



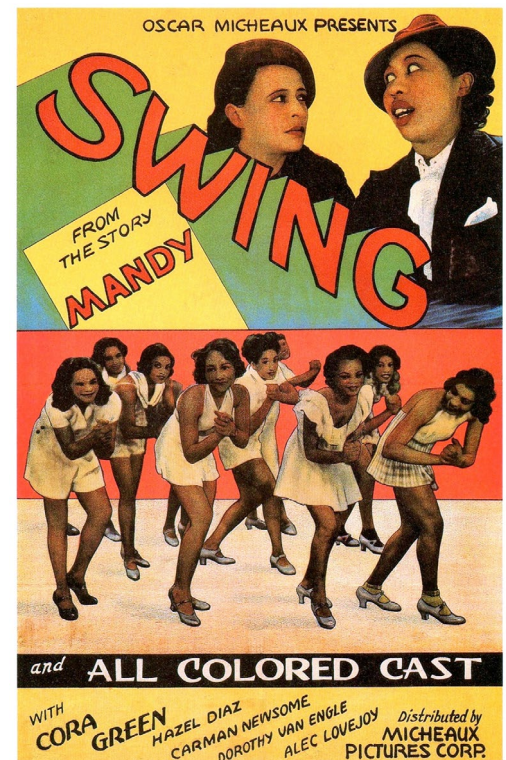
# Anything Phonographic

by Steve Ramm

**B**y the time you get this issue I hope you've cooled down from the heat wave that covered the country.

**Let's go to the Movies (really old ones!) –** In 1891 the Edison Company successfully demonstrated a prototype of the Kinetoscope, which enabled one person at a time to view moving pictures. The first public Kinetoscope demonstration took place in 1893. By 1894 the Kinetoscope was a commercial success, with public parlors established around the world. The first to present projected moving pictures to a paying audience were the Lumière brothers in December 1895 in Paris, France. They used a device of their own making, the Cinématographe, which was a camera, a projector and a film printer all in one. Edison's "movie studio" was the "Black Maria" in West Orange NJ and his first full-length film (actually only 11 minutes), *The Great Train Robbery*, was filmed near the factory in New Jersey. What I wasn't aware of, until June, when I received a new 2-disc Blu-ray set from KinoLorber – ***Made in New Jersey- Films from Fort Lee, America's First Film Town*** - was that, before Hollywood it was all around the northern New Jersey area. This terrifically entertaining set includes 14 films (some quite short) made in Fort Lee between 1909 and 1939, along with two documentaries, *The Champion* (2015) – a movie studio, whose building still stands - and the rarely-seen *Ghost Town: The Story of Fort Lee* (1935). Thomas Edison's *Rescued from an Eagle's Nest* shot on location on the Fort Lee in 1907 is not here – but you can watch the seven-minute film here: <https://tinyurl.com/9t6svmzf>

Also from KinoLorber comes the five-disc Blu-ray ***Oscar Micheaux: The Complete Collection***. Micheaux was the FIRST Black film director/producer and made 44 films during his career. He wanted to present the "Black experience" to audiences. And MUSIC was a big part of all his films. They weren't actually "musicals" per se (though *Swing!* (1938), is about a guy who wants to open a jazz club, but many of them feature musical numbers. Ironically, *Body & Soul* (1925) starred Paul Robeson but was made just two years before movies added sound! I also discovered a collection of four "musical comedies" made in Germany in 1931 and 1932 just before Hitler shut down the film industry. ***Champagne & Caviar: Four Weimar Comedies (1931-1932)*** (*Flicker Alley*) not only has delightful casts (including Peter Lorre – in a comic role - and Hedy Lamarr). The real find here is that one of the films – (English title *I By Day, You By Night*) - contains rare performances by The Comedian Harmonists, whose 78s may be in your collection. These are a joy to watch.





Flicker Alley does amazing restorations with the best fragment of nitrate films from around the globe.

**New CD arrivals** – The summer was light on releases to share with you but there are a few. If you are an “old folkie” (I am) you’ll remember Maria Muldaur as part of Jim Kweskin’s Jug Band in the ‘60s. A few years ago she joined with the NOLA street band Tuba Skinny (who I’ve raved about here before) for an album. Her latest, **One Hour Mama- The Blues of Victoria Spivey** (Nola Blue), not only has TS but guest duets with Taj Mahal and Elvin Bishop. Spivey, whose recording career that spanned 40 years, from 1926 to the mid-1960s, was known for risqué (double-entendre) lyrics (the title track and “One Man Mama” are two samples) and, at age 81, Muldaur hasn’t lost her sassy voice.



The folks at the UK Acrobat label released a treasure-trove for bluegrass lovers. **The Father of Bluegrass: The Singles Collection 1940-60** packs 80 recordings (half originally released on 78s) on to three CDs and includes a 24-page booklet of notes and accurate discographic data.

**Phonos in Art** -Regular readers know that I love any graphic art with phonographs or records. In June, while on a cruise to Norway and British Isles, I saw an ad for the “at sea” auction by Park West that had a phono. I inquired and learned it was an etching titled “Sounding Silence” by a Russian artist, Michael Cheval. Further research showed the artist puts horn phonos in a few of his works (see SS as well as “Melody of Rain”. No, I didn’t buy the piece (they were asking \$1,300 for numbered print) but I see repro copies on the internet. Anyway, it’s worth sharing the image here.



**The Edison Papers update** - When the first volume of **The Papers of Thomas A. Edison** (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press) was published by JHU Press in 1989, some of you weren’t even born! It was anticipated that one volume, in a planned series of 20 would be published each year - ending in 2009. Well, things got delayed and I learned from the publisher that **The Papers of Thomas A. Edison: From Laboratory to Marketplace, January 1890–June 1892 (Volume 10)** is just being published. It’s 1032 pages. This is a massive undertaking by Paul Israel and his team of Editors. Has it really been 36 years? I contacted Dr. Israel for an update and received this reply:

*The schedule for publication is dependent on our schedule to complete the editing. Volume 11 focuses on the sound recording and motion picture industries during the last four decades of Edison’s career. We expect to complete the editing by June 2027.*

*At that point we will produce the digital book pages, proofread them, and create an index. We expect to submit final pages to JHUP in Spring 2028. At that point JHUP will put the volume in its publication schedule but that is determined by the Press.*

JHU often has 20% discount offer if you sign up for their sales.

I'll end here with another recommendation for those who are not buying the CD-ROMs offered by Kurt Nauck of the semi-annual **Naucktion Bidder Request Shows**. I got BRS *Number 76* before I left on our cruise and I'm still not finished listening to the super rare records (played uninterrupted) because it runs about 18 hours! There's even an index to search for which hour the recording appears plus a pdf of the catalog. And only \$20 (plus shipping if you didn't win anything)! [www.78rpm.com](http://www.78rpm.com)

Well, it's 100 degrees as I submit this, but I'll see you back here when Winter arrives.

Steve Ramm, 420 Fitzwater St., Philadelphia, PA 19147 (e-mail: [Stevenramm@aol.com](mailto:Stevenramm@aol.com))

## **78 RPM AUCTIONS - NOW IN OUR 50th YEAR**

Over 100 Quarterly auctions since 1972 featuring  
1900-1930s 78RPM Jazz, Blues, Personality, Classical,  
Opera, Country and Ethnic.

1920s-30s Magazines, postcards and sheet music.

Over 2000 different records offered on each auction.  
You are missing a lot of fun if you are not on our list.

**DAVE REISS, PO Box 2109, Seaford, NY 11783, USA**

**TEL: 1-516-798-3381 EMAIL: DNReiss@verizon.net**