

The body of the book proceeds chronologically, listing each recording session, with month and year, location, songs recorded (with the name of the album it appears on, if any), personnel, producer, engineer, and even which guitar Clapton used.

The discography, record numbers and release dates are in the back, along with a videography and a list of bootlegs. There is also an index of song titles, but this refers only to titles in the main body of the book, not the discography. In addition, players, producers and engineers are not indexed.

Roberty's book is recommended for serious Clapton fans and collectors, as well as libraries with strong rock music collections. *Reviewed by Bruce Rosenstein*

### ***Berliner Gramophone Records - American Issues, 1892-1900.***

*Compiled by Paul Charosh. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995. 290pp. ISBN 0-313-29217-5.*

If you have been waiting for an absolutely complete discography of Berliner records, this new book comes mighty close. This useful new research tool is a discography of known American Berliner records issued up to the spring of 1900. Over 3000 individual recordings are identified, along with as much information on each recording as was available to the author at the time of writing. To be sure, several gaps of information still exist, but this work is a monumental first step.

The Berliner record was developed by Emile Berliner as the first laterally recorded flat disc record available to the public. After several years of experimentation, Berliner issued his first printed catalog in late 1894 and began regular marketing of his disc records in competition with the brown wax cylinder. Sales continued until the spring of 1900 when Berliner was forced to quit marketing his gramophones and records in the United States due to legal action taken against the validity of his patents. He continued to be active in Canada and Europe. The Charosh book, however, does not cover the records made outside of the United States.

*Berliner Gramophone Records - American Issues, 1892-1900* avoids going into a detailed history of the Berliner label or its complicated corporate and patent history, although a section entitled "Resources for Further Study" is included. Instead, this book concentrates on the records themselves.

In the early years of record production, almost all companies used a "block" system of numbering to identify individual selections and Berliner was no different. With this system, each type of music or artist was assigned a numerical block. For example, with Berliner, No. 1 and up was assigned to band music, No. 150 and up was for male vocal solos, No. 200 and up was for cornet solos and duets, No. 250 and up was for piano solos, etc. When a block was filled, a new one would be assigned. For example, when No. 149 was reached, a new band block was started at No. 8000. The highest number reached in the Berliner block system was 8021, but this does not mean that 8021 different records were actually issued. Not all blocks were filled which, consequently, left gaps in the numbering. Most companies of the period, including Berliner, found this to be an awkward system. By the spring of 1899, Berliner began to issue new records in consecutive order using a "0" prefix and beginning at number 01 and continuing to number 01304. Mr. Charosh deals with what could become a confusing jumble of numbers by dividing the discography into two sections: the Block series and the "0" series. This is important not only because of the different types of

numbering in the two series but also because the formats used for noting different takes and recording locations are completely different in each of the two series.

Each entry contains the catalogue number; the title of the selection; the composer, when known; the take letter suffix (in the block series) or the symbol (in the "0" series); the recording date when known; recording artist; performance type; and language. In the block series, the additional field of recording location is also included when known. (The recording location is never given in the "0" series.) Fortunately, much of the information contained in this book was gathered from the records themselves. Unlike brown wax cylinders of the same period, Berliner records contained much of this information on the etched label area. When an actual specimen was not located and information came from another source, (i.e., a catalogue, a supplemental list, etc.), Mr. Charosh always makes this very clear in the entry, something that is very useful to the researcher. When I compared several entries with records in my own collection, I found the information to be quite accurate. The handy user's guide makes getting through the discographic information relatively easy.

Popular selections that remained in the catalog for a number of years would often have to be remade due to the original stampers becoming worn or damaged. Consequently, a number of catalogue numbers in the discography list more than one recording. These recordings were often not made by the same artists who made the originals. When known, the different take suffixes, recording dates, recording locations, and artists are given. For example, under No. 404 in the block series: "The Laughing Song" we find no less than seven different recordings by George W. Johnson and one by John Yorke Atlee.

When Mr. Charosh does not know a piece of information, he simply uses a small dash (-) to indicate this. This is useful because if the user can supply this information, there is room to fill it in the appropriate spot. Speculation is avoided which helps the user feel that the information is trustworthy.

Occasionally, little tidbits of additional information are provided under certain entries. In some instances this can be very useful, as in the case of No. 3438: "Bugle Calls - No. 1" by Emil Cassi, Chief Trumpeter of Roosevelt's Rough Riders. The title on the disc doesn't reveal much, but the quote from the National Gram-o-phone Company's April, 1899 *Record Catalogue* lists the actual contents of the selection: "Calls sounded at San Juan Hill, Santiago, Cuba, July 1, 1898 ... Taps sounded at the graves of Sergeant Hamilton Fish, Jr., and Captain Capron, June 24, at Las Guasismas ... " Sometimes the information provided is just plain and simple fun to know. For example, under No. 681 in the block series: "Nursery Talk with Casey Singing" by Russell Hunting, we find the following quote: "Casey is invited to help entertain the children, he tries to sing but the high notes are too much for him". The source of this blurb is noted as the *List of New Records*, National Gramophone Company, September 10th, 1897. In another entry, No. 388: "Der Vogelhandler: Die Nachtigall" by soprano Vroni Eidner, we find: "The reproduction of this record gives a high C clear and full, with no blast or rattle. Have you ever heard this note in a soprano record?" This curious little quote comes from the *Record Catalogue*, National Gramophone Co., undated, c. September, 1897.

Berliner records have often been accused of having a limited repertoire, but after scanning the entries one can see a fairly wide variety of material represented. Besides the usual popular songs, minstrel and comedy sketches, marches, cornet solos and hymns, there are examples of opera, original cast recordings, Native American songs, and selections sung in French, Spanish, German, Greek, Polish, Italian, Chinese,

Swedish, and Turkish! However, the number of artists who recorded for Berliner was rather limited. The user will see such names as George J. Gaskin, John Terrell, George Graham, Dan W. Quinn, Vess L. Ossman, and Sousa's Band showing up quite often: don't, on the other hand, expect to find major stars from the Metropolitan Opera. But, as the author points out, this is a strength of Berliner records. By scanning through the listings, we get a feel for popular culture in the 1890s. This is made even easier because three useful indexes that are included to access this information. In addition to the usual title and artist index, a recording date index allows the user to access the recordings in chronological order.

The "Physical Description and Photographs" section contains a detailed description of the discs themselves. Great care is taken to help the user "decipher" the rather cryptic numbers and letters found on the labels. There are no less than ten illustrations of Berliner labels which show minor variations cited in the text. Photographing Berliner's etched labels isn't easy; the pictures included here, however, are excellent.

A section on "American Berliner Gramophone Records on LP and CD" is also a nice surprise. This is especially useful for those who may not have easy access to the original discs or for the researcher who wishes to hear particular recordings. Mr. Charosh's care and accuracy also shines through here as well.

As I mentioned earlier, a section called "Resources for Further Study" offers a number of related source materials as well as a number of periodicals in which the reader may find additional useful information. (Readers should note that the address listed for the *ARSC Journal* is the old one. Apparently this book went to print before the change was made. The addresses of all the other periodicals mentioned are correct as of this writing.)

Paul Charosh apparently began work on this discography over 25 years ago. In order to amass the large amount of information which this book contains, he was able to obtain the help of several private collectors and institutions who allowed him access to their collections. All of us who will find this book useful owe people like Mr. Charosh a great deal of gratitude. Anyone who spends that many years working on a project like this, gathering the information and verifying the details for accuracy, is certainly worth their weight in gold. Obviously, new information will come to fill in several of the gaps and I feel sure that the author will welcome any new information from readers. But in its current state, this is a first rate research tool worthy of a place in libraries and private collections. *Reviewed by Peter Shambarger.*

### ***Columbia Twelve-Inch Records in the United Kingdom, 1906-1930. A Discography.***

*By Ronald Taylor. Symposium Books (110 Derwent Avenue, East Barnet, Hertfordshire, EN4 8LZ, England), 1994. 264 pp. £38.00.*

This is a splendid achievement. It breaks new discographic ground and does so superbly. It is well-organized, extremely thorough, and filled with additional bits of information that make the book superior to a mere listing of numbers and titles. It shows the author to be a knowledgeable and enthusiastic collector who knows when to add details that other collectors may want to know as well as being a good discographer. The result is certain to be useful to anyone with even a passing interest in U.K. Columbia artists and records of this period. Those whose interest is greater will find it invaluable.

The book is exactly what its title states: a complete listing of twelve-inch records