

COOPER, David Edwin: *International Bibliography of Discographies*.  
Littleton, Colo., Libraries Unlimited, 1975. 272p. (Keys to  
Music Bibliography, no. 2)

It is customary to review a book for how well it fulfills its stated goals, rather than for what the reviewer thinks its goals should be. Unfortunately, this volume requires a more flexible method of reviewing. I am not convinced the author has much experience in applying the information discographies contain. He, therefore, established criteria which, even if met, cannot furnish the tool required. By listing his goals and referring to the factors mentioned in the previous article (p. 47). hope to show not only where Mr. Cooper falls short of his own standards, but, more important, where his standards differ from those actually needed. This second group of criticisms also apply in varying degrees to most other such compilations which have appeared in the past.

A careful reading of the introduction outlines the book's content and also qualifies it in such a way as to excuse its listing otherwise unrelated items and omitting many which should be there. Such an escape chute may be acceptable in a school paper, but it is certainly not legitimate for a hard-bound reference work offered to the scholarly community.

Here are Mr. Cooper's rules, sometimes paraphrased, and between quotes, with my comments:

Subject range: "Western classical music and jazz and blues" (Escape clause: "A few essentially folk and popular music discographies were included on the grounds they touch upon areas of jazz or blues or musical comedy.") Is musical comedy a subject, too, then? If so, it should have been persued more thoroughly, if not, those entries have no business here.

Range of materials: "Extends from 'Recommended Recordings' lists of only a few items to massive record encyclopedias, and from lists that omit even company issue numbers to marvels of discographical thoroughness and precision." (Escape clause: "A few discographical essays appear and also some record reviews in a few subject that might otherwise be difficult to approach.") "Manufacturer's catalogs have been excluded, excepting retrospective label discographies." Those 'discographical essays,' etc., belong to that 'discographic source' book I mentioned in the earlier. They are not discographies, per se, and, as such, are simply so much padding. This book is for those seeking discographies, not a history of recording.

Criteria for inclusion: "None, regarding length, detail, and thoroughness, were used. The General Guides and Historical Surveys and Buyers' Guides sections were designed with the layman in mind." To the first point, it seems Mr. Cooper will accept anything that calls itself a discography, with which I disagree - some standards have to be applied. As to the General Guides, etc., apart from my discussion previously, records go out of print quickly nowadays: I'd guess the average classical LP dosen't last three years in *Schwann* under the same issue number, and jazz items perhaps a year less. Mr. Cooper's cut-off date is 1972, and that of publication is 1975. So why bother? There is no reason for the layman to seek out these now-obscure items (often available

by this point at premium prices only) when any competent current recording of the same item will equally suit his needs.

Years covered: "Publications of the years 1962 through 1972 are most fully covered." (Escape clause: "Discographies of the past eighteen months are included insofar as they came to the author's attention. Pre-1962 publications have been added so far as could be justified by 1) their not appearing in previous bibliographies of discographies; 2) their serving as the basis for the later discographical works; or 3) their continuing importance and general merit.") If Mr. Cooper had done his homework properly and really included all the items called for by these rules, the book would be ten times its size, and far more useful. Instead, these merely furnish an excuse for more padding and create considerable confusion besides.

Sources: "Secondary sources were used to a great extent in locating materials." This is the clue to one of the book's two most severe faults. It would seem if a discography or, for that matter, a periodical which regularly featured discographies, was not indexed in these secondary sources, it probably wasn't included. The Library of Congress music periodical shelves should have been read, many items listed in Books recently published, which appears in every issue of *Notes*, should have been consulted, as should have those individuals most familiar with discography - the active membership of ARSC, for example. The book is simply under-researched.

The other great failing, common to just about all other such attempts in the past, is that if the trash and treasure are to be listed indiscriminately, a strong effort should have been made to specify to what degree each entry falls into which category. Consumer protection laws require the listing of ingredients, as does ARSC in its annual cumulation. Each discographic entry should have been keyed to indicate what information is contained.

Each discography is listed in standard bibliographic format and numbered according to the general section in which it is listed. There are three such general sections: Classical Music; 2) Jazz and Blues (with entries divided into jazz and blues, excepting performer listings which mix both); and 3) Summary of National Discographies, Catalogs, and Major Review Sources. The most of the book is in the first two, each of which is further broken down into A) General Guides and Historical Surveys, Buyer Guides, and Subjects and Genres; B) Historical Recordings-General Sources, and Label Discography; and C) Composer and Performer Discography (not separated). The blues and jazz sections further introduce into B) Recordings Treated Chronologically. There is also an extensive index. The index is your only hope of making even minimal use of this book, due to the poor categorization of entries.

CLASSICAL MUSIC. General Guides. This section is fine, as far as it goes; according to Cooper's rules, though, it is rather incomplete. Following the criteria in my previous article, however, the 30 entries should reduce to zero, all being recommended listening lists.

CLASSICAL MUSIC. Historical Surveys. These are divided into the accepted periods of music history. To my way of thinking, the eleven entries in the "Ancient and Medieval Music" section reduce to two, both volumes of Coover and Colvig's *Medieval and Renaissance Music on Long-Playing Records*, each of which is assigned a separate discog-

raphy number. Two more are reviews which might contain discographic information. "Renaissance and Baroque Music" lists only reviews and textbook examples, while "Classical and Romantic Music" includes among its ten entries three composer's vocal music listings by Peter Morse or Jerome Weber, the balance being the usual. Morse's earlier and revised *Schubert/Schumann/Brahms Choral Music* share the same discography number. The process of revision and updating is roughly the same as with Coover and Colvig above, so why the inconsistency?

CLASSICAL MUSIC. Buyers' Guides. Occasionally a real discography pops up in these listings, though most are collections of reviews. Even accepting the author's ground rules, however, the various editions of survey books by Irving Kolodin, David Hall, and Percy Scholes should have made appearances. They were used as the basis for all later books comparing recorded performances, and have much intrinsic interest as discographic sources.

CLASSICAL MUSIC. Subjects and Genres. What a mess this section is! Items which belong together are separated, some listed in one grouping belong in another, and subject headings are poorly chosen. Discographies by (1) instrument, (2) country, and (3) subject all appear in the same alphabet. These should be broken out into separate sections for each. Mr. Cooper's handling of international identifications is a problem throughout. For example, if "American Music" were under "Music, U.S." and "Berlin" were under "Music, Germany, Berlin" or "Music, West Germany, Berlin" all such entries would index themselves in logical sequence. "Film, Radio, and Television" music should not be separated by five pages from "Musical Comedy." When the entries grow to 100,000, they will be in separate volumes. It would have been better to devise a generic heading for such music and put both groupings into it.

CLASSICAL HISTORICAL RECORDINGS AND LABEL DISCOGRAPHY: General Sources: The three last *Gramophone Shop Encyclopedias* are listed (those of 1936, 1942, and 1948) but the two works used as a basis for them, those of 1930 and 1931, are not. Incidentally, has anyone ever noted in print that the 1948 book is indexed by performer, making it the only such covering electrical classical 78s (limited though it may be to records available from all over the world in 1948)?

An important general source not listed in any bibliography of which I am aware is *The American Record Index - 50 Years of Recorded Music* by Bernard Lebow and Stephen Fassett. Elaine Music Shops published Volume 1, A-B, 159 p., in 1950 and, so far as I know, that was it. The whole alphabet has had limited circulation on microfilm.

CLASSICAL HISTORICAL RECORDINGS AND LABEL DISCOGRAPHY. Label discography: Here is where the subject arrangement really falters: "Columbia" and "English Columbia" should be "Columbia (U.S.)" and "Columbia (England)." Sometimes I think some lists are made up with an entry for, say, American Columbia, so it will file ahead of all other nations - a rather chauvinistic reason, if true. That's as poor a practice as David Jay's in his *Irving Berlin Songograph, 1907-1966*, of listing those who recorded a particular selection in alphabetical order unless Al Jolson made it, in which case, being Jay's favorite artist, he

preceeds all others.

Cooper does not know much about the history of the various record labels, nor does he seem to have had much experience handling and filing older materials. This reviewer's listing of the Victor classical 78 album numbers does not cover LM-1 to LM-1967. Those are LP prefixes; the entry should read "M-1 to M-1967." Furthermore, why is it the only listing under "RCA Victor Records" when Jacques Alain Leon's numerical catalog of Victor vocal records, which covers the same period, appears under "Victor Records."

Under "Monarch Records" is a reprint of a catalog of the "Gramophone Company (England)" announcing their new 12" 1903/4 series (one of the few such reprints cited, and not legitimately so by the author's own rules, since he was going to exclude manufacturer's catalogs). This belongs under "Gramophone Company (England)," as does the item under "G & T Records," an abbreviation for The Gramophone and Typewriter Company which was a corporate stage in the Gramophone Company's development. "Monarch" without a manufacturer's name to further identify it is double misleading, as Victor (U.S.) had an identically named series which ran from 1902 to 1904, with totally different context, and which were ten inch records, the Victor (U.S.) 12" equivalent of the Gramophone Company's Monarchs being "De Luxe."

"National Gramophone Company Records" is listed as subject, but the citation is for the National Gram-o-phon Company, a totally different organization, with a special place in history of early flat discs. Omitted is Pekka Grunow's *American Columbia Scandinavian "E" and "P" Series*, published in 1973 by the Finnish Institute of Recorded Sound.

Each label should have the country of manufacture following the heading, as the same name is often used by loosely or non-associated companies in different parts of the world. Those Cooper mentions are Columbia, Dacapo, Edison, Eterna, Monarch, Sonora, and Zonophone. He puts the English and American Edison entries under the same subject, including Edison Bell (England), not to mention Everlasting Indestructible Cylinders which had no relationship with Edison but was an independent competitor eventually bought by Columbia (U.S.) after they discontinued their own cylinder manufacturing operation.

CLASSICAL COMPOSER AND PERFORMER DISCOGRAPHY: These are two types of discography and should be separate. Cooper gives real names for some (Harold Arlen) but not for others (Irving Berlin, for crying out loud!) His practice is inconsistent throughout.

Cooper offers the following on two Stravinsky entries:  
in CLASSICAL MUSIC - GENERAL GUIDES, BUYERS' GUIDES, AND SUBJECTS:  
C 63 Boretz, Benjamin, and Edward T. Cone, eds. *Perspectives on Schöberg and Stravinsky*. Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1968. 284 pp. Discographies, pp. 251-284.

in CLASSICAL MUSIC - COMPOSER AND PERFORMER DISCOGRAPHY:  
C 1044 Hamilton, David. Igor Stravinsky: a discography of the composer's performances. *Perspectives of New Music*, IX (#2, 1971), 163-79.

C 63 should be in the composer section, and accounted for under each subject. The discographies are credited in this volume to Hamilton, and are, in fact, the original of which C 1044 is the second published revision. The intermediate item, not listed by Cooper, was in the booklet accompanying the record set Columbia D5S-775, *Stravinsky: Nine Masterpieces Conducted by the Composer*, first listed in Schwann in July, 1970.

JAZZ AND BLUES. Blues General Guides, Buyers' Guides, and Subjects: The first entry is for an article from a Billboard supplement, "Chess and the Blues." It isn't the good old board game, it's Leonard Chess, of Chess Records, and belongs in the Label Discography section.

In the subsection "Subjects and Genres, Race Records," Armagnac and Kendziora's *Perfect Dance and Race Catalog (1922-1930)* is not perfect records to which to dance and race and similarly belongs with the record companies. Chris Strachwitz's *Texas Blues* is a collective title for discographies of three separate performers and is under "Subject and Genres" rather than in a performer section. The only safe thing, if you must use this book, is to consult the index first, since what you seek may turn up in a variety of places.

JAZZ & BLUES. Blues Recordings Treated Chronologically and by Label: In this Cooper lists Dixon and Goodrich, Leadbitter and Slaven, and *Those Oldies but Goodies* by Steve Propes. None are chronological. The first two are alphabetical by artist, the last organized by genre, then by artist. The second portion of this section, "Blues Label Discography," carries the same general complaints as for the classical section. There is also a section on "Jazz Label Discography." The three should have been combined - since the record company is the operative factor.

How do the Beatles get in under Jazz (J297-J298), and most incompletely, at that.

The entry for Paramount Orchestras (under artists) does not refer to the aggregation at the Paramount theatres, but rather to the bands recording for the Paramount label. Guess where it belongs. And Monk spell his first name Thelonious.

I won't analyze these sections further. The same problems which plague the classical section occur throughout.

The last section is a SUMMARY OF NATIONAL DISCOGRAPHIES, CATALOGS, AND MAJOR REVIEW SOURCES. This is the most useful part of the book. It is divided by country, then by the three categories in the section title. Incomplete though it is (there are many, many more fanzine publications than are mentioned), it is still a good source for ordering some interesting serials.

My guess is that the book is only between 15 and 20 per cent complete within its perimeters. So its usefulness is further reduced, substantially, by its incompleteness.

Each section might have been offered to a journal such as the one in which this review appears, which reaches those with the requisite

expertise and information. Enough "I take my pen in hand" letters would have been forthcoming to at least get the format right, and the pieces within shifted around properly. The additions should be made before going to hardback, with its implication of permanent authority. Certainly the ground rules should have been offered to the community of discography users.

Which brings us to the omissions. I have no intention of re-writing and correcting this book - it is too far beyond the pale for a short list to be helpful, and a long one is the business of someone else's book, more properly and comprehensively done. The only other purpose a list would serve would be to prove I had done my homework in proving Mr. Cooper had not done nearly enough of his. Well, I can tell you that not one entry appears from *Musica e dischi*, which probably deserves at least a hundred all by itself, not nearly enough from *Audio and Record Review*, which adds at least 25 more, nor another half-dozen from *fono forum* from 1972 alone, nor at least 20 artist discographies from *Gramophone Record Review* by Clough and Cuming, nor any from *Phonographische Zeitschrift*, among many others. The *Richard Strauss Thematisches Verzeichnis* has a discography of each piece after its listing, as does the Florent Schmitt works list by Yves Hucher.

One last mess to untangle. In the "National Discography" section, the catalog of Finnish records is all balled up. It is not in five volumes, but is a serial publication of which nine have now appeared. Cooper also has them numbered incorrectly: they are, properly, Volume 1, 1946-1966; Volume 2, 1967; Volume 3, 1968; Volume 4, 1902-1945; Volume 5 is listed correctly as 1969. Lacking are Volumes 6, 1970; Volume 7, 1971; Volume 8, 1972; and Volume 9, index 1902-1971, A-L.

The rather pretentious preface equates Cooper, as a bibliographer of discographies, with the early work of Besterman in the bibliographic field. I don't know at what speed Besterman is revolving in his grave, but revolving he is. As it presently stands, this effort should not have been permitted beyond the typewritten stage. I hope all concerned have the grace to blush.

Steve Smolian.