

Current Bibliography

“Current Bibliography” is an annotated index to research on recording history that has appeared recently in small circulation journals. To be indexed here an article must be in English, be reasonably substantive, and deal with recording history – as opposed to musicology, sociology, or contemporary subjects such as record reviews. “W/D” or “discog.” indicates that the article was accompanied by something at least remotely resembling a discography.

Issues covered this time were received between September, 1993, and March, 1994. If you contact one of these publications or authors, please mention ARSC and “Current Bibliography.”

Notes

It was with surprise and pleasure that I recently stumbled on new issues of the English periodical *The Gunn Report*, previously lost and presumed dead. John and Carole Gunn’s whimsical auction list cum research newsletter was published regularly from c.1968 to 1989, when it was last seen at no. 107. Now nos. 109-111 have suddenly surfaced at the New York Public Library, dated December 1992 to late 1993 (don’t ask what happened to No. 108 – I have no idea!). They are included here. The Gunns have not responded to inquiries, so if you write to them you are on your own.

Another English veteran of the 1960s, the highly regarded jazz periodical *Storyville*, may soon be coming to an end. Founder/editor Laurie Wright has announced his retirement after six more issues, unless “satisfactory arrangements” can be made (i.e., a buyer found). Back issues, which have always been kept in print – a laudable practice which more publications should follow – are now being sold off.

In the Works...

Mentioned in the last issue of Dr. Rainer Lotz’s ambitious project to publish a multi-volume German National Discography brings to mind two other ongoing projects that may be of interest. When I reviewed the Document CD “The Earliest Negro Vocal Quartets, 1894-1928” in Volume 23 No. 2 I had no idea of the extent of Austrian producer Johnny Parth’s work in preserving 78 r.p.m. era blues recordings. He has been at it since the 1950s, and his catalog now boasts approximately 300 discs, all kept in print and now all available on CD. Artists range from blues shouters to black country dance, jug bands, barrelhouse piano and gospel. An international network of collectors,

whom he credits, helps him dig up copies of incredible rarities. If you are interested in this material write for a catalog to Johnny Parth, Eipeldauerstrabe 23/43/5, A-1220 Vienna, Austria.

At the other extreme of the musical spectrum – and I draw no value judgments here – West Coast engineer/collector John B. Gray has just completed a project to make high quality tape transfers of the entire catalog of Hit of the Week records. As collectors of early 1930s recordings know, these cardboard discs were quite well recorded and featured some important stars of the day including Gene Austin, Rudy Vallee, Eddie Cantor, Ben Pollack and even Duke Ellington (as the “Harlem Hot Chocolates”). Issued one per week and sold on newsstands for 15¢, they represent a cross-section of the pop hits of the day. Many are so up-tempo and cheerful one wonders if there was really a Depression going on. Gray is turning his tapes over to the International Association of Jazz Record Collectors, which operates a reissue program and will hopefully make them available to collectors. If you are interested in such an issue write the IAJRC (see address under *IAJRC Journal*). A complete discography of HOW commercial releases, by Howard J. Waters, was published in 1960 in *Record Research* no. 26 (now, sadly, out of print); a listing of advertising records manufactured by HOW’s parent company, Durium, by Kurt Nauck, is in the *New Amberola Graphic*, October 1993.

The Copyright Wars: Reports from the Front

ARSC’s indefatigable Dr. Michael Biel provides information on two recent non-mainstream publications dealing with copyright issues, and the use the recording industry has made of these laws to assert almost total control over music distribution in the US. The industry’s “we control EVERYTHING” posture is so extreme it might in other circumstances be amusing (rather like the “we control the vertical, we control the horizontal...” of the 1960s TV show *The Outer Limits*). But when lawyers attack, humor withers, as the comedy group Negativland found when attorneys for the rock group U2 decided the comics’ latest satirical CD sampled too much of their client’s music. The group’s tribulations are detailed in a magazine called *Negativland: The Letter U and the Numeral 2*, which apparently published only one issue (address: 1920 Monument Blvd. MF-1, Concord, CA 94520).

The second publication is *Gray Areas*, which states as its purpose the interesting goal to “examine the gray areas of life... subject matter which is illegal, immoral and/or controversial.” The Fall 1993 issue has several articles on record piracy, including an interview with the head of the RIAA’s anti-piracy unit, Steven D’Onofrio. Address: P.O. Box 808, Broomall, PA 19008-0808.

Heads I Win, Tails You Lose?

Those who bid on mail auctions may be interested in the following tale. Recently I bid on a series of early 78s offered by an East Coast jazz and blues dealer. Although the bids varied quite a bit, I lost them all by similar small amounts. Losing items in an auction isn’t unusual, but this pattern seemed to be (the instructions made no mention of “bid topping”), so I inquired as to what had happened. The dealer straightforwardly replied that no, he did not allow bid topping, but whenever he wanted a record which had been placed with him on consignment, he simply added a little bit to the highest bid, paid the consignor himself, and kept it. In this case he kept them all. “Maybe

there's no completely fair way of collecting rare records," he added, "but this is certainly fair to the seller."

But is it fair to the bidders? Without being told, they are used to set the price, but in fact they have no chance of winning. Perhaps the practice is more widespread than I realize, and this dealer was simply being honest about it (at least, when asked). Is it fair? You decide.

Correspondence

David D. Ginsburg writes in response to the mention last time of *DISCOVERIES*' "Reference Library" column. He points out that he, not the current author as I had stated, originated the column in *Goldmine* in the early 1980s. Speaking of reference books, the October 29, 1993, issue of *Goldmine* contains an interesting essay by William Ruhlmann entitled "Music Books – Why Are There So Many Errors?" Why indeed.

Another item in the last issue concerned "National One-Hit Wonder Day." This brought a surprising note from a gentleman named Steven Rosen who said that he had originated the event in 1990, and that it was an off-shoot of his magazine *One Shot*. Readers fascinated by the ephemeral may contact him at 11667 Elkhead Range Road, Littleton, CO 80127.

One More Thing...

Isn't it nice when one of those little problems that has annoyed you for years is suddenly solved? For collectors who have always had problems centering early 78s with odd-sized spindle holes (Standards, Harmonys, Uniteds, Aretinos) dealer Kurt Nauck is offering a set of plexiglass spindle adaptors of various sizes, neatly stacked on their own little base, for about \$8. Contact him for current price and availability (his address is in the *ARSC Membership Directory*). Now if someone can only produce an accessory to make those cardboard Hit of the Week records lie flat...

Thanks to Joe Pengelly and to the staff of the Rodgers & Hammerstein Archives, New York Public Library, for information used this time.

Publications Listed:

Absolute Sound, P.O. Box 6547, Syracuse, NY 13217.

American Music, University of Illinois Press, 54 E. Gregory Drive, Champaign, IL 61820

Antique Phonograph Monthly, 502 East 17th St., Brooklyn, NY 11226

Antique Phonograph News, Canadian Antique Phonograph Society, 122 Major St., Toronto, Ont. M5S 2L2 Canada

Australasian Record and Music Review, 15 Lowanna Ave., Baulkham Hills, NSW 2153, Australia

Australasian Sound Archive, journal of the Australasian Sound Recordings Association, c/o John Spence, ABC Radio Archives, ABC Ultimo Centre Level 4, Ultimo 2007, Australia

Bluegrass Unlimited, Box 111, Broad Run, VA 22014

DISCoveries, Box 309, Fraser, MI 48026

Echoes Of the Past, Box 40, Agawam, MA 01001

Goldmine, 700 East State St., Iola, WI 54990

Gunn Report, Bramble Hall Lane, Daws Heath, Hadleigh, Essex SS7 2XG England

Hi-Fi News & Record Review, Link House, Dingwall Ave., Croydon CR9 2TA, England

Hillandale News, c/o D.M. Field, Hon. Treasurer, City of London Phonograph & Gramophone Society, 116 Tanhouse Lane, Malvern Link, Worcs., England WR14 1LG

Historic Record, The, 185 The Wheel, Ecclesfield, Sheffield S30 3ZA, England

IAJRC Journal, International Assoc. of Jazz Record Collectors, 127 Briarcliff Lane, Bel Air, MD 21014

I.S.A.M. Newsletter, Institute for Studies in American Music, Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, NY 11210

In The Groove, Michigan Antique Phonograph Society, 2609 Devonshire, Lansing, MI 48910

International Talking Machine Review, 105 Sturdee Ave., Gillingham, Kent ME7 2HG, England

The Jazz Archivist, Hogan Jazz Archive, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118

JazzTimes, 7961 Eastern Avenue, Suite 303, Silver Springs, MD 20910-4898

Jerry's Rhythm Rag, Carl A. Hallstrom, Liljefors gata 85, S-754 29 Uppsala, Sweden

Joslin's Jazz Journal, Box 213, Parsons, KS 67357

Journal of Country Music, Country Music Foundation, 4 Music Square East, Nashville, TN 37203

Memory Lane, 226 Station Rd., Leigh on Sea, Essex, SS9 3BS England

New Amberola Graphic, 37 Caledonia St., St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

New Orleans Music, 127 Mount Drive, Urmston, Manchester M31 1QA, England

Old Time Country, Center for the Study of Southern Culture, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677

Popular Music & Society, Bowling Green University Popular Press, Bowling Green, OH 43403

Record Collector, The, c/o Larry Lustig, 111 Longshots Close, Broomfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 5DU, England

Record Collectors Monthly, Box 75, Mendham, NJ 07945

Record Finder, Box 1047, Glen Allen, VA 23060

78 Quarterly, P.O. Box 283, Key West, FL 33041

Sound Box, The, Calif. Antique Phono. Society, Box 67, Duarte, CA 91010

Soundtrack!, Luc Van De Ven, Astridlaan 171, 2800 Mechelen, Belgium

Storyville, 66 Fairview Drive, Chigwell, Essex, IG7 6HS, England

Tailgate Ramblings, 3608 35th St. NW, Washington, DC 20016

Vintage Light Music, 4 Harvest Bank Road, West Wickham, Kent, England

Popular, General

Allen, Perry (disc jockey), by Sherry Daniel, in "Faves of the Airwaves" column, *DISCoveries* Nov 1993, p.125

"Australian Compositions Recorded in England" (1920-1926), *Australasian Record & Music Review* Jul 1993, p.3-4

Barlow, Charlie, by Chris Hayes, in "Dance Bands at the Local Palais," *Memory Lane* Winter 1993, p.39,42

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Christmas Records in the Rock Era: "Jingle Bell Rock," by Dave Marsh & Steve Propes, excerpted from the authors' book *Merry Christmas, Baby: Holiday Music From Bing to Sting*, *DISCoveries* Dec 1993, p.35-37

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- Festival of Britain, by David Mason, discusses recordings related to the exposition held in London in 1951, W/D, *Historic Record* No. 29 (Oct 1993), p.11-19
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- Platters, The, "Heaven on Earth," by Jay Warner, W/D, *DISCoveries* Dec 1993, p.112-113,115

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