
LETTERS

Pseudonymous Performers

To the Editor:

I write to congratulate Ernst Lumpe on his article "Pseudonymous Performers on Early LP Records: Rumours, Facts and Finds" (Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 226-231) for taking on an important and neglected subject. I approached the same subject in a 1983 issue of the *ARSC Journal* ("The Anonymous, the Pseudonymous, and the Missing: *Conductors on Record Revisited*," Vol 15, No. 2-3, pp 19-25) and came to similar, if less well researched, conclusions about such pseudonyms as Karl List, Joseph Balzer and Felix Guenther, and certainly about John Holmes' uncritical listing of them in his reference work. Herr Lumpe has clearly done some much more serious work about tracking down the truth behind the many fictions on these early LPs, but I am also left with a few questions—as well as a strong desire that he continue to write about his research.

While I can confirm some of his identifications from my own small collection of these old records—the Gerhard Stein/Karl List Grieg Concerto is certainly the Wührer/Böhm performance on Urania, for instance—I must take issue with one of them, at least tentatively. "Eric Silver and the National Opera Orchestra" may or may not be Helmut Roloff and the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra playing the Mendelssohn Concerti under Lehmann, but I find it very hard to believe that they are the same recording as that on DG LPM 18073 and Decca DL 9652; even accounting for the severely degraded sound and such bobbles as the missing opening statement in the Second Concerto on the pseudonymous Gramophone LP, I find them to be different performances. There is much evidence in the detail, but more than detail is the distinct flurry of misplaced notes near the entrance of the piano in the (truncated) opening of the Second Concerto on the Gramophone LP. This could, I suppose, be some sort of very odd tape slip, but it sounds more like an indication of a live performance to me, and very different from the calm clarity of the DG performance.

Of much greater importance, and certainly a surprise to me, is the author's identification of the Royale/Relief Karl List/Wilhelm Fürtwangler Dvorak Ninth Symphony as actually by the Munich Philharmonic under Kabasta. The rediscovery of lost Kabasta material is a far more uncommon event than has been the case with Fürtwangler, and indeed, the Kabasta corpus is so small and of such unique quality that the surfacing of a recording of a major work should be major news. Did I miss it, or is the first announcement of the "RRG Studio Production" mentioned by Herr Lumpe? He ascribes the Relief identification of the performance as Fürtwangler/BPO to "insufficient research," and he may be right, given that he has the evidence, but Urs Weber of Relief

is careful to cite such circumstantial evidence of Fürtwangler as the testimony of a Berlin Philharmonic horn player from those days, as well as experts Christoph Nolte and Herbert Haffner. Much of the performance is sufficiently uncharacteristic of Fürtwangler (whatever that means) to support the reassignment, but to these ears the orchestra sounds more like Berlin than Munich (through a fog, to be sure), and the incandescent finale could certainly be Fürtwangler (or the Kabasta in the mold of his sublime Bruckner Seventh, come to think of it). Anyway, I urge the author to expand on this portion of his article forthwith.

Finally, a quick summary of my own matchings to add to the author's list: *The 1812 Overture* on Varsity 6925 is the famous Mengelberg recording, confirming Lumpe's connection of a number of the earliest Mercuries with pirates; Joseph Balzer's *St. Matthew's Passion* is definitely the old Fritz Lehmann on Vox DL 6070, with Fischer-Dieskau and other distinctly identifiable artists; the Louis Stevens/Felix Guenther Tchiakovsky Violin Concerto on Halo 505B is certainly Oistrakh, probably the old Gauk recording, but I'm not sure of that. Louis Stevens, however, is not Oistrakh in the superb Brahms Concerto (also with the pseudonymous version of Dr. Geunther, the real one having had a distinguished career in another part of the musical forest entirely) on Gramophone 20200 (and other labels). I have concluded that this is Wolfgang Scheiderhan, partly on stylistic grounds, partly because he is the only violinist I know who always used the Winkler cadenza favored by this version of Louis Stevens (if it is the same as the old DG recording with Fricsay, which I haven't heard, this would lend credence to the Mendelssohn argument made by Lumpe which I dispute above, but I think the "Stevens" is live). Oistrakh does put in at least one appearance as "Marcus Belayeff" in the Beethoven Concerto on Egmont, however, probably the old, much-pirated performance with Gauk.

Many other identifications have been made over the years, of course (the famous "Schreiber"/Keilberth *Ring* ought to be mentioned), and we who have decided to spend time speculating about this sort of thing can obviously go on forever. It is good to know that someone is investing effort in real research on the subject. There are some wonderful performances in those mounds of cheap plastic. *John Swan, Bennington College, VT*

Note: Ernst Lumpe and John Swan have corresponded since the previous letter was submitted to the editorial office. As a result of their correspondence, Lumpe recently informed this office that Swan now shares his views on pseudonymous performers.

To the Editor:

Ernst A. Lumpe's "Pseudonymous Performers" (*ARSC Journal*, Volume 21, Number 2), pointed to a significant discographic project in need of a great deal of cooperation—the research, as far as possible, into the sources of the Allegro/Royale/Plymouth/Halo discs published by the "Record Corporation of America" on below-budget-priced LPs in the early 1950s. I wonder whether Herr Lumpe and/or ARSC would be willing to take on the task of acting as clearinghouse for the immense amount of research which it would be necessary to collate.

The benefits of such a project would be inestimable. Already, Herr Lumpe's identification of the purported Flotow *Martha* excerpts as in fact being from the same composer's otherwise-unrecorded opera-comique *Le veuve Grapin* (in its German translation) adds to the recorded repertoire of a minor but important composer; the identification of other Royale LPs as having commercial sources extends the discography of important conductors.

Herr Lumpe has not mentioned, though perhaps he is aware of the fact, that Edward J. Smith, later of multitudinous private-label LP issues, was the A&R consultant for Royale. Shortly before his death, Smith told me a bit about how the company acquired its master tapes. They had a contact in Germany who was not sophisticated in his understanding of classical music, but who had a tape recorder and who was paid to record whatever appeared on the various German networks. Smith specifically mentioned short-stopping from publication a fine *Madama Butterfly* which he recognized as the Decca/London recording with Tebaldi. Smith's own predilection for the human voice and his inattention to orchestral music may account, as Herr Lumpe notes, for the presence of pirated Mercury recordings, though I would guess that the 1952 Bayreuth *Ring* (as later exposed in *American Record Guide* by participant Regina Resnik) may have been issued with full knowledge of the source.

Smith told me, though it may be yet another example of his fabled ability to make up "facts," that an accurate list of actual performers on the Royale discs did exist, and was then in the possession of his (third wife's) brother-in-law. Be that as it may, the list is probably lost, if it ever existed. But German networks most probably still have printed records of both studio broadcasts and commercial recordings broadcasted. At least one, Westdeutscher Rundfunk, published, on its twentieth anniversary, a book detailing all its studio recordings and briefly listing its live pickups from other studios and from public performances. Herr Lumpe is in a unique position to research NDR, RIAS, etc. for their broadcast listings. For many of Royale's releases, cross-checking would be necessary and, inevitably, some material (orchestral and chamber) would be subject to speculation as to just which performance may have been used. The vocal music ought to pose a lesser problem. I know of an archive which contains the speculations of a contributor to Bauer's *Historical Records*, and an academic colleague, currently a reviewer for a major British newspaper, whose ear for sopranos is uncanny, which could be mined for possible attributions.

In short, I ask ARSC and/or Herr Lumpe to volunteer as a focus for information on the "RCA" labels. It could prove to be an incredibly valuable source for future discographers of both vocal and orchestral performers of classical music. *William J. Collins, Davis, CA.*

The Managing Editor Responds:

The *ARSC Journal* is always prepared to print the results of research on the topics Mr. Collins and Herr Lumpe have raised. The *Journal* will cite previous work which has been printed by us as a part of new contributions. Herr Lumpe indicates his willingness to continue his research, with help from Mr. Collins and others, in the letter which follows.

To the Editor:

Since the publication of my article in Vol. 21, 2 (Pseudonymous Performers on Early LP Records) I came into contact with a couple of members who were able to supply me with more information and dubs from their own collection of these records. Starting the whole research from the basis of a mere personal, rather 'detective-like' interest, I now realize from the letter of Mr. Collins that it appears to be of a more general interest. I am glad that this work meets with such an amount of response and I would happily move into this direction. I agree with Mr. Collins that some of the performances must inevitably remain the subject to a certain amount of speculation which I would try to make as reasonable as possible. Apart from a few more definite identifications, I have

tracked down a couple of performances in the radio journals of those times which are more than likely to be issued on pseudonymous Royale, etc. records. At the moment, I try to convince one or another person from our various radio stations to show the necessary amount of cooperation. I would be proud to become the "focus for information on the "RCA" labels," as Mr. Collins writes and with further help and support from other interested collectors I am quite sure that this work can move a couple of steps farther than it has done so far. *Ernst A. Lumpe, Germany*

Australian National Discography

To the Editor:

Last year was the centenary of the arrival in Australia of Professor Edmund Douglas Archibald, English travelling showman and educationalist, who introduced the improved Edison phonograph to the Australian colonies and New Zealand.

Between 1890 and 1892 Archibald recorded local dignitaries and theatrical personalities. At his public demonstrations, he played cylinders recorded in America including a message to the Australian people by Thomas Edison, made on 24 April 1890.

I am researching the early days of Australia's recorded sound history and would welcome information from readers on the life of Archibald and the activities of pioneer Australasian recording artists in the Americas.

My findings will be included in an *Australian National Discography* that I am preparing, which will list all known sound recordings by Australians, made at home and abroad, between 1890 and 1960.

The identity and achievements of some Australian performers, such as Nellie Melba, Peter Dawson, Percy Grainger, John Brownlee, Marjorie Lawrence, Florrie Florde, Albert Whelan, Billy Williams, and Judith Anderson are well known. However, many significant artists from "down under" remain poorly documented.

In particular, I am seeking biographical and discographical information on the following Australasian singers and musicians who are known to have recorded in the USA/Canada during the monophonic period:

Florence Austral	Errol Flynn	Daisy Kennedy
Frances Alda	Percy Hemus	Marie Narelle
Dorothy Brunton	Hamilton Hill	Stella Power
Ada Crossley	Ernest Hutcheson	Cyril Ritchard
Amy Castles	Roland Hogue	Lempriere Pringle
Arthur Crane	Lauri Kennedy	Esla Stralia
Clyde Cook	John Lemmone	Frances Saville
Leon Errol	Godfrey Ludlow	Amy Sherwin

I have prepared comprehensive lists of all known Australians and New Zealanders to have recorded overseas between the 1890s and 1960. These lists, covering the acoustic and electric recording periods (with more than 400 names) are available to researchers and institutions who wish to contribute to my research project.

I would welcome correspondence with fellow members of ARSC who wish to assist with the preparation of the *Australian National Discography*. All letters will be answered and all contributions acknowledged. *Peter Burgis; P.O. Box 1660; Port Macquarie, 2444; N.S.W., Australia*

Quebeçois Popular Song

To the Editor:

I propose to do a chartology of the popular song of Quebec from 1960 to 1970, songs that were recorded and broadcast but that have never been charted officially and scientifically using proven methods such as those used in the Canadian record industry today. Such sound methods were tested and developed in the U.S.A. in the beginning of the twentieth century by specialized firms such as *Billboard* and *Cashbox*. The decade of the sixties was a crucial epoch in Quebec's cultural growth: it was then that music, and the record industry supporting it, became an important vehicle for a new generation that changed its course irreversibly. The "chanson canadienne" became the "chanson quebeçoise" and the popular music field was occupied by two important genres: the poetic song and the pop song. This was illustrated when two songs, *Le ciel se marie avec la mer* and *En veillant sur le paron*, won the all important "Concours de la Chanson canadienne" sponsored by Radio Canada from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s; the former came from the poetic genre and the latter was of popular origin. The new chartology will allow us to discover the importance that the two principal genres had in the milieu quebeçois, and the place that individual artists and songs occupied through the consuming preferences of the record buying public. The quebeçois song, like any other art form, flourished and prospered because it first appealed to the public.

Before 1975 records were not charted officially in Quebec; each segment of the music industry had its home statistics that were roughly gathered each week, month, and year. In our project this data must be collected, verified, analyzed, and compiled so that it enables us to constitute essential elements of a rigorous and authentic chartology. Data must be gathered from segments of the record industry that were in operation between 1960 and 1970 and records and documentation carefully examined. Comparisons between records, archives, and home charts must be checked so that each phonogram (sound recording) can be charted in order according to its place in the market based on public tastes and demand. A compilation will be made for each year from 1960 to 1970, listing the top 100 songs that appeared on the charts that year.

If you can help, or are interested, please contact me. *Jean-Pierre Sévigny; 9437, rue Centrale; Lasalle, Québec; H8R 2K4; CANADA; (514) 368-3396*

Early "Stereo"

To the Editor:

The possibility that fossilized stereo performances wait to be unearthed ("New Possibilities in Audio Restoration," *ARSC Journal* V. 21, No. 1, pp. 39-44) has bestirred me to a (fruitless) search of my own 78s for not-quite duplicates. As fascinating as the concept may be we must realize that what is under discussion is not stereo in the sense of the 3-D sound heard in modern recordings. The intention in this case was to produce two virtually identical monaural masters. The small differences between the two masters were more likely a source of annoyance than interest at the time. The controversy stems from the vastly different expectations of today's listeners.

Dual microphones were common safety features in monaural radio in the thirties. Typical configurations were no more than a foot apart (see Leo Walker's "The Wonderful Era of the Great Dance Bands" Howell-North, 1964, p. 164 & 234). If the same setup was employed at RCA it would preclude the kind of precise spatial imaging the word "stereo" suggests today. Assuming that the instruments were spread no more than 45 degrees to either side of the microphones' axes, a sound wave striking the left microphone from the extreme left would still have 8-1/2 inches to travel before it encountered the right microphone, which would take about .627 milliseconds. This short a delay would

not add much sense of "space," but it would add an unpleasant slap echo at about 1596 hz (a bit sharp of a soprano's high G). This may be the cause of the ringing reported by Mr. Young in his letter in the Fall, 1990 *ARSC Journal* (Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 309).

The negative comments of various engineers should not be given undue weight. Keith Hardwick is obviously too young to have any firsthand knowledge of depression-era practices, and there is no certainty that RCA would have shared this technique with its cousins across the pond. EMI has released an experimental 33-1/3 stereo recording of Sir Thomas Beecham from 1934 (*New Scientist* Vol. 92, Dec. 24, 1981, p. 908-911). CBS radio engineer Bill Savory (of Benny Goodman aircheck fame) expressed doubt in a *Downbeat* article (May, 1986, p. 59), but regarding CBS and RCA, as they used to say, "would Macy tell Gimbel?"

Whatever the sonic merits of these recordings may be, it should certainly be possible to verify their binaural character with modern digital signal processing (DSP) techniques. Millisecond delays are quite large by today's standards and phase differences should be detectable under favorable circumstances. A surround sound unit might expand the stereo image and make these records more listenable.

Although this sort of speculation is fun, it would be much more worthwhile to report how, or if, ARSC members are actually using the new technologies. Many electronic music and instructional technology departments are far ahead of archives in this respect. If the organization wishes to participate in establishing standards for the industry, the membership will have to take an active role in realizing the potential of DSP.

P.S. I note that in my letter published in the spring issue I closed with a reference to Columbia's Bix Beiderbecke album and 'lies that will not die.' The correct number is C-29 not 36. I don't wish to inaugurate new lies. *David J. Diehl, Harlington, TX*

Barere conducted by Brico?

To the Editor:

A point that may be worth noting in the record review section or among the letters concerns one item among the Appian CD reissues of the recordings of the great Simon Barere. The first two volumes of these reissues are reviewed in your spring issue (*ARSC Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 114-118) by David Breckbill (whose aesthetics, by the way, are much too tidy, I think, for a real appreciation of this master). I referred to the recorded performance of the Rachmaninoff 2nd Concerto, which the CDs and the review sources I've seen refer to as "with unnamed conductor and orchestra." A number of years ago the folksinger Joan Collins and a colleague made a documentary about the pioneer woman conductor Antonia Brico, a fine film that got fairly wide coverage, including the use of some of its footage on CBS's *60 Minutes*. I recall that in her recounting of her struggles to get recognition and work as a woman in a field that did not take kindly to women on the podium, Brico had very appreciative words for Barere, and, more to the point, the film has footage of her playing a Carnegie Hall Transcription disc (they show us the 78) of a portion of the Rachmaninoff 2nd with Barere and Brico at the helm. This is circumstantial evidence, of course, but it should be something that can be pursued. If this is the Brico recording, the performance has an extra dimension as a piece of social as well as musical history. *John Swan, Bennington College, VT*

Tiny pitch changes

To the Editor:

I refer to the review, in the *ARSC Journal* (Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 118-125), of the Pearl and the RCA editions of the recordings of Enrico Caruso and to the points which the reviewer makes regarding the pitch standard used for the transfers. In a nutshell, the

discussion centred on whether the transfers were made at A=440, 438, or 435.

First, readers who are not especially interested in pitch standards should be aware that the difference between A=440 and A=435 is barely perceptible even to many trained musicians, and this is true even under the most favourable conditions, i.e. when the frequency of a pure, uninterrupted tone is changed from 435 to 440, or vice versa, a change equivalent to less than one quarter of a semitone. A change from 435 to 438, or from 438 to 440 is, of course, still more insignificant (and might have taxed even Mozart, who seems to have been thought quite exceptional in being able to detect intervals of one eighth of a semitone). Nevertheless, I accept the reviewer's implied assurance that he can detect changes of 2 hz, i.e., between A=438 and A=440.

The difference between A=435 and A=440 corresponds to 1/88th of the prevailing speed, i.e. 0.9 rpm at 78 rpm. Some 78 rpm record collectors can detect the difference when the speed of a record is changed by 0.9 rpm *while it is playing*. Whether they would detect any change at all *if the record were stopped, the speed adjusted, and the record then restarted* is debatable.

It is clear that turntable speeds, even now, fluctuate: why else do manufacturers quote "wow" figures? The inaccuracy of the old weight or spring-driven recording lathes used 80-90 years ago is illustrated by the well-known fact that, when played at nominally constant speed on electrically-driven turntables, the pitch of some records is observed to rise or fall by a semitone or more during the playing of a 10" side (the result, respectively, of the slowing down or speeding up of the original recording lathe), producing an *apparent* change of 20-30 hz in the pitch standard used. Clearly, such a change is spurious: instruments do not change pitch so radically over a period of 3 minutes. It is the record speed which has changed, not the pitch standard. There can be little doubt that many or most 78 rpm record speeds vary during a side: the reason why such variations are tolerable is that they are usually too small to be perceptible. Where they *are* detectible, a speed determined at the *beginning* of a recording might well be different from one determined at the *end*. In pitching these old records one must continually check the music from beginning to end and thus determine, for the entire record, an *average* speed, which may appear to be slightly off at the beginning or the end.

The reviewer states that [in the RCA edition] 'Mr. Moran did not make a firm decision regarding the pitch standard' and that he has transferred some titles at A=435 and some at A=440. Mr. Moran, who was probably the very first to place the whole question of record speeds on a proper scientific basis and to reject the piano as a stable pitch standard, has consistently, in his writings as in his dubbings, used A=440, as defined by the trumpet stop of an Aeolian organ with metal reeds. I have absolutely no doubt that this is the standard that he used for his part of the RCA edition.

It is easy to be misled by the implied authority of numbers engraved on the scales of commercial equipment. The reviewer is not the first to fall into the trap, known to all science students, of using a precision instrument (in this case his Korg Chromatic Tuner) to measure something—pitch, hence turntable speed—which in old recordings is essentially imprecise. Differences of 2 hz are completely masked by the other inconsistencies of early recording machinery. What the reviewer really means is not that Moran has been inconsistent in his pitch standards but that he does not entirely agree with some of Moran's speeds. This is quite a different matter, for which there are several possible—and reasonable—explanations. The differences are (as he admits) trivial. Nevertheless, let us not attribute them to notions of accuracy which are meaningless in the context of these primitive recordings. *Dr. Michael E. Henstock, Nottingham, England*