

alla madre (Alfred Piccaver, c. 1929, Polydor); **Verdi:** *Ernani*: Infelice! e tu credevi (Ezio Pinza, May 7, 1929, Victor); **Mozart:** *Die Zauberflöte*: In diesen heil'gen Hallen (Alexander Kipnis, April 14, 1930, HMV); **Schubert:** *Erlkönig* (Alexander Kipnis, Nov. 20, 1936, Columbia); **Schumann:** *Die Lotosblume* (Lotte Lehmann, April 25, 1932, Odeon); **Wagner:** *Die Walküre*: Du bist der lenz (Lotte Lehmann, June, 1935, HMV); **Wagner:** *Tristan und Isolde*: Liebestod (Kirsten Flagstad, Oct. 9, 1935, Victor); **Ponchielli:** *La Gioconda*: Cielo e mar (Jussi Björling, Sept. 3, 1937, HMV); **Millöcker:** *Der Bettelstudent*: Ich has' kein Geld, bin vogel-

- frei (sung in Swedish, Jussi Björling, April 28, 1938, HMV); **Cilea:** *L'Arlesiana*: Come due tizzi accesi (Tito Gobbi, July, 1942, HMV); **Tchaikovsky:** *Eugene Onegin*: Wohin, wohin bist du entschwunden (Fritz Wunderlich, Nov.-Dec., 1962, HMV).
2. Almquist, S. Sound Recording Reviews: **Royal Opera House at Covent Garden: An Early History on Record**. Nimbus NI 7891; and **Divas, Volume 2, 1909-1940**. Nimbus NI 7818. *ARSC Journal*, 1992;23 (1):73-76.
  3. Storm, W. "A Proposal for the Establishment of International Recording Standards." *ARSC Journal*, 1983;15(2-3):26-37.

### ***Directory of American Disc Record Brands and Manufacturers, 1891-1943.***

*By Allan Sutton. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994. 282 pp. ISBN: 0-313-29200-0. \$65.00.*

Those who have long lamented the shortcomings of Brian Rust's pioneering *The American Record Label Book* (1978) at last have something to cheer about. In fact, they can give two cheers. Within the past year two volumes have been published which add significantly to the literature on U.S. record labels. Guy Marco's *Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound in the United States* (Garland, 1993),<sup>1</sup> though not without some factual errors, contains concise overviews of a great many labels of the 78 rpm era. Most importantly, it includes an excellent bibliography of further sources which the researcher can consult.

Now we have Allan Sutton's *Directory*, which, for labels at least, is even better. It is essentially an A to Z listing of "commercial and semi-private disc record brands manufactured or marketed in the United States for general entertainment purposes." Every label of significance, and many that were not, is here, more than 330 in all, according to the publisher's blurb. Of course that does not mean *every* label marketed before World War II is listed, but the exceptions are not likely to cost you any sleep. Comparing the *Directory* to my own card file of record labels, I found only five in the "A" that it did not list. In case you're wondering, they are All Star (a c.1915 8" mail order label from the "Standard Mail Order Company"), Ammor (a 1939 juke box label), Angelophone (a 1916 religious label), Apollo (an International Record Co. brand of the early 1900s) and Arthur Fields Melody Shop (early 1920s). Now, those are obscure! On the other hand the *Directory* did list such obscurities as Arthur Fields Melody Record (1923) and Art Tone Gennett (early 1920s), as well as such important brands as Aeolian-Vocalion, American, Arto and Autograph. I do wonder why Arthur Fields made it in, but Arthur Hall did not? Oh, well.

There are two main sections to the book. The first, a Label Directory, covers Actuelle to Zon-o-Phone; the second, a Manufacturer Directory, spans The Aeolian Company to Yerkes Recording Laboratories. In addition there is a competent introductory history of the industry, and appendices including Phantom Labels (anyone ever

seen an Amphiola?), corporate genealogies in chart form, a glossary of industry terms and a detailed, ten-page bibliography. There is also an index of names appearing within the main listings.

The main label entries, on the whole, appear to be quite well done. They vary in length from a few lines to several pages for majors such as Columbia and Victor, and are clear and easy to access. The heading for each indicates the years that label was in production (e.g., "Actuelle, 1920-1923") followed by an indication as to whether the label issued lateral, vertical, or some other type of record. The text is laudably specific as to dates of production, changes in ownership, source of masters, label design, and the like. Separate entries clearly distinguish identically named, but unrelated, labels.

Rarity is sometimes alluded to, but not uniformly, and it is not always clear which labels (and sub-labels) had wide distribution and which did not. For example, the Aeolian-Vocalion entry talks about the label's 1916 vertical cut discs and 1920s laterals on equal terms, when in fact the former are quite rare. The company, like many others, did not become a force in the marketplace until it switched to lateral recording at the end of 1919.

It appears that most of the entries are more a compilation of previously published research than original work by the author. This is in no way a criticism. A major shortcoming of many previous articles and books, including Rust's, is that they did not adequately incorporate the work done by others (one wonders if the authors even knew about it). All good research builds on what has gone before, and Sutton has taken obvious pains to locate, sift, compare, and use the best that previous authors have uncovered on specific labels. Thus, this book is laudibly free of the old errors that mar so much current work. For example we now know that Little Wonders were independently recorded, and not dubs of Columbias as once thought; that is clearly spelled out here. The genealogy of the 1901 Climax label, long a subject of speculation, is carefully explained, and the two related versions of the 1920s Puritan label (one for the Northeast, one for the Midwest and South), which sometimes interlocked and sometimes did not, are nicely disentangled. To the work of others the author has added his own research, primarily in the field of patents and trademarks, which often reveal useful information about smaller labels.

Those of us who have published research on specific labels will recognize our work here (generally credited), and I for one have no complaint about that. In fact, I was a little startled by how carefully the author has followed the literature, and how up-to-date this 1994 book is. For example there is an entry for Broome Special Phonograph Records, apparently the first black-owned label (it predates Black Swan, which is usually accorded that honor, by nearly two years). The first time *that* information appeared in print, to my knowledge, was in an article I wrote for *The New Amberola Graphic* in late 1991. Other references in the bibliography are as recent as 1993. In his acknowledgements Sutton gives special credit to the late George Blacker for helping him over the years, but it is clear from the bibliography that he has made wise use of the seminal work of Raymond Wile, Allen Koenigsberg, Carl Kendziora, Stephen Calt and Gayle Dean Wardlow (Paramount), Henry Henriksen (Autograph) and other label researchers.

The only real shortcoming of the book is its lack of illustrations. I understand the reluctance of commercial publishers to lavish money on limited circulation books, but this one isn't inexpensive and pictures would have been particularly helpful here. As it is, the author does his best to describe label designs in words, but you need a lot of words (a thousand, did someone say?) to take the place of a single black and white

photo. The Rust book was illustrated. Rust and Sutton also differ in their general approach to the label entries. Rust tended to talk about repertoire and numerical series, whereas Sutton leans more toward corporate ownership, sources of masters and marketing. There is little information here on record numbering; for that, consult Steven C. Barr's excellent *The Almost Complete 78 RPM Record Dating Guide* (1992 edition),<sup>2</sup> which belongs on the shelf next to this book.

In all, the *Directory of American Disc Record Brands and Manufacturers* is a first class compilation of research which belongs in every library of recorded sound reference materials. I will use it often, and I suspect others will too. *Reviewed by Tim Brooks.*

### Endnotes

1. Reviewed in *ARSC Journal* 1994;25(1):64-68.
2. Reviewed in *ARSC Journal* 1993;24(2):208-211.

### Reviewers

**Tim Brooks** is Senior Vice President, Research for the USA cable network in New York. He has written numerous articles and books on television and the history of the recording industry and compiles *Current Bibliography for the ARSC Journal*.

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**John W.N. Francis** works at Central Opera Services in New York City. He is the author of two opera discographies to be published by Greenwood Press and a former editor of the *ARSC Journal*.

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**Gary A. Galo** is Audio Engineer at the Crane School of Music, State University College at Potsdam, New York where he also teaches courses in music literature. He is a Contributing Editor to *Audio Amateur* and *Speaker Builder* magazines, has reviewed books for *Notes* — Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association, and has written for *Antique Phonograph Monthly*. He is also a contributor to *The Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound in the United States*, (ed. Guy A Marco).

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**Elwood A. McKee** is a private collector, researcher and audio consultant. He is Secretary of ARSC and has been an active member of the Association since 1979 and a regular contributor to the *ARSC Journal*.

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**Peter G. Orr** is on the staff of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

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**Bruce Rosenstein** is a librarian on the staff of USA Today in Arlington, VA. He has written extensively on popular music and sound recordings and is a regular contributor to *Library Journal*.

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