

Librarians, cultural historians, and foreign relations specialists will find the book informative and very useful. Librarians who call for isolationism should read this book with an open mind. It is a good analysis of the way we were: compassionate, loving, and very helpful.—*Mohammed M. Aman, Dean, Palmer Graduate Library School, C. W. Post Center, Long Island University, New York.*

Halsey, Richard Sweeney. *Classical Music Recordings for Home and Library*. Chicago: American Library Assn., 1976. 340p. \$15.00. (LC 75-40205) (ISBN 0-8389-0188-3)

This is a rather peculiar work both in its intentions and its realization. The author states that "its chief purpose is to ease the way for those who want to build, enlarge or upgrade their collections. . . . Although nostalgic humanists may deplore the calculated intervention of the recording studio, the public and the art of music benefit. This guide has been prepared to promote the widest possible distribution of that benefit to listeners of all ages" (p.vii).

How Mr. Halsey goes about his stated purposes is what constitutes the oddity. The book is divided into six main sections (excluding the glossary of audio terms and the title and subject-proper name-composer indices): (1) music, education, and recordings; (2) the "collection"; (3) reviews; (4) buying sound recordings; (5) classification, cataloging, and care of sound recordings; and (6) equipment and environments for listening. Except for section two, the work is in narrative form and is excellent from the standpoint of bringing together a plethora of information into one handbook.

The title of the work, however, suggests that it is section two which is of primary importance and it is precisely this section which is weak. Basically, it is comprised of two large listings: a composer-title list (subdivided into ten categories essentially by musical genre or form, and arranged within each category alphabetically by composer and then title) and a manufacturer's catalog number-performer list. Mr. Halsey has assigned each item in the first list a distinctive "guide number" by means of which one may locate all of the titles on a

disc identified in the second list.

Further, each entry in the composer-title list is given three coded ratings: (1) minimum age level (broken down to adult, secondary, and elementary); (2) aesthetic significance (a five point scale, 1 indicating "a masterpiece," 5 "flawed or insubstantial"); and (3) access (another five point scale, 1 being a work which "commands attention" while 5 denotes an "austere, esoteric" work. These indications tend to be quite subjective and, often, capricious, Mr. Halsey's assertions notwithstanding (e.g., the Shostakovich Symphony No. 5 has an aesthetic significance of 1 while the Sibelius Third Symphony rates a 4 and Stravinsky's *Firebird* is given a 3).

This, plus the lack of important information (e.g., names of orchestras and, frequently, key performers and record labels are omitted), the approximation of playing times, the massive number of items covered (over 4,000 compositions), and the sheer cumbersomeness of the unwieldy arrangement extirpate any usefulness section two might have offered.

In fine, the work can be recommended only for the portion excluding section two, and recommended only for those who do not own works treating the subjects herein cared for in greater depth.—*Kenyon C. Rosenberg, Assistant Director, University Libraries, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.*

Patterson, Maureen L. P.; and Yanuck, Martin, eds. *South Asian Library Resources in North America*. Papers from the Boston Conference, 1974. Committee on South Asian Libraries and Documentation of the Association for Asian Studies. Bibliotheca Asiatica 11. Zug, Switzerland: Inter Documentation Company, 1975. 362p. \$24.00. (ISBN 0-88386-797-4 US)

Patterson, Maureen L. P., ed. *South Asian Library Resources in North America*. A Survey Prepared for the Boston Conference, 1974. Committee on South Asian Libraries and Documentation of the Association for Asian Studies. Bibliotheca Asiatica 12. Zug, Switzerland: Inter Documentation Company, 1975. 223p. \$20.00 (ISBN 0-88386-798-2) (Distrib-

uted by South Asia Books, Box 502, Columbia, Missouri 65201.)

The ostensible purpose of the Boston Conference of 1974 was "to bring about a greatly increased measure of understanding among those who administer, interpret, and use South Asia library materials." This purpose was probably achieved at the conference; if not, it should be by the publication of its papers.

The conference was attended by thirty-nine librarians and twenty-nine nonlibrarians, and the book contains thirty-two papers. Of this total twenty were given by teaching faculty and twelve by librarians—a curious imbalance since it was supposed to be a conference on library resources.

The bad news is that in some ways the book was outdated before it appeared on the market—hardly the fault of the editors, the publisher, or those who presented papers.

The good news is that these anachronisms do not seriously detract from the worth of the book. There is not space to analyze all thirty-two papers here; so a few general remarks are in order.

The conference-goers who love the English language must have cringed now and then as it was misused. However, the writing is mostly intelligible and in a few welcome instances delightful. (Are conference papers ever supposed to be anything but dull?)

More positive comments can be made about the content of the papers. The conference consisted of four panels. The first was on the "Overall Scene"; the second on "Research Trends and Resources" covered the major regions of South Asia; the third on "Acquisition of Library Materials" was primarily about Public Law 480; the fourth was on "Access to South Asia Library Materials." In this last section the subject is discussed from the point of view of the small college.

This reviewer is disappointed that there was not a more equally matched debate between those who espouse keeping all or almost all the material that comes on PL480 and those who favor greater selectivity, especially when one considers that among participants the latter position is overwhelmingly the majority one.

Perhaps the most sensible statement of the conference came from Jack Wells of Wisconsin, who suggested creation of "a modified 'Farmington Plan' for South Asia, developing areas of language and subject responsibility for each of the research libraries that are [sic] still seriously involved in collection development." In the margin of my copy of the book I wrote "shabash!" next to this statement. (For those who have not bathed in the Holy Waters, "shabash" is Hindi for "bravo!")

For this statement was the challenge of the conference. If something is done about it, then the Boston Conference of 1974 will be regarded in years to come as a landmark meeting that initiated a change in the course of South Asia library development. If not, then it was just another in a progression of conferences where professors (some of them impersonating scholars) and librarians indulged in gum-beating, back-slapping, and cliché-swapping.

This leads to a discussion of the second book under review, which is a survey of South Asian library resources and neatly complements the papers.

It is a compilation of responses to a questionnaire issued to eighty-six institutions and completed by forty-three. More than that, it is a manual which contains a chronology of PL480, the Library of Congress South Asia selection policies statement and charts showing who gets what language on PL480, which institutions belong to which consortia, and what the strengths of the responding libraries are. It even has a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms. (Ever hear of GNOMES? Or would you believe, SASASAAS?)

The most valuable part of the book, of course, is the collective response to the questionnaire because this tells who is strong in the several regions, periods, or languages of South Asia.

On the basis of this information a follow-up to the Boston Conference should be summoned. It could be called "Boston Conference Part II" or perhaps "Son of Boston Conference."

At this meeting the participants would not read papers at each other, but work out a South Asia Farmington Plan (SAFP) in which each library would agree to collect

in depth in its areas of strength; and, if necessary, areas of collecting would be assigned.

If this comes about, then those who attended the Boston Conference of 1974 will be able to say to their grandchildren some day that they were there when history was about to be made.—Henry Scholberg, *Librarian, Ames Library of South Asia, University of Minnesota*.

Blake, Norman F. *Caxton: England's First Publisher*. London: Osprey, 1976. 220p. £7.00 (ISBN 0-85045-106-X)

The second half of the twentieth century affords many publishing coincidences. For instance, the appearance of this book coincides with the quincentenary anniversary of publishing in England. This anniversary was celebrated in London during September 1976 by a Caxton International Congress where the author, presently a Senior Lecturer of English Language at the University of Sheffield, was one of the main speakers.

This critical study of Caxton's publishing is long overdue; more than one hundred years have passed since the publication of William Blades' bibliographic study, *William Caxton: England's First Printer*. Actually, the similarity of Professor Blake's title reflects a change in contemporary scholarly emphasis since he relates the literary, as well as bibliographic, advances in Caxton scholarship. Incidentally, Blake's earlier work, *Caxton and His World* (1969), discusses the literary environment of the fifteenth century, and though that is partially duplicated here, the present volume also reports the technical aspects of publishing; so the two are complementary.

An historical chapter on Gutenberg's invention and subsequent lawsuits places printing in the fifteenth century for the novice. Then in the following three chapters Blake explores Caxton's early life and career. Blake raises the possibility that Caxton was born in Strood, Kent, but regarding a birthdate, he will only say "the limits of his date of birth are between 1415 and 1424." Caxton, we know, entered the mercer's trade and enjoyed a long successful career; however, according to Blake, we should not consider Caxton's late adoption

of printing as a break with his past. Earlier as a mercer, Caxton was undoubtedly dealing in luxury goods; thus, books were simply another item in his inventory. Here, Caxton's publishing venture is viewed as much a "commercial speculation" as a purely literary endeavor.

Having considered the necessary historical background, Professor Blake presents a lucid introduction to the practical aspects of "The Book and Its Production" in the late fifteenth century. Unfortunately, it is marred by several minor technical errors. For example, in his discussion of the *Eneydos*, Blake confuses sheet for leaf when he states "the first six sheets (A⁴A³²) contain the prologue and table of contents" and page for leaf in an explanation of signatures, "if the first gathering by that letter is designated 'a', then the first page will be 'a1' the second 'a2', and so on." The bibliographer will immediately realize what Blake has done, but the novice may get the wrong impression of how a book is produced.

Readers will find the chapter on "Decoration and Ornament" an intriguing discussion of the usefulness of decorated borders, initial letters, and paragraph marks for dating Caxton's books. Usually scholars date Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to 1478, but based on a carefully stated hypothesis involving typographic paragraph marks, there is a possibility, for Blake, that the first edition appeared in 1477. In addition, Blake mentions some solutions to the cryptic printer's device used by Caxton.

To some extent, the lack of scholarly apparatus limits the usefulness of this work. Only a selected bibliography is appended, and although the lack of footnotes tends to make the text more readable, the interested reader will have to search out appropriate supporting sources.

However, Professor Blake's contribution is the positing of Caxton's true position in early printing. Blake balances the historical and literary views and blends earlier writings into a single perspective, offering the reader a fascinating, insightful volume necessary for understanding Caxton and the publishing and book trades in England and the Low Countries during the fifteenth century.—John Richardson, Jr., *Graduate Li-*