
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:

Ernst A. Lumpe's article, "Pseudonymous Performers," which appeared in the fall 1990 issue of the *Journal* (Vol. XXI, No. 2, pp. 226-31) was interesting to me as I have also been trying to obtain more information about the 1950s releases of the Record Corp. of America. I specialize in recordings of the music of Jacques Offenbach and have acquired several of these interesting, although sometimes baffling, editions. The following information may be a useful addition to those given by Mr. Lumpe.

Royale 1269-1271: *The Tales of Hoffmann* (1952)

The front cover of the box lists all major roles in the opera and a pseudonymous performer for each. The lead role, Hoffmann, for example, is given as being sung by Wilhelm Horst. The box also lists the Dresden State Opera Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Karl List. The inside front cover has brief notes on the work, and credits "Soloists, Orchestra and Chorus of Dresden State Opera conducted by Gerd Rubahn." The individual record labels also give Rubahn as the conductor. The records are pressed in automatic sequence.

The performance is, as Mr. Lumpe suggests, the 1946 Anders/Streich recording with Arthur Rother conducting, and distributed by BASF, Urania and others with the actual cast named. It should be noted that this is not a complete recording, but rather extended excerpts, since well over half hour of the score has been cut.

Royale 1322: *The Tales of Hoffmann* (1952)

Single record of excerpts from the above, with the jacket listing the performance as by "Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Joseph Balzar."

Gramophone 20154-2056: *The Tales of Hoffmann* (1954)

The 1946 Rother recording reissued on another Record Corp. of America label, this time attributing the performance to "National Opera Singers and Orchestra." The recording is identical to Royale 12160-1271, and the run-off groove area on each disc shows the original stamp number scratched out, but readable, and the new number.

Varsity 6978: *Tales of Hoffmann* Arias (not dated)

A 10-inch LP of excerpts from the 1946 Rother recording on another of the Record Corp. of America labels. Here the credit is given to "The Varsity Opera Company." The disc contains six excerpts, three choruses (Student's Chorus from Prologue, Chorus at the entrance of Olympia, and the Finale from the Epilogue), a duet (the Barcarolle), and one aria (The Diamond Aria).

Varsity 6945: Light Concert Selections (not dated)

A 10-inch LP with eight popular light classics, performed by the "Varsity Concert Group." The record includes a performance of the Barcarolle from *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

Royale 1213: Opera Highlights (1951)

This recording of excerpts from four operas correctly appears to identify the performers. None of the excerpts are from the Rother recording. The jacket notes soloists with the Berlin Opera Orchestra, Herbert Guthan conducting. Side A is devoted entirely to *The Tales of Hoffmann* and includes: Track 1, Barcarolle sung in Italian by Maria Corelli and Diana Eustrati; Track 2, Dapertutto's Diamond Aria sung in German by Hans Wocke; Track 3, Couplets Bacchique, sung in German by Rudolf Schock; Track 4, an orchestra medley from the opera. Side B contains two arias from *Boris Gudounov* sung by Gerhard Frei and two arias by Schock ("Oh Paradiso" from *L'Africana* and "La Donna è Mobile" from *Rigoletto*).

Royale 1387: An Hour of Offenbach Music (not dated)

The jacket includes the titles *Gaite Parisienne* and *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and the performance is credited to the "Berlin Opera Orchestra and Singers directed by Karl List." Side A. is actually the first part of a German language production of Offenbach's *La Vie Parisienne*, see entry for Royale 1301 below. The stamper clearly shows the number 1301A, even though it has been scratched through and 1387A added. Side B has the same *Hoffmann* excerpts as given on Royale 1213, see above. The stamp number 1387B has been added and 1213A scratched out.

Royale 1301: *Gaite Parisienne* (not dated)

This is actually a recording of extended excerpts from *La Vie Parisienne* sung in German. The jacket identifies the cast as including Elly von Kovatzky (soprano), Wilhelm Horst (tenor), and Fred Grossmann (baritone). The conductor of the unnamed chorus and orchestra is given as Karl List. The performance appears to be a studio production of the same vintage as the Rother *Hoffmann* released by this company. The disc does not have tracks, but there is a brief pause between the numbers. The performance uses a medley Finale not given in any of the standard editions of the score. None of the many other recordings of this operetta are the same as this release, and actual details of the production and cast are still not known.

Allegro Elite 3078: *La Vie Parisienne* (1953)

Same recording as Royale 1301, but with the title of the work correctly identified. Allegro is another Record Corp. of America label. The performance here is credited to a "Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Joseph Berendt." The jacket has very brief notes on the operetta. The record label names Marta Bach (soprano), Josef Franke (tenor), and Hermann Wilhelm (baritone). New stamps were apparently made for this release since there is only the one set of numbers on the disc, and the sound is much improved over the Royale 1301 release. *Robert L. Folstein, Germantown, MD*

To The Editor:

In reference to the correspondence in the Letters section of the *ARSC Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Fall, 1990) regarding Charles K. Harris, mention is made of "After the Ball" being a catalyst for the mass marketing techniques *albeit primitive by today's standards* (emphasis mine), I think your readers will be interested in the excerpt from "Music in the Southwest" by Howard Swan, (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1952) p. 192, which is reproduced below.

Here is an interesting letter received by L. E. Behymer, treasurer of the Los Angeles Theater, from Charles Harris, composer of "After the Ball."

New York City, N.Y.
March 10, 1893

My Dear Mr. Behymer,

On March 23 to 25 the Primrose and West's Minstrel Company will play your theater. A young American tenor, Evan Williams, will sing my new song, "After the Ball." I am enclosing my check for \$10.00. If Mr. Williams sings all four times you are to give him \$10.00. If he sings only three times, you are to deduct \$2.50; in fact, deduct \$2.50 for each omission and return the money to me. It's a simple melody but has achieved success, and Williams sings it well.

Faithfully,
Charles K. Harris

Perhaps Charles K. Harris had another "first" to his credit: PAYOLA. Further research is needed to determine if Evan Williams earned all of his \$10.00 in his Los Angeles concerts of March, 1893. The Evan Williams discography in *The Record Collector* (Vol. 24, Nos. 11 and 12, December, 1978) documents some 121 waxes cut for The Gramophone Company in 1906, 1910, and 1911 (with 54 published) and something like 510 sides cut (with 135 published) for Victor from 1907 to 1917... plus a handfull for Pathé in 1911, but not a single "After the Ball!" *W. R. Moran, La Cañada, CA*

To the Editor:

Mr. Lumpe's review of pseudonymous performers on early LP records (*ARSC Journal* Vol 21, No. 2 (1990) pp. 226-231) brings to mind other published research on the recording adventures of one Eli E. Oberstein, the "Elliott Everett" of Royale 1376 and all around Jolly Roger of the industry. As an executive producing Victor's field recordings through the deep South and Mexico during the late 1920s and 1930s he probably learned how difficult it was to enforce copyright laws across international borders and how inexpensive foreign labor could be. Ever the entrepreneur, he induced a number of RCA artists, such as Artie Shaw and Glenn Miller, to sign personal management contracts along with their new Bluebird contracts then attempted to coerce them into following him to his own U.S. Records (*Variety*, December 5, 1939, p. 41).

He padded his Varsity/Royale catalog with dubbed masters from several sources, including some European labels whose rightful owners might not have been in a position to protest given the events on the continent around 1940. Always on shaky financial ground, he reorganized as the Elite Record Co. in 1941. Despite a name change to Hit Records and the reputed use of non-union performances ("made in Mexico," he claimed) the first Petrillo ban did him in. Between recording bans he

returned to Victor. His subsequent reappearance under the Record Corporation of America banner prompted vigorous action by the real RCA.

Oberstein's activities have been documented in a series of articles by George A. Blacker aptly titled "Eli Was an Operator" beginning in *Record Research*, No. 149/150 (Oct, 1977) p. 2. These are highly recommended to all students of double entendre and the relentless pursuit of deception. More pertinent to Mr. Lumpe's interest may be "Pirates, Prima Donnas, and Plain White Wrappers" by Robert Angus in *High Fidelity*, Vol. 26, No. 12 (Dec. 1976) pp. 76-81. Angus further alludes to considerable discussions of Royale releases in early 1950s issues of *American Record Guide*.

Apropos of periodicals in general, I would like to commend the efforts of Tim Brooks in his "Current Bibliography" department. Living far from a major university it is difficult for me to keep up with the growing quantity of publications. Would it be possible to include page numbers in the citations? This would be a great boon to those of us who rely on interlibrary loan for access to some of the less common items.

Regarding "Lies That Will Not Die," surely the most enduring error in jazz is the claim that Paul Whiteman's "Sweet Sue" was edited when dubbed for reissue in Columbia's Bix Beiderbecke album C-36. Whether George Avakian merely assumed that it must have been trimmed in order to fit the original 12-inch onto a 10-inch disc or CBS didn't want consumers to begin demanding extended playing time, a single audition of the relatively common original should have quashed this misinformation. Instead, it persisted through the liner notes of several microgroove incarnations, spread to Delaunay's *New Hot Discography* and is still to be seen in the fourth revised edition of Rust's highly regarded *Jazz Records 1897-1942*. David J. Diehl, Harlington, TX 