

Advances in Discography

Michael Fitzgerald
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PROBLEMS

- How can we share the information that researchers, librarians, collectors, and fans discover?
- How can we create enhanced access to existing collections that goes beyond cataloging?
- For decades — over a century — we have talked and dreamed about a union catalog. Now we have OCLC WorldCat but is it meeting the needs of our users (discographers and users of discographies).
- Discographical metadata is different from cataloging metadata. Discography describes the intellectual work and the expression as well as the manifestation. Cataloging is instead based on the item.
- Our catalogs do not exert authority control at the levels that discography users need. This means: individual song titles and composers, performers and instrument specifics. Discographies are based on the recording session and include matrix numbers, studio locations, etc.
- Discographies are interested in unissued material (even unrecorded material). Cataloging is not.
- Past methods of sharing information: print discographies, CDROMs — all are immediately outdated upon publication.
- Current general discography projects are flawed in several respects: incompetent research, incompetent database design; reliance on earlier bad data; sloppy data entry even now; extremely costly — for what?

SOLUTIONS

- We, as librarians, can do the job better by partnering with serious researchers and collectors.
- We can develop a system so that interested individuals can contribute information and then the entire community can share in the benefits.
- Those contributing information may well not be librarians but rather graduate students, faculty, and other researchers. Please encourage these individuals to get in touch regarding collaboration.
- A system is already in place and has been for over five years at www.jazzdiscography.com. Over 300 listings have been produced. (Please note: this is **not** connected with www.jazzdisco.org, nor is it connected with the books/CDROM *The Jazz Discography* produced by Tom Lord.)
- Details on the database application being used follow below.
- For libraries, a simple hyperlink in the 856 field gives our catalogs instant enhancement. The expansion of the catalog to use outside resources is a topic of great interest for libraries.
- Session information is exportable in XML format and can be reused in other XML-friendly applications (e.g., [M.I.T. Simile project](#)). Systems librarians know the value of this highly-structured and extremely flexible data.

Michael Fitzgerald holds two degrees in jazz studies from Rutgers University and taught instrumental music for ten years in the New Jersey public schools. He is co-author of the book *Rat Race Blues: The Musical Life of Gigi Gryce* (Berkeley Hills Books, 2002), which won the ARSC Award for Excellence in 2003 and he has written considerably on the subject of jazz, with liner notes for CD releases on the Verve and Mosaic labels and articles in such publications as *ARSC Journal*, *Coda Magazine*, *Signal To Noise*, and *Jazz Education Journal*. Michael has been involved in discographical research for over twenty years and has been a pioneer in the electronic compiling and publishing of discographies. His website www.JazzDiscography.com is well known, attracting over 15,000 visitors each month.

Michael is currently a Carolina Academic Library Associate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he works in the music library and music cataloging departments. He also serves as consultant to the Jazz Loft Project at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies.

A remarkable new development
in jazz discography

Brian

The computer discography database application

The only program of its kind currently available.

The perfect tool for the archivist, collector, educator,
historian, or writer, as well as for the dedicated
discographer.

Stores and reports all aspects of recording session
information in the most minute detail, specifically
designed for jazz.

Reports are automatically formatted for clean and
clear viewing on the web and in other media.

*This is the next step—infinately superior to the printed
page, even beyond the CD-ROM—the immediate
global access of the Internet is the future of
discography.*

Expertly Designed by Specialists

Named after Brian Rust, the eminent British discographer who perfected the format for print discographies, **Brian** is a major leap forward for researchers in the jazz field. Designed specifically by jazz experts, **Brian** is not a makeshift “catalog your record collection” program but a revolutionary custom-tailored recording session-based tool written by a professional database programmer with the cooperation of expert jazz researchers. It has received attention and accolades at the Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies and was featured by the Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC) at their 2004 and 2006 conferences. Most importantly, it is being used every single day by international researchers on the cutting edge of jazz discography.

In addition to a multitude of online discographies, **Brian** has also been used in the booklet for the Frank Sinatra *The Complete Capitol Singles* boxed set and in the preparation of books such as *Rat Race Blues: The Musical Life of Gigi Gryce* published by Berkeley Hills Books (winner of the 2003 ARSC award for best jazz discography).

The program can be used for artist discographies or label discographies and reports can be designed easily to handle complex searches. For example: all recording sessions done by one artist in the company of another artist, but only for a certain label, and only within a specified timeframe, showing only issues on CD.

Packed with Features

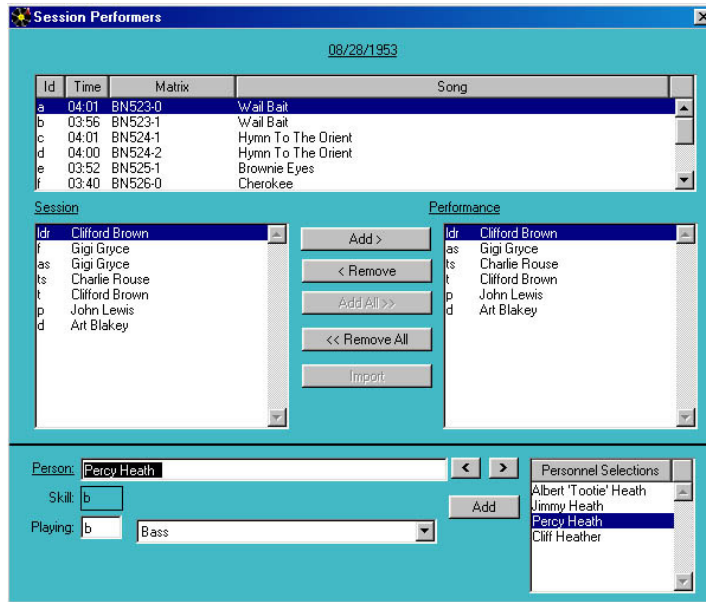
Nearly a decade’s worth of improvements and refinements have been implemented, based on the input of serious users who push the program’s limits. **Brian** can now handle any discographical situation and does so quickly and easily. Additional features such as the data exchange function are being used by collaborators. Thousands of sessions have been entered and can be shared between users. The XML format allows for data to be reused in many other computer applications.

Features in version 5.5 include: improvements to the user interface, a quick display window, font options, and additions such as fields to record data source details. Leader entries may be produced (the format used by general discographies) and even instrument-specific reports can be created (a particular artist playing a particular instrument). International character support makes available all diacritical characters to create the perfect discography in any language. Advanced lookup fields make data entry easier by letting the user see the next step.

Easy to Use

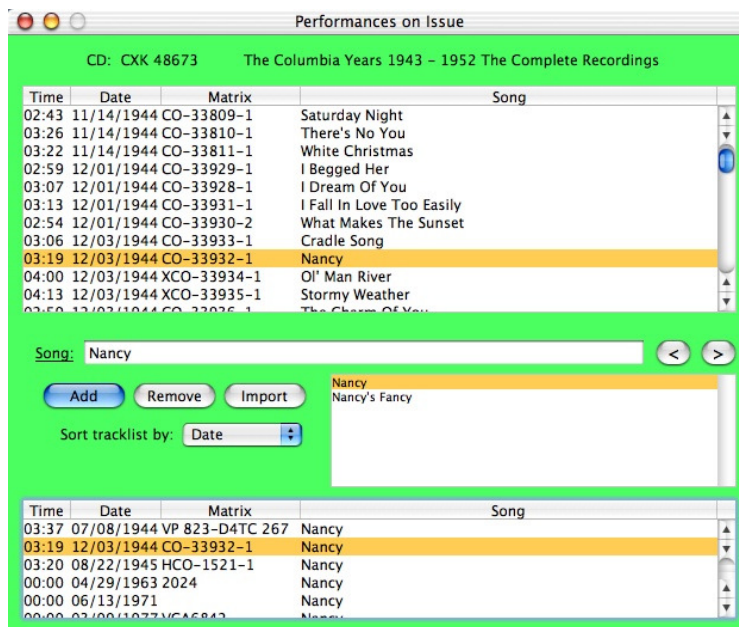
Inputting information is a snap—a large amount of starter data is available, if desired, so that hundreds of standard tunes (including composers), musicians, and record labels are at your fingertips, ready to be used. Once all the data is in the system, simply create a session and add performances and personnel. When the session is completed, create the issues and add the performances.

Figure A is a sample screen (Windows platform) showing performers being added to a session, not just collectively for the entire date, but specifically for each song to allow maximum flexibility and discographical accuracy. Abbreviations are fully customizable as is the instrument sort order.



(Figure A)

Figure B is a sample screen (Macintosh platform) showing performances being added to an issue.



(Figure B)

Figure C is a sample report for a single recording session in html format. Note that in addition to all standard discographical information (including matrix or master numbers and full titles for issues), **Brian** also includes track timings and composers as well as issue release dates. No manual editing was performed. The program automatically identifies all personnel exceptions and shows individual as well as collective issues.

Date: May 25, 1955
Location: Los Angeles, CA
Label: Decca

Jack Millman (ldr), Lin Halliday (ts), Ray Vasquez (bar), Jack Millman (fl), Don Anderson (vib), Don Overberg (g), Don Friedman (p), Ralph Peña (b), Gary Frommer (d), Chico Alvarez, Bill Holman, Jack Montrose, Gerald Wiggins (a)

a. L 8442 **When You're Near** - 02:09 (*Jack Millman*)
b. L 8443 **So Goes My Love** - 03:16 (*Jack Millman*)
Progressive CD: 7085 - Blowing Up A Storm (2002)
c. L 8444 **Too Much** - 02:57 (*Jack Millman*)
d. L 8445 **Tom And Jerry** - 02:54 (*Jack Millman*)
Progressive CD: 7085 - Blowing Up A Storm (2002)

All titles on: - Decca LP 12": DL 8156 - Jazz Studio 4
- Fresh Sound CD: 502 - Jack Millman And His All-Stars (2000)

Omit Lin Halliday (ts) on b. Ray Vasquez (bar) on b only. Omit Don Overberg (g) on b, c. Omit Don Friedman (p) on a. Chico Alvarez (a) on a only. Bill Holman (a) on b only. Jack Montrose (a) on c only. Gerald Wiggins (a) on d only.

Some sources erroneously report that Don Friedman is actually Russ Freeman.

(Figure C)

The current version is **Brian 5.5** and is available for both Macintosh and Windows platforms.

For more details including download information and online tutorial, visit

www.JazzDiscography.com

Also on this site can be found detailed discographies of the following artists: Bill Barron, Kenny Barron, Edgar Bateman, Tony Bennett, Walter Benton, Teddy Charles, Circle, Chris Connor, Art Davis, Sammy Davis, Jr., Walt Dickerson, Hobart Dotson, Ted Dunbar, Julian Euell, Don Friedman, Tony Fruscella, Kent Glenn, Honi Gordon, Joe Gordon, Henry Grimes, Slide Hampton, Wilbur Harden, Joe Henderson, Eddie Higgins, Andrew Hill, Elmo Hope, Shirley Horn, Joe Hunt, The Jazztet, Don Joseph, Tiny Kahn, Al Kiger, Bill Kirchner, Steve Kuhn, Pete LaRoca Sims, Barbara Lea, Harry Leahey, Peggy Lee, Abbey Lincoln, Joe Locke, Makanda Ken McIntyre, Carmen McRae, J.R. Monterose, Tete Montoliu, Ralph Moore, Michael Philip Mossman, Bob Mover, John Neves, Newport Youth Band, Orchestra U.S.A., Greg Osby, Duke Pearson, Carl Perkins, Benny Powell, Renee Rosnes, Kendra Shank, Frank Sinatra, Carol Sloane, Frank Strozier, Ira Sullivan, Sir Charles Thompson, Lucky Thompson, Bill Triglia, Mark Turner, Wilbur Ware, Lem Winchester, Tony Zano, and Attila Zoller. Plus nearly 250 leader entries. And many more to come!

All of these were created using **Brian** and most include automatically generated indexes of personnel, tunes, and issues.