

---

## BOOK REVIEWS

---

***Canfield Discographic Encyclopedia of Classical Composers, 1992 Edition.*** Bloomington, Indiana: Ars Antiqua, 1992. Unpaginated. \$50.00 paperback, \$67.50 cloth.

Since my review of the second edition of the *Canfield Guide to Classical Recordings* (*ARSC Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 195-198), a third edition has appeared, enlarged to two volumes (priced at \$50.00) and modified in ways that met some of my objections: for example, the basic label/catalogue-number listings are subdivided by format, with 45 rpm discs, 78 rpm discs, CDs, reel-to-reel tapes, and cassette tapes following the main sequence of LPs rather than embedded within it. Stereo, mono, and other recording modes, as well as the number of discs in sets, are now specifically indicated. The work's price-guide function is maintained: a proposed retail price (for a mint-condition copy) is again given, but the "demand code" (representing the number of requests Ars Antiqua received for a record minus the number of copies it had available for sale) was replaced by a simpler figure, the number of copies that had passed through the hands of the Ars Antiqua dealership. However, from a discographic (as distinct from a pricing) standpoint, many serious difficulties remain; for details, readers are referred to my earlier review.

The *Canfield Guide* was essentially a dump of the label, prefix, catalogue-number, and "description" fields for every recording in Ars Antiqua's sale catalogue database (the description information "as complete as the space in that field allows"), preceded by label/number cross-indices. The current work is basically another cross-index to that database, this time by composer, label, and catalogue number. Read that carefully: *not* by composer and title, but by composer, label, and number. Each entry comprises: label name, prefix, catalogue number, 36 characters of title information from the description field, and the record's entry number in the main database listing of the *Canfield Guide to Classical Recordings*. If there is one work and one performer on the record, fine and dandy; if there are more, the 36 characters may not include the title of any works on the disc, perhaps rather listing the names of other composers in a miscellaneous collection; in that case, the entry number allows you to go back to the database dump in the *Guide* for a longer, though still not necessarily comprehensive, description: it may merely list the composers on the disc without giving specific titles. A supplement to the main database in the *Canfield Guide* is found at the back of the *Discographic Encyclopedia*, adding some 9,000 entries, all indexed in the latter but not in the former.

These limitations may not be serious if you are chasing down recordings of music by Nikolai Arkas (6 entries) or even Francesco Manfredini (32 entries). But the

Beethoven listings fill some 25 pages, each page containing 2 columns of 120 lines each—some 6,000 entries all told. Should you be researching the dissemination of Beethoven's music in the Soviet Union and want to know how much of it was recorded by Melodiya, the *Canfield Discographic Encyclopedia* might be a useful, though hardly comprehensive, source of information. More likely, however, you are looking for a recording of a particular work by Beethoven, whether the rare *Cantata on the Death of Joseph II* or the ubiquitous Symphony No. 5. To do that, you must pass your eyes down the description column on those 25 pages—not exactly fun, given the small and close-packed type. If you are “lucky,” you may find the title you need among the 36-character descriptions in the composer/label listing. If you do not, the next resort is many miles further down the road to insanity: you can start tracing each of the 6,000 Beethoven items in the *Discographic Encyclopedia* back to its longer form in the *Guide's* database listing until you hit what you are looking for—and once again there is no guarantee that you will find satisfaction. There are surely other incidental hazards: for example, virtually all the listings for Aaron Copland have been alphabetized under “Colpand, Aaron,” even though the name appears to be correctly spelled in the description field.

Evidently the incomplete and inconsistent nature of the original input in the database's description field precludes a proper composer/title sort. So, while one may possibly admire the ingenuity that must have gone into achieving this sort, it is much more difficult to find the result greatly useful. As suggested, it may be a last-ditch resort in tracking down recordings of obscure composers; for better-known figures, the output is inadequately—or, more precisely, irrelevantly—sorted: the haystack has been broken down into smaller ones, but a lot of them are still much too large for needle-hunting by hand or eyeball.

The *Canfield Discographic Encyclopedia* may serve a warning to those designing databases—and specifically to those trying to take information gathered and encoded for one purpose and medium and to recycle it for another. Even the initial *Canfield Guide* is cumbersome to use in its print form as anything more than a price guide, though I'm sure that, as mounted on Ars Antiqua's computer, the database can answer many queries expeditiously. But the present volume seems fundamentally misconceived, absurdly impractical to use in answering the questions that most people expect a “discography of classical composers” to answer. I fear that the promised additional volume, a *Discographic Encyclopedia of Classical Performers*, will suffer from the same flaws: useful to fans of Erik Then-Bergh, but unhelpful in clarifying the voluminous discography (full of multiple rerecordings, repackagings, and recouplings) of a Fischer-Dieskau, Stokowski, or Bernstein. *Reviewed by David Hamilton*

***The Devil's Music Master: Wilhelm Furtwängler*** by Sam H. Shirakawa. Oxford University Press, 1992. 506 pages.

What we have here is a very curious situation. This book is a necessity for anyone interested in the German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler and/or in what music life was like during the Third Reich, because it is well researched and thoroughly documented, and is quite balanced in many respects. However, it also must be said that the book is clumsily written, filled with hyperbole, and flawed in a number of serious ways. There are parts that are extremely informative and even incisive. Certainly this book would have benefitted from a good editor.

I have no hesitation in recommending it; it must be read by all who are interested in Furtwängler, because it is the most comprehensive biography and perhaps the most

well-balanced assessment of his role in Hitler's Germany that has yet been written. It does not apologize for nor excuse Furtwängler's errors in judgment or naïveté, nor does it blindly attack him. In the end, it is clear that Shirakawa is sympathetic to Furtwängler's controversial decision to remain in Germany, but he is also cognizant of the moral blindness and incredible ego that led to that decision. The thought that he could, in fact, make a real difference in the way the Nazis conducted their government is as good a case of hubris as has yet been documented in quite a while, and, I suppose, so is the feeling that his presence was so important to the Berlin Philharmonic's preservation, and the preservation of German music. But then, hubris is a quality not in short supply in conductors. Nor is this a simple issue, for there are many connected with the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics at that time, including some Jewish musicians, who maintain today that both orchestras would not have survived as we know them without Furtwängler's wartime efforts.

This biography is far more complete than Schönzeler's brief one from a few years ago, and is filled with valuable insights and facts. Shirakawa has spent years researching this book, conducting interviews all over the world, and thinking about the issues involved. He does, therefore, give us a clear and detailed portrait, and does not flinch from the less attractive side of the conductor. Furtwängler's conspiratorial turn of mind (again, something not uncommon in conductors), his paranoia, his overwhelming conviction of his own rightness, these are qualities that existed before Hitler was anywhere near the halls of power, but they are qualities that Hitler, Goebbels, and Göring all knew how to play on to get cooperation from the conductor on some level. On the other hand, it is also clear from this book that Furtwängler exhibited personal courage in countless incidents, courage that put his own life at risk (in fact, he had to flee at the end because the Nazis were ready to eliminate him), whether by performing Stravinsky and Hindemith, saving Jew after Jew, or fighting mindless governmental orders. He knew that he was too famous and too good to be dumped or exiled, and he used that power frequently in humane and noble ways. It was the trade-off for the Nazis' use of his name for their own prestige. Shirakawa documents thoroughly, with names and places, a large number of Jews whose lives were saved by the conductor, and he puts to rest the canard that Furtwängler only did this for "important" people who could help him in some way. Many of those he saved by using his influence with the Nazi officials were virtual strangers, people who could give him nothing. To those who would ask how he could possibly remain in a country that was doing what Germany was doing, it could be answered that perhaps a hundred human beings were able to remain alive, maybe far more, because he did stay there. Those Jews who finally left the Berlin Philharmonic and the country are quoted in their admiration of him for protecting them as long as he did, and assuring that they got out alive. The object in this review is not to settle this question, but to point out that it cannot really be discussed without reading this book, because of the author's extensive research and documentation.

What is unfortunate, then, is that it is such a flawed work. The writing is clumsy, and the flow of Shirakawa's logic is astonishingly convoluted at times. For example, he points out one aspect of Furtwängler's personality—his tendency to vacillate. He was chronically incapable of making firm, quick decisions, shuttling, as Shirakawa says, between "the way things are and the way he wanted them to be." Shirakawa links this to the conductor's remarkably effective way with tempo transitions in his work, saying "that extraordinary gift for transition in his music making also produced a maddening sort of vacillation in everyday life." I find that a bizarre connection, and one that simply won't fly. Furtwängler's tempo transitions worked precisely because he was so certain

about what he wanted, so absolutely firm in how he worked them out, and they have nothing whatsoever to do with indecisiveness. This kind of curious thinking on the author's part recurs with alarming frequency. He concludes that Furtwängler's baton technique "could be as clear as, say, Fritz Reiner's or even Nikisch's, but his fuzziness of beat was purposefully calculated to a great extent; constant, absolute unison of ensemble was not necessarily his prime objective." The latter clause is certainly true, but there is no evidence that he could have had a clearer technique (many good conductors simply cannot, for reasons of physical condition) and there is no evidence presented by the author that the famous vagueness of beat was a calculated approach to conducting.

There is a great deal of what could be called oversimplification in this book. Many of the issues Shirakawa is dealing with are very complicated ones, and he frequently seems to reduce the complexities to something too simple. He certainly deals with the Furtwängler vs. Toscanini "feud" in that way. The differences *and* the similarities between these conductors do not lend themselves to terse descriptions and tossed-off generalities, but that is what they get.

Another serious problem with Shirakawa's book is its melodramatic and overblown style. Example:

but be it through composition or conducting, there was a price to pay for that Promethean instinct, for that need to bring out the fires of aural imagination from unearthly regions to the here-and-now. If he saw himself as the child of Prometheus, though, he had yet no notion of what would be exacted from him for warming humanity with that fire during the cold cruel days to come.

This inflamed writing style, with adjectives and adverbs flying around like so many unguided missiles, becomes tiresome. When Shirakawa has an emotional involvement, he uses words as blunt instruments.

Göring and Tietjen personally used every available opportunity to deploy Karajan against Furtwängler, and their efforts were lubriciously abetted by one of the most sinister characters to find a place for himself in the cultural sector of the Third Reich. Rudolf Vedder was one of those fetid personalities for whom the Reich offered unique opportunities to develop and profit.

"Lubriciously," "sinister," "fetid,"—one certainly cannot accuse the author of holding back. Nor is Shirakawa's wrath reserved for Nazis. Whenever he disagrees with the actions of someone, he cannot stop himself from characterizing those actions in his writing. Thus, the *New York Times* did not merely report speculations regarding Furtwängler's problems with the New York Philharmonic. No, the *Times* "clucked" that Furtwängler's ticket sales were poor, and it "chortled" that the Salzburg Festival the following year featured Toscanini's name but not Furtwängler's. Yes, the *Times* did not distinguish itself in its coverage of Furtwängler, and it did let its news coverage stray from objectivity. Shirakawa documents the *Times's* journalistic shoddiness well, but every time he inserts highly colored language of the type noted above he weakens his case. Subtlety is not a quality in abundance in *The Devil's Music Master*.

There are also a few errors, although for the most part the author has done his homework. In a footnote on page 352, Shirakawa completely bungles timings of Bruckner symphonies. The Third Symphony was *not* "almost half the length of the Eighth," it is about two-thirds. He then puts the Ninth in the "long" category of the Eighth, when actually its timing is closer to that of the Third. It is a muddle, and undercuts the point of the footnote. He also tries to authenticate the circulated recording

of what purports to be a Furtwängler Bruckner Eighth from April 10, 1954. This has long been doubted as Furtwängler by some (myself included), one reason being that it is not the Haas Edition that the conductor used ever since its issuance (in fact, he led the world premiere of it). The author claims that Elisabeth Furtwängler has verified it because she said that he saw the then-new Nowak edition before its publication and used it on that date. If that is true, it absolutely confirms that this performance is not by Furtwängler, because it is not of the Nowak edition, but rather of the version edited by Bruckner and then revised by Schalk and published in 1982 by Schlesinger—the very version that Haas replaced as outdated. Furtwängler might have used the new Nowak, but it is absurd that he would use the version he had rejected for years. But the point here is that Shirakawa, for all his research, gets the version wrong, and then uses his erroneous information as the foundation for his argument that the performance is authentic!

Shirakawa's musical analysis and opinions leave a great deal to be desired. His discussion of Furtwängler's recordings is the writing of an enthusiast with a smattering of knowledge. Unfortunately, he got carried away with his role as a record reviewer, devoted pages and pages to his thoughts about Furtwängler's recordings, and in the process gave short shrift to the biographical aspects of the postwar years. Furtwängler's life after the fall of the Third Reich is very superficially skimmed.

The above sounds like a harsh conclusion—and in some ways it is. This is not the biography I had hoped it would be, and yet I cannot get away from its enormous value. The crux of this book is the period of the Third Reich and its impact on the life of Wilhelm Furtwängler, and nothing written in English until now has presented this issue as satisfactorily, with as thorough an exploration of *all* the forces pulling on Furtwängler. Those forces were internal and external. Some were noble and some selfish; some were naïve and some cunning. They certainly were complex. Shirakawa is unique in his balance on this horrible crisis in Furtwängler's life, because he presents all sides of this issue fairly and completely. For all my complaints about much of his reasoning process, I think he is correct in his own assessment that Furtwängler's motives were distorted by hubris, but were, taken on their own terms, in no way evil.

The book also provides valuable information and insight into other Furtwängler-related issues that will be of interest to many. We get many documented details about the way in which Herbert von Karajan and the Nazis used each other, as well as the Karajan-Furtwängler relationship. The unfair treatment of Furtwängler by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is well documented here, although it previously had been covered well in Dan Gillis's *Furtwängler in America*, a book Shirakawa used as a source (he is scrupulous in crediting his sources and footnoting them). Relationships between the conductor and other colleagues, such as Strauss, Walter and Klemperer, are revealed with depth and texture, and Furtwängler's less attractive traits, his paranoia, his womanizing, his self-centered outlook, are treated sympathetically but fully.

This book is essential reading for anyone interested in Furtwängler, because of the thoroughness of the research and the excellence and detail in which it deals with his life until the end of the war. The author's weaknesses are unfortunate, and certainly this book will act to discourage a better English language biography in the near future. One has to read the book with care, so as not to get caught up in the author's emotions, and not to take all of his assertions as fact. However, notwithstanding all of that, it is still a very worthwhile effort. *Reviewed by Henry Fogel*

***The Furtwängler Sound.*** Compiled by John Hunt. 4th ed.; published by the author, 1992. Pp. 184. Price £18.00 ISBN 0-951-0268-4-4.

***Mid-Century Conductors; More Viennese Singers.*** Compiled by John Hunt. Published by the author, 1992. Pp. 417. Price £18.00 ISBN 0-951-0268-5-2.

Wilhelm Furtwängler has been a discographic favorite of many researchers, notably Henning Smidth Olsen through two editions in 1970 and 1973 and John Hunt in four editions under this title; he began in 1982, continued in 1985, followed that with a third edition that I have consulted (347 pages, dated 1989 and 1990), and the fourth is now in hand. Unfortunately, the results have not been cumulative. Olsen included matrix numbers in both of his editions, but Hunt waited until his fourth edition to include them. Olsen also assigned a serial number in chronological order to every work each time it was recorded; Hunt's third edition included in an appendix a revised list of these numbers, but the appendix has now disappeared. Hunt's second edition included an extensive survey of the conductor's activities in Great Britain, a study that has not been reprinted. His third edition included a chronological list of the conductor's public performances and recording sessions, but the latest edition offers only a list of additions and corrections to that list.

More than with most conductors, Furtwängler's discography is made up of comparatively few studio recordings and a great many tapes derived from radio and other sources. Since many critics regarded the conductor's work before an audience more highly than the results he obtained in a studio, these live recordings found a ready market. Along with the inevitable reissues on new formats, this piecemeal release of the conductor's legacy has made his discographies obsolete with regularity, even decades after his death. We would expect Hunt's *discography*, at least, to be cumulative, even if the *appendices* come and go, but in fact he admits that "a large number of LP republications within the EMI group which were to be found in my previous Furtwängler discographies have now been dropped."

Yet Hunt has given us an exhaustive amount of documentation on Furtwängler that cannot be passed over by anyone seriously interested in this conductor or, indeed, in discography, for more than most artists Furtwängler needs this kind of research. But to consult it we need at least the last three editions of this title. Would it be asking too much to put everything in a Fifth Edition? It will then allow us to discard all the earlier editions.

The other title resembles another Hunt publication, indeed supplements it (*ARSC Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 2, p. 235). Since the omission of Serafin and De Sabata from the group of Italian conductors in that book was noticed (in this review, for one place), they are included here, along with Böhm, Knappertsbusch, and Krauss, who complement the Viennese singers that continue to occupy Hunt's attention. Added to the seven sopranos in the former book (only five of whom were identified primarily with the city) are sopranos Maria Reining and Leonie Rysanek, tenor Anton Dermota, and baritones Erich Kunz and Eberhard Wächter. There are also several pages of addenda to the Streich section of the earlier book, and Viorica Ursuleac is completely covered in the discography of her husband, Clemens Krauss.

Böhm and Dermota take up the largest amount of space, almost twice as much as the next conductor or singer respectively. It is worth noting that Hunt has not overlooked the acoustic Knappertsbusch and early electric Krauss recordings, but his treatment of De Sabata leaves a major question unanswered, even though he had help from Angelo Scottini for this and the Serafin lists. De Sabata's first recordings were seven sides with

the EIAR Orchestra of Turin, four of them devoted to his own work, *Juventus*; all have been reissued on LP by Discocorp on the I Grandi Interpreti label (even the curious eighth side). Hunt's date for the series is "1934 or 1935," clearly a guess (I was once given a date of 1936 for *Juventus*, but I don't know what authority it had). Given a certain lasting significance for the composer's recording of his own work, this deserved to be tracked down. Much more to the point, the eighth side, Stravinsky's *Fireworks*, was not recorded by De Sabata but is an older Odeon recording conducted by Gabriel Pierné, as the matrix numbers prove (Decca 25509 and 25510 both have the matrix number xxP 6729).

Two admissions by the author are damaging. He states early that he uses "VPO" to cite both the Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna State Opera Orchestra; in fact, a number of early LPs were credited to the State Opera Orchestra even though they were played by the Volksopechorchester, a lesser band at a second house under the same management. He also uses "Berlin RO" to encompass various radio orchestras "which existed at various times." Now this is irresponsible; besides the orchestras that may have existed at different times, there were orchestras at two different radio stations simultaneously in the postwar era, the Berlin Radio in East Berlin and the RIAS in West Berlin. To obscure the clearly differentiated names of these completely separate orchestras would be worse than using "London Orchestra" for the LPO, the LSO, the RPO, and the Philharmonia, which have been known to share certain players from time to time.

Hunt has not reacted to criticism of the missing running heads in the previous book, and it is maddening to flip through the pages without knowing which of the 10 discographies lies open. Instead, one must turn each time to the table of contents, find the desired artist, and look up the appropriate pages. There are occasional errors: all the 78 rpm discs under Krauss's Schubert Ninth are identified as LPs, while the LP and CD designations for a Schubert "Unfinished" under Böhm are reversed. A Brahms First under Böhm is listed as "date uncertain," but in Japan the reissue is dated 13 April 1950.

While Hunt includes all the non-commercial (or pirate) issues, he cites only a few numbers, the first issue, "important" reissues, and current issues. Hence Böhm's Beethoven Missa Solemnis has a D.G.G. number but not Decca DX-135, as it was known for many years in this country. He declines to claim completeness, but we need not decline to ask him for a certain degree of utility. He lists dates as year only or month and year, but in many cases he simply omits the days of the month that are documented in his sources, no service to those who need better information. The typing is neat and the layout clear, with a great deal of white space. There are no indexes, and the many collaborating artists are never identified beyond their surnames. Much printed matter, such as programs, is reproduced as illustration, and short biographies are included, such as an article on Clemens Krauss by Bill Flowers. Hunt's work will be useful to many collectors, but he could easily enough furnish even better work. *Reviewed by J. F. Weber*

***Jean-Pierre Rampal: A half-century of recordings (from 1946 to 1992).*** Compiled by Denis Verroust. Paris: La Flûte Traversière, 1991. 308 pages. Price \$29.95.

Once more an enthusiast has undertaken to document his favorite subject on records, and the result is commendable. Verroust's interest is the flute, and Rampal is, of course, the leading flutist of our generation. Verroust also is aware of the problems of discography, and he solves most of them reasonably well and with considerable flair, though he will leave many readers unsatisfied.

Rampal's principal label after 1965 was Erato, and his exclusive label after 1980 was

CBS (now Sony), but the period from 1946 to 1965 was marked by free lance activity on a bewildering variety of large and small labels, notably Boîte à Musique, L'Oiseau-Lyre, Discophiles Français, Critère, and Philips, as well as Erato. Many of these recordings were licensed to others.

Verroust chooses a unique and complicated layout for his main listing, but given the variety of music that Rampal has recorded, it proves serviceable. His basic entry is a disc as it was originally released: the object, not the content. The main entries are divided into 10 categories: Italian Baroque, French Baroque, German Baroque, etc. The discs in each of these groups are listed in arbitrary order along with the title printed on the sleeve. Since the serial number he assigns to each original disc is the main reference in the rest of the book, the system works quite well. The amount of information he offers for each disc is extensive: precise identification of works; collaborating artists; couplings; original issue numbers (sometimes one for each of two or more countries) and renumberings of the identical disc (the latter set off separately); producer; engineer; date and place of recording, and as much additional commentary as the author finds helpful.

The second part of the discography lists reissues (not unchanged renumberings). These are divided into six categories, including excerpts of works, integral albums put together from previously issued singles, recouplings, and compilations from several distinct original discs. Finally, there are seven indexes: a summary of the first two parts showing the whole main section at a glance on five pages and the whole second part at a glance on three pages (severely restricted in its usefulness by the omission of all record numbers); a two-page list of all the labels that originated recordings; a list of the initials used to identify all the collaborating artists and ensembles; a composer index; an index of collaborating artists; an index by label name and issue number; and finally, the chronological index. All of the indexes furnish at most a short title, label name without issue number, and discography number.

The chronological index is a considerable accomplishment, given the difficulty of finding documentary sources, but it might have been offered with greater caution. First Verroust lists 32 entries for which he estimates the dates by *Dépôt Légal* or publisher's catalogue; at least six other entries should be here somewhere (#42bis, 208, 251, 266, 291, and 180bis) but are omitted entirely. The estimated dates, some offered plain, others with a question mark, are not bad, for I only found a few that are as much as two or three years too late: #156 is not "1955," for it was reviewed in *Disques* in March 1952, #213 is not "1955?," for it was reviewed in *Disques* in July 1953, and #28 is not "1959?," for it was reviewed in *Gramophone* in October 1956.

But then he lists all the remaining entries in chronological order, stating that "certain dates are approximate for the day, sometimes—rarely—for the day and month... but all the years are certain." Unfortunately, half of his dates up to 1959 are just as much guesswork as the first list, and even a few later dates are off. For example, #142 cannot be "01/01/70," for it was made by Washington Records, probably no later than 1967; #15 cannot be "01/01/60," for it was reviewed in *Disques* in March 1958; #14 cannot be "01/01/57," since it was reviewed in *Disques* in October 1956.

Two things could have been handled better here. If Verroust had looked up all the review dates in the *Disques*, *Diapason*, and *Gramophone* catalogues, he would have had a better grasp of the chronology. If he had not used exact numbers for estimated dates, he would not lead readers to think that the dates are more precise than he intended.

Other problems are few. No. 250 could not have been "made in the presence of the composer," Schoenberg, nor was it the world's first recording of *Pierrot Lunaire*, for that was made in 1940 in Los Angeles (I found a review in *Disques* mentioning these two



recordings that he could have misread). Of the batch of L'Oiseau-Lyre recordings that were transferred to Philips, Verroust failed to discover the original issues of #28 (OL 50120) and #105 (OL 50121).

The book is truly bilingual; everything that needs to be translated from French into English is done. Fifty photographs are printed on coated stock. A dozen tasteful full page ads from Rampal's labels and other concerns are inserted between sections, doubtless reducing the price to users. The book was computer-typeset and laid out very attractively on the page.

By the usual standards of discography, this book is flawed, for neither the composer index nor the chronological index is easy to use and should have been expanded greatly. For many users, these will be crippling flaws that should have been obviated by greater detail in the indexes of composers and chronology. Yet, given the vast range of Rampal's musical output, Verroust saw fit to cut the Gordian knot and focus on the object rather than compositions or recording sessions. Given the breakdown of the main section by type of music, the result is a book that can be read through with enlightenment and pleasure, and the detailed information and comments for each entry are gratifying. *Reviewed by J.F. Weber*

***Parsifal on Record.*** Compiled by Jonathan Brown. Discographies, No. 48; Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1992. Pp. xiv, 152. Price \$45.00. ISBN 0-313-28541-1.

As recordings proliferate, we move from opera discography to Wagner discography to *Parsifal* discography. In fact, this opera has been examined by discographers repeatedly, and fortunately this latest attempt omits nothing that I can find. The compiler begins with 22 complete performances (justifiably including the "95% complete" Met broadcast of 1938 as issued by E.J. Smith), goes on to cover 17 principal selections starting with the Grail Scene recorded in 1913 (a group that includes the misattributed "Fritz Schreiber" record on Allegro and the notoriously deceptive Discocorp release supposedly drawn from Bayreuth material), and then proceeds to list 350 short excerpts in the order of their appearance in the opera, chronologically under each excerpt. Two brief additional sections list arrangements and anthologies, but the last is simply an index to recordings identified in their proper place previously.

Describing himself ruefully as the resident of a continent where *Parsifal* has never been performed (though he has traveled the world extensively), Brown precedes the discography with a lengthy essay describing the recordings with considerable insight, much as he might page through the manuscript pointing out things to observe. When he comes to the arrangements, however, he singles out a 1904 recording by Pryor's Band. He adds that "the other arrangements and 'syntheses' are best passed over in silence," perhaps expressing the accepted opinion of Stokowski's three recordings of his Symphonic Synthesis, but unjustly ignoring the important set of orchestral excerpts broadcast in 1940 (and performed on the South American tour) by Toscanini, who after all conducted it at the 1931 Bayreuth Festival. (In the discography Brown quotes without correction a reference to Toscanini conducting a non-existent 1932 Festival.)

The citations offer full names of performers, date and place of recording as exactly as possible, issue numbers in all formats from many countries, and matrix numbers of 78s. He assumes that the format of a record's first issue is obvious, identifying later formats in the case of reissues (the year of reissue is also given). The excerpts are identified by a musical incipit. The entire discography is numbered serially, and there is an index of singers and conductors.

Several of the author's attempts to clarify may be misleading. The alternative credits of "Vienna State Opera Orchestra" and "Vienna Volksoepernorchester" on the same recording are explained by saying that "both orchestras were under the same management" at the time; rather, the *Staatsoper* and the *Volksooper* were under the same management, with record companies conferring the sheen of the State Opera House on its little brother's orchestra. I don't believe the "New Classical Philharmonie directed by George Randolph [sic] Warren" can be explained as "an ad hoc studio orchestra brought together for the recording"; all recordings bearing this attribution that I know of appear to be pseudonymous issues of existing recordings, in this case a disc that corresponds exactly to Capitol SP-8368. The text is remarkably free of typos, although a few errors such as *Leibesmahlfeier* and *Lief Segerstam* got by, while the letter O and the digit 0 get transposed occasionally. The only dates I might question are "ca. 1934" for Arthur Grüber on a wartime Odeon and "ca. 1951" for Eugen Jochum in Amsterdam, a wartime Telefunken perhaps not issued until then.

Judging by the long list of credits, Brown has spared no effort to obtain all the facts he needs. He has organized them in a useful manner and laid out his page attractively. He has left no reason to consult previous discographies, for which we may all be thankful. We can't expect to have this level of detail for every work in the repertoire (nor could we afford it at this price!), but this level of work teaches us all a great deal about the past 90 years of recorded history, and the lessons can be adapted to parallel works. *Reviewed by J. F. Weber*

***Al Jolson. A Bio-Discography.*** By Larry F. Kiner and Philip R. Evans. Metuchen, New Jersey and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1992. 808 pp. + illus. ISBN 0-8108-2633-X.

From the early days of his vaudeville and Broadway career in the decades before World War I through his remarkable and unprecedented comeback after World War II, Al Jolson (1886?-1950) was billed as "The World's Greatest Entertainer." Few ever contested his right to such a title; Jolson's larger-than-life personality, volcanic singing, and outrageous clowning elevated both his on-stage and off-stage lives to mythical proportions. In recent years, however, Jolson's influence on American popular culture has too often been forgotten, denied, or ridiculed.

In a 1988 biography *Jolson: The Legend Comes to Life* (Oxford University Press) author Herbert G. Goldman suggests that since Jolson can no longer be seen on-stage his genius has been lost. In actuality, Jolson has been an elusive and misunderstood figure. His relatively few films rarely are shown on television or in revival houses, and his greatest stage successes date from long before the advent of original cast recordings and living memory. A major reason for the seeming disinterest in Jolson undoubtedly stems from the fact that as the last important entertainer of the blackface minstrel tradition, Jolson has come to embody an odious racial stereotype in the age of political correctness. Many have equated Jolson's blackface image with white America's condescending image of blacks, but this view is somewhat unfair since Jolson simply was employing a widespread and well-worn stage convention used liberally by both black and white performers from the early nineteenth century. One legend suggests that it may have been a black performer who suggested the use of burnt cork to Jolson as a way of overcoming his nervousness in the early days of his stage career. Such Jolson stage contemporaries as Fanny Brice, Bert Williams, Eddie Cantor, Sophie Tucker and Ethel Waters, among many others, all found their own highly individual stage personas based at least in part on easily recognizable racial, ethnic or gender models. As a result, all of

them were able to ascend to heights of vocal emotion and comic lunacy. More naturalistic styles would not have permitted them.

There is little question that in his day Jolson dominated all aspects of popular entertainment, from the stage to recordings and sheet music, and, ultimately, to films and radio. By the mid-1930s, however, due to poor choices in film roles and changing styles, Jolson's popularity waned. He recorded very little and seems dispirited in his few radio appearances and film roles during the late 1930s. At the outbreak of World War II an aging Jolson emerged from frustrating semi-retirement to devote his energies to singing for American soldiers throughout the world, building a new audience so that after the war, when a highly fictionalized biographical film, *The Jolson Story* (1946), and its sequel, *Jolson Sings Again* (1949), were made, they revitalized his career. In a sense, these films could be regarded as the first music videos; the mellow, later-day Jolson voice, channeled through young actor Larry Parks as Jolson, is showcased superbly by the film's pleasing visuals. As a result, in 1948, record sales and radio ratings proved that Jolson was again the top singer, edging out the younger Bing Crosby, Perry Como, and Frank Sinatra even though he was then in his mid-sixties.

Despite the controversy regarding Jolson's blackface image, his recordings have remained consistently popular. In the short time since the compact disc revolution, some of Jolson's contemporaries have turned up on a CD or two, but there already are literally dozens of Jolson CDs available, from collections of his earliest recordings, radio transcriptions, and film soundtracks, to his post-World War II studio recordings. Jolson's prolific recording career is now documented in some detail in *Al Jolson: A Bio-Discography* by Larry F. Kiner and Philip R. Evans. Kiner previously published *The Al Jolson Discography* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983), which has been the standard source on Jolson's recordings, but this new, expanded volume offers much valuable new information.

It would be hard to imagine a more comprehensive and detailed discography of Jolson's work. Moving chronologically through Jolson's recordings, Kiner and Evans include all available facts, including details about the issued and unissued takes from his studio sessions, names of all personnel involved, and most importantly a listing of the many reissues and collections in which that particular recording appear. With Jolson's radio and film recordings, similar material is included. The detail is exhaustive, running to over 800 pages, and much more complete than Kiner's earlier discography. The text is sprinkled liberally with excellent illustrations of Jolson record labels and album covers, sheet music covers, and photographs.

*Al Jolson; A Bio-Discography* is less successful in its attempt to chronicle other aspects of Jolson's life and career. Between entries, Kiner and Evans have included occasional tidbits about other facets of Jolson's career, occasional excerpts from reviews of Jolson's various radio shows, a brief forward from Leonard Maltin, a short biographical sketch by long-time Jolson Society member Dolores Kontowicz, and some in-house record company press releases and related documents. These last are an odd addition in that they offer no new insights on Jolson's work, and, since Kiner and Evans supply relatively little information about Jolson's films and stage appearances beyond whatever recordings might be associated, they seem especially superfluous. A useful listing of Jolson's sheet music is included, as well as a variety of helpful indices, but more on Jolson's stage career and film work would bring this volume closer to its proposed goal of being a definitive guide to Jolson's career.

Even though it may be excessive in length and expensive for the casual fan, *Al Jolson: A Bio-Discography* is an impressive work which undoubtedly will remain the definitive source on Jolson's recordings. *Reviewed by James Fisher*

***Judy Garland: World's Greatest Entertainer.*** By John Fricke. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992. 256 pp. + illus. ISBN 0-8050-1738-0.

***Judy Garland.*** By David Shipman. New York: Hyperion, 1993. 540 pp. + illus. ISBN 1-56282-846-0. London: Fourth Estate, 1992. 522 pp. + illus. ISBN 1-872180-95-7.

Few singers of popular songs have elicited the attention in print that has been lavished on Judy Garland, both during her life and since her untimely death in 1969. In the last few years, something of a Garland renaissance has taken place, with many reissues of most of her recordings on compact discs and a variety of books on diverse aspects of her work and personal life appearing. Since the late 1970s, there have been books on the making of two Garland films in Aljean Harmetz's *The Making of The Wizard of Oz* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977) and Ronald Haver's *A Star Is Born: The Making of the 1954 Movie and Its 1983 Restoration* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), her troubled television series in Coyne Steven Sanders's fascinating *Rainbow's End: The Judy Garland Show* (New York: Morrow, 1991), and a career survey in *The Complete Judy Garland* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990) by Emily R. Coleman, as well as numerous in-depth biographies and personal memoirs by Gerold Frank, Anne Edwards, Christopher Finch, and several former co-workers, ex-husbands, and hangers-on.

David Shipman's new biography, *Judy Garland*, follows the familiar formula of the tell-all tome and is certainly a serviceable text on that level. However, it offers few new revelations, most of this material having been well covered in Frank's *Judy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), which profited from the cooperation of many Garland friends and family, and Edwards' *Judy Garland* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975). Shipman has been assisted by Garland friends Deanna Durbin and Joe Mankiewicz, among a few other survivors from Garland's early days, but much else in his study depends on second and third-hand accounts and he readily admits that many co-workers and family members declined to cooperate. As such, this book emerges as little more than a rehash of Frank's work, which will undoubtedly remain largely definitive as an intimate personal biography of the troubled star.

Shipman includes a lyric which is particularly appropriate in suggesting a way to understand Garland: "The history of my life is in my songs..." she sang plaintively in her perennial medley of film songs. Audiences would forever identify the ups and downs of her personal life with the songs she sang, from the hopeful young girl of "Over the Rainbow" to the lonely mature woman of "The Man That Got Away." And, like Billie Holliday, she frankly revealed her pain to her audiences. But it is Fricke who astutely recognizes that despite Garland's erratic personal life, her body of work in over 30 films, approximately 1,100 concerts, numerous radio and television appearances, as well as recordings, would have to be considered extraordinary by any standards, all the more so when one is reminded that she died at the relatively young age of 47. Fricke's *Judy Garland: World's Greatest Entertainer* is perhaps the most welcome of all Garland books, particularly for those less interested in behind-the-scenes gossip than in her extraordinary achievements. Fricke has noted that his book is intended "for those who feel that the most important aspect of Judy Garland's life is her professional legacy," and he proceeds to survey all facets of Garland's career, vaudeville, film, radio, concert stage, television, and recordings, in a lively and engaging text. Although he does not shy away from acknowledging Garland's personal infirmities and tragedies, he avoids dwelling on them, keeping the focus firmly on Garland's artistry. Few popular entertainers have dominated so many areas of entertainment as Garland, and even fewer have been regarded as artists. Garland, as Fricke writes, was perhaps the singular popular singer

of her time who will be remembered for “her matchless talent, her communicative ability, and—in the word used repeatedly by her professional associates—her genius” (p. 9).

*Judy Garland: World's Greatest Entertainer* is lavishly illustrated with photographs (many in color and most previously unpublished), reproductions of lobby cards and movie posters, programs, studio memos, and other ephemera related to Garland's work. Although much has been written about Garland's work in movies and her later performances on concert stages and on television, Fricke has unearthed a considerable amount of fascinating detail about these areas and, most interesting of all, about Garland's earliest performances in vaudeville as a child. As the youngest of the Gumm Sisters, Garland was continually singled out by critics and her fellow performers as a unique performer able to “convey in song the heartrending pathos of human existence” (p. 8). Simply put, what more could be asked of any artist? *Reviewed by James Fisher*

***Dino: Living High in the Dirty Business of Dreams.*** By Nick Tosches. Doubleday, 1992. 572 pages, \$24.00. (Also available in paperback from Dell.)

It is perhaps surprising that Nick Tosches, known for his down and dirty biographies of tortured golden age rock and country stars (*Hellfire: The Jerry Lee Lewis Story*, *Ungung Heroes of Rock 'n' Roll: The Birth of Rock in the Wild Years Before Elvis*, *Country: Living Legends and Dying Metaphors in America's Biggest Music*) would undertake a biography of a mainstream Hollywood star such as Dean Martin. His earlier subjects, arguably, at least created great music. But Dean Martin? That old comedian who crooned ersatz Italian ballads, played a drunk on TV, and hung out in Las Vegas? It is even more surprising that scholars of recording history would find much of value in such a book. But they will.

Some will no doubt be turned off by the author's style, a sort of “new journalism” which emphasizes sex, violence, constant obscenities, and a world view that seems to regard everyone as driven by (un)equal measures of greed, lust and misery. No one remotely well-balanced or happy ever seems to inhabit the pages of a Tosches book. However if you are willing to get past the f\*\*\*'s and sh\*\*\*'s, and the obligatory Mafia scenes, there is actually some very substantive research here on Martin's recording, film, television, and nightclub careers. There is also context. An author who can bring George W. Johnson, the black street singer of the 1890s, into a biography of Dean Martin has obviously cast his net widely.

Dino Crocetti was born in 1917 in industrial Steubenville, Ohio, and began singing locally in the late 1930s, between odd jobs as a boxer and a croupier in a gambling casino. Ohio bandleader Ernie McKay renamed him Dino Martini in 1939, while another employer shortened it to Dean Martin in 1941. Dean's first commercial recordings were for the tiny Diamond label in 1946, followed by others for Apollo and Embassy in 1947. The Apollo sessions are described vividly, based on interviews with producer Jerry Jerome, in some of the best sections of the book, at least for those interested in behind-the-scenes operations of minor labels of this period; the author has written frequently about the music business during this period, and obviously knows his stuff.

Martin's big break came in 1948, when he opened at the Copacabana as half of the comedy team of Martin and (Jerry) Lewis. There, on radio, television, and in slapstick films like “My Friend Irma” (1949) they became two of the biggest media stars of the early 1950s. Simultaneously, Dean tried to start a legitimate singing career on Capitol, at first without much success. The author explains how Dean's first recordings for the label (with Lewis) were made in 1948, during an AFM recording ban, using a dubbed Mexican orchestra! Dean had some minor hits in the early 1950s, but his recording career did not

go into high gear until 1954, when he sold a million copies with a piece of Italianate drivel called "That's Amore" ("When the moon hits your eye like-a bigga pizza pie/That's Amore!").

Curiously, the author gives us less background and texture on Dean's long association with Capitol than with Diamond and Apollo, relying mostly on a parade of recording dates and chart positions. The same is true of his years with Reprise (owned by Frank Sinatra), and his later on-offs for Warner Brothers and MCA. One gets the impression that since nothing much of musical interest came out of the sessions, Tosches is not very interested in what went into them. We do, however, see Dean's recording in context. As big as his record hits were in the 1950s and early 1960s, recording was always a secondary part of his career; this was a TV and movie star dabbling in recording, not vice versa.

The main thrust of the book is Dean's larger career on TV and in films. Martin and Lewis ("the organ grinder and the monkey" as Tosches refers to them) was not a team made in heaven. They hated each other's guts, and it is a wonder they stayed together as long as they did. At the break-up in 1956 the smart money was on Lewis, who had garnered most of the favorable reviews for his manic comedy. Initially he was the more successful, with hit films and even a freak record hit in 1956 belting out Al Jolson's "Rock-a-bye Your Baby With a Dixie Melody." (I always wondered who bought all those 45s; his family? I never saw a copy in any teenager's collection.) But it was Dean who emerged as the bigger star in the 1960s and 1970s, propelled by surprisingly good dramatic performances in "The Young Lions," "Some Came Running" and "Rio Bravo," and his smash hit TV show (1965). There is plenty here on Dean's career moves, his marriages, "The Rat Pack," and his connections with the mob (he sang for them, but never joined). His famous reunion with Lewis on a Muscular Dystrophy telethon in 1976 was, it seems, a sham. He still hated his guts.

Ultimately, this is not about an artist, but about one type of modern celebrity: undeniably talented, a friendly exterior, but self-absorbed and absolutely inscrutable, or perhaps empty, inside. A recurring theme of the book is that its subject revealed nothing of himself, even to those closest to him. Even his wives and his son never really knew him.

The book is immaculately sourced (the footnotes are at the back, where they won't get in the way of salability), and those interested in Martin's recording career will be especially pleased with the thorough, 24-page discography, complete with recording dates and matrix numbers. There is also a filmography and index.

Don't be fooled by the commercial packaging. There is some excellent, original research here into a major popular recording artist of the 1950s and 1960s who has not been adequately covered anywhere else. *Dino* was, in fact, the winner of the 1993 ARSC Award for Excellence in the field of General Popular Music. *Reviewed by Tim Brooks*

***The Almost Complete 78 RPM Record Dating Guide (II)***. By Steven C. Barr. Published and distributed by Yesterday Once Again, P.O. Box 6773, Huntington Beach, CA 92615. 1992. (714) 963-2474. \$14.95.

One of the handiest books on the 78 rpm researcher's shelf, Steven Barr's *Almost Complete 78 RPM Record Dating Guide*, recently has been reissued in a much expanded and improved new edition. The original came out in 1979, with a second edition in 1980; copies likely are by now dog-eared from years of use. The 1980 edition's 51 pages have grown to 177, with a much improved spiral-bound format for easy use (lays open flat).

The *Guide* opens with 10 pages of introductory text, and a six-page thumbnail history of the recording industry in the U.S., Canada and Britain. The next 140 pages comprise the heart of the book, containing dating charts and explanatory text for hundreds of labels issued in these three countries between 1900 and 1942. At the back are a variety of appendices, including an 18-page guide to label designs (all text, no illustrations), comments on early electrical recordings, labels which leased matrices to other labels, discographical resources and an annotated bibliography. Although this new edition is better organized than its predecessors, it still suffers from “scattered-information-syndrome.” For example, in the case of Columbia a helpful two-page history of the label is found on pp. 12-13, dating charts on pp. 25-31, descriptions of label types on p.150, an explanation of the “W” (electrical) symbol on p.166, and a listing of matrix series appearing on other labels on pp. 170-171. Additionally, labels are not presented in alphabetical order but rather in one of eight sections organized by era, “major” vs. “minor” labels, etc. Perhaps the author would consider for a future edition rearranging his listings into one big alphabetical list, A-Z, with all information on each label grouped together in one place. As it is, he at least gives us a prominent, detailed index which indicates where to look for all the pieces. The reader will use it constantly.

The scope of coverage of this new *Guide* is awe-inspiring. It includes all principal catalog series (with release dates) and matrix series (with recording dates) for hundreds of labels issued in the three countries mentioned. These include popular, classical, country, folk, and race music series; in fact, the only series generally excluded are those for export, foreign-language material, and minor or limited-run series. In the case of Victor, for example, the *Guide* contains charts for approximately 19 popular and 17 Red Seal catalog series.

The book’s ostensible cut-off year is 1942. The author says he does not want to get involved with the thousands of postwar labels, although he does chart a small selection of those he considers important. Additionally, the *Guide* follows major numerical series of its listed labels beyond 1942. For example, Victor’s principal pop catalog series of the 1940s, the 20-1500’s, is followed to 1959, a helpful feature. For detailed coverage of the postwar period the author refers us to William Daniels’ fine book *The American 45 and 78 RPM Record Dating Guide* (Greenwood, 1985), to which we would add Galen Gart’s valuable *ARLD: The American Record Label Directory and Dating Guide, 1940-1959* (Big Nickel Publications, 1989).

In most cases, the charts give the number reached by January and June of each year, so that release and recording dates can be approximated to the nearest half-year. Of course, most labels did not issue or record in strict numerical sequence, as the author explains, so the dates are only approximate. However, one should rarely be off by more than a few months. The choice of “June” is a bit peculiar. If these are supposed to represent the first of each month, wouldn’t the half-way point in the year be July 1st?

This brings up a technical shortcoming of the book which may be apparent only to serious researchers in the field—some of whom, no doubt, will be reading this review. The author never explains exactly what he means by his dates, or even by the term “released.” Do “January” and “June” mean the first of the month? Or is it January 1st and June 30th? For labels with heavy release schedules, this can make a considerable numerical difference. Does release mean “announced” or “placed on sale?” The difference is not always minor, as labels sometimes gathered together past releases into supplements which then were dated with deceptive precision. Columbia in the teens included in its supplements an explicit statement that the records listed therein would be placed on sale on the 24th or 25th of the *preceding* month; the Victor files reveal that records

listed in a given supplement were sometimes released for sale one to several months previously, in some cases regionally or as “specials.” While this sort of detail may not be of consequence to the casual user, greater precision as to terms would be helpful to the advanced researcher, and for those who wish to become one.

The author is disarmingly candid about the limitations of his work (note the book’s title), and points out on p.ii that the charts provide approximate dates only. Hopefully, users will keep that admonition in mind when using this data in their own published works.

Finally, the big question: how accurate is the *Guide*? Readers of my previous reviews will know that I seldom go easy on reference books on the matter of accuracy. Data from such sources will be incorporated into future works by others, and the danger of propagating misinformation is considerable. Compilers of technical reference books bear a special responsibility to *get it right*. Based on a sampling of the charts presented in the *Guide*, its accuracy would appear to range—in record grading terminology—from “VG” to “E+”.

To address the question of accuracy, I compared the *Guide*’s release date charts to primary sources such as original supplements, dated listings in company publications and trade journals, and information from company files. I looked at January of each year for sample 10 year spans of the principal popular series of Columbia and Victor. The results for Columbia were as follows:

### Columbia 10" Discs—Popular Series

	<u>Guide</u>	<u>Primary Sources</u>
Jan 1905	3075	1911?
Jan 1906	3293	3293
Jan 1907	3525	3527
Jan 1908	3900	3739
Jan 1909	A250	A601
Jan 1910	A800	A777
Jan 1911	A960	A944?
Jan 1912	A1100	A1092
Jan 1913	A1275	A1241
Jan 1914	A1450	A1445

Pretty good, in most instances. It should be noted that the 2000’s were skipped, so 1905 is off by 164, not 1164. From 1905-1909, the “primary” column reflects supplement dates (which is what the *Guide* seems to have used); beginning in 1910 Columbia supplements explicitly stated that records would be placed on sale at the end of the preceding month, so “primary” reflects the placed-on-sale date. The major discrepancies are for 1905, 1908 and especially 1909. Columbia commenced regular issue of double-sided discs in September 1908, with the release of a single catalog containing A1 through A589. New issues starting at A590 were announced monthly beginning in November 1908, so “A250” for the beginning of 1909 is clearly in error.

Victor supplements of the early 1920s carried a notice that all records listed would be placed on sale on the first of that month, although later on advance-release specials became more prevalent. At one point, in 1923-1924, the label even issued weekly supplements, making precise dating easy. The *Guide* was checked against primary sources for Victor’s principal popular series (18000s-21000s) for January of each year



from 1920 to 1929. From 1920 to 1924 the two sources differed by only about 20-30 numbers each year, however after that the gap widens to more than 100 numbers. For example, the files say that by January 1928 the series had reached 21013, while the *Guide* lists 21150 (that was actually a March release). To be fair Victor's release pattern was very erratic during these years, with many numbers issued substantially out of sequence. Any chart for this period by definition must be "approximate." Unfortunately, the *Guide* gives us little indication which data is precise, and which is not.

To verify matrix series I checked three labels: Pathé from 1919-1923, Gennett in the 1920s, and ARC in the late 1920s and early 1930s. There are no recording ledgers surviving for Pathé, so a comparison was made with Brian Rust's standard discographies, which have been indexed by matrix number in a running listing in *Record Research* magazine called "The H-3 Chrono-Matrix File" (for citations see the "Current Bibliography" department of this *Journal*). Basically, the *Guide* differed from Rust by anywhere from 15 to 170 matrices at the start of each year during this period. I don't know who's right; take your pick. The *Guide's* Gennett and ARC charts were compared to data from those companies' files, which has long circulated among researchers. The *Guide* almost exactly matched those reliable sources, indicating that the author had welcome access to this information.

Because of the importance of the *Guide*, its relatively wide circulation, and the use that will be made of it as a primary source for other work, this review has gone into some detail on its pluses and minuses. I do not apologize for that; I think the serious reader is entitled to a serious evaluation. The shortcomings mentioned should not obscure the fact that the *Guide* is an exceptionally useful tool, both for dating individual discs and for gaining a valuable overview of the numerical series used by a very large number of labels. Moreover, the author has made every effort to make this fairly technical subject understandable to the beginner.

The author has shown his willingness to update and correct, and indeed frequently repeats the plea "please advise author of corrections." He also says that he intends to research internal company files to further enhance future editions (incredibly, the present volume was compiled *without* access to those files).

The *Guide* is clearly laid out, very reasonably priced, and tremendously valuable as a first place to check for approximate release and recording dates of pre-World War II recordings. Even if you have the needed discographies in your field, odd issues can often be identified and the search for more precise data narrowed considerably by reference to it. It is highly recommended. *Reviewed by Tim Brooks*