

Current Bibliography

“*Current Bibliography*” is an annotated index to research on recording history that has appeared recently in specialized journals. To be indexed here an article must be in English, be reasonably substantive, and deal with recording history – as opposed to musicology, sociology, or contemporary subjects such as collecting or record reviews. “W/D” or “discog.” means that the article was accompanied by something at least remotely resembling a discography.

Issues covered this time were received between September 2018 and February 2019. If you contact one of these publications or authors, please mention ARSC and “*Current Bibliography*.” Comments or suggested entries may be sent to the compiler at tim@tim-brooks.net.

News of Publications

The *American Music Review* celebrates the Leonard Bernstein centenary by devoting its entire Fall 2018 issue to articles about the conductor, including one by his daughter Jamie. Although the articles are primarily about his life as a composer, they are included here since he was also a very prominent recording artist.

In the Autumn 2018 *Antique Phonograph News* Oliver Berliner, grandson of Emile Berliner, delivers a lengthy rebuttal to claims made at the April 2017 Edison Site symposium honoring Edison and French inventor Eduard-Leon Scott de Martinville, regarding the contributions of those two inventors.

ARSC icon Chris Strachwitz is interviewed at length in the February-March 2019 *Blues and Rhythm*, with more to come in subsequent issues.

Names & Numbers for January 2019 includes interesting reflections on censorship of some of the bawdy 1920s blues records during the 1940s reissue era.

The IASA Journal is now open access at <http://journal.iasa-web.org>.

As reported previously, the International Association of Jazz Record Collectors (IAJRC) is being disbanded, however its *Journal* is bowing out in style. The penultimate issue, dated Fall 2017 – obviously a little late – includes the first of several tribute articles. Among the facts revealed: the association peaked in 1995 with more than 1,990 members.

The now-defunct British publication *Classical Recordings Quarterly* (aka *International Record Collector* and *Classic Record Collector*) published 80 issues between 1995 and 2015 for lovers of historical classical recordings. Now all 80 issues are available in digital form, on a USB memory stick no less, for £110. A comprehensive index is included. Individual issues are also available. See <https://crq.org.uk/icrc-crc-crq>.

This month's column contains my final listings for *Popular Music & Society*, a venerable publication which has been included here since Current Bibliography began in 1979. *PM&S* is still being published, but there are two reasons it is being dropped – the first time I have done this with any listed publication. First is cost. The publisher has declined to provide copies for indexing, and it is by far the most expensive publication included (\$182 per year, or more than \$36 per issue!). The second is relevance. Articles have become largely contemporary, theoretical, or musicological rather than dealing with recording history, which is the focus of Current Bibliography. We wish them well.

Who's That Snapping on My Record?

Recording history holds many enduring mysteries. One that you may not have thought about recently is who snaps their fingers on the Stanley Brothers' countrified 1960 version of the R&B classic "Finger Poppin' Time"? *Bluegrass Unlimited* thinks it has the answer. In the October 2018 issue Paul Kovac recalls a conversation he had with Ralph Stanley in which he asked, "Since you and your brother were both playing your instruments, who's snapping their fingers throughout the song?" Stanley replied, "That was a song by Hank Ballard, who also recorded for King Records, and he was in the studio that day. So he was the one who snapped his fingers on our version." However numerous other sources say that Stanley told a reporter that the finger-snapper was James Brown, who he said happened to be in the studio at the time. Then again, two recently published biographies of the Stanley Brothers (by David Johnson and Gary Reid) both quote guitarist George Shuffler as saying eight to ten "colored persons" from the King staff were brought into the studio to provide the snaps, including a shipping clerk named Roy. The recording ledgers don't say, but do indicate that the snaps were overdubbed later, not recorded during the session. I guess this mystery will endure a little longer.

Conversations About Old-Time Music

Craig Evans is a passionate man, passionate about old-time music and the people who create it. He has created three series of DVDs containing on-location "conversations" with artists, instrument makers and others who keep this prototypically American music alive. A filmmaker and storyteller, he does not simply interview his subjects but draws from them stories that illuminate what drives them, and what this music means to them – and to us. As he puts it so eloquently, "History books/the internet can report the facts of one's life. But meeting and filming the real person, face-to-face in the context of their lives, hearing and seeing their passion in describing their life's adventure can tell you more about their heart and soul (the 'fire') than any printed biography."

Among his many subjects have been Stephen Wade, Dom Femons, Alan Jabbour, Bill Malone, Neil Rosenberg, and Dr. Steven Lewis, director of the new National Museum of African American Music in Nashville, plus many musicians whose names you may (or may not) recognize but who are often very interesting people. I am honored to have been included on one of these DVDs, talking about my book and CD *Lost Sounds*, which is about the earliest black recording artists, as well as my forthcoming book on the media history of the minstrel show. For more information about this novel, worthwhile series see www.oldtimeconversations.com.

Let's Go Surfing

Another person with a cause is Liz Roman Gallese, the daughter of the man who she says actually wrote the famous song “Blue Moon.” Her website <http://bluemoonsong.org/> contains an engaging account of the origins of the oft-recorded song. Although the song is normally credited to Rodgers and Hart, she says it was actually composed by her then-17-year-old father after he went skating one night and noticed the moon’s blue reflection on the ice, and she has documents to prove it.

One of the most entertaining blogs on the Internet is <http://theoldrecordgal.blogspot.com/>, conducted by talented teenager Ramona Baker. The daughter of jazz musician Clint Baker, and an accomplished ragtime pianist herself, she is fascinated with the studio pianists of the brown wax cylinder era (1890s) such as Fred Hylands, Frank P. Banta, and Fred Hager. She has done some excellent research into them, and into early recording generally. She has an engaging writing style and her distinctive period-style cartoons of her subjects only add to the fun.

A rare 1932 off-air recording of the Duke Ellington Orchestra is described and posted at www.wbgo.org/post/hear-earliest-surviving-radio-broadcast-duke-ellington-historic-find-deep-dive#stream/0. It is believed to be the earliest surviving broadcast of the Ellington band, and one of the earliest for any African American orchestra.

The Library of Congress National Screening Room at www.loc.gov/collections/national-screening-room/ contains nearly 300 historical films, dating from 1891 (the experimental film “Indian club swinger”) to 1999, including commercials, newsreels, and other clips. Among them is a demonstration of the Edison Dictation phonograph in 1910. Most are in the public domain and available for downloading. New content will be added on a monthly basis. (*New York Times*, Oct. 23, 2018).

If you’d like to stroll past the phonograph salons of Paris during *la belle époque* (and later), visit www.messynessychic.com/2015/08/14/documenting-the-disappearing-record-stores-of-paris/. Vintage photographs are often juxtaposed against photos of the same location today. An interactive map of Paris store locations has been compiled by Thomas Henry at <http://disquairesdeparis.fr/> (it’s in French, but with Google Chrome you can instantly translate it into English.)

Music Memory is an ambitious project begun by the Dust-to-Digital label to digitize historic 78 rpm roots recordings and use them to “build a database complete with audio, discographical information, artist and composer biographies, song lyrics and notation.” The recordings are captured with portable equipment in the homes of cooperating collectors. So far 49,000 have been digitized, but the database is apparently not yet accessible to the public. Donations are solicited to support this work. A rather vague description of the project is at www.musicmemory.org/ (not to be confused with www.musicmemory.com, an educational site devoted to classical music, or www.musicandmemory.org, which brings music to the elderly and infirm).

Alan Kelly’s massive database of Gramophone Company recordings during the 78 rpm era is now online at www.kellydatabase.org. There are more than 400,000 entries dating from 1898 to the mid 1950s. (*For the Record*, Winter 2018).

For more than 40 years Paul C. Edie has been gathering serial numbers from surviving Victor Victrolas and entering them into a database which has now reached nearly 180,000 entries. He describes some findings from this giant database in the March 2019

Antique Phonograph. More information can be found on his website, www.victor-victrola.com/, where you can also send him information about your own Victrola.

The UK-based www.78rpmcommunity.com, a gathering place for collectors, has apparently abandoned its downloadable magazine *The Discographer Magazine* (last issue was in 2016), but transitioned to a new and elaborate website which offers all sorts of free resources. These include articles, discographies and original documents (supplements, etc.) dealing with the 78 rpm era, both popular and classical. Most but not all of them are British. There is also a Facebook-style forum where music and video (blessedly out of copyright in Europe) can be uploaded. The site claims 6,600 members worldwide. It's all free and worth checking out.

Short Takes

Is classical music being played increasingly fast on modern recordings? Researchers for the Deutsche Grammophon and Decca labels think so, citing a recent study of 280 hours of performances of Bach over the past 50 years. The study found that performances have been sped up by as much as 30% over that period. For example a 1961 performance of the Double Violin Concerto clocked in at 17 minutes 15 seconds, while a 1978 performance took 15 minutes and 42 seconds and a 2016 recording, 12 minutes and 24 seconds. Bach would be dizzy. (*Digital Music News*, November 1, 2018).

A new Rachmaninov recording has been discovered, made at a 1940 impromptu gathering at which the composer demonstrated how he wanted his *Symphonic Dances* performed. A three-CD restoration has been issued by Ward Marston who says, "I feel this is one of the most important achievements of my career." (*International Piano*, September/October 2018)

The RIAA has released a new ranking of the top-selling albums of all time in the US. In addition to direct sales they now count as an "album equivalent" ten downloaded songs from the same album, or 1,500 streams from that album. Two of the top five albums of all time are greatest hits compilations. Can you guess (1) which two greatest hits compilations are in the top five, (2) the rank of the top selling Beatles album, and (3) the rank of the top selling Elvis Presley album? Answers are at the end of this column.

Some record dealers really love their work. Lawrence Holdridge's 2018 annual classical catalog is 170 pages, and packed with biographical information and pictures. (The 2017 edition was 218 pages!) You not only shop, but learn a lot. Kurt Nauck's general catalog, which includes both popular and classical recordings, does not have pictures but recently came with a free CD of his internet radio show on which he plays selections from his auctions. Sing along and shop!

China's earliest-known sound recordings, field cylinders taken in 1901, are being digitized at the Indiana University Archives of Traditional Music under a \$90,000 grant. The Laufer Collection consists of approximately 400 items. Unfortunately, few if any of these transfers appear to be available online.

Copyright, another view. In an interesting letter to *Blues and Rhythm* magazine, Roger Armstrong of the UK's Ace label (which specializes in reissues of older US rock and blues material) rails against the public domain, which in Britain is anything recorded before 1962. Why? Because it allows his competitors to reissue the same material more cheaply, undercutting his reissues, which he considers to be of higher quality. If

everything was still under copyright he could pay high licensing fees, create reissues to his standards, and pass the costs along to the consumer, who would have no alternative. An interesting rationale. What do you think?

Long ago I wrote one of the first articles about American Vogue picture records of the 1940s, but I wasn't aware that No. 715 was "among the rarest of all of them." This is a routine commercial issue of a rather ordinary pop tune of the day, "I Can't Begin to Tell You" by Shep Fields and His Orchestra. Apparently somebody really wants dear old Shep, paying \$10,000 for a vg-minus copy on eBay recently. I checked my shelves and I have 714 and 718, but not 715. Drat!

Would you like to actually chew some bubble gum music? In the 1980s a product called Chu-Bops marketed bubble gum in the shape of tiny round LPs, accompanied by miniature reproductions of real album covers (Elvis, Pat Benatar, Billy Joel, the Knack, etc.). According to *Goldmine*, they're quite collectable on eBay, although we wouldn't advise chewing the 30-year-old gum. (*Goldmine*, February 2019).

My favorite opening line from an article this month: "They say that after a nuclear war, the only things that will remain are the cockroaches (and perhaps Keith Richards)." (*Goldmine*, November 2018).

For my past articles and reviews, as well as information on my recent book *College Radio Days* (Glenville Press), visit www.timbrooks.net. About to be published, after a very long research journey (and perhaps available by the time you read this), is my new book *The Blackface Minstrel Show in Mass Media: 20th Century Performances on Radio, Records, Film and Television*, including the first in-depth look at those hundreds of "minstrel first part" recordings that were popular from the 1890s to the 1920s. For more information visit <https://mcfarlandbooks.com/product/The-Blackface-Minstrel-Show-in-Mass-Media/>

Quote of the month: "Rock journalism is people who can't write, interviewing people who can't speak, for people who can't read!" – Frank Zappa

Thanks to Paul Johnson for input this time.

Answers to top albums question: (1) *Eagles Greatest Hits* at #1 and *Billy Joel's Greatest Hits* at #4; (2) *The Beatles* at #12; (3) *Elvis' Christmas Album* at #87.

Publications Listed

Note: phone numbers as dialed from USA. 44 is the international code for the UK. For more information on these and similar publications go to <http://www.timbrooks.net/publications-recording-history/>

American Music, University of Illinois Press, 1325 S. Oak St., Champaign, IL 61820-6903. (www.press.uillinois.edu/journals/am.html)

American Music Review (formerly *I.S.A.M. Newsletter*), H. Wiley Hitchcock Institute for Studies in American Music, Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College, 2900 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11210. (718-951-5655) Available as a free downloadable pdf file (only) from www.hisam.org.

The Antique Phonograph, The Antique Phonograph Society (formerly California Antique Phono. Society), Box 169, Victorville, CA 92393 (www.antiquephono.org)

Antique Phonograph News, Canadian Antique Phonograph Society, c/o Bill Pratt, 122 Major St., Toronto, Ont. M5S 2L2 Canada. (416-924-8207. www.capsnews.org)

Blue Suede News, Box 25, Duvall, WA 98019-0025 (425-788-2776. www.bluesuedenews.com)

Bluegrass Unlimited, Box 771, Warrenton, VA 20188-0771 (540-349-8181. www.bluegrassmusic.com)

Blues & Rhythm: The Gospel Truth, c/o Mike Stephenson, 80 Lewisham Road, Dover, Kent, CT17 0QQ, UK www.bluesandrhythm.co.uk)

Echoes Of the Past, Box 40, Agawam, MA 01001 (email: echoes.past@yahoo.com)

For the Record, c/o Elaine Hedger, 38 Prout Grove, London NW10 1PT, UK (www.clpgs.org.uk).

Goldmine, 700 East State St., Iola, WI 54990 (800-258-0929. www.goldminemag.com)

IAJRC Journal, International Assoc. of Jazz Record Collectors, Aaron Gangross, 209 Claywell Drive, San Antonio, TX 78209 (www.iajrc.org).

IASA Journal (formerly *Phonographic Bulletin*), International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives. For current membership information see the website, www.iasa-web.org.

International Piano, Intermedia, Unit 6, The Enterprise Centre, Manor Royal, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 9PE, UK (www.international-piano.com)

The Jazz Archivist, Hogan Jazz Archive, 6801 Freret St., Room 304, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118 (504-865-5682, <https://jazz.tulane.edu/jazz-archivist>). Available as downloadable pdf.

Journal of the Society for American Music, Society for American Music, Stephen Foster Memorial, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 (www.american-music.org)

Names & Numbers, Gerard J. Hoogeveen, Reine Claudestraat 15, 1326 JC Almere, Netherlands (31-36-545-0114. www.names-and-numbers.nl)

Old-Time Herald, PO Box 61679, Durham, NC 27715. (919-286-2041. www.oldtimeherald.org)

Popular Music & Society, Taylor & Francis, Inc., 530 Walnut St., Suite 850, Philadelphia, PA 19106. (www.tandfonline.com/rpms).

The Record Collector, c/o Larry Lustig, 111 Longshots Close, Broomfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 7DU, UK (44-124-544-1661. www.therecordcollector.org)

Rock Music Studies, Taylor & Francis, Inc., 530 Walnut St., Suite 850, Philadelphia, PA 19106. (www.tandfonline.com/rrms)

Vintage Jazz Mart (formerly *VJM's Jazz and Blues Mart*), Russ Shor, P.O. Box 4181, Carlsbad, CA 92018-4181; or Mark Berresford, The Chequers, Chequer Lane, Shottle, Derbyshire, DE56 2DR UK (www.vjm.biz).

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- Bettini, Gianni, "Lieutenant Bettini and His Advertising Icon, Emma Calvé," by Robert Feinstein, Bettini's close friendship with Calvé. *Antique Phonograph* Mar 2019, p.22-27
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- Victor Talking Machine Co., "Dark Days in Camden: The Winter of '24," by Robert Baumbach, how the company dealt with the collapse of the phonograph market due to competition from radio, *Antique Phonograph* Dec 2018, p.26-31
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