

# Magnificent Obsession: The Discographers

By Jerry Atkins

First published in edited form in *Jazz Journal International*, November and December 1982, later in expanded form in *IAJRC Journal*, Winter 1989-90. It is reprinted here with the author's permission.

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Anyone who seriously collected and listened to jazz records when there were only 78s with a minimum amount of information on their labels had to wonder who those wonderful supporting musicians might be. In today's age of LPs which usually include complete personnel, recording dates and location, plus comments on the session and material, it's hard for the young collector to know how frustrating it once was just to confirm who played the solos. Quite often the musicians who really had you 'hooked' on jazz never had a recording date under their own name. Once you discovered their names then the search began to find more of their recorded work. Suddenly one day you discover that you are not alone in this constant desire to know about positive identification of musicians, dates, alternate takes, and all the other information not included on that small and difficult to read label - especially while it's spinning at a dizzy 78 revolutions per minute. Definitely there are other jazz lovers in the world who have sleepless nights wondering if that solo they can now whistle was in reality played by a known giant of jazz.

I think it is necessary that I now borrow a little of the history of discography which has finally become a word found in most dictionaries. Generally the inadequate definition is something like "a catalogue of phonograph recordings; especially, a comprehensive list of recordings made by a specific performer." The word seems to have first been coined by the Frenchman, Charles Delaunay; however, the pioneer work is attributed to Hilton Schleman who was a record company publicity man. Its title was *Rhythm on Record* and it was published by the British weekly, *Melody Maker*, in 1936. That same year, Charles Delaunay's *Hot Discographie* appeared in Paris and Hugues Pannassié's *Hot Jazz* made its debut in the United States. There were great differences in format and content of these publications. Since descriptions of those works have been well documented before, I will not attempt that here.

Charles Delaunay is probably the father of discographical format as we know it today. He seemed to be the first to realize the importance of master numbers and worked toward the goal of listing each artist's work in chronological or matrix number order. Strangely it was this very logical idea that distressed me (and I'm sure many others) when I consulted my first discography. This was long after the introduction of LP albums and my discovery that there was actually a place to find the content of out-of-print records. My disappointment was that I expected to find the album titles which, of course, is simply not possible to coordinate with individual tracks except in ideal circumstances. There's no point in elaborating on that here since it becomes apparent when you understand what discography is all about.

It was not until 1943 that the first United States edition of Delaunay's book, was published with the help of Commodore Record Shop. I well remember that famous little jazz shop as being the first place from which I ever ordered a record by mail. The *Jazz Record Book* edited by Charles Edward Smith in 1942 was more or less a collector's guide, but Orin Blackstone's four-part *Index to Jazz* which was published in 1945-1948 was considered more inclusive than Delaunay's work. That seemed to be remedied, however, when in 1948 the *New Hot Discography* of the Frenchman appeared in greatly expanded form and was edited by Walter E. Schaap and George Avakian. The somewhat forgotten Schleman seemed to be the first to start short paragraphs about origin, personnel, and engagements and probably was first with biographical sketches. Delaunay listed more or less the development of jazz. He was so influential during the 1936-1946 period that possibly the inclusion or exclusion of a recording in his work contributed to its value or lack of

value.

There still was a need for a publication that had all artists arranged alphabetically with their recorded works listed in some chronological order. Three Englishmen - Dave Carey, Albert McCarthy, and Ralph Venables tackled this voluminous job and issued the first volume of *Jazz Directory* in July, 1949. The only logical way to do this is to approach the alphabet a few letters at a time. It was eight years later when Volume 6 appeared and they had covered only the letters from A to Lo. So much new material had been recorded that it was considered necessary to start revising Vol. I (A-B) again. The publisher was unwilling to continue so this innovative work by the well respected English jazz lovers was left unfinished.

Fortunately others were hard at work and the bio-discography of King Oliver by Brian Rust and Walter Allen set a new standard when it appeared in 1955. Jorgen Jepsen in Denmark was busy publishing discographies of individual major artists: Armstrong, Morton, Holiday, Parker, etc. An excellent hook on Benny Goodman by Connor appeared, and another on Teagarden by Waters. Delaunay was again busy in collaboration with Kurt Mohr and the, completed the *Hot Discographie Encyclopedique* but its survival was short. Another notable effort was Albert J. McCarthy's *Jazz Discography 1958*. It was an attempt to list all items issued or reissued in the calendar year of 1958 only. 165 of its 271 pages were devoted to new American releases and 22 pages were taken up with LP reissues in the USA. Considering that was more than 20 years ago, it further emphasizes the magnitude of such a task today.

It was another Englishman, Brian Rust, who seemed to logically decide that the only way to have a single jazz discography was to commit it to a specific time frame. Since he had very little interest in post-1940 jazz he chose to first publish *Jazz Records A to Z: 1897-1931*. This first great volume came to print in 1961 and included blues and gospel records as well. While it's hard to believe that jazz or records existed before 1900, Rust says he has a disc dated 1895. When the second edition extended coverage to 1942 and left out blues and gospel, John Godrich and Bob Dixon picked up the omission and their *Blues and Gospel Records* covered the same period. The fourth revised and enlarged edition of Rust's work has now appeared in two volumes. It contains some 50,000 recordings, more than 30,000 song titles referenced to the artist, and lists some 10,000 performers. It covers all known 78s and all known LP issues of performances never issued on 78. There are approximately 2,150 pages. No doubt that the cutoff year of 1942 has allowed him to produce a work of remarkable accuracy.

This still left the post 1942 area uncovered except for the unfinished efforts of Carey, McCarthy and Venables. It was Jorgen Grunnet Jepsen of Copenhagen who undertook that monumental task. He continued in time where Rust left off and started the alphabet at M where *Jazz Directory* had stopped. The first four volumes were completed in 1963-1965 and were titled *Jazz Records 1942-1962*. The projection was to complete it in eight volumes, but those who are fortunate enough to have a complete set know that it required 11 volumes. Since the starting volume M-N was called Volume 5 and Te-Z Volume 8, it required a Volume 4a, 4b, 4c and 4d to make everything coincide. Fortunately as he progressed he continued to cover later years and the last volume covers the period from 1942-1969.

I quote from the foreword of that final volume by Mr. Jepsen, "It has been ten busy but rather fascinating years. With this volume the whole alphabet has been covered, but this of course is only the beginning. I am withdrawing from discographical research, but I know there are many who will keep up the good work." In that same volume there appear four pages describing the formation of an International Discographers Association. Some rather explicit plans were outlined to continue revisions of all the important works that were available at that time. An Advisory Board was formed and anyone who has read those detailed plans has to wonder what caused them to go astray. I am fortunate to have Malcolm Walker of London to answer my questions and to provide me with some interesting information about his own work.

Malcolm was a member of that advisory body and I'm sure was appointed because of his continuing

dedication to discography. His publication *Discographical Forum* has now reached its 45th issue and has been in existence since 1960. Originally it was the brainchild of Albert McCarthy who at that time was editor of the excellent English magazine *Jazz Monthly* (now absorbed into *Jazz Journal International*). After the first four issues the publication lay dormant until Malcolm started it again in 1967. The format is a serializing of discographies of individual musicians and there is never a shortage of people who want to contribute. Malcolm hopes for four issues per year but states that the policy now is to approach each issue one at a time. He's like the rest of us who cannot devote our full time to jazz. His profession is a graphic designer/typographer and some nights he just wants to go home, relax, and listen to some of his favorites - Wardell, Serge, Fats, Tadd, and others who interest him as much. By not having to worry about schedules, he can and will continue his important contribution.

Some major contributors to *Discographical Forum* have been Brian Davis, Pete Moon, Don Tarrant, and Michel Ruppli. Now there are many new ones like Roger Hunter. Malcolm feels it should be like a workshop and should be used to help people with other discographies. As he states, "it is definitely not a glossy magazine." Malcolm's own contributions were Stan Getz (1956) and in the sixties, Bill Evans, Eric Dolphy, Archie Shepp, and Steve Lacy. He did the first Ornette Coleman and later John Coltrane (with Erik Raben) all published in *Jazz Monthly*. He's now at work on Kenny Dorham, Jimmy Raney, and others. He gives much credit and thanks to Brian Davis and Alan Morgan.

The International Discographers Association never functioned as it had been intended. Many of its members who attended the one meeting held in London simply lost interest, but fortunately others continue their projects and will be discussed later. Malcolm is now in his mid-forties and I'm sure that all of the revisions of major discographies owe a great debt to him and his contributors.

During the seventies there was a steady flow of new discographies to appear, mostly devoted to specific artists. There are also extremely accurate ones for specific jazz labels and now one even for V-discs issued during World War II. I'll cover some of these in more detail elsewhere. Certainly the most surprising and comprehensive discography to appear is *Sixty Years of Recorded Jazz* by a Belgian, Walter Bruyninckx. Section 1 appeared in mid-1978 and one jazz publication stated, "more inquiries about the quality of this work have been received than any other jazz product that's had advance billing." This was not Bruyninckx's first discography and there was some doubt as to how valuable the second would be since the first had not had much impact on the discographical fraternity.

Originally *Sixty Years of Recorded Jazz* was to be six volumes and an index with each volume limited to 1,500 typed pages. It includes jazz, blues, gospel, ragtime, and the entire scope from early 1900's to the present. I was very fortunate to meet Walter in August of 1981, and I'm anxious to share my impressions and conversations with this remarkable man. Walter's home in Mechelen, Belgium is about a twenty-minute drive from Brussels' central train station, but I think Walter can make the trip in fifteen minutes if he can talk about jazz along the way. Actually it was an automobile accident in Kohalpur, India during the fall of 1965 that got Walter seriously into discography. Plastic surgery and a long recuperation period got him working on *Fifty Years of Recorded Jazz* in 1966. His first exposure to jazz was similar to my own. An uncle gave him some 78s back in the forties but those were the desperate war years in Europe. Walter had no turntable and eventually had to miss a trip to Spain to buy one. He helped found a jazz club in Mechelen in 1948, and his collection had grown to about 250 records supplemented by a copy of Delaunay's *Hot Discographie*. Soon he came in contact with Albert McCarthy and he began to catalogue his own collection. He worked for both UNICEF and a newspaper when he had his automobile accident. During that long period he wrote to Sinclair Traill at *Jazz Journal*, ran an ad to see if anyone was interested in his work, and he received about 300 replies. His first printing was 500 copies and his comment to me was "it is better to list a little bit more than miss something really important. If it were for me only, I could have eliminated maybe 30%. I meet people who say King Oliver is jazz and others say it is Anthony Braxton."

Walter continued, "There is always good and bad. Every Picasso can't be a great one with his true soul in it, but they are all there. Do you realize what it means to type 1,500 pages and do all the necessary checking and re-checking? I do it all. I have associates all over the world but I do the typing. Sometimes my son helps but he's more interested in basketball. I think I can agree that about 10% is missing. I thought I covered New Orleans well but I have a friend who owns five or six thousand records of just traditional music. Only sixteen miles from here is a group that has made four records and I have just learned."

At this point in our long conversation Walter began to tell me of his interest in philosophy. He stated, "symbolism in philosophy is not always solid and some music is the same way. There is a big difference between something just nice and something that is aesthetic. If you've heard Hawkins's 'Body and Soul,' it will stick with you forever. You cannot forget this great masterpiece."

Volume 7 will go to L. It must be kept to 1,500 pages. There will be a Volume 8 and there will be an index. More than 26 people are working on this index and it may run into 400 pages. In the future I think such works will have to be done in specialized sections or the discography may reach 20,000 pages. I get enthusiastic letters offering help but they rarely do. I know that for the circumstances I have to work in I have succeeded in making a fairly good discography. Of course there are faults and omissions in it, but there are naturally hundreds of LP's you never were aware of. This is taken for granted but believe me I try not to make errors.

Volume 8 will probably be not as large as the others but it will include the musicians index. You ask how others can help. If they have the discography then please check it against your collection. Tell me what I missed and please advise me of incomplete listings, missing personnel, dates, etc. Any specific musicians on whom you have compiled discographical information will be appreciated. Most of all help me to get the record companies involved. I rarely get an answer from them.

At this point our conversation more or less ended concerning Walter's discographical work. Soon he plans to write his own article on the future of discography. My wife and I relaxed and enjoyed the wonderful hospitality extended to us by Walter, his wife, and two daughters. Mechelen is a quaint and beautiful city and not really an unlikely place to find a person who loves jazz, his dedication to documenting it, and his vow to continue even after the present work is completed.

Charles Delaunay is a name often read and associated with jazz, but I, suspect that most jazz lovers were like me and had little real knowledge of his link with jazz history and discography. I knew he was closely associated with Django Reinhardt and that he has been editor of *Jazz Hot*, the excellent French publication, for a long time. There had to be some connection with the early French jazz labels and I read that he actually named the record label Swing, which was the first devoted entirely to jazz. I assumed there were also close connections with the Vogue label. Now I find that he and Hugues Panassié actually started *Jazz Hot* and together they produced the French recordings involving Django, Barney Bigard, Eddie South, Dicky Wells, Rex Stewart, Bill Coleman, and some others.

Delaunay's parents were geometric painters and his mother was also a very successful designer. Both were well acquainted with Gertrude Stein. Charles was the first to introduce Django and Joseph Reinhardt to Louis Armstrong. Once he helped raise money to stage a Paris concert for the stranded Dizzy Gillespie Big Band in about 1949. Almost from the beginning his interests were with jazz. His only link to painting was through some interest in impressionism. He still is a steady contributor to the world-wide revisions of discographies and estimates that one could easily reach 20,000 pages. He states his own collection may contain some 30,000 items but quickly notes a friend of his who has a collection of 200,000.

The earliest issue of *Jazz Hot* came in about 1926 but was mainly concerned with African musical

instruments, Paul Whiteman, and George Gershwin. Besides listing artists alphabetically and their work chronologically, he also wanted personnel to include arrangers, vocalists, and where appropriate, soloists identified. He wisely has said, "The field can no longer be covered by a handful of dedicated scholars. The mass of data is now so huge that the publication expenses can no longer be met by a handful of sales."

I wrote directly to Mr. Delaunay and asked for a biographical sketch. What I received from him is so interesting and thoughtful that I must share it with you. I'm sure he will forgive me for editing it slightly:

When I started getting interested in jazz in the late twenties, there was no documentation or literature in existence. When I was released from the Army, I discovered there were some cats like me who were also interested in that music. They knew records and musician's names I had ignored, and they learned this from U.S. musicians playing in Paris. When I got some dozen records, I decided to list the soloists in a small booklet which I carried with me. It was very suitable for a few private listening sessions we had with pianist Freddy Johnson, Big Boy Goodie, and Arthur Briggs. They had so much to tell about the bands and soloists that it was like discovering a new world.

My booklet proved to be useful not only as a directory, but it helped guide us to discovering many other records by the same artists. One of the few places we could expect to find foreign records with the flea market. It must be noted that in the very early thirties, local record companies weren't releasing but a few items a year. Prior to 1930 these companies were pressing as few as fifty records. In 1936 some of the best selling jazz records (Goodman and Fats) were only 200 copies! This shows how limited was the jazz audience.

In the mid-thirties, the few collectors and our correspondents insisted that I print my discography, which was done in late 1936. At the time, record companies didn't care about personnel. It was only after our persistence that they started listing names in their files. In fact, nearly all of the 1936 edition of *Hot Discography* was obtained from interviews with US artists. They were surprised at our interest in such details and were most cooperative in providing us with information on dates, personnel, etc.

Things had greatly improved when I published the 1938 edition. Record companies were now conscious of keeping files of all sessions, and collectors now had a real network for sharing information. Finally discographical research had become more scientific. It's that edition that Commodore used for the 1940 American edition.

Then came war in Europe and with German occupation there was no chance for correspondence. It is surprising that even though no records were produced or received from abroad, jazz was spreading in Europe. There was such a demand for discographical information that I published a new edition in 1943 in spite of the scarcity of paper.

When France was liberated by the allies, there was an immediate and great hope for the future of jazz. We were excited to hear all the records made by old and new artists between 1940 and 1945. There were new trends also and I was impatient to bring the manuscript of *Hot Discography* up-to-date. It was a tremendous work since hundreds of new companies had spread all over the United States. Addresses were difficult to get and many could not answer our inquiries. It was then I decided that I must go to the United States and visit as many companies, musicians, and discographers as I could

find.

In July 1946 I flew to New York and met Walter Schaap whom I knew from pre-war years. He had collaborated with me on *Jazz Hot* and he knew people in the record business. Milton Gabler from Commodore introduced us to Mike Golsen from Criterion Publishing Company. We visited many independent companies such as Keynote, Apollo, Savoy to get a great part of our needs. Also we visited George Avakian at Columbia and spent a whole weekend with their files in Bridgeport, but we just couldn't get to Chicago, St Louis, or California. It was at this point that Milt Gabler had the wonderful idea to contact James C Petrillo, who was president of the American Federation of Musicians located in the Chrysler Building (I think). Many recording sessions were fully documented there for all parts of the United States and it was a gold mine for discographical information. The main problem was that there were so many companies devoted to different kinds of music: sacred, folklore, language teaching. A human lifetime would not be enough to check everything. Fortunately, the President was in Chicago most of the time and we were given the use of his office all day long, going madly through all the sleeves, lying on the floor, and furiously copying all the information we discovered.

Of course we also obtained valuable information from musicians, but there were disappointments. One important publisher, writer, musician, and producer actually asked how much I would pay for his important information. It was the first time anybody had asked me for money so I said it was time to split. I crossed the street to pay a visit to James P. Johnson, and Walter and I spent a wonderful afternoon listening to James P. playing piano, organ, and telling us fascinating stories.

After a sojourn of two months in New York City, I returned to France with most of the collected information. Walter and I carefully typed the material and before the end of 1946 I was back in New York for the final steps of the new manuscript, and the *New Hot Discography* was soon to be published by Criterion. This is the same one that is still on sale and steadily reissued.

My next project was a *Jazz Discography and Encyclopedia*. Only three volumes were published through the letters He. Distribution and sales were so disappointing that I stopped it. I had to make a living for my family and I stopped the seemingly impossible task particularly with the introduction of the long-playing record. It was an impossible task for one individual to keep up with the multitude of new information coming every day. I only devoted time to individual discographies for my own enjoyment. Now I am over seventy and my activities are limited, but I enjoy new and old musicians who still love jazz. My last achievement has been a new discography on an old friend, Django Reinhardt.

When I started my search for current discographical information I had not thought of writing this article. My first goal was to find out what had happened to the proposed revisions of Jorgen Jepsen's *Jazz Records 1942-1969*. I was aware that Erik Raben of Denmark, who had been closely associated with Jepsen, was the force behind the revisions but very little has ever been written about Erik and his valuable work. My close friend, the Danish discographer, Arne Astrup, knows Erik quite well and the following is taken from an interview in Copenhagen:

*Arne A:* How did you get into the revision of *Jazz Records*?

*Erik R:* My interest in jazz discography started in the late fifties with McCarthy's *Jazz Directory*. A few years later I got in contact with Grunnet Jepsen who was working on

the *Jazz Records*. I started to check his manuscripts and after the last volume was issued in 1969 I had some meetings with the publisher, Karl Emil Knudsen, who was interested in a revised version. It was in 1977 that we decided to start the work.

*Arne A:* How did you arrange the work to be done?

*Erik R:* Karl Knudsen tried to start a discographical organization which would coordinate the work on the revised edition. Unfortunately this never worked, so in 1972 it was decided that I should try to get contacts with people who could help prepare the manuscripts. I started the manuscript circulation with three copies being sent to about twenty-five people throughout the world. This covered all the west European countries except for Spain and Portugal. About ten of these people were in the United States, Canada and Japan. Other countries were covered by people who were sending details of issues from their country. Some of these were Poland, Czechoslovakia, Australia, Spain, and South Africa.

*Arne A:* A lot of people have been involved in your project?

*Erik R:* Yes, in fact about thirty-five people have worked on the revisions since 1972. This should give the revised editions a high degree of completeness and accuracy.

*Arne A:* When did the circulation of the manuscripts come to an end?

*Erik R:* In 1977-78 the last manuscripts were returned to me. Then I started to update *Jazz Records* with additions and corrections. I also included new recordings up to the end of 1977. These revised manuscripts were then circulated to five people (three Americans) for final check.

*Arne A:* When did you start the final typewriting of the manuscript?

*Erik R:* It was our plan to start this part of the project in spring 1980, but various problems arose when we tried to find the right microcomputer. Eventually it was delivered in March 1981 and we started the final composition in April.

*Arne A:* Will you still use 1977 as a cut-off date even though we are now in 1981?

*Erik R:* We did foresee that problem last year so we have now decided to include recordings up to December 31, 1980. All volumes will be *Jazz Records - 1942-1980*.

*Arne A:* What is your time schedule for all the volumes?

*Erik R:* We will issue one volume a year. Each volume will be approximately 800 pages and there will probably be eight.

Arne terminated the interview at this point since Erik Raben is such a busy person. In my continuing discussions with Arne, I learned that Erik works in a State job in Copenhagen and commutes from Roskilde which is about 45 kilometers. He is married and his work load is very demanding of his time. I had the opportunity of talking with him by telephone and while much more could be written about this dedicated person and his work, I feel that he prefers that we limit our remarks to what he has shared with us. Naturally there have been many disappointments in getting this voluminous project to its present stage. It is now very possible that the first volume will appear about the same time as this article.

While writing this I received word that Jorgen Grunnet Jepsen died September 24, 1981 from a heart attack. It certainly has not been my intention to impose on his private life because, as musicians would say, "he paid his dues." At the time of his death he was a journalist for a leading Copenhagen newspaper *Berlingske Tidende*. My Danish friend tells me that he confined his writing to reviews of books on Danish history as well as critiquing Danish TV programs. Surprisingly he wrote a book *A Nation Comes into Existence* which describes the United States' fight for independence. I have not discussed his death with Erik or other discographers but he will be missed and his contributions will continue to be used as valuable reference material. We owe him a great debt and I would think that the best way of repaying is to ascertain that discographical research will continue and remember the hard work he contributed.

While Karl Emil Knudsen hasn't been a researcher, the discographical world certainly knows that he has been a key figure in bringing many important works to print and circulation. He did publish the original Jepsen's and it is my understanding that he will also publish the revisions. In 1953 Knudsen recorded the two big names of traditional jazz in England. Storyville records was formed both as a record company and a booking agent for many jazz and blues artists. Otis Spann, Lonnie Johnson, Chet Baker, MJQ and others were brought into Storyville promotion. He created the Sonet label in 1956 and today he is managing director of its Danish wing. He is very much into video and offers many rare jazz films of Armstrong, Ellington, Basie, Waller, Nat Cole and others.

Storyville now has distribution in the United States and even though it has heavily been into blues and vintage material, artists like Warne Marsh, Lee Konitz, John Tchicai, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Jesper Thilo, Teddy Wilson, and many Scandinavian groups have been added. Kenny Drew and Ernie Wilkins are both involved and distribution throughout the world looks very good.

I deviated a bit to bring Mr. Knudsen into the discographical story because such people as he have to believe enough in jazz to put up the money for such worthwhile preservation. He was appointed to the original advisory board of the International Discographers Association and undoubtedly has maintained an interest where others have chosen to forget.

Another important discographer in whom Knudsen believed is Michel Ruppli. His work started in 1954, eventually culminating with the Knudsen-published *Prestige Label Discography* in 1973. Now also available are *The Savoy Label* and *Atlantic Records*. In the works are Chess and Blue Note. Michel tells me that research is also underway on Capitol, Mercury, ABC, Impulse, Vee Jay, King, Imperial, Decca, RCA and Columbia. He states, "All my books are listing of all sessions by a label with full details on personnel and recording dates. These listings are generally based on master number sequence rather than true chronological order. This type of research requires access to company files." Even though Ruppli is an engineer in electronics and is married with four children, he has found time to go to the United States for accurate research.

Many people believe that Ruppli's approach to discography may be the only way to achieve the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the history of recorded music in the future. This type of single label approach supplemented with discographies of individual artists will allow the jazz world to more closely pinpoint their own interests. Generally jazz people are more concerned with artists than tune titles. Many individual discographies of special merit have appeared in recent years and Ruppli alone has compiled and had published: Charles Mingus, Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett, Billie Holiday, Ornette Coleman, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Eric Dolphy, Stephane Grappelli, Gary Burton, Clifford Brown and Fats Navarro.

Of course it's impossible to list all discographies in an article such as this. If you are interested in learning more about what has been done then there are publications that do exactly that. In fact there is a new one by Dan Allen titled *Bibliography of Discographies, Vol. 2 - Jazz*. It covers 1935-1980 and has 239 pages with over 3,800 listings. That gives you some idea of the scope and interest today. Two other publications I have heard about are Brian Rust's *Guide to Discography*, and *International Bibliography of Discographies, Classical Music, Jazz & Blues, 1962-1972*. The author of the latter one is unknown to me. I would like to list a few more details on discographies of



special interest:

- *V-Discs: A History and Discography* by Richard S Sears. This is the story of a unique series of records produced by the military for distribution to service people during and after World War II. It's not all jazz. The 1,156 pages were compiled by geologist Sears over a period of fifteen years.
- *American Dance Band Discography* by Brian Rust. Two volumes covering 2,373 bands.
- *The Duke Ellington Story on Records* by Massagli, Volonte, and Pusateri. This is now into its 14th volume which covers years 1966-67, so much more is to come.
- *Wax Works of Duke Ellington* by Benny Aasland now in its second volume.
- *Micrography, Jazz & Blues on Microgroove* by Bakker of Holland whose team has produced well over forty volumes.
- *Charlie Parker 1940-1955* in four volumes by Koster and Bakker.
- *Hendersonia: The Music of Fletcher Henderson and His Musicians* by Walter C Allen. This bio-discography is considered one of the best and most definitive works.
- *Jazz Solography Series* by Jan Evensmo which is in many volumes pinpointing solo work of great musicians like Hawk, Ben, Roy, etc. This is a rather specialized type of discography.

I think it would be futile to continue to list all the excellent discographies on individual artists because there are so many good ones. There seems to be a countless number focussed on the giants like Coltrane, Miles, Ornette, Ellington, Armstrong, Bird and others of similar stature. Yet, there seems to be equal interest in lesser jazz figures such as Shorty Rogers, Jimmy Knepper, and others that I know are in preparation. When I assisted Arne Astrup with the publication of *Stan Getz Discography*, I would not have believed it would run into almost 100 pages. He then followed it with the excellent *Zoot Sims Discography* with an equal number of pages and interesting format. One of the most unique I've ever seen is the *John Coltrane Discography* produced in Japan by Kuniaki Mogushi which reproduces the covers of most of Trane's albums in four-color process.

Then there comes the biographies which include discographies that are sometimes complete and sometimes just selected works. Todd Selbert's Art Pepper discography in *Straight Life* is invaluable as is his specialized work for many Artists' House Records. He seems to be one of those background figures who has helped just about everybody but has never had time for a major work of his own. Dr. William F. Lee's bio-discography of Stan Kenton called *Artistry In Rhythm* is certainly a definitive work. Even though there are purists in the discographical field who feel that true discographies must follow a rigid pattern, there are still supplemental works of another nature that I couldn't do without. Of course all of Leonard Feather's *Encyclopedias Of Jazz* are invaluable reference books. I only recently discovered the *Bielefelder Jazz Katalog* which is about 500 pages and a goldmine of discographical information listing artists, sidemen, and some record labels in a unique way. Coupled with a current edition of the American *Schwann* catalogue, it gives a fair idea of what is available in print in the world today. The recent publication of *Jazz Records: The Specialist Labels* by Laing and Sheridan falls in the same general category.

I've already mentioned Malcolm Walker's excellent *Discographical Forum*. Certainly the *Journal of Jazz Discography*, edited by Chris Evans and *The Journal of Jazz Studies* from Rutgers Institute deserve mention as continuing publications of vast importance. Unfortunately I can only read the jazz publications of the world that appear in English. I believe that *Cadence*, edited by Bob Rusch, does the best job of covering record releases promptly and in the manner that best contributes to documentation of jazz history, especially with American releases.

My research in writing this article has been gratifying and I wish to thank all who contributed and took the time to write to me or talk with me. I was told many times not to forget the contributions of

Pete Moon, Jack Millar, Tony Williams, Don Tarrant, Reg Cooper, Derek Coller, Alun Morgan, Paul Oliver, Max Harrison, Ronald Atkins, Michael James, Jack Cooke, Eric Townley, Bert Whyatt, Dan Mahony, Bozy White, Tony Rotante, George Hulme, Len Kunstadt, Bob Colton, Otto Fluckiger, George Hall, Ernie Edwards, Jr., Bob Porter, Bill Miner, Mike Cuscuna, Gene Williams and Mike Leadbitter.

I owe my special thanks to Paul B Sheatsley for allowing me to quote from his excellent article "A Quarter Century Of Jazz Discography" which appeared in *Record Research*, Issue 58, February 1964. I honestly didn't know that publication was still being printed, but Paul assures me that it and Len Kunstadt are still hard at work spreading the good word about jazz. Both have been very gracious in giving me permission to reprint Paul's article.

Paul Sheatsley was co-editor of *Blues Research* along with Tony Rotante and obviously has a strong and continuing interest in helping just about everybody with discographical research. In fact, his occupation shows him to be highly qualified on research in many fields including social, economic, health, and education issues. He has some extremely interesting views on how the future of discography might best serve the jazz world. He suggests that all 78s might be included in one volume. Perhaps a second volume would separate the EP and LP reissues, worldwide, of all the 78s, which also might include transcriptions, concerts, radio broadcasts of those artists who made the 78s. This would then leave documenting LPs from sometime about 1951 onward. Probably then it would be necessary to separate types of music such as gospel, Latin, calypso, C & W, etc. I think he wisely states that most collectors of 78s are only marginally interested in all types of music. They also care little for LP reissues on labels throughout the world. LP collectors on the other hand are generally more interested in knowing what 78 material has been reissued on LP than knowing master numbers of original 78s. It will be interesting to hear other views in the future which I am sure are forthcoming.

I'm sure that those reading this article can understand that several months have elapsed since its start and publication. Most recently I have heard from Dan Morgenstern who was once editor of the American magazine, *Down Beat*. One of the first things that I ever read on the documentation of recorded jazz appeared in the *Down Beat Yearbook 1966* and was titled "Discography, A Thankless Science." I am indebted to Mr. Morgenstern because many of my references come from that article. Today he heads the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. The former *Journal* of that institution has now become the *Annual Review of Jazz Studies*. The first volume should be in print by the time you read this.

I quote the following from a letter that I received from Mr. Morgenstern: 'The Institute, I'd like to say, would not be able to function as a research center without Rust, Jepsen, et al.—in fact, without discographies we would have only limited access to our collection of more than 60,000 records. The computerized cataloguing project we are currently involved in would not be feasible without this literature. Not a day goes by without some use being made of these works, and I would go so far to say that discographic research is the single most important component of jazz scholarship. Dan Allen's new *Bibliography of Discographies* is a Godsend to us, by the way (because among its other virtues), it provides access to the multitude of un-indexed periodicals containing discographical materials.'

Now comes a letter from Dan Allen stating, "I compiled the *Bibliography of Discographies* due to my father's being a member of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections and, knowing the people who were doing Vol. 1 (classical music), he recommended me to do the job. I didn't seriously get interested in jazz until 1970."

Jazz music was just something that was playing about the house so I guess I took it for granted. When I got older I used to help him (Walter C. Allen) in his book business and processing orders so I did have some familiarity with the names of the musicians. I attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge and ended up majoring in geology just like him, which I wouldn't have expected when I entered. I did go to

occasional jazz concerts, but my main interest at the time was classical.... I moved to Toronto in the summer of 1970 where I've been ever since, and I'm now working for *Coda*.

Dan's father, Walter C. Allen, died in December of 1974 at the young age of 54. The *Record Research* Issue No. 132 of April 1975 stated, "His passing undoubtedly will produce a vacuum for many researchers, both advanced and neophyte, who were dependent on his astute know-how and his most prolific research contributions. For nearly thirty years his research from A to Z appeared in countless publications and preparatory works. To name just a few we can recall the Grauer-Keepnews *Record Changer*; Orin Blackstone's *Jazz Finder and Playback*; the English *Pickup* magazine (forerunner of Sinclair Traill's *Jazz Journal*) and *Jazz Journal* too, with Walter's regular *Discomania* column.... His work on King Oliver and the eventual publication of his own monograph series with the great discographer, Brian Rust, was another brilliant structural innovation in the publication of bio-discography."

Walter was a longtime member of the executive committee of the Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies. All of his accomplishments coexisted with a full non-jazz career including a bachelor's degree in geology, thirty-four combat missions in World War II, a master's degree in mineralogy, and a Ph.D. in ceramic engineering from Rutgers, where he remained and rose to a full professorship in ceramics. He invented and patented several processes.

Dan shared a letter with me which Walter wrote to Ed Souchon and stated: "I became interested in jazz when I was an undergraduate at Columbia in 1939.... First real jazz records I heard were by Bix, and like Hoagy Carmichael said, he hit those notes like a chime. From then on I was hooked."

I've delayed publication of this for almost a year from the first time Phil Oldham and I discussed it. I felt it was necessary to try and make contact with some of the original participants who are still quite active in the writing and publication of discographies. Since basically the same one who declined to respond eight years ago have also declined once again, then it is evident that I may have some inaccuracies about their current work or extensions of their older works. I apologize for this but really have no control over it.

First, I would like to cover what little I know about the Jepsen revisions which I'm sure will have a different title than that. Erik Raben informed me last April that he hoped to have volume one delivered to the publisher by June 1988. Erik visited the United States once last year to attend an international meeting unrelated to his discographical work. After his return to Denmark he advised me that he really had nothing to add except that Volume 1 would be about 600 pages and each volume will have its own index as well as a general index to appear in the last volume. The goal was to have Volume 1 ready for sale in 1988, but obviously that has not happened. I know that he has had many unavoidable delays and will keep me informed.

Walter Bruyninckx asked that I add the following comments to his original portion of my manuscript. I have taken the liberty of revising this just a bit for clarity.

My series of pocket books were actually made for the Japanese market but they are selling surprisingly well in the rest of the world. This series was divided into Modern Jazz, Traditional, Swing, and Vocalists. There should be a total of about thirty-four to thirty-six books of which twenty-five have already been published. In the meantime, *Sixty Years* has become updated to *Seventy Years* and the first two parts M-Pa and Pa-Sh have already been printed and sold. It is my intention to bring the entire discography up-to-date again by 1992. The day may not be so far away that I will put a final point on this enormous task of keeping up with the never-ending flood of new issues. LP issues may now even be surpassed in quantity by compact discs and cassettes. Let's hope that someone, somewhere will continue the work when I stop, because a lapse of even five years would be enough to find it unable to continue a reliable work.

The information in these pocket books requires continuous work day by day and week by week to keep from getting hopelessly behind. So far almost nobody seems willing to devote his life to discography.

Charles Delaunay must have realized many years ago when he passed his information to Walter that perhaps he had found the right person to continue his discographical work. Walter is now nearing his sixties and hopes to find someone to whom he can pass on his wealth of information which is still coming in from his numerous correspondents. I don't think anyone wants to think about his work coming abruptly to an end in 1992.

I believe it was early in 1988 that Delaunay died. Walter advised me that he had attended his funeral and had great regrets that he had not known for a while that Albert McCarthy had died just a couple of months earlier.

Michel Ruppli has continued his valuable discographies of record labels and with assistance from dedicated jazz people like Bob Porter, Michael Cuscuna, and Bill Daniels, they are excellent. I'm not sure I'm up to date on all of them, but three important ones are: *The King Labels*, *The Clef/Verve Labels*, and *The Blue Note Label*.

Brian Rust is now into a two-volume fifth edition of his work. Richard Sears has produced a V-Disc supplement. I'm not exactly sure about Malcolm Walker's most current issue of the *Discographical Forum*. He somehow manages to keep it going despite his many interruptions.

There always seems to be an unending flow of good individual discographies. I'll list a few that I know about but have not seen or read:

- Bill Coleman - Evert Kaleveld & Lily Coleman
- Buddy Collette - Hoffman
- Eddie Condon - Lombardi
- Eric Dolphy - Uwe Reichardt
- *Ellingtonia* - W. E. Timmer
- Booker Ervin - Georges Wattiau
- Bob Gordon - Gerard J. Hoogeveen
- Herbie Hancock - Suzuki
- Hank Jones - Iwamoto
- Vic Lewis - Tony Middleton
- Hank Mobley - Claude Schlouch
- Shorty Rogers - Hoffman
- Frank Rosolino - Roberto L. Machado
- Art Tatum - Arnold Laubich & Ray Spencer
- Clarence Williams - Bakker
- Kai Winding - Engelon

Here are a few that I do own and highly recommend:

- Hampton Hawes - Roger Hunter & Mike Davis
- Bill Evans (Turn on the Stars) - Peter Larson (out of print but hopefully soon back in with updates)

I correspond regularly with a number of people and I'll list a couple of books I know that are getting close to publication:

- Gerry Mulligan - Arne Astrup
- Shorty Rogers bio-discography (with lots of help from Shorty) - Ed Barr
- Stan Getz, edition three - Arne Astrup

I think our own member, Russ Chase, has undertaken the massive job of an Al Cohn discography.

Late additions:

- Blue Mitchell - Roger Wernboe (available now)
- Buck Clayton - Bob Weir (available this year)
- Jazz Records 1942-1980 (Jepsen replacement) - in stock in August (this information comes from a jazz book dealer)

Additions to this article could continue to hinder its publication. I've awaited word to see if Record Research is still being published. Sadly, I just learned that one of its great contributors who helped me so much, Paul B. Sheatsley, died January 15, 1989. I understand that our member and associate, Len Kunstadt, spoke at his memorial services.

The documentation of jazz must continue.