is uncertain: it is known only in the edition of M. (Marius, brother of Henri or monsieur?) Casadesus." I have also been told that Maximilian Steinberg wrote the whole piece. The notes accompanying the Victor 78s of the Koussevitzky/BSO recording of this (M-559) state, "A note prefacing the score of this transcription by Maximilian Steinberg informs us that: The manuscript belongs to the collection of Charles Guillon at Bourg-En-Bresse, France, in which it appears as Number 718." The notes that accompany the Ben Stad recording referred to by Mr. Hall (Victor M-271) describe the piece as the "Suite in D" by K. P. E. Bach with no mention of disputed authorship. In spite of the variety of information available on this subject, a footnote in the discography acknowledging that Bach's authorship of this work has been questioned by musicologists may have been in order. *Edward Young, Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

To the Editor:

John S. Allen's "New Possibilities in Audio Restoration" (*ARSC Journal*, Vol 21, No. 1 (1990), pp. 39-44) was both thoughtful and thought-provoking. Digital synchronization opens up new possibilities in distortion abatement as well as noise reduction for 78 rpm discs. At present the best results are obtained using a truncated elliptical stylus sized to track the least damaged elevation of the groove walls while avoiding the eroded bottom. For records in poor condition a succession of styli is often necessary.

Reproducing styli before the advent of stereo can generally be characterized as conical and so were subject to the "pinch effect." During playback these round pegs were squeezed upward during lateral groove excursions. The resulting hill-and-dale wear patter is often startlingly audible on well-worn records. The delicate sound of a guitar, cymbal, or other background instrument will be heard with exquisite clarity in the midst of excruciatingly distorted ensemble passages. This surrounding cacophony is the result of the burden imposed on the groove walls when, in addition to the lateral modulation, they must also elevate the inadequately shaped stylus. This implies that differently sized styli will momentarily achieve optimum results at

different combinations of amplitude and frequency.

The fact that the groove wall which is actively engaged in transferring energy to the pickup incurs the most damage while the other is only helping to support the weight may present another opportunity for reducing distortion. I believe the CBS Discomputer is supposed to be able to choose the least distorted channel during playback. This technique could be exploited more successfully if it did not have to rely on the input of a conventional stereo cartridge. By optimizing for one channel at a time and employing extreme amounts of lateral pressure the stylus could be forced into the relatively intact recesses of the passive sections of the groove rather than following the well-worn shortcuts of its many predecessors. Half-speed playback would probably ease the added tracking difficulties that would necessarily be encountered. The two resulting tracks could then be synched and the discomputer could do its good work.

The ability to exploit the predictable characteristics of wear is one of the many new possibilities presented by digital techniques. As a private collector on a librarian's salary the expensive hardware and array of styli envisioned in this thought exercise is quite beyond me. But if we are to pass along the recordings we love to the next generation as a viable artistic experience rather than as a museum curiosity, then a great improvement in the techniques of reproduction must take place. *David J. Diehl, Harlingen, Texas*