

HMV – THE GRAMOPHONE COMPANY MATRIX SERIES IDENTIFYING LETTERS A SUMMARY BY JOHN MILMO

In the beginning was Fred Gaisberg. He arrived in London in August 1898 and it is now generally accepted that he began to make recordings on 8th August. The second recording engineer (“expert”) to arrive from the U.S. was William Sinkler Darby who went first to Hanover and made the first recordings in Russia at the behest of Joseph Berliner who kept that trip secret from the Head Office in London. Other experts joined the team over the years and suffix letters were attached to their matrixes to identify who had made them: hence the phrase “experts’ matrix series”. Only in 1934 was it decided to start a number of matrix series by reference generally to the country or nature of use – whoever actually made the recordings. Those series are set out at the end of this Summary but between 1898 and 1934 a variety of series were in use and will be identified below.

1. The “Original Series”

Between 8 August and 31 October 1898 the only expert was Fred Gaisberg so all recordings made during that period were made by him. He or his secretary entered the date of the recording in the centre of the record and numbered each recording made that day sequentially. Unfortunately the date sometimes appears as d/m/y and sometimes as m/d/y so 8/10/98 could mean either 10th August or 8th October. All these recordings are zinc-etched 7” Berliners without a paper label.

2. The “Unlettered Series”

The system of daily series of numbers ceased at the end of October 1898. It was succeeded by a simple numerical series starting at 1 on 1st November 1898 and reached 4557 by June 1900. All were made by FWG and were zinc-etched 7” Berliners without a paper label.

Sinkler Darby’s arrival in Europe in March 1899 allowed Joseph Berliner to send him to record in St Petersburg where he remained for some weeks. These recordings are also 7” zinc-etched Berliners without paper labels. What marks them out is that they carry no matrix number so that, when they arrived at the Hannover factory to be processed, they could easily be distinguished from those being sent there by Fred Gaisberg but they do bear dates – assumed to be the date of recording but the difference of 15 days between OS (old Russian style) dates and NS (new European style) dating needs to be borne in mind. The final date of recording was 22nd April (7th May) 1899.

After that, Darby moved to London where he assisted Fred Gaisberg and the two of them made the “First European Tour” to Leipzig, Budapest, Vienna, Paris and Madrid from May to August 1899 followed by the “First British Tour” to Glasgow, Belfast, Dublin and Cardiff between September and October. Both men left diary entries recording their experiences and from which recording dates can be verified. The important fact is that they used the same “Unlettered Series” whether one or the other or both actually made relevant recording.

By the end of September both men were back in London where, of course, no recordings had been made since they set off for Leipzig in May. The decision was then taken to send Darby on another foreign tour but to keep Gaisberg in London.

3. The first use of suffix letters

During his solo tour Darby added an “A” suffix to his matrix numbers while Fred Gaisberg continued to use the existing Unlettered Series re-starting at 3815 on 6th October 1899. Darby began in Stockholm in November 1899 starting at 1 and continued to other cities before he was joined by Fred Gaisberg for a joint visit to Moscow during April 1900 during which they used Darby’s “A” series. Darby then continued his tour and Fred Gaisberg returned to London where he re-started the Unlettered Series at 4469 on 18th May 1900. The series had stopped

on 7th December 1899 at 4418. Kelly notes that 4419-4468 were not used. Recordings are still zinc-etched 7” Berliners without paper labels.

The next major event was the introduction of wax recording to replace the less satisfactory zinc process. Darby switched from suffix “A” to “B” to differentiate between old and new processes. For some weeks Gaisberg used both the old zinc process and the new wax one and took both to Milan in June 1900 where he recorded a Greek bass named Mazzara on zinc. Presumably, it was thought that the artist’s status did not justify using wax. By then the zinc series had reached 4557.

For his new wax recordings Fred was given a new series starting at 500 on 1st May 1900. The first records bore a “J” to indicate the use of the new Johnson all-wax process but that was discontinued very quickly lest people realised that records without it were effectively old stock.

By this stage the company had two experts working independently, each with his own matrix series and, although Darby started his B series at 1 and Fred Gaisberg started his own at 500, the prospect of confusion must have been anticipated. Gaisberg then began to add a suffix to his recordings – this could be a G, FG or FWG but, whichever he used, or if he forgot to add something, Darby’s “B” would distinguish his recordings from Fred’s.

Fred was joined by Belford Grant Royal who had come over to help with the introduction of the new wax recording system and accompanied Fred to Milan. He made a number of recordings using Fred Gaisberg’s numerical series but replacing G, FG or FWG with R. This suffix R should not be confused with R added to two letter prefixes such as BW/CW which indicates a “relay” recording – see below.

10” recordings began to be made in April 1901. While Fred was in Russia, Royal, who had been to the U.S. for training at the Camden workshop, returned to London and the two experimented during April starting a new series at 100. The same suffix letters, G, FG, FWG or R were added to identify the expert.

Fred’s brother, William Conrad Gaisberg, arrived in London in May 1901 to work as another expert. When he arrived Fred was in Russia. Will used the suffix W, WG, WCG, and WG² or WG² to distinguish his recordings from those made by Fred and Royal although some records carry both men’s identifying codes such as G1327R: presumably both were engaged in making such recordings.

When 12” recordings began to be made in 1903 another numerical series began, probably with tests. The first known published example is by the first “Otello”, Francesco Tamagno: 10FT where the suffix identifies the artist rather than the expert. Although these Tamagno recordings were later (see below) taken into Fred’s “c” series they were in fact recorded by Will Gaisberg at Tamagno’s country villa in Italy.

Later, other experts joined the team: each needed 3 separate identification letters for 7”, 10” and 12” recordings respectively. By 1904 there were a number of them and it was decided to start using new identifying suffix letters. That led to the question, What do we do with recordings still in the catalogue but with “old series” letters? The solution was to replace the old letter with the expert’s new (1904) one. For that reason it may be confidently be asserted that a pressing with the new letter was made after 1904 but the presence of an old letter may indicate either an earlier pressing or one still held in stock at Hannover at the time of the change-over.

Subject to one point, it will be easier to assimilate both the old and new series (see 4 below) so as to marry up each expert’s pre- and post-1904 series.

The remaining point relates to Fred Gaisberg. On 28th September 1902 he sailed from Tilbury on his Far Eastern tour not returning to London until 5th August 1903 after which he made a well-deserved trip home to the U.S. returning to the U.K. in late September 1903. During the trip he used two matrix series (7” and 10” respectively) each with the prefix “E”. 1-868 were 7” and 1000-2189 10” recordings. So he did not record in Europe during that 12 month period.

But recording continued in London using “Fred’s” matrix series: many records were made by Will and others by Royal who continued to use their identifying letters.

Just to confuse matters, when Will Gaisberg went to Milan (and Zürich) in October 1903 his brother was back working in London so Will needed a new numerical series since they were now working in different locations. He also made recordings on that trip to fulfil artists’ contracts with the International Zonophone Company

recently taken over by the Gramophone and Typewriter. For the former he used the first half of his second name “Con” and for the latter the second half “rad”. So “Con” has nothing to do with an otherwise unidentified hotel called the Continental. In passing, I have otherwise ignored the post-take over activities of Zonophone.

The French Company was under the control of Alfred Clark as Managing Director. In 1902 he appointed Walcutt and Scheuplein as his recording engineers. Not only were both current record sizes (7” and 10”) allocated one numerical series with a suffix “F” (Français) but both experts had to use it. Their individual contributions can sometimes be detected by suffix “CW” or “CS” but the former is generally concealed by the label. If the use of one numerical sequence might be thought unfortunate the next development was even worse: while Walcutt continued to record in Paris, Scheuplein was sent to record in Barcelona. To avoid confusion between the two he was told to start at 7001F; no one seems to have thought what would happen when Walcutt reached 7000F. Fortunately the 1904 reform prevented that eventuality.

Fred Gaisberg had started recording in August 1898 in Europe, William Sinkler Darby in March 1899 and Will Gaisberg in May 1901. Belford Royal began by assembling gramophones and helping with the operation of the new processes; he never had his own matrix series. Georg Franz Hampe [Hampe I] started in 1902 as did Cleveland Walcutt and Charles Scheuplein. Franz’s brother, Max Hampe [Hampe II], started in 1904. Other experts came to join the original team after the introduction of the 1904 codes and yet more joined later.

The tables in the next section identify the matrix suffix letters allocated to each of the above. Although Arthur Spottiswoode Clarke did not start until 1908 he had the last three single letters to be used, x, y and z. Others were allocated double letters starting with aa.

There were a number of miscellaneous recordings which fall into no known series. In January 1903 Carmen Sylva, Queen of Romania, made 4 10” recordings numbered 1-4 with no prefix or suffix; in March/April 1904 Fred Gaisberg recorded Nellie Melba in a series 1-28. Some have a “Melba” suffix but not all; others have other suffixes the meanings of which are not fully understood. Berlin made some 1904 recordings prefixed 0B with suffixes x, y and z and in 1905 some g, h and i recordings which do not fall into any recognised series. The final oddity is “14Archiv” recorded in Berlin in 1906 where “Archiv” appears in the Register but not on published pressings of the record.

4. The 1904 revision

Expert	Allocation in 1904			Usage prior to 1904 / Notes		
	7”	10”	12”	7”	10”	12”
Frederick “Fred” William Gaisberg ¹ “Far Eastern Tour”	a	b	c	G, FG, FWG or no letter		
				E	E	
William “Will” Conrad Gaisberg	d	e	f	W, WCG, W2 see Note ² below		
				Con 20+	Con 100+	Con 500+
William Sinkler Darby [see also ad/ae/af below]	g	h	i (j)	Zinc: A		
				Wax: B	X	Y
Georg Franz Hampe [Hampe I]	k	l (L)	m	C	Z	Hp
Cleveland Walcutt see Note ³				F	F	F
George Walter Dillnutt see Note ³ [see also ak/al below]	n	o	p	From 1907 to 20.12.10		
John Daniel “Dan” Smoot				26.10.16 to 30.12.16 See Note ⁴ below		
Theodor Heinrich Max Hampe [Hampe II]	q	r	s	Started in late 1904		
Charles Scheuplein	t	u	v	F	F	F
Harold “Harry” Fleming		u	v	Scheuplein’s last recording was made in Strasbourg in July 1920 and he died in March 1921; Fleming replaced him		
Arthur Spottiswoode Clarke [see also ah/ai below]	(x)	y	z	From November 1908 to July 1915		
Ivor Robert Holmes	aa	ab	ac	From October 1908 to March 1910		
William Charles Hancox				From August 1910 to August 1914		
Edmund James “Ted” Pearse	ad	ae	af	March 1909 to 18.04.14		
William Sinkler Darby				29.02.16 to 18.04.16		

[See also g/h/I above]				
Hugh Murtagh		ah	ai/aj	April 1910 to June 1919
Arthur Spottiswoode Clarke [See also x/y/z above]				August 1919 to June 1921
George Walter Dilnutt [see also n/o/p above]		ak	al	July 1911 to 1921
William James Beckwith		am	ar	October 1919 to March 1921

Note 1. Although the a, b and c series are regularly described as Fred Gaisberg's they were in fact used not only by Fred but also by Will and by Royal. In describing them Kelly is careful to use the phrase "made by F W Gaisberg *et al*".

Note 2. In a letter dated 12.12.10 Will suggested that his d e f series should in future be used by anyone who recorded in London and that idea was accepted. In the result the actual expert's identification appeared as a prefix and e or f (depending on size) as a suffix. By 1910 7" recordings had ceased so the change only applied to e and f. In practice, recordings for HMV shifted to the HO identification when those series were introduced and e and f were taken up with recordings destined for Zonophone issue but the e and f usage of the expert's identification continued after Will's death until the 1921 re-organisation of matrix numbers described in the next section. Unfortunately, as Kelly points out, "... the few indications on Recording Sheets do not always agree with the letters found on the discs themselves and indicating letters are often missed from the entries in the Registers."

Note 3. Dilnutt was the first English expert to work for the company. He accompanied Fred on the Far Eastern Tour in 1902/03 but was recalled to London from Singapore in May 1903 before Fred went to Bangkok and Rangoon. In May 1906 he worked with Will Gaisberg in India, Burma and then, on behalf of Victor, in Japan and Korea, before returning to India where they concluded their trip and arrived back in London on 1st May 1907.

Walcutt left the company in December 1907 having left Tunis on 1st November on a "pest ship" before being quarantined in France. He left officially in March 1908 and returned permanently to the U.S.A. in 1912.

Following his resignation his "o" series was allocated to Dilnutt who (supervised by F W Gaisberg) recorded in Cairo in late 1907 where the first "p" (12") recordings were made. Dilnutt was then allowed to record on his own at Beirut in January 1908.

Note 4. Dilnutt's "o" recordings run from 7622o to 13922o. After his trip to Beirut and, later, Alexandria, he worked exclusively in India and the Far East. In October 1916 John D Smoot went to Scandinavia but started at 13000o already used by Dilnutt in Madras. Smoot's 13000o-13517o duplicate Dilnutt's. The duplication of more than 500 matrix numbers is believed to be unique in HMV's history. Kelly comments that their previous use must have been overlooked and adds "At this time there was bitter rivalry between the newly independent Deutsche Grammophon AG in Hannover and The Gramophone Company in London, both of which were attempting to acquire (or to retain) the Scandinavian market while the Great War continued. According to the late Karleric Liliedahl both DGA and HMV issued pressings of these records. In the case of the German pressings the suffix letter was given as "o" (with "p" appearing on 12" discs), while on HMV pressings of both sizes the suffix was given as "sm". It may be assumed that Hannover knew little if anything of the prior use of the "o" and "p" prefix but Hayes should have been aware before sending Smoot to Copenhagen. Another expert, Pearse, who visited Stockholm on his way back to London from what was then Petrograd reported that he had been told that Smoot had not made any recordings in Scandinavia. If he didn't, who did?"

In May 1912 a new series was introduced for London recordings at Head Office. Like the amended e and f system it was used by different experts at different times. "HO" was first applied as a suffix with experts' identifying letters as a prefix in two separate numerical series, one for 10" and one for 12". The 10" series started at "ab20ho" because, when Holmes started to record (see aa etc above), it seems no one told him how to identify his recordings so he had used HO as a prefix until he was told not to. The same applies to the 12" series which started at "aj130ho". By July 1912 HO was the prefix and the expert's letters the suffix. Unfortunately, as Kelly has pointed out, there are instances in which the wrong letters were attached: Fred Gaisberg made the 21 June 1912 Paderewski recordings but "f" was attached not "c" for the first four. There are sufficient instances of error to reject experts' suffix letters as a reliable guide unless independently confirmed. By May 1916 it seems that the letters attached were not those of the expert who actually made the recording but of the expert in overall charge of the studio on the relevant day.

But the fact that a particular expert was on Head Office duty means, of course, that there will be a gap in his own personal series when on its face it might seem he was not working.

The series ended on 16th/17th February 1921 when they were replaced by Bb/Cc.

5. The 1921 revision

In 1921 a Victor sent its Chief Recording Engineer, Raymond Randoff Sooy, to London to bring HMV up to date on developments in the cutting of waxes carried out in the U.S.A. during the war. Kelly comments that this led to a complete reconstruction of the HMV recording studios and methods of recording. In consequence, it was decided to withdraw all the existing matrix suffix letters and to establish an entirely new system in their place for all new recordings; existing recordings were not affected. Each consists of a size indicator (B and C for 10" and 12" respectively) and a second letter to identify the expert. Both proceed in one combined numerical sequence. No allowance was made for any future 7" recordings. Their production had effectively ceased some years before but when in 1923 some 7" Children's records of nursery rhymes were made in London they were allocated a Dd prefix within the Bb/Cc numerical sequence.

Perhaps in tribute to his work for HMV, Sooy was given the first (BA/CA) pairing and London came second. He went back to the U.S.A. for Christmas but, "for the purpose of checking up and reporting on the work which was done during my absence", he returned in early 1922 and reported that "I found the work had progressed to the satisfaction of all concerned": R R Sooy's Memoirs – the David Sarnoff Library.

In each of the following tables I have attempted to include "Start" and "Finish" dates. The former represents the date on which the first recording in the sequence was made; the latter, the last such recording. In the post-1934 table the last recording may be one created on tape unprocessed for issue on 78 but only on 45 or EP. In such cases the "Finish" date may represent the end of the numerical sequence regardless of record speed.

10"	12"		Numbers	Starting	Finishing
BA	CA	Raymond Randoff Sooy ¹	1-11	21.05.21	24.05.21
		Francis "Frank" William Rennie	20-477	23.05.29	26.11.29
Bb	Cc	Various ²	1-21113	13.03.21	31.12.30
BD	CD	Robert "Bob" Edward Beckett	1-9374	01.23	18.12.30
BE	CE	Alfred Collins Skelson ³	1-1288	04.10.21	16.07.23
		Unknown	1300-2134	08.04.29	
		John Hartley Ellis	2135-2735	17.01.30	30.09.30
BF	CF	Edward "Chick" Fowler	1-3750	22.06.26	20.11.30
BG	CG	Ernest Gower	1-1519	11.05.29	31.12.30
BH	CH	Arthur Spottiswoode Clarke	No recordings traced		
BJ	CJ	Harold Edward Davidson	1-3624	16.11.25	23.06.30
BK	CK	George Walter Dillnutt	1-3078	06.10.21	24.11.30
BL	CL	Douglas Ewen Larter	1-6844	19.09.24	20.12.30
BM	CM	William James Beckwith	1-496	03.05.21	22.05.22
		Carey Charles Blyton	500-1692	05.11.28	30.06.30
BN	CN	Sidney Edwin Tunn	1-1158	08.10.28	19.12.30
BP	CP	Joseph Jackson	1-318	22.05.23	16.07.26
BR	CR	Non-studio locations U.K.	1-2911	28.10.25	22.12.30
BS	CS	Harold "Harry" Fleming	1-4923	22.10.21	04.12.30
BT	CT	Marcus Joseph Colthurst Alexander	1-4198	30.07.23	15.07.28
		William Laybourne Ewing Dickson	5000-5313	18.08.30	15.10.30
BU	CU	Capt. Hampton Sanders	Indian recordings; few details traced		
BV	CV	Waldemar René Vogel	1-572	01.10.28	04.01.29
		Francis Cecil Addington Bulkley	600-647	03.09.29	13.09.29
		Francis Cecil Addington Bulkley and Arthur Douglas Lawrence	648-671	16.09.29	10.10.29
		Francis Cecil Bulkley	672-1044	29.10.29	12.02.30
BW	CW	Arthur Douglas Lawrence	1-3781	07.06.26	18.08.30
BX	CX	Arthur James Twine	1-8713+	.09.26	?

Any of the above letter pairs followed by R indicates a Relay Recording in which the recording was relayed from a non-studio recording location to a studio generally by a landline or (in the U.K.) to the Recording Van and/or using a landline at the same time; BR was used for such recordings made in the U.K. This use of “R” must be distinguished from early recordings taken by Royal.

1. During his stay in Europe in 1921 Sooy spent some time in Italy where he recorded Mattia Battistini known as “the king of baritones; the baritone of kings”.
2. Bb/Cc includes Hh/Jj and Yy/Zz recordings pressed for Homophone/Zonophone respectively and a small number of 7” Dd recordings. Recordings were made by various experts at various locations mostly in London but included a small number at Croydon and at the Theatre Royal, Dublin.
3. Skelson died 18.08.23; Ellis was dismissed in 1931.

The next major development in recording was the introduction of electrical recording but that did not lead to any change in existing matrix series which had to wait until 1929 when, for reasons which might be identified in Company documentation at Hayes but which no one has seen, a new system was introduced although it retained most of the characteristics of the one already in use: one numerical system for use by one expert at any one time. In general early electrical recordings carried a ▲ after the matrix number. Again, the introduction of these new series did not affect any existing recordings which retained their matrix numbers without change. In general the series used one letter following the 0 and 2 size code but some series (e.g. 0WX) used two letters.

6. The 1931 revision

10”	12”		Numbers	Starting	Finishing
A continued to be applied to Victor recordings replacing the Victor prefix					
0B	2B	Various, all in London ¹	1-7820	01.01.31	24.07.34
0BR	2BR	Relay recordings	1-340	11.01.31	27.06.34
0C	2C	George Thomas Corran	1-2401	.01.31	01.12.31
H0C	H2C	Hindustan Musical Products			
M0C	M2C	Megaphone Company	-6218		
0D	2D	Robert Edward Beckett	1-2123	08.01.31	08.06.34
0E	2E	S K Sen	No details save that it was used in India for other companies – Michael Kinnear		
0F	2F	Edward Fowler	1-519	02.01.31	15.07.31
0G	2G	Ernest Gower	1-1020	01.01.31	08.07.31
0H	2H	Arthur Spottiswoode Clark ²	1-8	25.08.32	26.08.32
0J	2J	Horace Frank Chown	1-1270	02.09.31	.07.34
0K	2K	George Walter Dillnutt	1-1544	05.01.31	05.01.33
0L	2L	Douglas Ewen Larter	1-	02.01.31	
		Arthur Spottiswood Clarke	-849		06.06.34
0M	2M	Carey Charles Blyton	1-1449	25.08.31	30.06.33
0N	2N	Sidney Edwin Tunn	1-705	07.01.31	.02.32
0NX		Sydney, Australia	1-19	18.09.31	27.01.32
0P	2P	This subdivides as follows:			
0PA	2PA	Gustaf Jonasson	1-274	.05.32	22.07.34
0PC	2PC	Is NOT part of this series but belongs to the 1934 system: see below			
0PD	2PD	Recorded at Pathé Studio, Paris	1-14	11.07.32	16.01.34
0PF	2PF	C J Anderson ³	1-?	02.09.32	?
		William Laybourne Ewing Dickson	?-221	?	Jan 1934
0PG	2PG	George Woolliscroft Deakin	1-1725	15.09.32	30.06.39
0T	2T	Albert Conrad Dickson	1-1761	14.01.31	01.08.34
0W	2W	Arthur Douglas Lawrence (et al)	1-2600	21.04.31	02.05.31
0WX	2WX	Wilhelm Starkmann	1-780	20.08.31	25.06.34
0X	2X	Arthur James Twine	Dutch East Indies; no details		
0Z	2Z	Horace Frank Chown	1-214	05.04.33 ⁴	18.06.33 ⁴

1. 0B/2B includes 0Y and 2Y recordings pressed for Zonophone. Recordings were made by various experts at different locations in London. The series proceeded in blocks allocated in advance for use at particular recording venues. Within each block recording proceeded in numerical order but some were filled before others so that, for example, 18000 was used on 17.01.30 but 18001 had been used on 02.10.29. Equally if an artist was due to make 5 records and the first three concluded a block, the last two would have to take the first numbers in the next block for that location thereby giving the impression that two recording sessions had been involved rather than one.
2. All recorded at the Hotel Metropol, Monte Carlo.
3. Kelly first enters OPF1-60 as Stockholm recordings. He gives no details. Liliedahl Vol.5 lists them as OPA. They agree that they were recorded at the Odéon Studio, Stockholm. Kelly then lists another group (Copenhagen and Oslo) also starting at 1. I think he accidentally reproduced the first line of his OPA "Contents of Series" entry in his OPF contents list and have therefore removed it from my OPF line.
4. These dates are doubtful: a manuscript list differs from matrix card details for these Baghdad and Teheran sessions operated jointly, according to Kinnear, by HMV and Columbia.

7. The 1934 and final revision

The reasons for the revision are unknown; the suggestion has been made that using a 3-digit series gives more scope for expansion than the then existing 2 digit series. Again, the introduction of these new series did not affect any existing recordings which retained their matrix numbers without change.

Where these series differ is that each relates to a country or area of recording, not to the identity of the expert. It also gave scope to have a "main" series such as 0LB for Belgium with 0LBC for the Belgian Congo. There appears to be neither rhyme nor reason for the allocation of particular letters to particular areas.

At the end of most series the 0 and 2 prefixes gave way to a 7 prefix to indicate an issue on 45. Since by then all recordings were made on tape a decision had to be made whether to issue on 78, 45 or both. Recording dates become a nightmare: what appears on recording cards as "Recording Date" generally represents the date on which a 78 or 45 master was made from the tape.

10"	12"		Numbers	Starting	Finishing
0AA	2AA	Australia	1-947	1935	c.1957
0AB	2AB	West Africa: Gold Coast/Nigeria	1-70086 ¹	02.09.37	1959/60
0AC	2AC	Egypt (made by Max Frenz)	1-27 ?29-31	.11.35	
		Egypt See note below	?29-31, 32-107	03.03.47	05.05.47
0AE	2AE	Ethopia	1-203	13.09.55	13.10.58
0AF	2AF	East Africa: Kenya, Uganda	1-496	01.09.38	17.12.56
0AM	2AM	East Africa: Tanganyika, Congo	1-611	12.06.56	c.1959
0AN	2AN	New Zealand	1-289	? 1937	? 1955
0AS	2AS	South Africa	1-349	18.11.37	12.09.50
0AT	2AT	"Overseas Recordings"	1-34	.01.54	03.04.56
0AV	2AV	South Africa	No details discovered		
0AW	2AW	No details			
0BA	2BA	Italy	1-10494	20.08.34	? 1954
0BF	2BF	Finland	1-245	c.1951	c.1958
0CS	2CS	Denmark: Copenhagen			
0DK	2DK	Hungary	1-313	Probably all post war	
0EA	2EA	England: London	1-20136	15.08.34	28.01.97 ²
0EB	2EB	Recordings made in London for EMI Sales & Services Ltd – private contract work not for public sale	1-7717	22.01.48	c.1955 ³
0EF	2EF	"Recordings made in London: Foreign Interests" ⁴	1-22	c3.04.40	21.12.42
			1-425	21.07.41	c.2.12.47
			10001-10699	21.10.54	17.06.60
0EL	2EL	Ireland			

0EN	2EN	Recordings made in London for the entertainment of H.M. forces	A little under 18,000 wartime recordings but Peter Copeland reports that no matrixes or documentation survives. ⁵		
0EP	2EP	Ireland	1?-1053	?	Feb 1960
0ER	2ER	Non-studio recordings U.K. using mobile van and/or relay to studio	1-993	27.08.34	01.01.47
0ES	2ES	Recordings made in London – H.M. Forces instructional records	1-307	c.1941	c.1952
0EW	2EW	Recordings made in London for U.S. forces “Special Services Division” H.Q. SOS ETOUSA	1-165	19.11.43	06.11.45
0FA	2FA	Holland and Cologne	2000-2229	26.09.50	02.02.58
0FM	2FM	French	10” 1-3 12” 1-4	Only issued on L.P. c.1960	
0GA	2GA	Greece	1-3158; 10001-10015	19.11.34	1960
0GF	2GF	Recordings by Gracie Fields	1-62	08.10.38	19.10.39
0HB	2HB	Teheran	1001-1294	27.10.47	?1952
0HC	2HC	Prague	1-339	03.12.34	05.10.46
0HD	2HD	Vienna for Roumania	1-53	13.12.37	Nov. 1938
0HL	2HL	Vienna for Prague	1-79	28.10.37	17.02.38
0HR	2HR	Bucharest	1-584	16.10.34	17.05.40
0JE	2JE	India	very few details at Hayes; Calcutta must have them		
0JH	2JH	? India			
0JP	2JP	India/Pakistan			
0JW	2JW	India			
0KA	2KA	Spain	1-c.1950	22.09.34	c.1956
0LA	2LA	France (including French North Africa - Algiers, Tunis etc.	1-7679	26.09.34	?1957
0LB	2LB	Belgium	1-1057	04.04.38	c.1954
0LBC/2LBC		Belgian Congo	1-1409	29.05.54	25.11.61
0LK	2LK	? Paris			
0LPG/2LPG		? Belgian Congo	1-6	04.11.54	04.11.54
0MC	2MC	Calcutta including Hawaii	Few details		
0MCGA		Greece c. 1964			
0MD	2MD	Overseas – India ?	very few details at Hayes; Calcutta must have them		
0ME	2ME				
0MF	2MF				
0MG	2MG				
0MH	2MH				
0MJ	2MJ				
0MK	2MK				
0ML	2ML				
0MP	2MP				
0NA	2NA	Norway		?1934	?1954
0PC	2PC	Lisbon, Portugal	1-1174	1942	21.02.58
0PH	2PH	India	Kelly only has 6 entries; I have none!		
0PK	2PK	Made by/for Opika	No details		
0PL	2PL	Made for Parlophone (Vienna)		1950s	
0RA	2RA	Germany	1-	06.08.34	1958
0SB	2SB	Stockholm, Sweden	1-3078	30.08.34	11.08.49
0SM	2SM	MGM recordings	? to c.424	1950’s	1950’s
0SW	2SW	French Swing series	1-263	21.01.38	21.02.42
0TB	2TB	Turkey	1-2875 10000-10112	19.01.35	1960’s
0VH	2VH	Austria – Vienna	1-811 7000-7265	28.08.34 05.10.37	17.04.57 24-01-51
0WAO		West Africa in Fanti	?-?1904	Late 1950s	

0ZA	2ZA	Switzerland	1-2030 2ZA1-c.75	24.04.37 05.02.46	11.02.56 23.10.50
SW	Swing Label – mostly French and Victor		1-c.411		
ABCD					
TTP/TPPX CTP/CTPX	Special Recordings ⁶		1-20150	1932	02.06.65

Note (0AC). The first group is noted by Alan Kelly as having been recorded by Max Frenz who is not otherwise known as an HMV expert. The second group is catalogued as “enregistrement dirigé par le Prof Mansour Awad. Some recordings listed in a 1920 catalogue are similarly described. Since it is unlikely that a Professor was employed as a recording engineer it seems more likely that he supervised the performances rather than the actual recording process – although some youthful piano recordings by Fred Gaisberg are listed as by “Professor Gaisberg”. I have included references to what a 12” recording would show but in many series such as 0AC no 12” recordings have been identified.

I have omitted details of series such as KAN which seems to include recordings in Hausa and Yoruba for West African companies including Senaphone as well as a couple by “Ella Fitzgerald in person” the significance of which escapes me. Nor did I think it worth trying to detail NAS which involves South African recordings processed by HMV in the 1960’s but, if you have a desperate need for details of recordings by R A Oswi and his Brown Visards, let me know! The same went for a 1960’s TM series from West Africa for which I have scant details and one (QQS) which seems to include only bands from the U.K. and the Gold Coast (now Ghana) police band and issued on an otherwise unknown QSR label (whether by HMV or not). Indian recordings pose their own problems and I have followed Alan Kelly in not getting involved with them save if I find a relevant matrix card. It would not be surprising to learn of other matrix series, not included above, which were used in India.

1. This does not run continuously from 1 – 70086: there are many gaps before the series resumes at a round number. Recordings seem to have been made locally, shipped to Hayes to be processed and then returned to West Africa with HMV labels for sale to the public.
2. This series was split into blocks dedicated to No 1 Studio, No 2 Studio, Kingsway Hall, the Transfer Room and other venues. This poses the same problem as that noted for Bb/Cc: each block proceeded at a different pace so that although numbers are sequential within each, the blocks themselves are not. In the result, therefore, although 5200 was recorded in February 1938, 5201 had been recorded in May 1937.
The 1997 recordings (Robert Alagna accompanied by Antonio Pappano, piano) were made by the acoustic process to celebrate HMV’s Centenary. Prior to that, the last number used was in 1961 but issued only on 45.
3. This includes a number of 16” recordings prefixed 6EB for radio broadcasts in the “Orchestras of the World” series.
4. This is a misnomer: most were actually made in Iceland or Africa! And no, I don’t understand why they should be in a common series either. The first two groups include Demonstration Records for dealers, Dutch, wartime recordings from Melodia in Russia and Latin-American recordings while the 5-figure series was for English recordings made for export to “emerging nations” in Africa and the West Indies.
5. Peter Copeland suggests that to date these recordings you should take the matrix number, add 2,500, divide by 3,000, add 1,941 and you will get the year of recording with the decimal part representing roughly how far into that year: see 31 Historic Records for his analysis.
6. This is the series introduced to accommodate Joe Batten’s Special Recording Department at EMI from mid-1935. The first recording was a Columbia matrix followed by HMV matrixes but it was really an EMI series. When some recordings were made available to sections of the public they bore EMI labels. The series included everything from lions and tigers at a zoo to talking books for the blind, private recordings of speeches, songs, greetings and weddings and government contracts for experimental scientific and educational use. The tests made by Mme Marchesi are included as well as a complete opera “Lorna Doone” by Hilary P Chadwyck-Healey recorded at the composer’s expense. Large numbers are taken up with recordings for the libraries of music publishers such as Boosey & Hawkes from which the public could borrow records and for private radio stations (then illegal in the U.K.) including Radio Luxemburg and Radio Normandie including advertising material and other sponsored material. After the war Joe Batten created the “Intimate Artistry” series of recordings on 16” (6CTP) including a 30 minute interview with a Star coupled with some of the Star’s records. The Stars so honoured included Richard Tauber and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf neither of whom was an HMV artist.

Some traps for the unwary

First, it is often assumed that if a record is found with a particular expert's suffix letter(s) that he must have recorded it. This is not necessarily so. I have, earlier in this Summary, referred to the first European and British Isles tours undertaken by Fred Gaisberg and Sinkler Darby using Fred's Unlettered Series. Where a senior expert was accompanied by a junior it is simply not known whether both attended every session or whether one or the other attended some sessions but not others. The same applies to their joint visit to St Petersburg using Darby's "A" series but it may be inferred that Fred did most of the recording save when he was ill in bed for 4 days. Whether Darby recorded during that period is not documented. While Fred was in the Far East it was Will Gaisberg who recorded Francesco Tamagno although the recordings were later assigned to Fred's series.

Second, it should not be assumed that any particular series proceeded in a strictly numerical sequence. Many did but I have noted the fact that both Bb/Cc and 0EA/2EA were subdivided into blocks which could result in numbers being used not in chronological sequence. Similarly, on occasion, the task of allocating matrix numbers was delayed until the end of a session and the date entered on the Return was that of allocation not recording: this can lead to absurd results such as more than 50 recordings apparently recorded on the same day. It has always to be remembered that this was a commercial operation and not one designed to accommodate the wishes of discographers trying to make sense of it many years later; it was of no concern to the company that a recording was made on one day rather than another so long as all recordings made at a particular session were logged for company records and people knew what had been recorded and by whom.

On occasion, recordings by HMV were re-allocated to another company within EMI such as Columbia for issue at which stage the HMV matrix numbers would be deleted and Columbia matrix numbers allocated. The now-blank HMV numbers were then re-used maybe weeks or months later and wholly out of date sequence. Other dating discrepancies can be accounted for if numbers were pre-allocated to titles prior to a session or sessions but the artist decided to vary the sequence of recording. That generally involved no more than a day or two. In one instance Fred used Columbia matrix numbers in Vienna to record Bruno Walter and the VPO in the Brahms Symphony No 3 (CHAX95-111) after which its use by Columbia resumed with Beethoven's 8th performed by the same orchestra under Weingartner. It seems likely that the HMV recording engineer was making recordings elsewhere at the time of Fred's visit; hence the need to use another company's equipment. In that instance the matrixes were left in Columbia form and not transferred to an HMV series.

Similarly, it is clear from the West African series that on arrival at Hayes the waxes or tapes were processed in no particular order. The noted "Date of Recording" in the documentation was completed by reference to the date of processing not of the actual date on which the artist had made the recording so that not only is there generally a two month gap to allow the waxes to be shipped back to Hayes for processing but the "Dates of Recording" may bear little resemblance to the sequence in which they were actually made by the artist.

If it is correct that a documented "Date of Recording" may actually be a processing date rather than the date of the artist's recorded performance, the use of tape recording requiring the production of a 78, 45 or 33 master before any copy can be produced, may (and probably does) mean that recording dates for tape recorded material are potentially misleading. There are, in the Archive, 0EA documents which specify a date and time of recording for which the relevant matrix card shows a later recording date. Towards the end of his life, confronted with this disparity, Kelly reckoned that many of his dates for recordings originally made on tape could be wrong and should be looked at with that in mind. I have no reason to think that this would not apply to recordings made in other countries too and, for that reason, would advise hesitation before assuming that a recording date for tape recorded material reflected the date on which the artist visited the studio. For practical purposes that could apply to any recordings made in the 1950's.

Third, the existence of further (Indian) codes cannot be disregarded: such additional series would be documented at the Calcutta (Dum-Dum) factory and in all probability not have been sent to Hayes.

Fourth, the use of "0" in the 1931 and 1934 series is the figure "0" to indicate 10" size not the letter "O": use of the wrong symbol will frustrate any computer search. Similarly, discographers have for years reproduced the lower-case "l" which appears on Franz Hampe's 10" records by an upper-case "L" to avoid confusion with the figure "1".

Finally, this is intended as a Summary and one danger is that in seeking to simplify one oversimplifies to the extent of raising an inaccuracy. It should be used with that in mind. If any particular areas need further clarification or details of locations/dates in a particular series are needed please let me know.