

## EDITORIAL

The greater part of this double issue of the Journal is taken up with the Report of the Education and Standards Committee of ARSC -- a report that stands as at least a partial response to the challenging C. B. Hagen Proposals Presented to the 1966 Meeting of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections Held at Washington D. C. (revised and augmented for the Bloomington, Indiana meeting of March, 1967). The extent to which the Education and Standards Committee Report deals in detail with Mr. Hagen's proposals is indicated at a glance by comparison of the outline appearing in pp. 12-14 of Vol. I, No. 2 of the Journal with the contents summary on p. 3 of the present issue.

I trust that readers of the Journal will not take amiss a few editorial reactions to the Committee Report, since the undersigned -- as record reviewer, discographer, archivist, record producer, magazine editor, and program annotator -- has had in the course of 25 years to deal at first hand with most of the problems raised. Perhaps the most single important achievement represented in the joint efforts of Chairman Ida Rosen, together with Barbara Krader, Thor E. Wood, and David Hamilton, has been to define the all-important areas of inquiry and action which the Association must be prepared to pursue if it is to become and remain an effective force for order and integrity in the long term task of preserving the cultural heritage represented by the body of sound recording accumulated over a period of more than three-quarters of a century.

Taking some of the various subjects of the report in order of appearance, Miss Rosen has not hesitated to tackle the controversial topic of apparent realism versus "super" realism in the recording art, particularly as related to the London-Decca operatic recordings supervised by John Culshaw. There was hot discussion on this topic at the September New York Sessions of the International Music Congress, repercussions from which are still manifesting themselves in letters to Harold Schonberg (also a veteran record reviewer before becoming music critic) in the Sunday New York Times. Presumably some ARSC members have heard of the latest product of the "super" realistic school of recordings producers -- an LP of the Borodin D Major String Quartet done entirely with contact microphones attached to the instruments!

Barbara Krader's insistence on adoption by manufacturers of full and accurate standards of product identification -- lack of which always has been a bane to the archivist, discographer, and conscientious reviewer -- has never been more timely than

now in this day of doctored "stereo" and barefaced falsification on the part of certain independent record firms of the sources of major symphonic and operatic performances put out under their labels.

Miss Rosen's précis and updating of the Pickett and Lemcoe report on preservation and storage of sound recordings is most needed and useful. It is ironic, indeed, that much of the recent improvement in magnetic tape from the standpoint of physical and electronic stability has been forced not at the insistence of the commercial phonograph record industry, but by data processing firms whose computers were being thrown out of whack by deformation of memory drum tapes due to stretching and other conditions arising out of continual hard use.

As to the standards posed by Miss Krader for record reviewing, they would seem to represent an impossible ne plus ultra under present conditions in that semi-profession. But it is important that the ultimate ideal to be achieved in this field should be spelled out in just such detail as Miss Krader has done, and especially so in the ARSC Journal. It would be interesting to discover just how many record reviewers here and abroad make a full time living at such work. Until the numbers who do are vastly increased and until the economics of magazine publishing permit a relaxation of the space limitations that hamper most record (and music) reviewing, achievement of the goals set forth by Miss Krader would seem to be impossible, save in a few purely scholarly and/or non-profit publications.

Thor E. Wood in his commentary on what is and what is not worthy of preservation and on the problems facing legitimate dissemination of the contents of non-commercial recordings, such as of oral history interviews, "on location" concert recordings, etc., raises by implication a number of other major dilemmas facing archivists, especially those associated with major educational and library institutions. I have in mind the phenomenon of yesterday's trash becoming tomorrow's treasure, and vice-versa. Far-fetched as it might seem on first thought, the stock market investor, the race track bettor, and the institutional archivist do have a point or two in common.

In dealing with field and "on location" recording, Barbara Krader again returns to the crucial point of rigorous identification, not only of program content, but of the conditions under which the program material was recorded. How many of us have found ourselves in a state of enraged bafflement over original tapes whose pitch bore no relation to any of the so-called

standard speeds, or have discovered that an original was recorded on an obsolete "staggered head" machine -- but with no indication of such facts on the tape box or accompanying log sheets, if any?

David Hamilton, in his portion of the report, has summed up effectively the general state of discography today, indicating both directly and by varied implication the crying need for proper information coordination on both a national and international level throughout the entire sound recordings field. Only through the serious and continually applied efforts by all parties involved, the record industry, library and educational institutions, private recordists and collectors -- backed by funding assistance from industry, foundations, and government -- can achievement of substance along these lines become a fact. It is the hope of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections to be the major channel through which these efforts can find direction and ultimate realization.

- David Hall

#### MEMBERSHIP OBITUARIES

February 11, 1967	Vic Allen, VP, Mailbag Toronto, Canada
July 4, 1967	Benjamin Stanbler, Collectors Guild Recordings Brooklyn, New York
January 7, 1968	Edwin Dunham, Broadcast Pioneers Project New York, New York
February 15, 1968	Fuki Fujita, International Who's Who in Music Tokyo, Japan