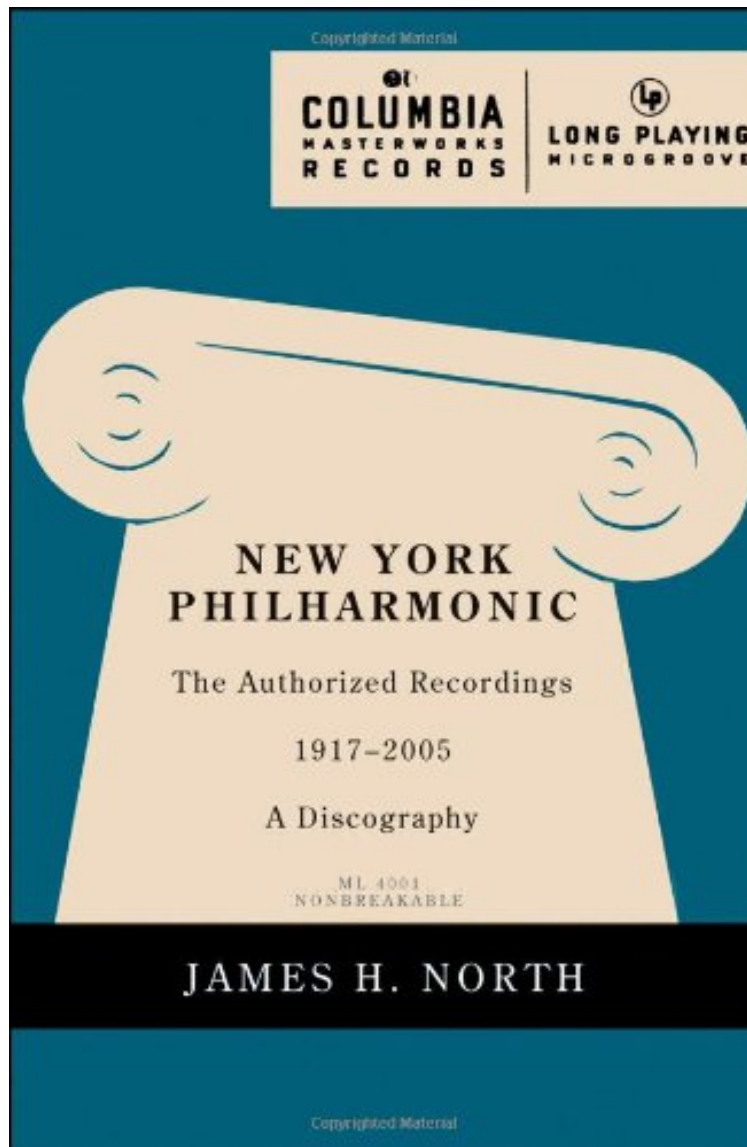


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New York Philharmonic: The Authorized Recordings, 1917-2005

James H. North

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James H. North : New York Philharmonic: The Authorized Recordings, 1917-2005 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised New York Philharmonic: The Authorized Recordings, 1917-2005:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Why Boulez didn't record Janacek's Sinfonietta - an invaluable discography of the New York Phil (with a few flaws) By Discophage There's this strange breed - the record collector. The kind of literature he enjoys is usually difficult to smuggle into mental institutions that harbor him, because his

shrinks look with great suspicion onto it, considering (rightly so) that it only fuels the compulsive obsession: it consists of long, tedious lists that to any normal person would seem an utter, pointless bore. Try reading the phonebook for your leisure and enjoyment. Thanks to James H. North and The Scarecrow Press for being the pushers in these doubtful drugs, here and in the companion book, *Boston Symphony Orchestra: An Augmented Discography*. A (hopefully complete) discography of the New York Philharmonic, a collector's delight, everything you ever wanted to know about the recordings of the NYPO, without even knowing what to ask for. Like: who conducted the very first recordings of the orchestra, and when? Or: what was the first complete symphony recorded by the NYPO, when, and conducted by whom? Or: why did Boulez NOT record Janacek's *Sinfonietta*? North hasn't just compiled previous discographies, checked old Schwanns or label catalogs for records and label numbers. He's done a mammoth job cross-referencing and double-checking that info against the actual records, most of which are held in one form or another by the NYP Archives. He also consulted recording company archives, where he retrieved invaluable information on unreleased recordings. For information on recording dates and locations he scoured orchestra personnel manager's weekly reports and schedules, summaries of royalties received, orchestra-recording company correspondence. The information provided, especially as concerns recording dates and venues, can be considered authoritative, and must take precedence over any other provided by the discs themselves. A few precisions deserve to be given on what this discography really is - and what it is not. It is a discography of only the AUTHORIZED New York Phil recordings, made under the orchestra's full name. These are not restricted to the studio recordings, since a good chunk come from broadcast concerts released on the orchestra's various commemorative sets, on LP or CD. Likewise, the notion of "New York Philharmonic Orchestra" includes the recordings made prior to 1928 by the New York Symphony Orchestra (under Walter Damrosch) or the New Symphony Orchestra (under Artur Bodanzky), that were to merge with the Philharmonic to eventually form the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York (which is still, I learn from North, the organization's legal name). On the other hand and consequently, the recording made of *Carmen's Overture* made in 1903 by "The Damrosch Orchestra", though consisting of members of the NYSO, isn't listed (it is mentioned in the introduction). A year before its merger with the Philharmonic, the New Symphony Orchestra changed its name to the National Symphony Orchestra, but careful scrutiny led North to conclude that some Path or Victor recordings listed under that name were NOT by the ex-New SO, and they aren't included either (see introduction page xiv). North has also done a surgical job trying to sort out which recordings attributed by Columbia to their generic "Columbia Symphony Orchestra" were by the New York Phil. That led him to exclude Bernstein's first recording of *Rhapsody in Blue*, or *Berlioz Nuits d't* by Eleanor Steber and Mitropoulos, but to confirm the attribution to the orchestra (already made in the CD reissues of the mid 1990s) of Bruno Walter's 1958 and 1960 recordings of Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* (with Cundari and Forrester) and *Das Lied* (with Miller and Haefliger). Not listed either are the recordings by soloists or ensembles from the orchestra, even when using the orchestra's name (like NYP Brass Ensemble), those by Stokowski's "His Orchestra", even when that was the Philharmonic (intro page xxvi, which also mentions a couple of other recordings by the NYP or members, not released under the orchestra's name, and thus not included) and those by the so-called Stadium Symphony Orchestra of New York, although it sometimes (but not always) included members of the NYPO. The one exception here is Mitropoulos' August 1949 broadcast recording of Prokofiev's 3rd Piano Concerto, issued on a commemorative LP in 1985 (not to be confused with his "official" Columbia recording from three years before with the Robin Hood Dell orchestra of Philadelphia, Prokofiev: *Concerto No. 3; Lieutenant Kij; Romeo Juliette [Import]*), because it was made predominantly by members of the NYP (North mentions this exception in his introduction under his scrutiny of the recordings by the Columbia Symphony Orchestra, page xvi). Not being official NYP recordings, those made by Reiner on November 2 1938 and released anonymously by Victor in their "World's Greatest Music" series sold through newspapers, are not listed. And, needless to say, "pirate" and "unauthorized" recordings are NOT included, and one feels North sorry in particular about the exclusion of aficionado Nick Nickson's Mitropoulos releases (see introduction page xix), but that was apparently the deal with the orchestra management and the tradeoff for having complete access to their archive. On the other hand the CD reissues by Dutton and the Barbirolli Society, and by Cala and the Stokowski Society, of recordings officially released once on 78rpm or LPs, are included, since they use Sony material and engineers. But in fact, when it comes to CD reissues, North's concept of what is a "pirate" is not really all that clear - see my additional comment further down. The recordings made by the orchestra as such for the movies are included, starting with the 1926 music of John Barrymore's silent *Don Juan*. But, not being Philharmonic recordings as defined, Glenn Gould leading musicians from the orchestra in two Bach concerto movements for the film *Slaughterhouse Five*, mentioned in the intro, is not included. Other than Bernstein's *Young People's Concerts*, the orchestra's television appearances are not chronicled. The discography is presented in chronological order of recording sessions (the date of the last recording session giving the ordering number), down to Mozart's *Symphonies No. 39-41* conducted by Maazel on February 9-14 2006 and available on download from DG, so the book can be read also as a history of the NYP's recordings. But there is an index of composers and works (Appendix A), one of conductors (Appendix B), and one of soloists (Appendix C), so if you are looking, say, for all the Bartok recordings made by the orchestra, or those made by Bruno Walter, it is pretty easy to cross-reference the info (although it takes some page juggling). Info, unless unavailable, is given on

timings (always checked by North, all amends made for varying revolution speeds of 78rpm), orchestra and conductor, recording venue, session dates and initial release year, record company, recording producer, matrix numbers and takes used for 78rpm, label numbers. The intro has a fascinating (err... for twisted collectors, I mean) presentation of Columbia's labeling logic (page xxiii and xxiv). North often adds illuminating comments on the recording's circumstances - or the reasons for it not being released: this listing of unreleased recordings is one of the book's most tantalizing offerings, of course (for twisted collectors, I mean), and too bad there isn't a specific index of those. If you want to know Bernstein's unpublished recordings, see intro page xxv. Same with North's mention (page xxvi and xxvii) of the scheduled recording sessions that were cancelled. That's how we never got Mengelberg's *Lied von der Erde*. Through North's comments you'll also learn, for instance, that in the latest CD reissues of Walter's *Mahler 4th*, a wrong clarinet entry in the finale was corrected (I'll stick with the faulty recording, it is part of its history and very nature), why Barbirolli's recordings from the spring of 1940 were misdated, what was the first LP published by Columbia, and many such trivia on which collectors thrive like weeds from daylight and water. Composition titles are given in customary and easily recognizable form - *Feste Romane* but *Pines of Rome*, for instance. As a welcome lagniappe North also gives us a listing (incomplete) of the Ginn Company 78rpm made by this Boston educational publishers in the 1920s for their textbook "appreciation in the Schoolroom", with members of the NYP under assistant conductor Henry Hadley (Appendix D), and of Bernstein's Young People's Concerts, with descriptions and comments of each (Appendix E). North has sought to be comprehensive for 78rpm, 45rpm, LP and (with provisos stated hereafter) CD issues. He's even listed two Columbia 7-inch/33rpm records (before the use of 45rpm discs) and a few 16rpm records intended for Chrysler automobiles in 1956. Label references are given as a rule only of US releases, except for international releases generally available in the US (like Sony's Masterworks Portrait CD series), or when only foreign issues are available (frequent with CD reissues). On the other hand North has NOT included the many forms of audio tapes, except in one case - Mehta's 1982 Brahms' First Symphony - where it was the only published form of the recording. A few VHS, DVDs and Video discs meeting the same condition are included. Quadraphonic recordings and Super Audio Compact Discs are mentioned where North has seen them. He's gone to great pains to identify the orchestra on collections of snippets where no orchestra was mentioned (as on some Andr Kostelanetz collections). In some cases, with the very early releases, he was even able to establish that some 78rpm were in fact recorded at 82,3 rpm. Is this book the ultimate collector's delight then? Not quite. A small quibble is the decision to list the recordings of concertos and works involving soloists, in the composers Appendix A, only with conductors names and not the soloists'. It is a lazy one and makes it slightly inconvenient in some cases to go find the specific entry in the main chronological discography. In his intro North mentions a recording of Beethoven's PC3 with Jean Casadesus (Robert's son, died in a car accident in 1972) never made available to the wider public, but when you want to find the specifics and go to the composers index, you find four recordings, by Szell in 1945, Mitropoulos in 1957, and Bernstein in 1964 and 1966, that all could be with Casadesus, so you need to check them all to find out (it turns out to be 1957). It wouldn't have cost much to list the works involving soloists by conductor AND relevant soloist in that composer appendix. Practicing North's discographies (the one of the Boston Symphony as well) I find that a major annoyance is his decision to reference, in the indexes for composers, conductors and soloists, the entries of the main chronological list by session date only, and not by page number. Having to find a recording by its session date turns out to be not so wieldy, and in the end I find myself penciling in the page numbers in the conductors index; I wish North had done it for me. But especially detrimental to the record collector I find is the absence of an index by label. Especially with larger collections and (in my case) especially with the CD reissues, you want to know what exactly are the disc companions of a given recording. Take the big commemorative collections released by the orchestra, like "Bernstein Live", "New York Philharmonic - An American Celebration vol. 1", New York Philharmonic - An American Celebration vol. 2 or "Historic Broadcasts 1923-1987". They gather recordings from multiple composers, made throughout the orchestra's recording history. No way you are going to painstakingly leaf through the book and jot down every occurrence. So trying to collate that kind of information is going to take some amount of juggling with Google and the various online CD retailers. By the same token, North could have been a little more specific for these collections than just giving a label number. It took me some research to figure out that "NYP/WQXR Radiothon Special Editions" NYP-88 1/2 and 89 1/2" were two tribute collections of "New York Philharmonic soloists from the orchestra", listed here as ASIN B000Y3ZD14 and B002PEFQO4. Maybe Scarecrow and North wanted to give an incentive to buy the book's augmented reissue - whenever that comes. Another significant drawback is that foreign releases are not coherently and consistently mentioned - especially annoying when it comes to CDs. North is especially inconsistent for instance in his handling of the Dante Lys reissues, which I find especially regrettable, since, whatever one thinks of the label (I think highly of it, but many collectors look down on it, chiding it for pirating other CD reissues or dubbing later LP reissues rather than the original 78rpm), during its existence it was one of the major sources (and in many cases, still today, the only one) of such reissues. Take Walter's early US Beethoven recordings from the 1941 and 1942, Lys' Bruno Walter volume 1 CD-set is mentioned under Symphony 3 and 5 but NOT under 8 or Piano Concerto 5 (Bruno Walter Vol 1 His First US Records of Beethoven 1941-1942 Symphonies 3 5 8, Piano Concerto 5 (2 CD) (Lys)), and volume 4 (with the 1947 first Symphony and Violin Concerto, Bruno Walter Volume.

4 - Conducts Beethoven: Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Op. 21; Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61 (recorded at Carnegie Hall, 1947)) isn't mentioned at all; and it is NOT that Lys was the only CD reissue of Symphonies 3 and 5, so I don't understand North's logic. Dante Lys' reissue of Stravinsky's mono Columbia recordings isn't listed (Igor Stravinsky - First Recordings of Works on Columbia Records 1940-1946 (Ses Premiers Enregistrements pour la Columbia Americaine) (3 CD Box Set) (Lys)), despite the fact that it is more comprehensive than either Pearl GEMM's and Andante's reissues (mentioned). And since North does list those "pirate reissues" when they are the only ones, why not mention Urania's Stravinskiy - Petrouchka / Debussy - La Mer / Prokofiev - Sinfonia 1 - Dimitri Mitropoulos, for instance? Reading North you'd think that Mitropoulos' studio Petrushka was un-reissued. And it is not that North has rejected all the Urania Mitropoulos reissues: he mentions their Mitropoulos-Mendelssohn, for instance (see ASIN B000CS29M2 - I ran out of authorized links). Same with Falla's Nights in the Gardens of Spain by Kapell and Stokowski: the Music Arts reissue isn't mentioned (ASIN B00009YX70). I have Walter's 1941 Debussy La Mer and 1953 Vaughan Williams Tallis Fantasia on a 1988 Japanese King Records/Seven Seas CD, and they were also reissued on separate CDs by AS Disc; North mentions for both no CD whatsoever. The reissues from Pristine Classical are ignored - is it because they are available on download only? That North also ignores the United Archives 3-CD reissue of Mitropoulos recordings from the 1950s (including Scriabin's Prometheus and Khachaturian's Piano Concerto with Levant), is more explicable: the set was released in 2006 (ASIN B000F1HRAK on the French sister company). The fate of discographies is to become outdated. But the inconsistencies are not limited to those "pirate" reissues. Since North mentions the Japanese reissue of Mitropoulos' Verklrte Nacht (Schoenberg), why doesn't he do so also under its pairing on that CD (as on the original LP) - which happens to be the next entry, since both were recorded the same day: Vaughan Williams' Tallis Fantasia (ASIN B00005G7S9 on the Japanese sister company)? Under the Vaughan Williams, North mentions only other Sony reissues that came paired with Mitropoulos' recording of VW's 4th Symphony and Stokowski's 6th (and of course the discography doesn't easily inform you on those pairings, because of the absence of a label index; see ASIN B003D1WXFI). Those were also foreign reissues, so it looks really like a case of arbitrarily privileging one reissue over the other. Truth is, I don't quite understand what North includes under his definition of those "pirate issues" which he excludes from his listing. I first thought they referred only to the live, off-the-air recordings published without the orchestra's consent, like Nickson's or Music Arts' Mitropoulos broadcasts, or even Stokowski's 1949 live broadcast of Mozart's Haffner Symphony, published by Cala on one of their Stokowski-NYP CDs, ASIN B000222YGO, whose LP-originated companions are duly listed by North; this would be regrettable for the collector but would make sense. Still, North's not listing Stokowski's 1949 broadcast recording of Thomas Jefferson Scott's "From the Sacred Harp", also featured on that same Cala CD, seems to point to an excessively strict understanding of what is "unauthorized": as explained in the liner notes, it was originally released on a "V-disc" 78rpm, produced by the US Government for servicemen abroad. Was the US Government pirating the New York Phil? In his discography of the Boston Symphony (my review soon to be posted), North has improved things on this chapter: he devotes a specific Appendix to those V-discs and similar issues (and one to the real pirates as well). Furthermore, concerning CD reissues: in his intro, page xix, North mentions not listing "unique CD issues" of Guido Cantelli leading "The Four Seasons" and Oscar Levant playing Anton Rubinstein's Piano Concerto (for Rubinstein North may be referring to ASIN B000BPAOB4; for Cantelli's Four Seasons I've found trace of an Italian reissue, La Grande Classica BBBCD9007 CD, not listed on this website; the Vivaldi has been reissued by Pristine in 2009, after the publication of North's discography). However, those were indeed officially published LPs from the 1950s, again duly listed as such by North. So what's the rationale here? Why list CD reissues by Lys or Biddulph or Urania or Music Arts (as far as I know these were not "authorized" by the orchestra nor occasioned any payment of royalties), and not those "unique CD issues"? So even if one accepts the exclusion of the unauthorized live recordings, there still seems to be major inconsistencies in North's treatment of CD reissues, which undermines to an extent the usefulness for the collector of his mammoth work, and leaves him somewhat frustrated, despite the abundance of goods offered. Ultimately, I feel that for all his (admirable) minutiae, North has lost sight of the fact that the purpose of a discography is not just, and not mainly, to offer a long, tedious list to the eye: it is to forward the music lover to a roster of recordings he'll want to listen to. North's choices don't make it easy to go from the catalog of recordings to the catalog of records. But, you know how it is: what makes you collect is that you are never entirely happy with what you have. What North offers is already pretty stupendous, and I'll satisfy myself with it. Serious collectors can find the missing info by themselves, and the invaluable contribution of North's discography is to let them know what they should look for. With such an extensive discographic legacy, you'd think the NYPO would have recorded everything of significance, at least once, in their history. Not so, and the gaps are all the more surprising (and they'd be even bigger without those broadcast performances released by the orchestra in its commemorative issues). Who could believe they NEVER officially recorded Beethoven's second Piano Concerto, Bruckner's Symphonies 1 to 3, 5 and 8, Berlioz' Damnation and complete Romeo (only excerpts), Mendelssohn's first two symphonies, Debussy's complete Nocturnes (never Sirnes), Shostakovich's symphonies 2 to 4, 8, 11, 12 and 15, Khachaturian's Violin Concerto, Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms, Bartok's First Piano Concerto and Divertimento? They recorded only three piano concertos of Mozart (21, 23, 27) plus the concertos for 2 and 3 pianos, only one Rachmaninoff Symphony (2, Rodzinski, 1945,

with cuts) and never the piano concertos 1 and 4, very little Schoenberg (never the 5 pieces op 15 or the Variations opus 31). Those, hopefully, will be for the reissue of North's discography, in 50 years time. Much of the New York Phil's recorded legacy has been made available on CD, "officially" (Sony and RCA), "semi-officially" (Cala, Dutton) or "pirately", but leafing through North's discography lets you regularly stumble on recordings that lamentably seem to have passed the sifter so far (all amends made, of course, for those reissues North has failed to mention): Rodzinski's recordings from 1944 to 1946 seem the main casualty (and that includes Sibelius' 4th Symphony, Prokofiev's 5th, Gould's Spirituals, Rachmaninoff 2nd Piano Concerto with Sandor, Gershwin's American in Paris, Bizet's Symphony, Tchaikovsky's 6th Symphony and Suite #4, Ibert's Escales, Wagner's Siegfried Ydill), but Mitropoulos's recordings from the 1950s haven't been so well treated either. So that too is something to look forward to. Oh, and about those three trivia questions asked atop: First recordings: Joseph Stransky, January 20 to 24 1917, for Columbia Records: Ambroise Thomas' Overture to Raymond, Weber's Freischütz-Overture (not released), Largo from Dvorak's New World Symphony, Moritz Moszkowski's Malaguena (Boadbil op. 49/1), Andante con moto from Beethoven's 5th Symphony, French military march from Saint Saens' Suite algérienne opus 60, excerpts from Rimsky's Capriccio espagnol. Stransky recorded more such snippets on February 26 and March 2, 1918, then on October 22 to 24, 1919 - in all, including the unreleased, 26. Hardly any of these have been reissued in any form, and only two on CD, on Pearl GEMM CDS-9922. The next conductor to record was Arthur Bodanzky, in June 1920, six sides for Path. Then came Willem Mengelberg, in April 1922, for Victor (thanks Biddulph for the reissues, ASIN B000009L1F). The first recordings of Walter Damrosch were made on May 1, 1923, for Columbia. First complete Symphony? Ha, that's a tricky one: Mengelberg recorded Tchaikovsky's 5th for Brunswick on December 12 and 28 1927, but although a label number was assigned to it, it was never released, the records having apparently "broken down on a wear test". So, on January 4-6 1928, Walter Damrosch recorded Brahms's 2 for Columbia, and this one was released, and reissued by Biddulph (ASIN B00000HXN1). And although the question wasn't asked, the first complete Beethoven symphonies were 1 3, by Mengelberg, for Victor, on January 4 9, 1930 (and thanks again invaluable Biddulph for the reissues, ASIN B000009KEU). Boulez and Janacek's Sinfonietta: recording studio too cold, the orchestra voted against it and the session was cancelled. Now I bet this one must go at hefty prices on the secondary market. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. New York Phil on disc By Karl F. Miller James North clearly did his homework. It is a model for what a discography should be with complete discographic information, dates, recording venues, etc. While this is a reference book, being a discographer, I read it as though it was a history. I came away from my reading with something of a sense of an overview of the history of classical music in recording. As one looks at the repertoire recorded and when, one realizes that the early goals of recording were predicated on providing the customer with a representative sampling of the standard repertoire. As the public were more educated and informed, so too did the repertoire expand. It was amazing to remind myself how many recordings Bernstein made and the breath of the repertoire. The only frustration I felt was the omission of the unauthorized releases of the broadcast performances. For me, these are often the most significant documents of the history of any performing ensemble as they are perhaps a more truthful representation of their history. This is a wonderful contribution to the discographic literature. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Arthur Wilson A must for all fans of the New York Philharmonic!

The intent of any discography is comprehensiveness, aiming to include every recording within its chosen area, and to list all the important details of each. The discography, New York Philharmonic: The Authorized Recordings, 1917-2005 is no exception. Author James H. North has compiled more than 1500 commercial recordings made by the New York Philharmonic from 1917 to 2005. A fifteen-page Introduction serves as a general history of New York Philharmonic recordings, discussing issues such as the importance of recordings, the orchestra's relationships with various recording companies, the venues used, recordings of interest which were not made (and why they were not), and the record-labeling systems used by Columbia/CBS/Sony, the Philharmonic's long-term business partner. The entries are presented in chronological order of recording sessions and contain important details such as music played, performers, session dates and venues, recording companies and producers, first release dates, and all issues of the recording, including 78- and 45-rpm discs, Long-Playing records, and Compact Discs. Three appendixes catalog the entries by composer, conductor, and soloists respectively, referring the reader to the appropriate entry in the main listing. Two additional appendixes further illustrate the New York Philharmonic's history, one by describing the 78-rpm records made for class use by Ginn and Company during the mid-1920s, the other listing the twenty-five "Young People's Concerts," written and conducted by Leonard Bernstein and broadcast worldwide on television from 1958 to 1970, now available on VHS and DVD.

This book is an unbelievable accomplishment almost as impressive as the recording history it presents. My compliments to all the musicians past and present who have contributed to this mighty river of music. It is an honor to be among them. (Itzhak Perlman, World-Renowned Violinist) What a thrilling reminder of how much we owe to the New York Philharmonic for its monumental recording tradition. (Marilyn Horne, American Opera Legend) A

tremendous undertaking containing much obscure information, this is a seminal reference work that belongs in every large music collection... (Library Journal)North, a freelance journalist and music critic, assembles a chronological discography of about 1,500 recordings made by the New York Philharmonic from 1917 to 2005. Compiled from the Philharmonic and recording company archives, correspondence, and programs, the discography contains only authorized recordings, mostly American issues, and lists information by composer, covering conductor, soloists, venue, release date, record company and producer, timing, issue and matrix numbers, and comments. Formats include 78-rpm, 45- rpm, LP, and CD, as well as a few videos. Other ensembles that merged with the Philharmonic are listed under their own name. Appendices organize recordings by composer, conductor, and soloist, in addition to separate listings of Ginn Company 78s used for a course on music education in the 1920s, and videos of the Young People's Concerts.. (Reference and Research Book News, November 2006)...catalogs more than 1,500 commercial recordings by the New York Philharmonic and important details about each. (Teaching Music, December 2006)...full of fascinating details. (American Record Guide, May/June 2007)North, a freelance journalist and music critic, assembles a chronological discography of about 1,500 recordings made by the New York Philharmonic from 1917 to 2005. Compiled from the Philharmonic and recording company archives, correspondence, and programs, the discography contains only authorized recordings, mostly American issues, and lists information by composer, covering conductor, soloists, venue, release date, record company and producer, timing, issue and matrix numbers, and comments. Formats include 78-rpm, 45- rpm, LP, and CD, as well as a few videos. Other ensembles that merged with the Philharmonic are listed under their own name. Appendices organize recordings by composer, conductor, and soloist, in addition to separate listings of Ginn Company 78s used for a course on music education in the 1920s, and videos of the Young People's Concerts. (Reference and Research Book News, November 2006)About the AuthorJames H. North is a freelance journalist and music criticwriting for such publications as Fanfare and Classic Record Collectorand has attended New York Philharmonic concerts and listened to their recordings for over fifty years.