

# Book Reviews

## ***Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound in the United States.***

*Guy A. Marco, ed. (Frank Andrews, Contrib. ed.) New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1993. 910 pp. ISBN 0-8240-4782-6.*

The title could prove misleading, especially to the older discophile to whom encyclopedia of recorded sound meant Darrell and his successors on the *Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia*, and F.F. Clough and C.G. Cuming and *WERM*.

This volume is not a work along those lines. Such a thing would, if it would any longer be contemplated at all, have necessitated multiple volumes, if not less than the substantial proportions of this present book.

In his preface, Guy Marco explains what he has tried to do in the work whose title he abbreviates to ERSUS (it is not easy to imagine this catching on). This was to be nothing less than an encyclopedia covering the subject of sound recordings the world over. Having found that study in the Library of Congress could not provide the necessary depth of information, he eventually reduced his ambitions to dealing with the subject as it related to the United States.

Mr. Marco set himself a further limitation. The cut-off date for important material was to be 1970, but he admits that in many instances this rule has not been adhered to.

In addition, there is much attention to British matters in the chosen field, and other countries are by no means totally excluded.

Thus the reviewer or reader is given something of a problem: are apparent omissions deliberate, an oversight, or even an error of judgment? This is not easy to answer, but there is a good deal of information relating to the era of CD which suggests a desire to round off the overall view.

At any rate, what has emerged is a truly formidable compilation (some 900 pages) of facts and articles about sound recordings and their history, arranged alphabetically with much information almost certainly not collected elsewhere related to performers, producers of recordings, instruments, technical developments, important repertoire, social history, and other relevant materials of all kinds.

Mr. Marco helped himself in his task by gathering about him a team of advisors and specialists with a wide range of knowledge and experience in the field of sound recordings, including, for example, the illustrious David Hall. His experts provided him with all kinds of assistance and most valuable contributions.

He also acquired the help of Frank Andrews, an Englishman with a reputation as

a discographer and historian of the record industry with a special interest in the field of popular music. Mr. Andrews provided so much help and made so many contributions that he eventually became regarded as a partner with the title of Contributing Editor. His presence in the enterprise must undoubtedly have increased the proportion of entries related to the British history of the subject. Mr. Marco, however, admits to having written most of the entries himself, and no one should doubt that this must have been a mammoth task.

For the work is truly encyclopedic; the range of subjects covered is such that it is not easy to think of any important aspect which is not dealt with, often briefly, but where appropriate, in gratifying depth.

A valuable "List of Articles" introducing the alphabetical entries enables us to pinpoint just a few:

Automobile Sound Systems

Aviation Recordings

Criticism

Canada

This is a particularly useful résumé of recording activity in an area not much written about

Cornet Recordings

Postage Stamps

Animal Imitations

V-Discs

Payola

Recording Practice

Pseudonyms

Largely devoted to the popular field and might have also included, for example, Lisa Perli (Dora Labbette),

George Walter (Walter Goehr), the several names of

George Baker (died 1976, a date the compilers are unaware of on p. 41)

Radio Program Recordings

Perhaps a disproportionately lengthy entry

Sexually Oriented Lyrics

Seemingly in the eyes of the compilers, a popular music phenomenon, but surely some examples in the "classical" field could have been provided.

Some of these subjects might not have been among the expected ones, but there are also excellent articles on more standard topics which, as like as not, are among the best accounts to have been printed: Disc; Orchestral Recording; Compact Disc; Folk Music Recordings; Pianists; Loudspeaker; Rock Music Recording; Rhythm and Blues; Microphone; Jazz Recordings; Opera Recordings.

There is something for everyone, while the librarian and sound archivist will surely have cause to be grateful for such articles as those on Sonic Restoration of Historical Recordings (including a remarkable list of "inherent record EQ settings"); Sound Recording and the Library; Cleaning; Discography; Preservation of Sound Recordings.

One subject of some significance which is largely overlooked is that of Flamenco, or Cante Hondo. I found only a four-line reference under Guitar. Another field which has achieved a notable amount of recorded material in Indian Classical Music, but I found no mention of this in the work.

I looked for Rehearsals, given that published records have included examples by

Toscanini, Beecham, Furtwängler, Karajan, Walter, Boult, Monteux, Talich and others, but drew a blank here, too.

There is a useful entry for Literary Recordings but this excludes speeches, so I can find no entry for the war-time speeches of Winston Churchill, though the US fares a little better with Presidents on Record. Royalty Recordings features some rare speech records, but the reference to recordings of the British royal family mentions nothing later than 1923. A discography bringing the list up-to-date was published in *Recorded Sound* and might have been referred to.

Another kind of speech recording seemingly overlooked presents recording artists talking about their career or the music they have recorded. In this area valuable examples by Bruno Walter, Landowska, Segovia, Stravinsky, Szymanowski and others might have been quoted.

The article on opera recordings includes a curious statement in a reference to the famous HMV discs of Wagner's "Die Walküre", Act 2 with Lehmann and Melchior: we are told that the advent of World War II interrupted the recording in Vienna in 1937/8 and that "missing sections were filled in from Berlin". The CD reissue of the set gives 1935 for the Vienna recording and the Berlin sections were recorded in September 1938, naturally before the war began.

There are many entries giving brief histories of record companies and labels (a list of these treated is in the book's index). Some, like Columbia and Victor, are properly dealt with in more detail, and these constitute valuable pieces of gramophone history. There does seem to be a balance here in favor of earlier labels, many or most of them devoted to popular fare. The small records of the type sold in Woolworth's in Britain in the 1920's may not seem very significant today. The Scala label, which is included, is a British one from the 1910-20 period, but the US vocal reissue label of the same name from the earlier years of the LP does not appear, nor do the US LP label Unicorn or the later British one similarly named. Coliseum is included, but not Colosseum. A perusal of the list of record makes in the three volumes of *WERM* would reveal a number of other American labels dealt with, and this is to take the matter no further than 1956. One label which is quoted and which might not have been expected is the important French one Erato, with a lengthy history of substantial LP and CD issues. This, however, receives an entry of merely four lines.

Just as useful as the list of articles in the introductory pages of the book are two sections at the end. First is the "Bibliography and Key to Citations", which provides fuller details for brief references in the main part of the work. Thus, for example, the article about Glenn Miller, which ends "Flowers, 1972", translates in the bibliography into "*Moonlight Serenade: a bio-discography of the Glenn Miller Civilian Band* / John Flowers – New Rochelle, N.Y., Arlington House, 1972."

This system does not always work perfectly. The article on Opera Recordings refers to "Blyth, 1979", for which the bibliography prints *Alan Blyth: Opera on Record*. 2 vols. 1979, 1984. In fact, there were 3 vols. – 1979, 1983 and 1984. The article on Gregorian Chant refers to Weber, 1990. This is J.F. Weber's *Chant Discography*, but the requisite entry is missing from the bibliography.

The bibliography quotes the details of the label discographies "*Voices of the Past*", by John R. Bennett and others, and calls them listings of vocal records. In fact, at least six of these volumes were complete listings irrespective of the type of material recorded and the series title proved misleading.

Notwithstanding the editor's warning that "the bibliography is basically a list of writings cited in the text and not an inventory of writing about recorded sound", I

wish that the article on discography had quoted, and thereby caused the inclusion of, Armand Panigel's book *"L'Oeuvre de Frédéric Chopin (1949)"*, which was the first substantial publication devoted to the recordings of the work of a single composer. Just as significant, though much more recent, are the handsome "Phonographies" on Fauré by Jean-Michel Nectoux (1979) and on Poulenc by Francine Bloch (1984), while Timothy Day's *A Discography of Tudor Church Music (1989)* deserved a mention.

The book as a whole has a very substantial index already briefly referred to. The subjects of main articles are shown in upper-case and the index is organized to the maximum advantage of the user. For example, Ignaz Friedman, pianist, has not only his own entry with four page references, but also appears among the names of all pianists referred to in the text (five columns), "Libraries and Archives", "Executives and other Officials" (6 columns), "Inventors and Audio Research Engineers", etc.

The extremely informative and interesting worldwide list of Sound Recording Periodicals by Sara Velez, in chronological order, 565 titles long and with an alphabetical index, contained a good deal that was new to me. The compiler asks for additions and corrections. I can point to the Spanish periodical *Discofilia*, which was published in the 1950's and perhaps beyond (*WERM* Vol. III includes it in a list of periodicals consulted). The Spanish LP catalog "Polgar" was appearing in the 1970's and perhaps still does. The Italian LP catalog that was known as Santandrea appears to be missing, unless it is masquerading under another title. The monthly Russian MK (for short) catalog is shown 1958-1977? I have copies up to mid 1988. What has happened subsequently I do not know.

There are included a fairly considerable number of biographical articles relating to performers. In a one-volume work covering so many subjects, the choice of these was bound to be somewhat restricted and, not surprisingly, for the most part only the most celebrated artists are included. There is, perhaps, a slight preference shown to popular music, and in the classical field something of an emphasis on singers of the "Golden Age". Most of the great names of a later period are included and one would expect those included to have had connections with music-making in the US. For the most part this is the case, but not all of those chosen qualify in this respect, while a few slightly surprising entries turn up for artists whose careers tend to belong to the post-1970 era. Of these who might have been included, Gilels, Curzon, Brendel, Sviatoslav Richter, de los Angeles, Janet Baker, and Julian Bream, come to mind as some distinguished omissions.

In assembling so many biographical entries, there are some that could have used a little tighter editing. In the entry for Edwin Fischer, we are informed that he made the Brahms Second Concerto with the Berlin Philharmonic under Furtwängler *for* (my italics) the Russian MK label in 1942. Not really, the two countries were at war then and the broadcast performance was not issued on disc on a variety of labels until years later. Fischer's recording of Mozart's D Minor Concerto K.466 is quoted as conducted by Eugen Jochum, but this performance is one which the soloist directed from the piano. Jochum did not become an HMV conductor until 1975, while Fischer died in 1960.

The entries for Conchita Supervia and Elisabeth Schumann make reference to discographies now superseded, rather than the more recent ones which have been published in *Recorded Sound* and *The Record Collector* respectively. The Schumann entry seems dogged by ill-fortune. She recorded no Schubert song-cycles as is here alleged, while her *Rosenkavalier* recording was not made in Sofia but Vienna. Of course, she did sing *Sophie* in that set.

Under Myra Hess, the piano-roll performances reissued on LP were on the Ember label, not HMV.

Salvador Baccaloni has a curious entry in which the Italian Columbia record of "Udite, udite, o rustica" from *Elizir d'amore* is given as "CQX 16451, later 71383-D", whereas in fact the record number is that for a US Columbia remake on two 78 sides rather than one.

Boris Christoff's entry contains no error, but refers to his recording of arias from *Boris Godunov*, while curiously failing to mention his two complete recordings of the opera.

There is a sorry muddle in the entry for Pierre Monteux. Contrary to what is claimed, that the conductor's performance of Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* were not issued on 78s, nor was the latter performance confined to the orchestra suites.

Fritz Busch is correctly credited with a 1984 discography by Jacques Delalande, but this compilation in *Recorded Sound* also included discographies of Adolf Busch and of the Busch Quartet, which are not stated in the discographies alongside.

Interesting as some of these articles on leading artists are, it seems unlikely that the reader will turn first to this book for information on them, and I would have welcomed more entries for specifically American-born or domiciled artists who are not quite so widely known: William Kincaid, Bernard Krainis, Russell Oberlin, Noah Greenberg, and Robert Hayes are among those included, but how about Thomas Schippers, Leonard Shure, Gunnar Johansen, Nan Merriman, Martha Lipton, Phyllis Curtin, Eudice Shapiro, and William Warfield, to name a few chosen at random. Perhaps this might be a suggestion for Mr. Marco's next book.

It is not relevant to the foregoing, but perhaps I could fit in here a comment on the reference to the Hugo Wolf Society, where it is stated that this presented "the whole Wolf output of Lieder". In fact, the Wolf Society discs included 118 songs with a few more issued "posthumously". Eric Sam's *The Songs of Hugo Wolf* discusses no fewer than 242 songs.

Despite making various complaints while leaving out further minor corrections, I would not wish to leave the impression that this book is other than a very considerable, indeed, a triumphant, success, which deserves to be looked on as the recorded sound equivalent of the volumes of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, which it somewhat resembles in appearance.

I have done no more than scratch the surface of what the work contains, but I hope it is clear that as a source of reference for the librarian and sound archivist, it will have to set alongside *The Fabulous Phonograph, From Tinfoil to Stereo*, and the *Guinness Book of Recorded Sound*. Reviewed by Eric Hughes

### ***Ferrier – A Career Recorded.***

*By Paul Campion, with contributions by Dame Janet Baker and Winifred Ferrier.  
London: Julia McRae, 1992. £ 14.99.*

Kathleen Ferrier had a once-heard, never-forgotten deep contralto. A colleague, who is a singer, described Ferrier's voice as having a slightly thick quality akin to thick flowing cream, basically dark with a shimmery patina and a throbbing vibrato. In my recent listening years, only Emmi Leisner's contralto has rivalled Ferrier's. Kathleen Ferrier left a legacy of sound recording to tempt the collector and challenge the cura-