CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

By Tim Brooks

“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. Articles on musicology, sociology, or contemporary subjects are not included, nor are 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 April 1991 and February 1992. If you contact one of these publishers or authors, please mention ARSC and “Current Bibliography.”

Notes

My apologies for the absence of “Current Bibliography” in the last ARSC Journal, and thanks to those who enquired about its health (one wonders, sometimes, if anyone is reading!). I was swamped at the time with work on the fifth edition of my book The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows: 1946-Present, which will be out in mid-1992. Our esteemed Editor has asked me to maintain continuity, so you will get a bumper edition here covering nearly a year’s worth of articles.

In response to a number of requests, page numbers have been added to the citations this time. I’ve avoided this for years for fear the added complexity and compilation time would bring down the entire project; however we’ll try it. (Many articles skip all over the place, and multi-issue series are even worse.) The rules are these: skips are noted except for single-page interruptions in a run, which are not; and “+” (meaning “more”) will occasionally be used if the pattern gets so complicated that you’ll have to get the issue and figure it out yourself. Comments are welcome.

Happily, there is only one new literary fatality in the last year to report, Micrography, which had been published in the Netherlands since 1968. The last issue (no. 78) actually came out in 1989, but word travels slowly. Its sister publications Names & Numbers and Discographical and Micrographical Basics also have been discontinued. Crusty editor Erik M. Bakker has decided to pack it in.

In no danger of going under is the leading rock publication Goldmine, which celebrated its 300th issue in January, 1992. Under Editor Jeff Tamarkin it appears like clockwork every two weeks, and circulation is reported nearing 30,000—certainly a record for the field. Recent special features have included a pull-out directory of independent record labels currently active in the U.S. (Sept. 20, 1991 issue) and another of artist fan clubs (February 7, 1992 issue).
Other publications which recently have published useful round-ups are the September 1991 issue of Bluegrass Unlimited, with a bibliography of scholarly studies of bluegrass music, by Neil Rosenberg; Cadence, the long-running jazz review and interview monthly, which has a fifteen year (1976-1990) index of its articles out as a separate publication ($21 from Cadence, Redwood, NY 13679); and the November 1991 Newsletter of the Institute for Studies in American Music with a nice round-up of currently active publications containing serious research on early country music (most of them indexed in “Current Bibliography”), by Charles Wolfe. For those not familiar with I.S.A.M., it deals primarily with musicological subjects and is headquartered at the Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, NY 11210. The I.S.A.M. Newsletter is available free to those interested; monographs also are published on a wide range of subjects.

Three articles listed here deserve special notice. 78 Quarterly (No. 6) is up to part 4 in its stunningly detailed “inside story” of the 1920s Paramount label; the May 1991 Joslin’s Jazz Journal has a long and unusually informative piece on specialized playback equipment for the modern (disc) collector, with addresses, prices, etc.; and the ever-surprising DISCoveries in July 1991 offered readers its first-ever issue devoted entirely to facsimile reprints of radio station top 40 charts, more than 300 of them dating from 1955 to 1991. This writer contributed charts from the little-known but highly influential (!) college radio station of his youth. The DISCoveries feature was a fascinating tour of regional popular music tastes over the last 35 years.

Incidentally, any library worth its salt that caters to patrons interested in popular music of the last 40 years should as a minimum subscribe to Goldmine, DISCoveries or preferably both. A number of others could supplement these (e.g., Record Collector’s Monthly, Rockin’ 50s).

Ernst A. Lumpe, author of the recent ARSC Journal article on pseudonymous performers on early LPs, has privately published a 28-page discography of pianist Sergio Fiorentino. As it is in booklet form, it is not listed in “Current Bibliography,” but copies are available from the author at Nicolaiweg 2, D-4770, SOEST Germany.

Those interested in phonographic odds and ends, including needles, belt buckles, parts, emblazoned jackets and several pages of merchandise featuring Nipper (and his new pal “Chipper”), may wish to obtain the 24-page catalog of Yesterday Once Again, P.O. Box 6773, Huntington Beach, CA 92615.

Startling Discovery of the Month

It has long been believed that Queen Victoria (1819-1901) was the first British monarch to record, but that the fragile cylinder inscribed by her in 1896 for the Emperor of Ethiopia was destroyed on her orders immediately after it had been played. Well, according to a short article in the January 1992 Historic Record (page 6) one Paul Tritton has found in London’s Science Museum a Graphophone cylinder made in 1888, supposedly containing the Queen’s voice. It is extremely fragmentary, consisting of no more than this: “Greetings Britons everywhere! The answer can be... the phonograph is a wonderful thing. I have never forgotten...” (ends abruptly).

How this was identified as H.R.H. Victoria herself is not explained in the article, but may be in Tritton’s book The Lost Voice of Queen Victoria: The Search for the First Royal Recording. According to HR, the fragment was played widely on British media prior to Christmas, 1991. Perhaps an English ARSC member can enlighten us further on this curiosity.
Lies That Will Not Die - #4

Yet another writer has dug up poor old George W. Johnson’s bones and tossed them around. As you may recall from earlier installments, the story that the first black recording artist threw his wife out the window, and was tried, convicted and hung for the murder has long since been proven false. Among other things, the Johnsons lived in a basement apartment! Nonetheless, in a short article in the Autumn 1991 Memory Lane about alleged “million sellers” (more lies that will not die!) author Frank Wappat gleefully recounts the old canard as if it were fact. Are you listening, Mr. Wappat?

This writer, incidentally, has been working on a extensive biography of Johnson, who lived quite an interesting life. I would be delighted to hear from anyone who knows of contemporary references to the elusive artist.

And You Thought You Had Problems Storing So Many Records

The November 29, 1991 issue of Goldmine contains a long, complimentary profile of Joel Whitburn, compiler of the widely used (and excellent) indexes of Billboard record charts. This is no sideline for Whitburn: he has built a full-time business employing several people doing all this indexing. The article reports that he lives “above his fireproof, temperature and humidity controlled, double-strength concrete vault that contains every record Billboard ever charted...”

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Antiques & Collecting Hobbies, 1006 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL 60605
Australasian Record and Music Review, 15 Lowanna Ave., Baulkham Hills, NSW 2153, Australia
Bluegrass Unlimited, Box 111, Broad Run, VA 22014
DISCoveries, Box 255, Port Townsend, WA 98368
Echoes Of the Past, Box 40, Agawam, MA 01001
Goldmine, 700 East State St., Iola, WI 54990
Gramophone, The, 177-179 Kenton Road, Harrow, Middx. HA3 0HA 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
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In The Groove, Michigan Antique Phonograph Society, 2609 Devonshire, Lansing, MI 48910
Joslin’s Jazz Journal, Box 213, Parsons, KS 67357
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
Popular Music & Society, Bowling Green University Popular Press, Bowling Green, OH 43403
Record Collector, 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
Record Research, 65 Grand Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11205
Rejoice!, Center for the Study of Southern Culture, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677
Resound, Archives of Traditional Music, Maxwell Hall 057, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405
Rockin' 50s, 3022 56th St., Lubbock, TX 79413
RPM, c/o IASPM, Prof. Will Straw, School for Studies in Art and Culture (Film Studies), Ottawa, Ont. K1S 5B6, Canada
78 Quarterly, P.O. Box 283, Key West, FL 33041
Sound Box, The, Calif. Antique Phono. Society, Box 67, Duarte, CA 91010
Soundtrack!, c/o Roger Feigelson, P.O. Box 13835, Stanford, CA 94309
Tailgate Ramblings, 3608 35th St. NW, Washington, DC 20016
Tracking, c/o IASPM, Peter Winkler, Dept. of Music, SUNY-Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY 11794
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