

The **Gramophone**

edited by
COMPTON MACKENZIE *and* **CHRISTOPHER STONE**

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JAN. 1936

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CONTENTS

JANUARY 1936

PAGE		
311	EDITORIAL	Compton Mackenzie
315	ELISABETH RETHBERG	Thomas O'Brien
316	BOOK REVIEWS	
317	BEETHOVEN'S STRING QUARTET IN E FLAT	Cyril M. Crabtree
319	SCHOOL GRAMOPHONE NOTES	W. [W. Johnson
320	ROUND AND ABOUT WITH W. R. A.	
321	THE FUTURE OF SCREEN OPERA	W. John Elton
322	CASELLA'S SICILIANA E BURLESCA (1917)	Terpander
323	SECOND REVIEWS	
325	ANALYTICAL NOTES AND FIRST REVIEWS	
333	MISCELLANEOUS REVIEWS	M. E. C.
336	DANCE RECORDS	M. E. C.
337	SWING MUSIC	Edgar Jackson
341	MORE PROGRAMME BUILDING	
342	TECHNICAL TALK	P. Wilson
343	TECHNICAL REPORTS	
346	TRADE WINDS AND IDLE ZEPHYRS	
347	BEETHOVEN—THE MAN	Aural Gray
349	VIBRATO v. TREMOLO	
350	TURN TABLE TALK	
351	COLLECTORS' CORNER	P. G. Hurst
353	CORRESPONDENCE and GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY REPORTS	

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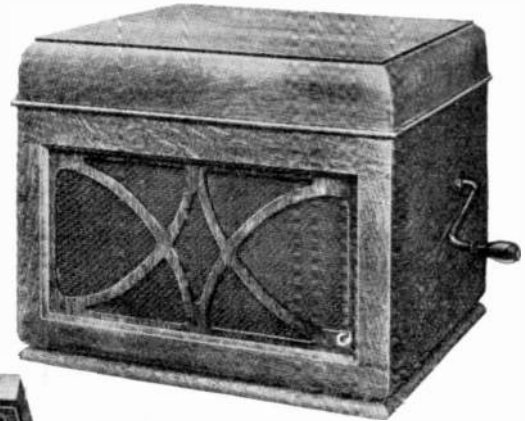
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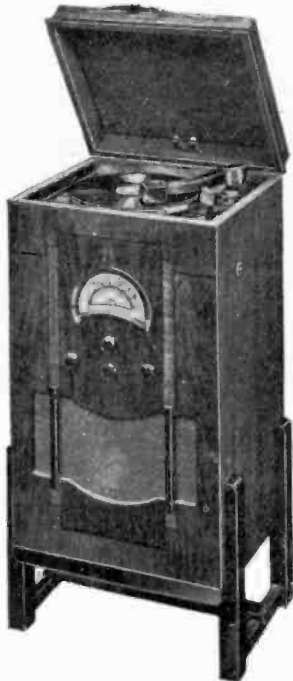
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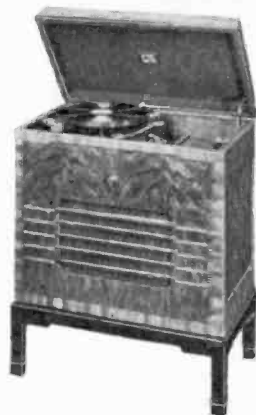
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JANUARY 1936

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EDITORIAL

It is for me a happy coincidence that I should be writing the first editorial of the New Year with the sight of hundreds of records on my shelves which had been packed away in boxes for five years. The pleasure of meeting all these old friends again has been considerably marred by meeting so many of them warped so much out of shape as to be worthless. The damage was done by not removing the discs from the albums of the complete works when they were packed. The result is that I have lost beyond hope of recovery at least fifty albums, and another fifty or so all barely playable. I hope that this example of folly will prevent any reader of THE GRAMOPHONE from ever considering for a moment the possibility of leaving records in albums when he is packing them. The tale of losses is too hideous to be dwelt upon, and the thought of transporting so many hundreds of useless cripples from the Channel Islands to the Outer Hebrides is too bitter to contemplate. Fortunately no optimism was indulged in over the H.M.V. or Columbia albums for twelve discs. From these the records were all taken out, and the actual breakages have been astonishingly few. On the other hand, the records in the Astra albums were allowed to remain in, and this optimism was justified. So far as I have been able to examine them, not one disc has been broken or warped, and I put it up to the Gramophone Exchange that they should see about getting these albums made again. I bought the last of the stock about ten years ago, and they are about twenty times as good as any album before or since. Compared with the H.M.V., Columbia, Broadwood, and others of my old albums, they look as if I had bought them yesterday and inherited the rest from my great-grandfather. They prevent warping. They prevent breakage. The only minor disadvantage they have is that one side of the record is hidden when it is in place, but this is so trifling compared with the superiority of the Astra in every other respect that it is hardly worth mentioning. My friend Mr. Russell of the Gramophone Exchange will remember them, and I really think he should consider putting them on the market again. I have

about a couple of hundred which I suppose cost on an average between the twelve-inch and the ten-inch six shillings apiece. Moreover, these Astra albums are so portable that they can be used as carriers. They are also very compact. Four of them will go to three H.M.V.s.

It is too early to attempt anything except a few disjointed comments on some refreshed impressions of these old records, and in any case I have not had time since moving into my new house to do much playing of the gramophone. A library of nearly ten thousand books and a collection of what cannot be less than eight thousand records take a good deal of storing away, and it will be weeks before I get them into any order on my shelves. The first comment I have to make is about Caruso and Gigli. I have never really had the slightest doubt about the superiority of Caruso's voice, but it was not until I played a few of his best early records against the pre-electric Gigli records that I realised the boundless superiority of Caruso in any aspect of a great tenor. Take, for instance, that famous trio from Verdi's *I Lombardi* sung by Caruso, Alda and Journet on a buff H.M.V. It is still in the catalogue. Mine is a single-sided disc, but I see that on the present red DM126 the trio from *Samson and Delilah* sung by Caruso, Homer and Journet occupies the other side. Caruso is playing the part of Orontes, a Saracen chief who has fallen in love with Giselda, a captive Christian girl; but having been mortally wounded he is dying in the cave of Peter the Hermit on the banks of the Jordan. Urged by Giselda and by Peter himself, played by Journet, Orontes is converted to Christianity, and this trio records the conversion. Caruso manages to suggest a man *in extremis* without once spoiling the lovely timbre of his voice. The singing of Journet and Alda supports him magnificently; in fact, this record is one of the best to be obtained. Of course, the old pre-electric accompaniment sounds a bit like an accordeon, but what does that matter when three such glorious voices are so perfectly recorded? I commend this record to readers who are looking out for something really special with which to surprise

their friends. I paid nine shillings for it, but nowadays you can get it and another old nine-shilling trio for six shillings and sixpence. I have not yet come across any of my twelve-inch McCormack discs, but I have unearthed all the ten-inches and find them as good as I ever thought them. I was particularly pleased to play over again a couple of songs with obligatos by Kreisler—*Carmela*, a charming Sorrentine ditty, and, on the other side, Moszkowski's *Serenade* set to ridiculous words, but nevertheless most attractive. The Galli-Curci records were a little disappointing. I had once thought her arias from *La Sonnambula* and *I Puritani* lovelier singing than they have proved on hearing them again after a long interval. On the other hand, Alma Gluck seems to me on hearing her again an even more exquisite singer than I had supposed her. The records of hers I have been playing are no longer in the catalogue, but if anybody has a chance of securing a disc of Gluck singing *The Old Folks at Home* with her husband Zimbalist playing an obligato of Dvorak's *Humoresque*, let him not miss it. Another exquisite record of hers is *Have You Seen But a Whyte Lilie Grow?* And equally lovely is her singing of Reynaldo Hahn's setting of Verlaine's *L'Heure Exquise*, which would certainly challenge strongly for the right to be called the most sensuously beautiful song ever written. There is another song, too, by Le Roux in the same sensuous French style called *Le Nil*, of which Gluck made the only recording. It is time some of our present singers for the gramophone go chasing about a bit for songs like this. I know that Radio has severely damaged the sales of vocal records, and that the public seems to want only the hackneyed favourites. Still the future of singing is with the gramophone, not with wireless, and it is a gloomy look-out if vocal records have to be abandoned because nobody buys them. Here again there seems to me an opportunity for the cheap reprint. One old purple Columbia which used to give me great pleasure turned up, and that was a record of Elsa Stralia singing *Ocean, Thou Mighty Monster*. That has vanished from the Columbia catalogue, where Stralia is now only represented in a duet with Frank Mullings. A purple Stracciari singing *Eri Tu Che Macchiavi* from *Ballo in Maschera* is one of the great baritone performances on the gramophone, and I see it is still in the Columbia catalogue as a light-blue disc with Germont's song *Di Provenza* on the other side. A name which has disappeared from the H.M.V. catalogue is Graziella Pareto. She made some beautiful soprano records, but as I remember when she appeared at Covent Garden she was not happy. Either the management had made things difficult or the critics had been unkind. She made one record of an enchanting Florentine folk song, *Bimba Bimbetta*. This is worth looking out for at second hand. Most of Titta Ruffo's records have disappeared from the H.M.V. catalogue,

and among them a charming song from Leoncavallo's opera, *Zazà, Piccola Zingara*. I recommend this moving little aria to the attention of some of our contemporary barytones. Then, of course, there were the De Gogorza records to dig out. Nobody has sung *La Paloma* better than he, and I am glad to see that is still in the H.M.V. catalogue with another bird on the other side—*La Golondrina* (The Swallow), a melodious Mexican song. Too many of his records have been removed if retention be judged by merit. All his Spanish songs are perfect. So, too, is his singing of Mozart, and he even made a very good record of *Sally in Our Alley*. The H.M.V. has Number One Catalogue, Number Two Catalogue, and the Connoisseur Catalogue. Would it not be a joy to impoverished gramophone enthusiasts if there could be a Number Three Catalogue, devoted entirely to cheap reprints? I suppose that plenty of records of De Gogorza are still available in the second-hand market, but the supply cannot last for ever, and it does seem a pity that a master of his art like De Gogorza should gradually fade from the public's mind. He sang with extraordinary ease and grace, and few singers have concealed so much art so successfully.

As I was turning over the records I came across what I think was the first Yehudi Menuhin, on the label of which he appears as Master Yehudi Menuhin; but after all it seems only yesterday that Mischa Elman was playing in Etons, and his picture in the current H.M.V. catalogue shows a bald-headed gentleman in his mid forties. Some way must really be devised of keeping these old records in circulation. I was particularly struck by that article by Mr. S. C. Greaves in our Christmas number. I had no idea that so many records had been made of the palmy days of the music-hall. Surely here is another opportunity for testing the idea of cheap reprints. I was not quite clear always whether some of the records mentioned by Mr. Greaves could still be obtained. For instance; I should much like to have the record of Victoria Monks singing *Give My Regards to Leicester Square* or *If you want to have a row, wait till the sun shines*. I would give much, too, for a record by T. E. Dunville. Did he ever make a record of *Press the Button of the Front Door Bell*? And did George Robey ever make a record of *Say No More About It*? Most of these old records are much better than we thought them once upon a time. On the first H.M.V. gramophone I knew, a model of 1908, no voice except Caruso's really had any effect at all. We had a record of Emmy Destinn singing *Un Bel Di*, and it sounded like a grasshopper chirping. Yet a good modern acoustical instrument like the Expert or the Mark 10A would transform such a disc. Orchestral records, too, were hopeless with old-style soundboxes, and looking back to those years it seems to me extraordinary now that better reproduction was not achieved much earlier. In trying to get away from the old gaudy

metal exterior horn to the horn concealed in a cabinet, music was sacrificed to furniture, and I think if THE GRAMOPHONE may be proud of anything in its career it may be proud of that band of enthusiastic amateurs who did so much to restore the exterior horn to its proper place. As I write these words, I hear that Mr. E. M. Ginn's All Range horn has reached Barra, but I shall not have an opportunity of trying it out in time to make any comments for this number, because we have to go to press earlier than usual and my copy must leave by to-morrow's post. With the All Range horn and the Mark 10A my room will look like the deck of a steamship.

Unfortunately, one of the albums which turned its contents into a switchback was the Columbia one of the Second Sibelius Symphony conducted by Kajanus, so that I was unable to compare it with the new H.M.V. version of this symphony played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Koussevitzky on five and a half red discs. I expect some people will grumble because the twelfth side is blank, but these odd sides are a great nuisance because it is often extremely difficult to find a short piece of music that will fit in with a great work like this Second Symphony, and I applaud H.M.V. for leaving the twelfth side blank. It is much less annoying than dividing the music in such a way as to leave

too wide a margin, merely to eke it out to twelve sides. Another device tried for a time was to let somebody speak an introduction to the music. There are one or two ghastly examples of this on Stokowski records. Stokowski may be a good conductor, but he has about the ugliest voice and the most tiresome diction that could be heard on a record. The ideal presenter of music has yet to be found. One enjoyed Sir Walford Davies over the wireless, but even he on a gramophone record is apt to sound tiresome after a certain amount of repetition. The conventional B.B.C. method of presentation is deplorable, chiefly because the announcers are under the impression that in order to convey the fact that they are using Italian words it is necessary to speak like a mincing schoolgirl. Anyway, it is a waste of time and energy to allot one side of a record to a spoken introduction. When once it has been heard it is as good as a blank, since nobody ever wants to hear it again. So on the whole the best solution of spare space is to leave it blank

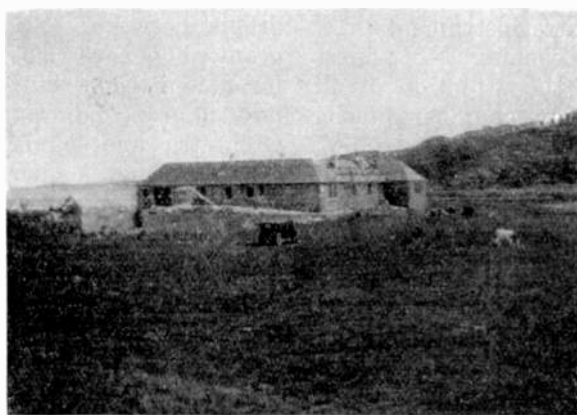
as H.M.V. have done on the twelfth side of the Sibelius symphony.

I really believe this is the best piece of orchestral recording we have had. The noise is often terrific, but there was not a single moment when I felt it was too much of a good thing. I think that more of the dynamic force of Koussevitzky's conducting has been captured in this recording than in any previous recording by him, and I regret more than ever that the latest H.M.V. Choral Symphony was entrusted to Stokowski instead of to him. I had hoped that we should have had another volume of the Sibelius Society ready to greet the composer on his seventieth birthday, but perhaps it was more appropriately celebrated by offering this superb recording of a superb performance.

Will some obliging and well-informed reader let me know the date of the first performance of *The Swan of Tuonela* in England? It was at Queen's Hall, and I was present. I was also present at the first performance of *Till Eulenspiegel*, and I want to discover why *Till Eulenspiegel* should have made a first impression of wild cacophony and why the *Swan of Tuonela* should have made an instant appeal. If I were offered to-day a chance of hearing either composition I should always choose the Sibelius work, not because *Till Eulenspiegel*

sounds cacophonous any longer, but because *The Swan* remains more elusive. I can lie back now and hum in my head various phrases of *Till Eulenspiegel*, but I cannot recapture in my mind a note from *Tuonela*.

This question of tunes which haunt the mind is perplexing enough. Years ago my wife, one of her sisters, and one of her brothers happened to play when I was present the Mendelssohn Trio in D, and some ten years afterwards, without having heard the trio once in the meantime, I much surprised my wife by humming with unusual accuracy the beginning of the first movement. I can hum it at this moment, but if I were to be threatened with instant death for failure to obey, I could not hum melodies much better loved, equally simple, and heard a hundred times more often. For instance, I doubt if there is any composition I have listened to more often than Beethoven's Spring Sonata, and yet I cannot reproduce at will a single one of its extremely simple melodies. In fact, in the whole of chamber music I believe that



The Editor and his new house, "Suidheachan,"
Isle of Barra

the only other movement besides the first movement of this Mendelssohn Trio in D that I can always reproduce is the last movement of the Brahms Sextet in B flat (Opus 18), which appeared last month exquisitely played by the Pro Arte Quartet with Alfred Hobday and Anthony Pini as second viola and second violoncello. By the way, I notice in last month's GRAMOPHONE that Alfred Hobday is made second violin by mistake. This sextet was one of our first publications for the National Gramophonic Society, and it is splendid to have this series of enchanting tunes recorded under modern conditions. It is a completely typical piece of youthful music, and it would make an ideal item in a Brahms chamber music programme between the two early piano quartets of which I was writing recently. There is the advantage of the gramophone. A concert performance of these three works in an afternoon would involve seven players and would not be economically feasible, so nobody is ever likely to hear such a concert performance. In fact, the Sextet itself is very rarely played because it involves two extra instrumentalists. Yet it is a work capable of reaching the widest popularity, and I press it upon the attention of all those who are beginning to enjoy chamber music. I had not heard it for five years when the H.M.V. version arrived a week or two ago. Yet, as I said, the melody of that last movement has haunted me all the time and I can at any moment hum it. As I dictate these words my secretary reminds me that there is another melody from chamber music which I am always capable of humming, a melody from one of Schubert's quartets, and it is true that I can usually hum that melody and very often do hum it unconsciously, but in spite of that claim I cannot recapture it at this moment, and I cannot even say with certainty from which quartet it comes. So I must fall back on the melodies from Mendelssohn's Trio and Brahms's Sextet.

This little discussion has given me an idea for another competition, and I think this time the prize shall be this Brahms Sextet. I shall confine the competition, which must be something of a lottery, to devotees of chamber music. The prize will be given to the reader whose list of six most easily remembered melodies from works of chamber music most nearly coincides with the votes of the majority. You simply write down your choice of melodies as they occur to you and as you are able to hum them to yourself and allot them to their proper works and movements, then send your list to THE GRAMOPHONE, 10A, Soho Square, by February 10th. Write "Tunes" on the outside of the envelope. Remember that this competition is to go to THE GRAMOPHONE Office, *not to me*. By the way, I am already receiving some most interesting entries for the competition I announced for January 10th, and if the rest of the entries come up to the first ones it is going to be difficult for me to

decide who is to have that glorious album of the Schubert Quintet.

Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite must have been recorded as often as any piece of music, apart from the popular affairs of the moment. The latest recording on three red H.M.V. discs is made by Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. I found it a most agreeable performance, and to my relief not too heavily over-weighted by volume of sound. One of our great puzzles at Herm was to find out what the instrument was in the Arab dance that made such a queer little sibilant noise, and I used to set the discovery of this instrument as a test for the innumerable soundboxes over whose merits we used to argue in the old days. That first version was one of Sir Landon Ronald's records as I remember. In the end we decided that the instrument was some strange oriental pipe until we bethought ourselves of getting hold of the score, when we discovered that it was a tambourine being stroked. In this latest version the stroking of the tambourine has not been so evident as it has been in several others between. Sir Landon Ronald, to whom the gramophone owes so much, had given us no records for a long time, but last month I was delighted to find him conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Kreisler in the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, and a charming performance it is of this perennially popular work. I still think that the most remarkable performance of any part of this concerto was made by Ysaye when he played the last movement or an extract from the last movement on an old purple single-sided Columbia disc. What a wonderful impression of extreme affluence those old purple Columbia discs gave!

Owing to the need of hurry this month with my editorial on account of Christmas, I have not had time to play through the Columbia records of Gluck's *Orpheus* issued on eight discs. Nor have I heard the Decca production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. However, they shall be played presently by the All Range Expert and the Mark 10A facing each other like a couple of defiant ventilators on the new Cunarder.

To all our readers, to the staff of THE GRAMOPHONE, and to everybody connected in the slightest way with records, I wish with all my heart a very happy and a very prosperous New Year.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.

We regret that the price of the Sibelius Second Symphony, H.M.V. DB2599-2604, reviewed last month, was given as 36s.; it should have been 33s., the last single-sided record costing only 3s.

Readers are reminded that the entries to the two Christmas competitions, as detailed on pages 267 and 280 of the December issue, must be received by the 10th and 15th of January respectively. The former to be sent direct to the Editor at the Isle of Barra and the latter to the London Office.

ELISABETH RETHBERG

"The Most Perfect Singer in the World"

by THOMAS O'BRIEN

OPERA enthusiasts are curious people. Like us Irishmen, they dearly love to wrangle, but with this difference: that whereas we devote ourselves almost exclusively to the political field and its strange inhabitants, they content themselves with arguing as to the comparative merits of this or that famous singer. How rarely they can agree that a certain artist is justly entitled to a place among the exalted! But they can do it; for, once in a while, a singer appears in the world of Grand Opera who, because of superlative qualities of voice and artistry, merits that place. Such were Patti and Melba at their best. Such a one to-day is Elisabeth Rethberg, whose magnificent singing in *Lohengrin*, *Schwanda* and *Prince Igor* in the last Covent Garden season has been acclaimed as the finest heard at the famous opera house for many years. From a purely musical point of view, her singing of Elsa's music was of that rare quality of which one finds it difficult to write restrainedly; and few who were lucky enough to hear it would quarrel with the title of "The Most Perfect Singer in the World" bestowed on Rethberg by the New York Guild of Vocal Teachers.

Elisabeth Rethberg was born of musical parents in a village in the Erz Mountains, between Saxony and Bohemia. From her earliest days she displayed exceptional musical talents, and at the age of sixteen was sent to study at Dresden. For two years she studied singing and pianoforte at the Conservatoire there, and two years later made her debut at the Dresden Royal Opera House. It was a triumph, and there soon followed engagements at the Imperial Opera in Vienna, and concert tours throughout Germany and Scandinavia. From then on, her career as an operatic star of the first order was assured. Since, she has appeared with dazzling success at the Metropolitan, New York, the Royal Opera, Budapest, the Grand Opera, Paris, the Royal Opera House, Rome, and the Scala, Milan. In all she has been hailed as one of the greatest of living singers, and an actress of uncommon ability.

In 1925 she came more or less unheralded to stately Covent Garden, where she made her debut in *Aida*, the others in the cast being Lindi, Franchi and Georgette Caro. It was in many respects a poor performance of Verdi's great opera; but there were no two opinions as to the performance of the title rôle: it was simply superb. Rethberg's singing of "O Patria Mia" was a thing of unforgettable beauty—a supreme example of the fast-disappearing art of *bel canto* at its best. In 1928 she sang with great success in the première of Respighi's opera *The Sunken Bell* at the Metropolitan, and during the New York season sang a total of forty-nine performances. The following year she won fresh laurels at La Scala, where

she was invited to appear by Toscanini. Of her debut there in *Aida*, one of the leading Milan journals said: "Rethberg's voice is beautiful, has a tremendous range with an astounding evenness in all registers. She has a lovely, youthful timbre and masters the art of modulation with greatest skill, indispensable for sincere emotional singing. Her style and technique are masterly, able to produce a perfect legato and portando.

It is especially noteworthy that her diction is faultless, a rare thing with a foreigner. Her success was complete and tempestuously manifested in the applause of the audience." Another Milanese paper said of her performance: "Her victory over Milan opera-lovers was complete." In 1929 she sang the rôle of Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* in New York, and proved a perfect Mozartian singer.

Though Rethberg has gained her principal successes on the operatic stage, she has also won a high reputation as a concert singer. She is reputed to have a repertory of 1,000 songs, including many of the finest of Schubert, Mozart, Schumann, Wolf and Richard Strauss. She is said to have studied and memorised the chief soprano parts of no less than 106 operas. She is also an excellent pianist.

Fortunate indeed is the gramophone who possesses all Rethberg's records and a gramophone capable of doing them real justice. Her voice records ideally, and nearly all her records are splendid; but to hear them at their best, one requires a big machine, preferably an open-horn instrument such as

the E.M.G. Ten A or Ten B. Her voice is too brilliant for smaller acoustic machines, and on an electrical instrument much of the individual Rethberg quality is lost. In this article I propose to deal only with some of her finest H.M.V. records. She recorded some years ago for Brunswick, the results in several instances being very fine, but the records are now almost unobtainable except through the medium of second-hand shops. She has also recorded for Parlophone. These records, however, I have not heard.

In my opinion the best Rethberg record is H.M.V. DB1517, containing the "Ave Maria" and "Willow Song" from *Otello*. This is a masterpiece of singing and recording. The haunting phrases of the "Ave Maria," sung with matchless purity, possess an ineffable beauty. There is much greater difficulty in selecting the runner-up. The *Aida* arias on D1451 are splendidly given and recorded, and so are those from *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* on D1420. The quietly reflective opening of Elsa's Dream is exquisite, while the sweeping final phrase of Elisabeth's Greeting displays the power and quality of the great singer's voice at its best. I care less for the *Faust* "Jewel Song" on DB1456, but the



Elisabeth Rethberg

King of Thule ballad on the reverse side is sung with great warmth, to a rather dull accompaniment. The attractive *Ballo in Maschera* aria, "Morro, ma prima in grazia," on DB1461 is a fine example of singing and recording. The singing of Amelia's other aria on the same record is a splendid example of Rethberg's dramatic powers, but the recording leaves something to be desired. That incomparable barytone of the old school, de Luca (who appears to be singing as well as ever, despite the fact that he has been on the operatic stage for thirty odd years or so), joins Rethberg in a superb rendering of the Amonasro-Aida duet on DB1455. This is easily one of the best modern operatic records I have ever come across. The two other records from the Nile Scene, in which Lauri-Volpi is the Radames, display ideal singing by Rethberg,

but Lauri-Volpi's fine voice is thinly recorded, save in the closing trio, which is splendid. Lastly, we come to a record containing two Verdi trios, "Qual volutta trascorrere" from *I Lombardi* and a lesser-known one from *Attila*. The effect made by three such voices as those of Rethberg, Gigli and Pinza (the finest living Italian bass) is simply overpowering. This is a fine record—but very definitely not one for owners of portable machines.

With this I close what I feel is a feeble tribute to a really great singer. I shall consider myself sufficiently rewarded if it leads other gramophiles to make a closer acquaintance with the records named, and having done so come to the conclusion they must inevitably come to, that while Rethberg lives, so also shall live the glorious art of *bel canto*.

BOOK REVIEWS

Music: The Child and the Masterpiece, by Percy A. Scholes. (Oxford University Press. 12s. 6d.)

I am sorry to have to start my notice of Dr. Scholes' new book with a grievance, but I was surprised to find that in the opening section, "History of the Appreciation Movement," not a single mention is made of the work of the H.M.V. Education Department started, under Walter Yeomans, in 1920, though Dr. Scholes speaks of the Aeolian Company's activities in regard to the pianola. Though I was so closely connected with the H.M.V. Education Department, perhaps I may be allowed to claim that the lectures we gave in literally thousands of schools of all types, training colleges, and to associations of teachers, as well as to the general public, put the gramophone on the map educationally as nothing else could have done. In the early days Dr. Scholes himself wrote an excellent little book for us, *Listening by Means of the Gramophone*, and I think he remembers very well the tremendous amount of prejudice that had to be overcome both against the use of a mechanical aid to musical appreciation and against a commercial firm undertaking such work as we did. The work has had this reward, that few schools who take music at all seriously do not now possess a gramophone together with the special educational material we laboured to produce.

Dr. Scholes' book is defined as "A comprehensive handbook of aims and methods in all that is usually called 'Musical Appreciation,'" and is one of those encyclopædic surveys that its author is so skilful in compiling. It is therefore a book for reference rather than continuous reading.

Dr. Scholes puts up ninepin after ninepin of objections only to knock most of them down with the balls of common sense. In the most interesting part of the book he discusses whether a man is musical or not, if "appreciation" makes things easy or difficult, whether it is opposed to technical proficiency, if music is only for the elect, and many such kindred topics.

But I am not sure that Dr. Scholes sufficiently distinguishes between music as a matter of enjoyment—by which I mean more than a mere titillation of the senses, but predominantly emotional satisfaction—and music as an intellectual activity.

His opponents' arguments as to the necessity of being able to read music (and be well read in music), to play, to understand the constructive aspects of the art, are all valid if we regard music from this second angle. To take one point only, beautiful phrasing means little to the ordinary music-lover, though he may, without advertence on his part, be affected by it.

"The rest may reason and welcome, 'tis we musicians know," is deeply true. And I think that one may prove the validity of this conclusion by turning to an art which one loves but of which one knows but little, and comparing that

appreciation with the appreciation of the art in whose language one has been steeped all one's life.

Dr. Scholes takes Mr. Stewart Macpherson to task for desiring that all musical instruction in schools should be given by professional musicians. I studied some years under Mr. Macpherson at the Royal Academy of Music and have never ceased to be inspired by the high musical ideals he infused into us. But while wishing for the realisation of this particular ideal, Mr. Macpherson would be the first to pay tribute to the devoted work of amateur musicians in schools who are casually told off to "do the music" with, as equipment, a worn-out piano or an ancient gramophone.

Similarly, there are few greater pleasures the trained musician can have than to meet and talk with a really keen music-lover. Both can learn much from the other.

I feel, also, that Dr. Scholes underrates the value of musical illustration at the piano; quite apart from the question of analysis being practically impossible on the gramophone, the personal appeal of such playing as the teacher can do is tremendous. Here is a book that all teachers of music must have—I only wish it were less expensive—containing matter for many debates, since there is no angle of its subject not passed in review, and it is very encouraging in its conclusions to the general practitioner.

A. R.

Music Under Eight: A Book for Teachers and Parents, by Louie E. de Russette. (Kegan Paul. 3s. 6d. net.)

In our modern educational system the musical instruction of children is apt to begin rather late in life: if begun at the proper time, it may be misdirected or even wasted owing to a lack of understanding of child psychology on the part of the teacher.

Miss de Russette bases her book on more than twenty years' experience in teaching music to children between the ages of four and seven. She arrives at certain conclusions, which she addresses (be it noted) not only to teachers, but to parents. Although parents may interest themselves in the musical talents of their children, it does not follow that they concern themselves with the right development of these talents: in spite of her good intentions, therefore, it is wondered whether this book will fall into the hands of the people for whom it is written. If it does, well and good.

Most infants pass through two stages of musical development—the phase of melodic unconsciousness, when rhythm dominates, and the phase of melodic consciousness, when "a personal love of music is born." How and when to present suitable material at these differing stages is Miss de Russette's theme, which she develops in simple but fascinating language.

W. W. J.

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by CYRIL M. CRABTREE

Columbia LX319-22 (four 12-inch records, 6s. each). Album No. 16a, with notes.

IS Beethoven the greatest composer? It is questionable whether the sixteenth-century polyphonists did not altogether live on a higher plane than any composers since. It is even possible that the noblest music yet known is plainsong (that lost art, now being restored in the teeth of a few very red herrings, if the metaphor may pass).

High up among the nearest approaches to the pure heights of sixteenth-century unaccompanied song are Beethoven's string quartets. His is music of a totally different outlook, of course; and if sometimes even in his string quartets we begin to find Beethoven prosy, it is because it is the music of the Emancipated Modern Man; because even in his string quartets he could never altogether admit the possibility that he had not (which is not at all the same thing as shirking the possibility that he had) a Message.

But when I set to work on this quartet, it was in the hope of earning one or two readers' gratitude for some slight musical enrichment; not at all with the idea of debunking Beethoven. And when I started this introduction, its aim was to prevent any of the music, after going in at one ear, from merely going out at the other. Whence, then, all this about the sixteenth century?

Simply because the only way to value anything is to know exactly what its value is. And when I play these records again—now, after writing the above—and again really give myself up to listening to them, I am not at all impatient to take them off and put on some Byrd or Palestrina—indeed, I should be impatient with anyone for doing so; I value them, I think I apprehend their value; but I find it very difficult to state their value. One thing is certain: they depend much on the playing—and I have never been more grateful to the Léner team than here.

Perhaps it is that there is no egotism here: no dryness or hardness; perhaps no sentimentality or sententiousness, even in the slow movement; that Beethoven's immense *humanity* is in full flood—has indeed been touched by Divine grace and has responded well. Palestrina sings of God and His works; Beethoven, at his best, especially in his string quartets, and especially in this one, sings gloriously that man was made in God's image, and that even fallen man can, eventually, recover that image.

We might compare Palestrina, Byrd and Beethoven more technically, but I doubt whether we should get any further.

FIRST MOVEMENT

Hum or whistle the first line of *God Save the King*. Stop on the last note of the first line—on the word *King*—fix that note, then start again with that as the first note (i.e., the first word to that note, the word *our* a note higher still this time). You have now changed either the tune or the *Tonality*; if you have kept the tune intact, you have changed the *Tonality*; you have shifted it up *one whole tone*. Start again. This time stop at the fourth note (on the syllable "gra-"), fix that note, and try to start again with *that* as the first note. (This is more difficult, but it doesn't matter if you can't do it very well; the point here is to learn to recognise, to apprehend *Tonality*, and simple and more far-fetched changes of *tonality*.) You have now shifted it *down one semitone*. Change of *tonality* is called *Modulation*, but the term modulation is usually reserved for some kind of logical process (not one

kind: any kind, so long as it is a logical process, not merely a single crude plunge, as we shall be able to see in this work); what you have just done, for instance, could hardly be called modulation.

In dealing with the simple tonal system of, roughly, the end of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, we can often simply speak of the *key*.

Tonality is the essence of such music as this quartet. The whole scheme of each movement is a tonal scheme; and very often in the music's development the point depends on, often is purely a matter of, tonality. Perhaps it could be said that in the drama which organic music of this type is, the themes are the characters and the action is more in tonality than in anything else.

Beethoven opens this quartet with dramatic gestures of tonality. It is, of course, characteristic of Beethoven to suggest strongly in the very first notes that we are in for no mere simple, easy-going music-making. Here, he opens with a short phrase suggesting half-veiled depths: pensive, undecided, somewhat questioning. Partly, of course, the melody at the top is responsible; much more the obscure tonality (starting with the key-chord, but continuing, and ending, with the note below the keynote flattened, and the bass never having the root note of a chord). After a longish silence, the phrase is repeated, and now makes us wonder more than ever what is to come, the last chord being changed to one that may lead off to almost any key.

What is the significance of all this? Is it merely a Napoleonic pose? We all know Beethoven's Napoleonic bent; and with his consummate mastery of powerful expression in music it is inevitable that he should constantly be tempted to effect for effect's sake. No doubt it would be a foolish impertinence to doubt that Beethoven was an easy match for such temptations. Perhaps this introduction attunes us to a certain pensiveness which belongs to the quartet as a whole, and into which we might never settle were we to hear the first movement proper straightaway, without this introduction. Yet there seems in it a note of pessimism foreign to the rest of the work, and I am strongly inclined to feel that it is a more or less conventional relic of the symphonies of Beethoven's forerunners, who so often began with a brief but slow and gloomy introduction, only to follow with straightforward, breezy music—a kind of foothold from which to get a good kick-off.

Returning to the start, we find that at the repetition of that initial phrase the last note is left suspended in mid-air; other notes are added, one by one, and the music gradually begins to move. That initial phrase serves as a theme, with the final note adapting itself to circumstances (deep viola at $\frac{1}{8}$ in., followed by 'cello in the bass next bar). After a pause at $\frac{1}{4}$ in. comes a new phrase (all instruments together). At $\frac{1}{2}$ in. this is abruptly dispelled by a loud chord—actually the last chord of that initial phrase. Viola starts the first theme again, the second theme follows, to be again swept aside by that chord, more tense and insistent still. Yet again the first theme tries to start, but now sinks into sheer indecision, in spite of 'cello's reiterated growlings of the theme (from $1\frac{1}{8}$ in.). Somehow we manage to grope our way out to the daylight of the key-chord at $1\frac{7}{8}$ in., and are now launched into the movement proper, with a preliminary call to attention.

D'Indy calls this call to attention a "thematic figure based on the notes of the common chord" (*do, me, so*), "which is to

dominate the whole of this first movement, and to lead directly, without the aid of a transition passage, to a very short second subject." Presumably he derives from it the *pizzicato* idea which gives the quartet its nickname, "The Harp Quartet"; otherwise we hear nothing of it, except to call us to attention again at the beginning of the Development section and the Recapitulation.

After the call to attention, violin 2 begins gently meandering—A1—and violin 1, above, announces a short, expressive sentence—A2, and the first subject proper. Any comment on this would be useless, except the mere calling attention to its rise and fall, and the contrasted rhythm and articulation of the two balanced halves; it will repay infinite attention. It is immediately repeated by viola, two octaves lower, who, however, at the end runs straight down to the keynote, rounding it off easily—and running straight into what is surely, *pace* M. d'Indy, as perfect a transition passage as could be. First, simply a short sentence (the *pizzicato* idea in viola and 'cello under quietly-pulsating chords) ending with a full stop—a full close, still in the main key.

This is at once taken up by the violins (chords now below), who alter its course a few points, and this time bring it round to land (at $1\frac{1}{2}$ in.) on a chord which the practised ear at once recognises as exactly right for the starting point for the second-subject section (i.e., in the key of the dominant, *so*).

But no—viola interrupts. The others take him in hand and gently lead him back to that chord. He shies again. (If you look closely for metaphors you may find them a little shifty.) What is to be done about it? Try him again, and this time compromise; avoid that chord, or camouflage it. . . now we're safely past it, and heading straight for the second-subject section, which we reach fair and square at 2 in.

This consists of little more than rushing scale-work; evidently viola's display of self-assertion has raised a mild breeze. But this gradually dies down, and after a little gentle syncopation (to me slightly suggesting a male voice choir!) the Enunciation subsides completely.

With the call to attention, plunging straight into a foreign key (N.B., without modulation), $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. before the end of side 1, we begin the Development section.

Viola sets A1 going, violin 2 contributes A2, violin 1 quickly capping it (not even letting violin 2 finish first). This proceeding is carried on, but at $\frac{3}{4}$ in. before the end of the side 'cello, entering high up near the top of the tenor register, brings a note of passion to the discussion of A2. Violin 1 answers him, and these two carry on a long argument (the other two bustling about in the middle, trying to keep them apart!), wandering, as usual in heated arguments, further and further from the point.

It goes without saying that nobody gets any forrarder, that they eventually arrive at short, snappy *tu quoques*—in fact, that you will probably find all exactly as you would expect. It is all only just subsiding when we reach the end of the side.

At the start of side 2 'cello, obviously disgusted, luckily happens to make a remark about that *pizzicato* idea, and viola and violin 2 at once seize the opportunity to change the subject. Violin 1 sulks for a long time (low murmurs, i.e., held chords), but at last the other three become irresistible, he shakes himself, and at $\frac{3}{4}$ in. all set off on the Recapitulation.

Everything goes perfectly straightforwardly now, of course, after the argument, everyone saying exactly what he said at first—or, better still, courteously reminding one of the others of some bright remark of *his*—but, we must admit, with new and happy point. The Recapitulation ends at 2 in. Everything has now been said, and everyone feels a little awkward, unable to think of any final bright remark. Suddenly violin 1 says "A2," violin 2 and viola say "Yes, of course!" and the three of them all talk at once for a minute, while 'cello looks on saying "M'm."

Violin 1 next begins to gibber, and 'cello, to save the situation, sets off on the *pizzicato* idea once more, the other three joining him. $\frac{1}{2}$ in. before the end, violin 2 and viola begin to declaim A2 with genuinely noble feeling and rising warmth and intensity (this is really a superb passage), 'cello supplying their bass, violin 1 of course continuing to gibber. At last all unite in that unanimous thought with which they concluded both the Enunciation and the Recapitulation, then finish up triumphantly *pizzicato*.

I have said that Beethoven's immense humanity is in this music. Those people do but betray an imperfect humanity who cannot smile charitably at small human failings, and who are disgusted at the suggestion of such flippancies in great music. Certainly this music is for me comedy rather than tragedy; but, however easy it may be to carry a fanciful idea to absurdity, I have certainly not reduced this to a farce. And, most certainly of all, while smiling at it, I am receiving a great deal more from it than a mere smile. It is perhaps as well to say this for the sake of those who are under the impression that "classical" music is no smiling matter. After all, my main object is to help you to find drama, and conversation, of *some* kind, in it; if I find a particular episode flippant, you solemn, musical analysis is not yet able to make either of us wrong.

SECOND MOVEMENT

This is one of those infinitely spacious, almost timeless, contemplative, or meditative movements of Beethoven. If the first movement is impulsive, reckless, sometimes even frivolous, this is infinitely and profoundly in earnest. But its solemnity is Christian, not pessimistic. It is this movement that gives the quartet its place in music. It is built on a broad, continuous melody, complete in itself, made of regular balanced sentences and paragraphs, sung at the outset by violin 1. Notice the lay-out of the first two sentences—high violin 1 and low accompaniment; there is at times two full octaves between tune and accompaniment.

This melody ends at $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., and is immediately followed by a second section, beginning and ending in the minor mode of the main key, but wandering far, through many tonalities, on its way.

The chief melody returns with side 4, with a little expressive elaboration and twining tendrils in the accompaniment. Notice the profoundly eloquent start of the second paragraph (violin 2, taken for one note by viola, then passing again up to violin 1).

At $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. a third tune enters, in a new key. 'Cello takes this up and repeats it at $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. At 2 in. a minor-mode development of the chief melody seems to be beginning, but comes to nothing, the melody returning a third time intact $\frac{3}{4}$ in. before the end of the side. Note that at the second paragraph the tune does *not* pass up to the high second violin, but continues enshrined in the arabesques of violin 1. This is most delicately played; perhaps too delicately, for there are *crescendi*, *sforzandi*, and *forti* indicated in the score.

The last paragraph of the tune begins side 5, stopping this time on the chord of the dominant (*so*). The second theme is recalled, but is soon relinquished for the peroration, which begins with a recalling of the final paragraph of the chief melody. The movement ends at 2 in. on side 5.

THIRD MOVEMENT

This is a very straightforward Scherzo-and-Trio.

The Trio starts side 6. D'Indy says it should be played exactly twice as quick as the Scherzo proper, and so it is. The Scherzo returns at $\frac{3}{4}$ in., and is repeated note-for-note. The Trio is also repeated, and the Scherzo a third time. Notice the delightful effect: this time, after the first *forte* it is played (as directed by Beethoven) soft throughout, getting softer and softer as it goes on. About $\frac{1}{2}$ in. before the end we run into a Coda, and with it yet more delights, starting

by going right off into a far-away key (actually a semitone up, hence the soaring sensation)—then even higher still—and here Beethoven gives us a touch of Brahms's best wonderland fancy.

Now for the greatest surprise of all: we never come back! Beethoven pauses on a chord (a quite imperfect, inconclusive chord), then, having led us on to something more than usually entrancing, gives us, without a break, the

FOURTH MOVEMENT

which turns out to be one of the most exquisite sets of Variations that even he ever wrote, on one of his most gracious, consoling, heartening tunes. The variations form is perhaps the ideal finale, with its power of comforting us with the feeling that nothing more is going to "happen": that we are now going simply to "make music." Certainly that is the inimitable function of this finale.

It is a regular, balanced tune, in two halves, each repeated (as are the two halves of each Variation). (To be exact, the two halves are not halves, but in the ratio of two to three. Why they are so perfectly balanced need not be discussed here.)

In the tune, notice the smooth continuous line at the beginning of the second part, and especially in contrast with the rest.

I will not bespatter the Variations with epithets, which would help no one. I will just point out what it seems to me might need pointing out.

Variation 1 begins at $\frac{7}{8}$ in. It is one of the freest, but you will find you can whistle every note of the tune to it, and will gradually find where it is (passing from one instrument to another, and only two or three notes of the whole tune actually missing). Variation 2 begins at $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. Viola flows round the tune. Variation 3 (the rest of side 7) mostly a rousabout for violin 2 and 'cello in double harness.

Variation 4 (start of last side), notice the powerfully expressive figuration in 'cello and viola (alternately), below the tune, at the beginning of the second part. This figure at once suggests Brahms, with whom it was a favourite type.

Variation 5 is a strong, buoyant, concerto-like piece for violin 1. In the cool, suave Sixth Variation over a quietly throbbing bass drone, don't fail to notice the superb touch at the end of the first part, which this time remains in the main key. Beethoven, of course, knew far better than to make the same master-stroke twice; and each Variation before this has followed the theme (Variation 4 not quite strictly) in modulating at this point to a half-close (semicolon) in the relative minor (closely-related minor-mode key). Listen to this last one.

There is a Coda, based at first on the opening of the last Variation, then, after two false alarms (apparent imminence of going off the track) at the last moment, Beethoven ends with one or two wild pretences of more Variations—sheer impertinences—"I could go on with this for ever, but I've had enough of it"; and with a gracious little bow he takes his leave of us.

SCHOOL GRAMOPHONE NOTES

(Continued from page 226, November issue)

The Columbia History of Music (II)

Dr. Scholes states quite clearly in the handbook to Volume I that the musical examples are intended for use in home, school and college, and for the professional student as much as for the intelligent lover of music. This is a tall order, and Dr. Scholes is well aware that what is meant for the experienced student is far too strong for the innocent school-boy. The fact is, of course, that this History, planned as it is for a wide circle of listeners, meets the needs of no particular type perfectly: but then it is the first work of its kind, and is in some respects experimental. It behoves the school teacher to select and present his material according to the abilities of his pupils.

A fair proportion of the records in Volume I have no *superficial* attraction for young people. This is important: it means that preparation for listening must be unusually thorough. In schools where there is little time or money for gramophone work—and there are plenty of these—the suggestion is made that records Nos. 5711, 5713, and 5715 be omitted in the first instance. Reasons will be given hereunder. This recommendation casts no reflection on the value of the records in the History, but is based on the knowledge that the work is not planned solely for children.

The first record in the album (Col. 5710) illustrates early organum, and proves fascinating to any child who also sees on the blackboard four parallel lines rising and falling like the melodic outline in the first stanza. When the class discovers that the choir imitated (to new words) the tune of the priest because no musical notation existed at the time; that the melodic curves proceeded mainly stepwise; that the settings were modal, and sung in Latin; then the record helps the class to go back in imagination a thousand years in order

to attend a church service. Such points as these may be elicited from the pupils after two or three auditions, but they are not mentioned in the handbook, which is concerned with facts—and not teaching methods.

The second side of record 5710 is valuable, even if children fail to follow it attentively to its conclusion. Here the choir obviously avoids imitation, because the tenors take up the tune after the "lead" given by the priest: the other voices merely provide a free descant. Some reference to the modern revival of descant should be made at this stage.

Four more plainsong examples appear on record 5711, and as children are not impressed by a surfeit of this style of music, the record may either be omitted altogether or just played through once while the text is being studied. The magnificent *Sanctus* by Palestrina must on no account be excluded, however. It should be heard a number of times, each with a different end in view; and on the last occasion the Parlophone record (R1021) of the same work should be substituted, if possible. Experience shows that children prefer the Berlin version to the Westminster Cathedral setting in the Columbia History: all kinds of reasons will be given for the preference.

The music for Elizabethan instruments (on Col. 5712-4) is of extreme importance. But why six pieces for virginals, and none for the recorders? Introduce the children to the virginals, therefore, on 5712; omit entirely 5713 (unless it is essential that variation form should now be studied); and substitute Col. DB1062—"Greensleeves" for two recorders—which is not in the History.

Hints on the classroom use of the second half of Volume I will follow next month.

W. W. JOHNSON.

ROUND AND ABOUT WITH W. R. A.

A Little of What You Fancy . . .

I have to thank several readers who wrote in response to my inquiry about favourite composers, and how their records "wear" (not in the physical disc-sense, but in the mental-spiritual). One does not, of course, attempt to make averages from a small amount of highly diversified material. The chief value in anyone's setting down such statistics lies in his seeing in which way his likes or tastes move. One table shows Mozart an easy winner, with 641 playings out of a total of 1,602 in about a year and a half. Here is a true fan, for the only other composer who tops the 100 mark is Beethoven, though Rossini and Verdi are close to it: the operatic pull, apparently, is strongest. Another reader, beginning with romantics exclusively, worked back to Bach, but stuck at Handel, and has never liked him. A third roved cheerfully thus: Beethoven, 524 sides played in ten months; Saint-Saëns, 266; Mendelssohn, 262; Schubert, 244; Liszt, 175; and so on, Elgar and Dvorak coming last with 51 and 37 respectively. He comments: "This analysis has shown me that I am more romantic than I considered myself to be." A good inclination, in these days when so much dreary anti-romantic stuff is being churned out. I heard an amusing American comment on a play that was supposed to be *un peu shocking*: "Shocked? No, I wasn't shocked: I was *swindled*." That is how I feel about so much extremist music: as the Irish humorist Percy French did about the "bed and board, 25s."—"I declare to you, 'twas a week before I knew which was the bed and which the board." After the unillustrious lustrum, which I should date from about 1920-25, we had a doldrums spell. Now, with the growth of interest in men like Bax and Sibelius, the Delius Society, and the fresh hope in people like Bloch, we are forgetting the would-be-shockings, and getting down to real music again, thanks be.

But even I get a slight shock now and again—as when a reader wrote and told me of the records he had bought, and, as a poor man to whom that meant sacrifices, had engaged my sympathy. Then he suddenly delivered a blow that, though not unfamiliar, still momentarily winds one: "I cannot stand Beethoven or Mozart, and the above records make up my entire collection." His natural bent, as the list showed, was for highly coloured orchestral music (it was all good stuff); none of his treasures dated beyond Brahms. Probably he knows nothing yet of the different joys that chamber music and opera have to offer. Perhaps they never may "get" him; but that does not matter, if he enjoys himself among fine music. There are many mansions, and not everybody can, or need, live equally happily in them all.

Chips from Workshops

I suppose a good many book-lovers share my habit of jotting down things read that please or stimulate. Not everything that strikes the fancy at the moment seems equally significant months afterwards, but I have on my desk a pile several inches deep of good sayings, suggestive aphorisms, and the like, not forgetting oddities of journalism, ranging from printers' errors to horrible examples of attempted "appreciation" and alleged music criticism. Perhaps a few chips from good men's workshops may be acceptable, and I will set down a few now and again, all having some reference to the methods or standards of art. Here are one or two:

"Praise is the most insidious of all methods of treachery known to the world; . . . intriguing schemers know how to stifle every kind of talent at its birth by heaping laurels on its cradle."—Balzac, in *The Country Doctor*.

(Can the same charge be laid against those innocent, unintriguing non-schemers, prodigy-fans?)

An artist's sound recipe, from Bourget: "Sois belle et tais-

toi!" And a nod, as good as a wink, for the critic (a Portuguese washerwoman's song—*copla*—quoted by the Gordons in one of their entertaining and thoughtful books):

"I do not care for too much truth,
For truth will only stir up strife.
Away goes sweet companionship
And all the courtesies of life."

On the other hand, the critic should remember, when inclined to be too easy, that, according to Barbusse, "the optimist is the permanent accomplice of all evil-doers." This reminds me of the definition told me by Mr. Stewart Macpherson as having been given by a child: "The man who looks on the bright side of things is called an optimist. The man who looks on the dark side is called a pianist." (But it's mostly the audience that gets the glooms.) Which leads me to what some may consider the recurring Rondo-main-theme of this page—Gaffes: otherwise, W. R. A.'s bonnet-bees (but they don't buzz so loudly, I trust, as to deafen anybody—even me).

A Gaffe a Day . . .

Our excellent hunter, Mr. P. G. Hurst, has an eye and ear for gaffes, as well as first editions. He says he has twice heard a B.B.C. announcer speak of "Bach's *Ave Maria*, arranged by Gounod." The third time, somebody really ought to shoot. Another time he heard the thrilling statement that Tamagno's voice caused the chandelier at the Coliseum to vibrate. Tamagno is an old-timer, but I don't think he goes back so far as ancient Rome, and I doubt if he comes forward to St. Martin's Lane days: but it is just possible (Coliseum built 1904; Tamagno died 1905). Mr. Hurst rightly hits out at performers putting their names to reminiscences which contain absurd blunders. One singer, he tells me, in the book attributed to her, speaks of the applause she got at the first rise of the curtain in *Lohengrin*. The first woman (Elsa) doesn't appear until Scene 2. Another singer seems to have won the gratitude of a tenor in *Cavalleria*, who expressed it "between each curtain" of this one-act opera. She also refers to Battistini and Devoyod as tenors.

Mr. V. W. Barber offers a neat comment on a perhaps quite happy comparison of Tibbett's voice to polished mahogany: "Timber or timbre?"; adds a slip by one concerned with a sister art, in which he wrote of a forthcoming production of *Hamlet* with actors "alternating in the parts of Romeo and Mercutio"; and winds up with a sweet word from an advertisement of a record on which certain invented characters are declared to have "materialised in the flesh." As they are jazzmongers, I cry "O! si sic omnia!"—and suggest steel: the colder the better.

Glasses Unfilled

The record of a Beethoven duet which refers to spectacles is still a mystery. I have looked it up: Polydor 66193. The title is: "Duett Es-Dur für Viola und Violoncello (mit zwei obligaten Augengläsern)"—"with two obligato eyeglasses." Whatever or whoever they were, they don't perform, for the record contains nothing but the two string parts. An Edinburgh reader and Dr. Ernst Waldstein of New York have written about this, but the joke (as I presume it to be) is not explained, no clue having come up. Nor has a Charley, alas, though I would warmly acknowledge the goodwill of Mr. Moses Baritz, who intended to give me one, but was misled, as I have been, by a similarity of title, and found that his volume was Annesley's *Standard Opera Glass*, a quite serious work which is to be found in Charing Cross Road bookshops. The book I burn for is by Fr. Charley, *The New Opera Glass*, printed (in English) at Leipzig about 1900.

THE FUTURE OF SCREEN OPERA

by W. JOHN ELTON

IN the October issue of THE GRAMOPHONE Mr. Roger Wimbush came forward with his provocative conclusion that the filming of opera had no future.

The subject that he had under review (the story-value of "On Wings of Song," as expressed by the H.M.V. "Memories" record) certainly deserved his contempt, and has, indeed, been the cause of comment in my own review in *Film Weekly*; but if he has seen the film in question he will admit, I think, that the disc dealt with its subject in an extremely unsatisfactory manner. The story, as told over the telephone, united my gasps to those of Mr. Roger Wimbush, but in it I see no signs of operatic films in general possessing no future.

In view of the changing policies of studio executives and the changing preferences of the film-going public, the future for screen opera is as uncertain as it is for any other species of cinema entertainment, but the "no future" decision is quite incompatible with the feverish signing-up of operatic singers and the equally feverish purchase of the film rights of familiar operas—activities which are at the moment in extraordinary evidence in both Hollywood and England. The plans of the film studios are often prematurely announced, but as the withdrawal of one project is usually accompanied by the proposal of another, it is perhaps safe to mention Lily Pons, Grace Moore, Gladys Swarthout, Nino Martini, and Lawrence Tibbett (all from the Metropolitan Opera House of New York) as being among the many singers of the operatic class now suddenly engaged in the making of films, while England has another contribution to offer in the shape of a film version of *Pagliacci*, starring Richard Tauber (an assignment with which I do not personally agree). From Berlin creeps the news that Beniamino Gigli has been engaged for a new film, from Hollywood that Paramount have purchased the screen rights of *Samson and Delilah*, and from New York that the Music Guild there is to sponsor a talkie-opera version of *Faust*, which is to be filmed in Technicolor. The screen rights of operas, in fact, are now at a value never before imagined, let alone realised; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer have recently spent £50,000 on the bulk purchase of operatic film rights alone, and it is said that mere permission to film *Pagliacci* cost the film company concerned a sum in the neighbourhood of £18,000. Are astute men of the film business likely to make these expensive preparations if screen opera promises no future?

On the contrary, I personally fear that the filming of opera will, during the next year, be overstressed to its own detriment; the activities are too feverish to be healthy, and will, I believe, be followed by the natural reaction of exhaustion which follows all fevers. But I sincerely believe that after this delirium, which seems to accompany all film "cycles," has been soothed, the filming of operatic subjects will take a calm and regular place in screen entertainment.

Further proof of the future of this type of production was provided by the success of Grace Moore's new film, "On

Wings of Song." When leaving the Press shows at the Tivoli it was necessary to pass queues of eager people waiting, as early as 11.30 in the morning, to snap their coins on to the brass plate of the box-office. Grace Moore's previous venture, "One Night of Love," which prominently featured excerpts from *Carmen* and *Madam Butterfly*, ran for fourteen weeks continuously in one London theatre (the record for the year), enjoyed an overwhelming triumph in the provinces (and I do not mean "overwhelming" in any cheap journalistic sense), took over £41,500 in a mere two weeks at the Radio City Music Hall, New York, has travelled over practically the whole world, and now, with the public still unsatisfied, has had to be reissued. If this is small achievement for screen opera, then I hold that the success of Covent Garden is negligible.



Grace Moore

I am quite aware of the comparisons Miss Moore suffered while performing personally in London; I am aware, too, of the purists' complaints that her films do not represent opera in its true sense. With this observation I agree. I am making no attempt to advance screen opera as a faultless entertainment for the students of opera in its true form; I am defending the right of screen opera to exist *as screen opera*—a right which a great number of musicians, outside the field of THE GRAMOPHONE, seem anxious to deny it. It must be said, positively and firmly, that the filming of musical subjects is a distinct art which demands its own students, its own technicians, its own theorists, and, for the full comprehension of the filmic as well as the musical qualities, its own critics; and there is no doubt that the intricate mechanism of film-making, which somewhat surprisingly accompanies the filming of opera as much as the filming of anything else, is not fully understood by the people who are continually disagreeing with the interpretation of music on the screen. Faults there are, a great number of faults, but the fine films have a right to be acknowledged with the condemnation of the bad.

The screen never hopes and never wishes to represent opera in its orthodox form, and this fact is being continually evaded when musicians are in the process of debunking the cinema. Screen opera will have to be a medium of entertainment in its own right, and to me this has no horrors. The unimaginative and weakly produced musical film (of which I have been one of the severest critics), together with such unsuitable and misleading appendages as the titles "One Night of Love" and "Love Me For Ever" (the American name for "On Wings of Song"), will in time be forced off the screen by the personal outcries of the film-going public, which is a shade more intelligent than some people seem to imagine it (*vide* the reference in an October review in THE GRAMOPHONE to "this rubbish, which is best left to film fans devoid of musical taste").

The average citizen dislikes instruction when he expects entertainment. He likes to have his pills well sugared, and suggestions whispered instead of condemnations thundered. Any attempt to put opera in its true form on the screen would

therefore be disastrous as well as artistically foolish. Artists should strive to *interest* the members of the public in music; they have no right to "learn" them. It is because of this that I welcome Miss Moore's films, in spite of the liberties taken, as magnificent examples of musical propaganda, however unconsciously applied that propaganda may be. I belong to that particular band of music-lovers which, in direct opposition to the sect believing that good-class music should be reserved for academists, is anxious to widen the appeal of an art which can give so much pleasure if its charm is once realised. I am convinced that the "popular" prejudice against opera is largely due to the fact that few of the indifferent ones have made any real effort to listen to it, and I am therefore heartily in agreement with the artistic adaptation of opera to the screen so that the enormous cinema-going public may become unconsciously interested in the beauties of better-class music, and thus encouraged to make, for their own pleasure, more serious studies.

All this, of course, is quite beside the point raised by Mr. Roger Wimbush, but it forms an essential part of any discussion centred on the filming of opera. Enormous strides in the cause of screen opera have already been taken. Knowing only too well the previous cinema prejudices, I found it a truly amazing experience to watch a great building full of unassuming and operatically disinterested people sitting

through a very large portion of Act I of *La Bohème* (featured in "On Wings of Song"), not merely with patience, but with an obvious enjoyment and an emotion occasioned by the beauties of the opera and the art of Grace Moore and Michael Bartlett. Thus have the first steps been taken. From this point it is possible to make further experiments, and when such great men as Gigli (already mentioned) and Sir Thomas Beecham (who is conducting the accompaniments to the film of Mozart's life called "Whom the Gods Love") surrender their art to the mercies of the film-makers, it means that people of great discrimination have faith in the future of screen music. The actual mechanics of film recording have, as yet, a long way to go before reaching perfection, but the principles involved will in time allow a truth in reproduction even greater than that of the modern gramophone record.

There are about five thousand cinemas in Great Britain alone; during the run of an operatic picture, an enormous number of these are virtually converted into opera houses. To me the filling of so many cinemas at such a time, in comparison with the meagre number of houses throughout the country able to exploit true opera, can only mean that the screening of operatic subjects is succeeding in the distribution of masterly music to an extent which the true opera houses, although more faithfully in tradition, cannot challenge.

The Contemporary Musician's Gramophone

CASELLA'S SICILIANA E BURLESCA (1917)

for Violin, Violoncello and Pianoforte

(Continued from page 217, October issue)

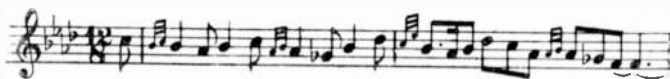
CASELLA'S music can perhaps be described as brilliant with an almost melodramatic intensity, like much Italian lakeland scenery. Its moments of lyricism are bright and shadowless. We, in England, know the high-spirited *Giara*—which is in the repertory of the Vic-Wells Ballet—and little else. We should know more, and we certainly should have more recordings of Casella. The darker music of our own clime demands, especially on a wintry day, its antidote. I can imagine Debussy's *Fêtes* providing such an antidote, and much of Casella's music—hence my plea for more of it.

In its trio form the *Siciliana e Burlesca* has achieved a certain measure of popularity, but it actually started life as a work for flute and pianoforte (1914). The later arrangement is undoubtedly a more ingenious affair, a better balance and a greater sense of stability being attained by the use of the three instruments than was possible in the earlier version where the flute had to contend with a rather overloaded pianoforte part. The musical content of the work is virtually unaltered; it has merely been redistributed and texturally made more pleasant to the ear. Yet Casella seems to have felt that he had produced something so fundamentally different from the 1914 version as to make it worth while rededicating it!

Score: Ricordi & Co. Record: One 12-inch Italian Columbia. Recording: On an electrical machine, excellent; otherwise moderate.

1. The *Siciliana* becomes, in Casella's hands, an eloquent and even dramatic thing. Those qualities, especially rhythmic, which we expect to find in such a form are all there, but lifted to a higher plane, ennobled, as it were. I should say it was a very fine example of a musician's art. The opening theme of the *Siciliana* is the mainspring of the whole work, all the material for both the *Siciliana* and *Burlesca* being ultimately derived from it. Here it is—its tonality rendered slightly ambiguous by the intrusion of the ♯ flat—played very softly by the pianoforte in double octaves:

Andantino languido e dolce



The feeling, at first, is of a barcarolle rather than a *siciliana*. A different version of the theme is then played by violin and 'cello in octaves, and this time harmonised. These two versions of the theme—for keyboard and for strings—remain peculiar to the instruments for which they were originally conceived, and when repeated always take the same order of precedence. There follows an impassioned section, based on an extension of bar 2 of the melody. It comes to nothing, however, and in place of a climax we get a downward scale-passage for unaccompanied violin, ending in a prolonged trill and productive of a curious little halting phrase (marked *capriccioso*), which at the time seems of no particular importance but which we later discover to be the material out of which the Coda is formed. After this false start 'cello and violin, over a syncopated accompaniment for pianoforte, commence once more to build up a climax, and this time they really achieve it. Casella makes of his theme a truly Protean thing, yielding a rich and fanciful development, and full of musicianly devices which delight the eye and ear. The exquisite grading of dynamics in this piece should also be noted. After a repetition of the two original versions of the theme (the strings muted this time) an attractive six-bar Coda leads straight into the *Burlesca*.

2. This is a plain-sailing and very gay rondo. The heraldings and repetitions of the themes have just that appositeness which we find in a really good triolet. Note that the opening tune is very subtly derived from an important pianoforte passage four bars before (17), which, in its turn, is quite recognisably derived from the original *Siciliana* theme. Then close your score and give yourself up to the spirit of impudent virtuosity which informs the final pages of this charming work.

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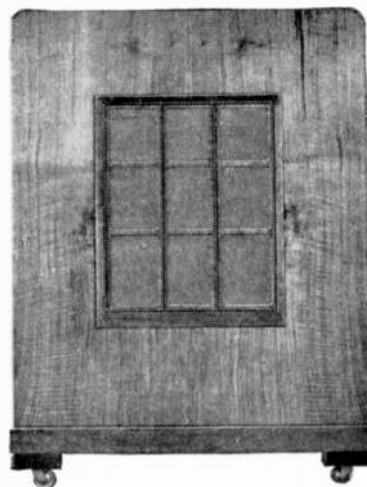
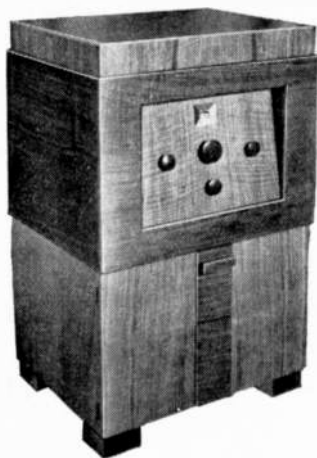
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SECOND REVIEWS



BEETHOVEN SYMPHONIES

THE FIFTH

Parlophone. State Opera Orchestra, Berlin (Rosenstock). E10906-9.

Decca. Queen's Hall Orchestra (Wood). K757-60.

H.M.V. Vienna Philharmonic (Schalk). C2022-5.

London Philharmonic Orchestra (Koussevitzky). DB2338-42.

Columbia. London Philharmonic Orchestra (Weingartner). DX516-9.

It is a little difficult to know how to make these Second Reviews most useful. Impossible for the Editor to afford space to go over in detail every "recording" and every "interpretation," whether or not these were reported upon fully in the First Reviews. I cannot even presume that everyone has treasured up all the jottings and tiddlings of the past. Perhaps it seems best, in general, not to worry about the past, but to give as clear a comparative indication as I can about the works now before me. I would gently reiterate, as a text for all Second Reviews, my conviction that "the best" is almost always a conception as impracticable as it is unphilosophical. Music being, in the minds of most of us, so dependent upon "interpretation" (you don't, happily, need an "interpreter" to get between you and a book or a picture, a temple or a statue), it seems the more important to adopt towards this big element an attitude as philosophical as possible; and the beginnings of the mundanity of that philosophy appear (alas for those who would remove themselves above earthly things to commune with pure art!) to lie deeply, ineradicably imbedded in the primeval mud, and to be expressed by some such phrase as "One man's meat is another man's poison"—whether the dish be flavoured with the vagaries of tempo or varieties of timbre; with "romantic recording" or with the severities of "music at first ear"; or the even deeper dubieties of "the music as the composer conceived it."

When we have removed several old recordings, one or two remarkably good (but it has been considered best to stick to those now in the British catalogues), we have still five Fifts left. Dear me! How often must I have prattled of the work—though I did not review quite all the recordings. It can stand any amount of that, I think, being deep-rooted in glory. Dates do not count very heavily, the earliest of the batch being 1929, but this is, of course, almost ancient, as recording goes. Price must always be important to those who, like me, wish to command many records, but cannot command a purse of the right length. From Koussevitzky's 30s. to Wood's 10s. is a big step. I take the opportunity to emphasise that the use of the word "cheap" does not connote "and nasty." When I say a thing is cheap, I am pointing out a bargain. The remarks accompanying that adjective supply all the comment in my mind: I do not hold back any criticism that I consider justified, whether good or bad; and as one who sometimes has to buy records, I am as anxious as anybody for bargains. The other recordings are all 16s. As to whether

a cheap recording is as good as a more expensive one, that is bound to be a matter of choice. I have known it to be as good. Those who can hear both will choose for themselves; those who cannot (and I know this means a good many) will, I believe, always get sufficient from a criticism to decide whether the work is good enough for them: more than that nobody can expect; for even if one says that, putting price out of consideration, one considers set A better than set B (and that does not mean that other critics would necessarily agree), so many factors, including one's instrument, are involved in the decision that there is, I am aware, often sufficient room for a customer to turn round and say, after buying the more expensive set and then hearing the other, perhaps in a friend's possession: "Well, I don't think there is x-shillings' worth of difference: I wish now I had bought the cheaper set." Nobody can legislate for others in this matter of price, either considered purely as what one can afford, or as value-for-money. What I may consider an adequate set may seem inadequate to others, and vice versa; though I suppose that a fair number of those who care to read my advice are likely to accept it, if I give reasons for believing a performance to be inadequate. But difficulty arises when only part of it is, or when a conductor mars a reading by what I think excesses in, say, one movement. How far, then, is the performance *as a whole* inadequate? That I cannot decide for anybody, try as I will. Often, the best available set would be made up of, say, A's finely built-up first and last movements, B's delicious scherzo, and C's splendidly deep slow movement. If ever the companies soar clean above even *Connoisseur* level, and set up what I suppose they can call the *Idealists' Catalogue*, we may be able to put aside this desire, which I not infrequently feel, for a set made up of such differently-conducted movements; or (since that would mean the sacrifice of unity) to hear, at a particular time, one movement, conducted by the man I think best for that section of the work. To own more than one set is for most of us out of the question. It might be interesting to have the votes of a number of well-experienced listeners as to how their ideal performance of certain works might thus be made up.

My first inclination is to say that if the strings sounded sweeter I should plump for Columbia, were an "under £1" set demanded, because I think Weingartner's style so good and the recording worthy. As to the strings, it is well known that for a period I had to say they didn't please me; but as to this, I ask you to remember P. W.'s guidance. When periodically I go out to his mansion and listen to all sorts of performances on his gramophone-fit-for-heroic-records-to-live-on, it is clear that some discs contain much more than average machines can bring out of them. I cannot too steadily insist that to the art of the professional musician, in this branch of criticism, needs to be added that of the expert in the subtleties of adequate reproduction. In the latter world I have never pretended to be expert, and any small things I know have been learned from P. W.

Disregarding price, I have to leave Koussevitzky with a doubt whether he is at his best in the Fifth, and whether the recording is either. But for weight and sonority it seems unlikely that we can expect anything better, or many recordings so good. This is where the swings and roundabouts begin! If Schalk sounds a little small (not thin), Koussevitzky is apt to be rhythmically a bit ponderous; to over-dramatise. Schalk perhaps under-dramatises. I am always inclined to be on the side of those who leave something to one's imagination. It is, obviously, difficult to convey to others the point at which one thinks this weakens into not doing enough for the composer. Reading in Dame Ethel Smyth's latest book an impression of Koussevitzky's difficulty in working

up English players to the excitement he wanted, I am inclined to modify the suggestion in December 1934, that he "keeps too cool." One can only, of course, speak as one finds: but it is well to beware of reading into the conductor's (as into the composer's) mind ideas that may not have been there. (By the way, a friend mentions that Furtwängler, as well as Koussevitzky, took nine sides to the Fifth, in a good recording not now in our lists.)

Rosenstock is handicapped chiefly by the date, since when recording has moved on. Much good sense here, and sound shaping. The roughness in the Weingartner is in the tone only. Nobody builds better. I don't think Wood's way, though often admirable, quite so satisfying. The two come about even, in the slow movement (where Koussevitzky, you may remember, spoilt himself by being so deathly slow). Schalk is beautifully smooth, though with a shade of rhythmic looseness. In the point of interpretation, then, averaging the four movements, I think there is little between Weingartner and Schalk, with Wood following close. Tonally, Koussevitzky must have it, as to volume. As to tone-shading, Wood drops behind, rather, and Schalk and Weingartner come up—that is, in the matter of what I hear them doing to the phrasing, that vital element (see October 1933, p. 181, col. 2, as to Weingartner's). My own interest lies there more than anywhere else: I can supply plenty of personal excitement. There is a lot of truth in David Stanley Smith's remark that "technical subtlety is the prime quality of great music." The conductor who lets the composer's subtlety speak for itself, through intelligent *phrasing* (using the word in its widest sense—and it means a lot), is the man for my money. But I think it fair to say that one probably has to know the music very well indeed in order to find the fullest satisfaction in this aspect of listening; and that, like many of the subtle things in music, I find people have to grow to it, slowly.

THE SEVENTH

Columbia. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Weingartner). L1898-1902.

Parlophone. Berlin State Orchestra (Knappertsbusch). E11103-7.

H.M.V. Philadelphia (Stokowski). D1639-43.

We have always felt the folkly nature of themes in this work. In the *American Musical Quarterly* for June 1935, Mr. James Travis expounded these Celtic elements. A briefer summing-up is accessible in Dr. Harvey Grace's *Listener* article of September 11th. I am not one of those who think that folkiness has been, or ought to be, an enormously important element in great art. The whole folkly business, to my mind, is easily overdone, when the tunes are taken out of their context. The Celtic tunes in the Seventh are not very good tunes, and that is true of a lot of folk airs. I know and enjoy the good ones, as well as the next man; some of them are among the world's best melodies, and when the songs go deep, they are as clearly masterpieces as the greatest art songs; but "movements" have a sad way of pushing forward the poorer stuff as well as the fine, and there are always people ready to cash in on any movement, without bothering to discriminate (if they are able to do so). Some composers have tiresomely overworked folkiness, too. It won't make the Seventh better or worse, wherever its tunes are found to come from. Beethoven arranged (as, I fear, a good deal of a hack-job) some Scots and Irish airs for a publisher. For the finale of the Seventh he used a theme from his piano accompaniment to *Nora Creina*, but weakened its sixth-jump, which in the original is to an E flat (in the key of F)—a characteristic note of the "mode." Mr. Travis also suggests that the jumping rhythms in the first movement were taken from the Irish airs, and that the scherzo has an Irish-jig gait (cf. *Garyone*—or, as we here more commonly call it, *Garry Owen*), with its run down the scale. Another air may have started the theme of the slow movement. Beethoven may not have thought much about it: we cannot know, as a rule, how

a composer works. I think Mr. Travis puts a value rather too high upon the connection between folk airs and the symphony: and the Seventh is not my ideal of the greatest Beethoven; but these sidelights are always interesting.

Again we bear in mind the teachings of P. W. regarding records that on a small instrument may seem to be rather fierce, and that, on an instrument of the right calibre, come into proportion. Also, the charms of Weingartner's Beethoven can be taken as read. If even on my big external-horned the Philadelphia tone appears at times fierce, that must be mentioned, not least because I think one can easily overdo the masterful (external) touch in Beethoven. The masterfulness is within. The Parlophone is apt to be a little muddy in softer levels, and not so full-bodied in the louder, as the others. The reading is clear and wise. In the second movement, Weingartner takes a less heavy pace than Stokowski, though his tone-quality and Knappertsbusch's are less impressive. If something of the consolation of the succeeding music be lost, there is clear gain in the Phil's distinguished volume and colour, and I think this orchestra's depiction of this curious movement would take a deal of beating. In the next movement Weingartner gets the fleeting effect best. It is not, as I have often suggested, a question of speed, but of shading and all that makes up the complex beauty of phrasing. Knappertsbusch is a bit stodgy here, lacking Weingartner's finesse. For the finale, I suppose everybody will like the Phil's effect of "all hands on deck." Weingartner conserves his energies more subtly, but perhaps the robuster tone is best (though the Phil strings here get rumbustious). So once again there is a choice of interpretations, with my vote leaning towards Weingartner for subtlety, and the Phil discs for fullness.

Addendum. Brahms Symphony 3. Vienna Philharmonic (Krauss). H.M.V. C2026-9.

In the small number of recordings of the Third this, which was not accessible when the others were being heard, is notable. There is much fine-handed treatment, some delicate wood-wind, and sustained pleasure in the easy control. I think the Vienna Orchestra has not quite the ideal recording chamber, for the strings, when loud, nearly always sound a little less fine than the wind. The fine-handedness is apt to become almost—perhaps not quite—finicking phraseology, as in the early part of the slow movement; but this is one of those remarks to which, were it not monotonous to keep repeating the phrase, I would add: "to my mind"; implying that I don't think such an element would annoy most people. The third movement is very gracious, homogeneous and judiciously built, and the finale a little bare, at full power. If there seems in this reading of the work rather more care and calculation than poetry, that, again, may be an impression that would tend to disappear on living with the records, which are a welcome addition to our store of Plum Label symphonies.

W. R. A.

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ANALYTICAL NOTES AND FIRST REVIEWS

[Those marked with an asterisk (*) are additions to the H.M.V. Connoisseur Catalogue or Columbia Collector's List.]



ORCHESTRAL

HIS MASTER'S VOICE

Schnabel and B.B.C. Orchestra (Boult): *Second Piano Concerto in B flat, Op. 83* (Brahms). H.M.V. DB2696-2701 (12in., 36s.).

Brahms played in the first performance of this, in 1881. Its spirit was shaped by a spring visit to Italy and the ripening sense of the year's progress in April and May. It is full of grand stimulating thoughts. Schnabel well assesses its stature, though his tone is not always very rich. There is something rather dry in him. The confiding way in which the first theme is given out by the horn is very attractive. Then the piano leaps to it with youthful zest—yet with the strengthening influence of age; in some of those chord progressions (e.g., bars 19-22) I seem to feel Beethoven's hand. A gracious following theme (1½ ins.) is immediately succeeded by strong leaps, which are a fine influence in the movement. Some of the best of the Brahms-German spirit is in the last half-inch of side 1 and the first half-inch of side 2. How ripe it all is! An inch in (side 2) is a quiet moment of musing on the side 1 (1½ ins.) theme. The orchestra (end of side 2) strikes in with this and the first idea, after the piano has worked up a good deal. We note how keen is the effect of these proportionings, and how, for instance (to take another side), at the start of side 3, the orchestral jumps against the piano's arpeggios make both salient: the piano is not merely filling in. Though the development now becomes rather more obviously organised, the movement has been growing right from the word "Go!" That is true growth—no superfluous flesh, no parading of material without its at once working into the body's build, like perfectly chosen food. We can feel, towards the end of side 3, the return to the simplifications of the opening ideas. Schnabel's honest clarity is welcome, though he does not perhaps give us very much more.

The Scherzo is marked "appassionato." I do not strongly feel that here. It is not hectic music, but strong, and rather inward than external. The opening section is repeated, as marked. On the whole, I like Schnabel here, for not all players mark the lines so firmly. Early on side 6 the Trio begins, with a broadening out. There is, soon after this, one of those movements reminding us of the eternal Brahms of the symphonies (just before the piano solo). The large, open speech of this section is very genially conveyed.

The *Andante* (on three sides, 7-9) is a bigger test. Its opening has one of the composer's beautiful, subtle combinations—three beats on top, and two below (six crotchets in the bar: two threes and three twos). The theme's sober comfort is rightly felt, its tender, sensitive end particularly. The change to the arabesques of side 8 is striking, but ornateness never lasts long: Brahms did not want mere decoration, or any show. The middle section (mid side 8) brings us again to the delicate sensibility of Brahms at his best. It is astonishing that the composer can ever have got the name of a rough-riding, heavy writer. All the players are finely in the spirit

here. The finale is not quite Schnabel's meat. We want more piquancy. He is apt to be too deliberate in step and accent. He is a bit lumpish at the second theme, just before the middle of side 10, and near the end of side 11 there is an unexpected moment when he rushes a bar—a thing he is inclined at times to do, and a bad trick. Rubinstein scored in the finale, though Schnabel is better, to my mind, in the rest of the work. He lacks the spirit to gambol. The Hungarian gipsy gets little look in. This apart, the recording is to be welcomed as a solid, well-graced piece of work.

**Minneapolis Orchestra (Ormandy): Verklärte Nacht (Transfigured Night)* (Schönberg). H.M.V. DB2439-42 (12in., 24s.).

Fear not—if any there remain to whom Schönberg's is a "name of fear, Unpleasing to the music lover's ear." For this is early romantic Schönberg, before his muse was sickled o'er with the pale cast of theory. *Tristan* had a hand in *Transfigured* [or *Resplendent*] *Night*, which was written at first (1899) as a sextet. It is based on a poem by Dehmel. Without knowing closely the poet's attitude to life, one can only sketch the background—a woman's confession to her lover of her betrayal of his faith, and his comforting her: this against the glorious night scene in the moonlit wood. So we may think broadly of (a) the night; (b) the confession, with its hints of passion and regret; (c) the comfort of the man's argument and reassurance, rising to passion in the end—the resplendent night has brought light to their hearts as well as their eyes; and (d) the mood of peace. If I quote a few lines written many years ago by one "K.K.," a former scribbler for this journal (now long forgotten), I hope his shade will pardon me: and I don't much care if it doesn't. These were written for the N.G.S., whose pioneering is too often forgotten. The first, drooping, phrase may be the woman's regretful voice. At about 1½ ins. another voice (viola) is heard. Side 2 has another short theme ('cello). This, marked as expressing grief, is much used, is developed on this side, and is much used later. Here we may feel the woman's fears and hopes. On side 3, 1½ ins., a wilder form of the Grief theme is heard, and broken interjections. The woman's emotion is fully freed. On side 4 we may imagine the end of her confession and her heaviness. The man speaks (side 5) "intimately, very softly and tenderly," in comfort and confidence. Soon an accompanying figure suggests that of Grief, reversed. New hope springs up (side 6) in a fresh theme. The love-song is fully developed in the last two sides, the man's and woman's themes joined (side 7, 2½ ins.)—his (second) theme below hers. We picture them, in joy and peace, going their way through the glorious night. The larger body of strings is certainly the most effective way of hearing the work. Those who do not tire of sentiment expressed in Wagnerian terms—but with a strongly personal application and evocative sensibility—will enjoy this highly satisfactory recording.

Vienna Philharmonic (Walter): Siegfried Idyll (Wagner). H.M.V. DB2634-5 (12in., 12s.). Score: Philharmonia and Eulenburg.

It seems only the other day that Walter was conducting the best recorded performance I remember of this lovely Christmas present that Wagner made for Cosima, to celebrate the birth of their son Siegfried (1870). Here is not the resounding Wagner of the *Ring*, but the singer of homely things. Perhaps there is more "programme" in the music than we know. But nothing is required to glorify its beauty. We remember how, on Christmas Day, a little band of musicians who had rehearsed in secret came to the villa and performed the *Idyll* on the stairs, awakening Cosima, to whom, after the

performance, Wagner presented the beautifully written score. Most of the themes are from *Siegfried*, but some were intended for a quartet, never written. The opening theme is first heard completely at bars 29, 30. This permeates the music. How sweetly the instruments enter—first strings alone, then flute (1½ ins.), horn supporting, with oboe soon after, clarinet, and the rest of the little band, which in all consisted of eight strings, five wood-wind and three brass. It is the flute which, in the descending figure, first introduces the Slumber motive of Brünnhilde. Side 2 brings the Cradle Song, the only theme which is not the composer's own. Not far from the end of this side is more music from the closing scene of *Siegfried* (which I remember Mr. Newman suggested as probably forming part of the quartet). The working up of this, on side 3, shows what can be done, without monotony, when the uplifting wings of the spirit are strong. At 1¼ ins. on side 3 comes again some *Siegfried* music, and the bird warbling—more of it, before the side ends. I have heard greater delicacy in the varied repetition of motives—this band seems a trifle stiff there; but the whole is soft as silk and smooth as velvet, and the bigger tone is chastely proportioned to the gentler.

***Paris Société des Concerts du Conservatoire Orchestra (Coppola): Iberia, and Soirée dans Granade (Debussy).**
H.M.V. 4974-6 (12in., 18s.).

Iberia (1910) is one of the three items in the set of *Images* for orchestra (to be distinguished from the other sets, for piano). The dwellers by the Ebro (the Latins called the district Hispania, hence Spain) were the earliest known people of south-western Europe. Now the Basques represent them. Ravel, as well as Debussy, has given us music about this peninsula. Debussy's *Iberia* is in three movements: *Par les rues et par les chemins* (two sides), *Les parfums de la nuit* (two), and *Le matin d'un jour de fête* (one side). The *Soirée* fills the last side. Fragments of song, snatches of characteristic rhythms, castanets, and opulent colour, make up the picture of the city's folk going about their work and recreation. Such queer little episodes as that about an inch from the end of side 1 (low melody and high accompaniment) point to the Eastern origins of the people. The colour is a delight; but the work may reasonably be criticised as lacking (except in this movement) much idea beyond that. Some might think that the second, too much of an apparatus-piece, slips over the edge into the luxuriance of decadence; but it is wonderful to hear how Debussy brings it off. It is handsomely done, though I think our wood-wind tone, at its best, can be better. The festival march and swagger of the finale, with fiddles held under the arm, like guitars, is gay. Pretty cross-rhythms diversify the progress. A bit of fascinating fantasy. The last side contains a piano piece arranged by Coppola—one of the three *Estampes* of 1903. This contains a more clearly marked though rather ordinary tune. The playing is refined and rich, and, with the little reservation above, the discs may be commended to those who enjoy Debussy's languorous evocations.

COLUMBIA

Busch Chamber Players, conducted by Adolf Busch: The Six Brandenburg Concertos (Bach). In two volumes, LX436-442 and LX443-449 (12in., 42s. each). Scores: 2, 3, 4, 5, Philharmonia; all six, Eulenburg. Vol. I, Nos. 1, 2 and 4; Vol. II, Nos. 3, 5 and 6. No. 1—three discs (with fill-up); No. 2—two; No. 4—two; No. 3—one; No. 5—three; No. 6—three.

As the accompanying leaflet points out, it is convenient to have all the six Brandenburgs recorded under one control. In that way the provenance of these experiments of Bach's may be appreciated: the high successes, and the movements in which there is not so much attraction. The chief attractions, to my mind, are the varying combinations of the orchestra, and the working out of motives. It was not to be expected that Bach should go further, and experiment with orchestral

colour as Mozart did in opera. Every man to his job: Bach had quite enough to do in the shaping of form. In Adolf Busch we have an admirably classically-minded violinist, whose style I have always appreciated. The first soloists are Busch, Rothwell (oboe), Brain and Bradley (horns).

The notes give all the information needed, but those who like to supplement it might read in Parry's *Bach* (Putnam). The piano, not the harpsichord, is used. I wonder if any purist will object? I don't, for I am not fond of the harpsichord, save when for a few moments, by a player like Landowska, we are rapt in a curious pleasure that no other keyboard instrument gives. The chief danger in playing these works is that of falling into a jog-trot style which emphasizes the sometimes only too obvious jog-trottery of J. S. B. This orchestra, though it does jog in No. 1 a bit more than I should let it, is not tiresome, for its pointing gives pleasure, while the level of simplicity is quietly maintained. It is in movements such as the second, with its striking sharp discords and its pathos, that the deeper Bach is found.

One matter I like in these recordings is that the chamber aspect of the music is clear, and the counterpoints stand out without being thrust at us, bringing out fuller values than usual of Bach's experiments. Perhaps Busch is a little reticent, and his tone sometimes does not tell very surely, but one can feel what he is aiming at. There would be no harm in a little more big-wig-ishness in a movement like No. 4 of the First: this has the good old spirit of eighteenth-century grandeur, with which Handel made us more familiar than Bach. There is some pretty work in the little suite of dances on sides 4 and 5. Side 6 contains a *Siciliano* (which is not part of the Brandenburgs), played by Busch and Serkin. This is a slow-paced, meditative movement.

In No. 2, Messrs. Eskdale and Moyses play the trumpet and flute, the oboe and violin (played as before) being the other solo instruments. Mr. Eskdale has a gay time in the first and last movements, and it is pretty to see how he tempers his tone to the small chamber dimension. I doubt if every single note can be expected to be in the centre, even if the archangels took to trumpeting as we see them in the Old Masters. The *Andante* is a good test of modern sympathy with old procedure. Few, I think, would be found to pass the music by. That little drooping figure catches the imagination. Perhaps the bass players are a bit apt to fade down so that the upper parts, light though they are, seem to lack sufficient support. But the counterpoint keeps itself in the air deftly, and the winding-up is a gay little racket. In the popular No. 4, for violin solo and two flutes (M. Louis Moyses plays the second), the slightly dark colour of Busch's fiddling contrasts well with that of the flutes, which are most delicately played: to admiration. Their echoing effect in the slow movement is striking. I have not heard this music to better advantage: leisurely, spacious, a perfect type of Bach's best breadth. The finale runs on velvet. Throughout, the management of weights is very pleasing.

Nothing can make the first movement of No. 3 sound aught but jog-trot. The musician, if he wants, can find more pleasure in it than the layman. I think a good deal of the Bach-rapture expressed of late years by some people has roots which are not altogether musical: the Hearties were upon him: but this takes us into a closer study of the mind than most people like to make; and that would bring us to a consideration (not to be undertaken in these chaste pages) of the queer state of music in this funny country. Mr. Busch and his party jog genially: which is much better than some conductors, who jog Gog-and-Magogishly. A tiny cadenza is added to the passage joining the movements. The second gains from the use of a small orchestra. Some people will like it less, because they chiefly enjoy the physical excitement of hearing a lot of basses rumbling. It seems to me that such a recording as this allows one to take in the music better. But no recorded performance gets as broad a phrasing, and as delicate stresses, as, say, Toscanini would. Nearly every-

body thinks it in too short breaths. That applies to almost all music. The beginning—and maybe the end—of taste in building is the ability to think in long phrases. If I had to mark one great quality in Toscanini, above others (and there are many), I should name that: his extraordinary power of securing long phrasing. But Busch is good, here, and the single record containing No. 3 is as good a sample as any of his treatment of the quick movements.

No. 5 has a far more interesting first movement. The interludes, between returns of the main-body theme, are subtly beautiful. Listen for the bit (flute trills) at 1 in. on side 2 of 444; and the piano (Serkin) has a life of its own, on the third side. A few moments of these episodes are worth acres of hearty jog-trot. The three-part slow movement muses graciously: a shade faster than we sometimes hear it: but that helps to keep it in the air. In the finale, as in most of the gay movements, this party is apt to be a trifle sober. I can imagine a keener spring in the rhythm, in places. But the style is a good one for keeping a longish movement going. It is a good classical style, perhaps most quickly appreciated by those who have been brought up among the classics, and have been accustomed to exploring them at first hand, in the printed music itself. It can give wide pleasure to others.

In No. 6 the gambas are heard (Bach scored for viola da braccia—two parts; viola da gamba—two parts, 'cello and keyboard; usually, 'cellos replace gambas). The tone colour is thus nearer to the original than in most performances. The pace is slower, and in some ways the shaping gains: but the interest, I think, lags a little. One side of 447, by the way, says "Part 1—First Movement—Allegro (First Part)," and the other says "Part 2—First Movement—Allegro (First Part)" (instead of "Second Part"). Surely some better designation could be found, in which the word "Part" is not used in two senses? "Side" seems the most obvious first word of the title. Cannot labellers get together and devise consistent ways of doing their jobs? The slow movement is one of the best of Bach's beneficences. I could wish the two bass parts rather stronger in this sweet refreshment. The finale shows again how much better it is to treat the works as chamber music than (as is the way of one or two of our native conductors) as "big bow-wow" exhibitions. We rescued Handel from the "bow-wows" (more or less demnition); let not Bach go to the dogs!

DECCA

London Symphony Orchestra (Harty): Symphony (Walton).
Decca X108-13 (12in., 30s.).

Three movements of the four were performed some time ago, and the last in November 1935. Now, in December, the whole is recorded: striking enterprise. The score is not yet issued (I understand it will be ready in February: O.U.P.). Other work prevented my hearing the music in the concert hall, and we go to press early this month, so my impressions must be somewhat sketchy. Walton was born in Lancashire in 1902, and is mostly self-taught. He has not written very widely, and he has been known to us only since 1923, when a quartet was done at the Contemporary Music Festival. Appearance at that bleak concourse of extremities is not the best augury, but the composer seems to have lived it down. The Carnegie Trust published his piano quartet: there is his music to the Sitwell *Façade*, the bustling *Portsmouth Point*

overture, and the choral-orchestral *Belshazzar's Feast*, with its ballet implications, besides a viola concerto.

There are four movements. The first takes three sides and part of the fourth; the second ends on side 5; the third takes three, and the finale four. In the first movement I get an impression of high tension and of thrusting power, with a little likeness in the shaping of the figures, and in some brooding spirit that seems to be here, to Sibelius (e.g., early on side 2); but the composer's harmonic thinking is less plain than the Finnish master's. It attracts me, for it does not seem, as in so much music of to-day, to be just modish wear, or a top-dressing hiding barrenness in ideas. The dissonance is keen, and in the short time I have been able to spend with the work, I do not altogether size up the composer's purpose, but at such a place as the start of side 3 I am strongly taken by the sense that he has a straight, strong aim in the travailing music. He has grip and all-through feeling, and the very helpful ability to keep a movement in the air, and unified in feeling. Salient figures, mentioned in Mr. Evans's notes on the work, can be found near the start (the semiquaver flirt) and its following bar, on top; at 1½ ins. (violins), and the rising seventh jump and its continuation (this can be heard in the bass, as clearly as anywhere, at about 2½ ins.).

The Scherzo is marked *Presto con malizia*. The last word suggests a mordancy which is easily found in the sub-acid quirks and jerks of the music. But "malice": can it really come off in music at all? I doubt it. The composer's rhythmic impulse is extremely keen: it would, I feel, repay close analysis. The movement might be called rhythm-ridden, but there is not the monotony of much of Stravinsky's rhythm-mongering. It is marked off from other post-war music, though I think such a movement easier to construct than the first or last. There is something of the *Portsmouth Point*

"rough island story" in it—English individualism. I find the bits of melody not very convincing. I doubt if the composer's melodic thinking is yet fully fused with the harmonic. That is a weakness much more pronounced in 90 per cent. of present-day music. I am always a little doubtful of these nervy scherzos, but if you like the type, this is a very skilful example. It might have been conceived in terms of ballet.

The slow movement is a far bigger test. *Con malincolia*, says this one. Again, a certain leisure in pronouncement and evocation is worth noting: a good quality. He is not afraid of the broad phrase, and some day his expression may be warmer still. He lets himself go (as, to take another modern, does Bliss). It seems to me a considerable feat to have worked up the climax of effect in the middle of side 8, with consistency in the use of dissonant material. The music is to me much more true (to use the word without qualification, in the music-cum-life sense) than the vast majority of what is put forth as expressing the day we live in.

The finale begins with splendid energy and a long-voyage outlook. It early shapes itself in more familiar style than the others, in a sectional manner, about which the difficulty is to know how it hangs together. The varied attacks excite a diversity of interest, the designations being "Maestoso; brioso ed ardentemente; vivacissimo; maestoso." I wonder if the music here is not a little raw? The first two sections are easily distinguished: I suppose the *maestoso* may be reckoned as a kind of introduction to the chief theme-containing part, the *brioso* (spirited, fiery) part. The fuguino on side 10—

SELECTED LIST

Adolph Busch Chamber Players	Columbia LX444-6
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra	H.M.V. DB2634-5
Orchestra de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire (C.C.)	H.M.V. DB4974-6
Schnabel and B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra	H.M.V. DB2696-2701
London Symphony Orchestra	Decca X108-113
Albert Sandler	Columbia DB1616
Alfred Cortot (C.C.)	H.M.V. DB2581-2
Richard Tauber	Parlo.-Odeon RO20296
London Palladium Orchestra	H.M.V. B8392
Leslie Hutchinson	Parlophone F350
Roy Fox and his Band	Decca K803

a good old device for tightening the rivets—is perhaps rather doubtful here: I do not altogether feel its cogency. Some of the developing phrases of this section are a bit trite. About $\frac{3}{4}$ in. on side 11 another theme, which has been shaped before, takes up the game, contrapuntally urged along, and then the counterpoint becomes keener still, with part of the earlier fugued theme combined. The *maestoso* broadens out to crown the movement. More study than time now allows, and the very necessary poring over the score, would undoubtedly show the details of the building better. But considering the nature of the first three movements, the finale, though full of good matter, seems scarcely to put the crown on the work; yet it has remarkable pull, and impresses me strongly. The composer has obviously been influenced by Sibelius; but influence matters little. I wish more moderns would let themselves be influenced by people with big views. We have too much niminy-piminy music, afraid to let itself go, or having nowhere to go to if it did. Walton is young: again, no harm in that; but he will grow in symphonic stature. The vitamins are here. I hope he will let himself go in melodic flight: and there are some other things I should like to discuss, did time and space permit. But for the present, here is the work of a man with honest, big aims, and a lot of power. Good luck to him! The recording is hearteningly big, even with fibre (the discs are hard on needles). Not having seen the music or heard the work in the concert room, I cannot say what the reproduction really is: but it gives an admirable effect of size and well-knit proportioning. W. R. A.

PARLOPHONE

Grand Symphony Orchestra: Hungarian Rhapsody (Liszt).
Parlophone R2143 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

The orchestral ingredients are well mixed in this *Hungarian Rhapsody*. There are nice little tit-bits for clarinets and bassoons, the piano is included as an instrument of the orchestra, but given a suitable chance to shine in a cadenza, and so forth. The result is an enjoyable confection served up hot and spicy. A. R.

ORGAN



Otto Dunkelberg (organ):
Silent night, holy night
and *O Sanctissima*. Parlophone R2141 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

I presume that the large organ at Passau Cathedral is again being used for this recording. The two well-worn tunes are played in a straight-

forward, if unimaginative, manner, both being introduced, and mixed here and there with the inevitable carillon. The recording stands up well to the full organ, fat pedal and all! A. R.

CHAMBER MUSIC

***Léner String Quartet: Quartet No. 77 in C major ("The Emperor"), Op. 76, No. 3 (Haydn), and Andante from Quartet in D minor, Op. 76, No. 2 (Haydn).** Columbia LX451-4 (four 12in., 24s.).

Though several records of the Slow Movement of the *Emperor* are available I cannot remember a complete recording having been issued before as a general release. The Léner Quartet are at the top of their form in this performance, communicating to us the enjoyment which they evidently felt in playing Haydn's delightful music. There is, moreover, a welcome vitality in their rendering. The accompanying leaflet gives all necessary historical and analytical notes both on *The Emperor* and on the movement chosen for the side left over. A wholly admirable recording. A. R.



INSTRUMENTAL

Albert Sandler and his Orchestra: Hassan—Serenade (Delius) and "None but the weary heart" (Tchaikovsky, arr. Mulder). Columbia DB1616 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

It would not be fair to compare this recording of the *Serenade* from *Hassan* with Sir Thomas Beecham's exquisite performance in the first album of the Delius Society, but it is, on its own ground, an excellent rendering, in which Albert Sandler gives the right wistful touch to the melody originally destined for the cello.

After a rather cloudy start the playing of a reasonable transcription of Tchaikovsky's lovely song reaches a passionate emotional climax. No one could complain that this performance lacks temperament. The recording of both pieces is exceedingly good and I predict a wide popularity for this disc.

Marcel Moysse (flute) and Louise Moysse (piano): Humoreske (Kreisler-Dvorak) and Les Millions d'Arlequin—Serenade (Drigo). Columbia DB1617 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

Owing to his nearness to the microphone Marcel Moysse's flute sounds a good deal louder than life-size and the breathing of the flautist is all too audible. His phrasing is sometimes, to say the least of it, unusual! The fact is that the *Humoreske* (originally a piece for the piano) is a misfit for the flute. The passionate section in the minor key, unforgettably played by Kreisler in his version for the violin, sounds foolish on the chaste flute. The *Serenade* is much more successful, though the rather hard bright stream of tone represents an instrument other than the flute we know.

Huberman (violin) and Siegfried Schultze (piano): Valse, Op. 70, No. 1 (Huberman-Chopin) and Moment Musical (Auer-Schubert). Columbia LB25 (10in., 4s.).

The harmonics to which the violin has to resort to produce the highest notes in the opening section of this transcription give Chopin's charming little valse a skittish character it does not really possess, and the middle section, all double-stopped, is transformed into a Johann Strauss waltz—a most attractive one, but an odd metamorphosis. Schubert's *Moment Musical*, the one in F minor, suffers no sea-change. Huberman's playing is, as ever, beautifully clean and musical: balance and recording are exceptionally good.

William Primrose (viola) and Sidonie Goossens (harp): Ave Maria (Schubert, arr. Wilhelmj), and Londonderry Air. Columbia DX720 (12in., 4s.).

It is odd that the harp is the instrument chosen for us by an inscrutable Providence to play in eternity, for its range of expression is lamentably small and its obtrusive character rapidly irritates. With all respect to Miss Goossens' known artistry, I submit that her accompaniments go near to ruin Mr. Primrose's lovely playing of these famous melodies. How she could bring herself to execute a sweeping cadenza between the two verses of the *Air from County Derry* surpasses my imagination. The lack of sustaining power in the harp is not so much felt in the arpeggio accompaniment to Schubert's song, but the instrument is still too prominent. The recording of both instruments is remarkably fine.

Temianka (violin): *Polonaise in A major, Op. 21* (Wieniawski). Parlophone E11288 (12in., 4s.).

This piece has merit only as a vehicle for technical display. As music it is colourless, and having begun there seems no reason why it should ever stop. Temianka sails through the formidable obstacles presented with flying colours, making one regret that he did not choose music worthier of his great talent. The recording is good.

Erdmann (pianoforte): *Intermezzi, Op. 117, Nos. 1 and 2* (Brahms). Parlophone E11287 (12in., 4s.).

Brahms' Op. 117 is composed of three Intermezzi of which the first in E flat carries an inscription from Herder's *Volkslieder*, which serves to identify the German poem with Lady Anne Bothwell's lament, beginning "Baloo, my babe." It is, as Mr. Fuller Maitland says, "an exquisitely simple lullaby, with a touch of dark foreboding in its middle section." Once again the demands of the time-limit have caused Mr. Erdmann to adopt too fast a pace and even notably to increase it at the recapitulation. One would have welcomed a slightly less matter-of-fact presentation of the lovely lullaby tune. Tenderness is lacking. The pianist is much more at home in the second Intermezzo in B flat, which is not of a tranquil character, but rather restless and regretful. The recording is very good indeed.

***Cortot** (pianoforte): *Scenes from Childhood, Op. 15* (Schumann). (Complete.) H.M.V. DB2581-2 (two 12in., 12s.).

This recording raises an interesting question. Are the *Kinderscenen* to be interpreted by the pianist from the point of view of the child or of the adult? Judging by the excessive amount of *rubato* Cortot introduces into many of the little pieces he would appear to take the second standpoint; for *rubato* and sophistication go together.

At the time at which he wrote the *Scenes of Childhood* Schumann was deeply in love with Clara Wieck and enduring agonies of suspense by reason of the opposition of her father to his suit. "My troubles have been productive of much music . . . I have never written so thoroughly from the soul as lately"! These statements—in the second he speaks of the *Novelletten*—are clues to the blessed relief he experienced in pouring his troubles out in music predominately lyrical: for to this period belong such works as the *Fantasia in C*, the *Fantasiestücke*, *Novelletten*, *Kreislariana*, the *Arabesque* and *Humoreske*. The pianist, therefore, is entitled to play the *Kinderscenen* with the sentiment of the last piece—"The poet speaks"—serving as a motto for the whole: "The natural longing of a young man for a home and children of his own, and a sentimental regret that the prospect of domestic happiness seemed so far away."

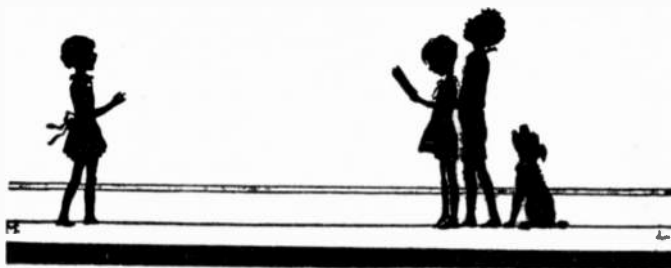
The one definite failure in this recording from any point of view is the ever popular *Träumerei*: but the time-limit of the record and not Cortot is, presumably, responsible for the misplaced *accelerandi* that disturb the dreamy atmosphere of the music. (This will be noted by the keen ear of my correspondent Mr. Hughes!) Regarded subjectively, the *tempo* of "Child falling asleep" is also too quick and the playing without tenderness, but if, as Mr. Fuller Maitland states, the titles were added after the music was written, one need not perhaps attach too much significance to them.

I have never heard a Cortot recording in which the piano tone sounded better—indeed, this is one of the best piano recordings I remember. That is high praise, considering that singing tone is demanded by the majority of the pieces. Most people will find these two discs wholly delightful: and the more exacting pianists will find much to admire, if also something upon which to hold critical inquest.

First Record: (1) *Of foreign lands and peoples*; (2) *Strange story*; (3) *Playing "Taj"*; (4) *Child's petition*; (5) *Quite happy*—; (6) *Important event*; (7) *Revery*; (8) *By the fireside*.

Second Record: (9) *Knight of the Hobby-horse*; (10) *Almost too severe*; (11) *Frightening*—; (12) *Child falling asleep*; (13) *The poet speaks*.

A. R.



SONGS

I have always made it a rule to give pride of place in these reviews to the music rather than the artist, but rules are meant to be broken, and when a singer just bowls one out with sheer charm, it would be boorish to veil her with the pedantic screen of academic criticism. I refer to **Gitta Alpar**, who has partnered Tauber, and is now heard in three songs from the film "I Give My Heart," better known over here as "The Dubarry." The songs are *I give my heart*, *The Dubarry* and *Good Luck*, by Carter, Millocker and Mackeben, and Miss Alpar sings them with a grace that is completely disarming. Her lovely soprano is well known, and these recordings can be recommended without reservation to brows high and low. (Parlophone RO20294-5, 4s. each.) On the fourth side is a tango song called *Loneliness* by Edgar and Brodsky, which is not so successful, so that my choice goes to the first record.

There are two records by **Grace Moore**, notable because, unlike her others, these are new recordings made in Hollywood only a few weeks ago. Brunswick 0130 (4s.) has *One Fine Day* from *Madame Butterfly* by Puccini sung in Italian, and very well done, except for an echo in the recording. On the back is *Love me Forever*, the theme song from "On Wings of Song," by Schertzinger and Kahn. Mr. Schertzinger in this and the earlier "One Night of Love" has shown us what a good melodist he is, but Miss Moore's singing is marred by wicked enunciation, while her humming effects compare badly with those of Gracie Fields, whose record of this number issued two months ago is still the best as well as being the least expensive. The difference is just that between the hot and cold tap. But hear the record for the Puccini, and also the sister record of *Musetta's Waltz Song* from the same composer's *La Bohème*, with the interruption by an unnamed gentleman, and chorus on Brunswick 02102 (2s. 6d.). This is backed by Denza's *Funiculi Funicula*, and both records have orchestral accompaniment, conducted on the twelve-incher by **Joseph Pasternack**.

Malcolm McEachern is always welcome, and this month he introduces two songs written by Flotsam and Jetsam, alias B. C. Hilliam and himself. The first has been broadcast and is an effective sentimental called *Old Stay at Home*, while the other, *Speed*, does not quite come off, especially when we remember the earlier and glorious *Song of the Air*. The accompanist is not named, but I suspect Hilliam. There is a 'cello in the first song. (Columbia DB1618, 2s. 6d.) **Richard Crooks** is much better recorded than usual, so that those who admire his methods will relish his performance of *Love's Old Sweet Song* (Bingham and Molloy) and *Mother Machree* (Young, Olcott and Ball) on H.M.V. DA1437 (4s.). No need to say anything about these at this time of day. **Derek Oldham** has two modern ballads in *Roadway of Romance* from the film "Charing Cross Road," by Keyes (can this be Clay Keyes, "The Ace of Clubs"?), and Carr's *Orchids to my Lady* on H.M.V. B8394 (2s. 6d.). Lastly, **Webster Booth** sings Logan's *Pale Moon* and Posford's *The world is mine to-night* on H.M.V. B8393 (2s. 6d.). Mr. Posford is known for his music in B.B.C. shows, and in this song proves that he can beat Vienna at its own game. Both these records have orchestral accompaniments and are excellently recorded.

ROGER WIMBUSH.



OPERATIC AND FOREIGN

HERBERT E. GROH (tenor), with organ and church bells.—**O Sanctissima** (O du fröhliche, o du selige) and **Silent night, holy night** (Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht); sung in German. Parlophone R2140 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

These two sacred songs may be found grouped with German folk-songs; they deal with the birth of our Lord and so are better regarded as Christmas hymns. This notice of Herr Groh's record would thus have found a more appropriate place in last month's issue; only the record was not available in time.

The organ accompaniment, plus church bells, suggests a congregation of worshippers and thus one would expect choral recordings instead of tenor solos. However, we have the latter, and it is fortunate that the loudness of the accompaniment has been fixed at a discreet level. The singer's style combines simplicity and sincerity; and the melodious nature of these old hymns and the very pleasant quality of Herr Groh's voice make the record a very satisfactory one.

LOTTE LEHMANN (soprano), with organ.—**Bist du bei mir** (Bach); and, with **Dr. Weissmann** at the piano, **The Erl King** (Schubert); sung in German. Parlo.-Odeon RO20292 (10in., 4s.).

It is less than a year ago since Elisabeth Schumann's lovely recording of *Bist du bei mir* was issued, with an orchestral accompaniment. Now comes Lotte Lehmann's, with organ support. It is fortunate for me that I am not obliged to suggest which is the better; both are beautiful. The newer version is marked by true devotional fervour; the enunciation is exemplary.

I hope it is only by a mere accident that my copy of *The Erl King* does not reproduce well. It is not often that a soprano attempts this song. An experienced operatic artist, Mme. Lehmann has no difficulty in realising the dramatic nature of the ballad; and she has sufficient command of vocal colour to characterise the principals in the tragedy. I fancy her tempo is a shade too rapid and too uniformly rapid; in saying this, I have the interpretations of Mes. Schumann-Heink and Gerhardt in mind. The present recording is, however, undeniably sound and effective and is well worth hearing.

RICHARD TAUBER (tenor), with piano accompaniment by **Percy Kahn**.—(i) **Im wunderschönen Monat Mai**, (ii) **Aus meinen Tränen sprissen**, (iii) **Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube, die Sonne**, and (iv) **Ich hab' im Traum geweinet**, from Schumann's *Dichterliebe*; sung in German. Parlo.-Odeon RO20296 (10in., 4s.).

Schubert only became acquainted with Heine's poems the year before he died, and so we have but six Schubert-Heine songs. Later song writers, especially Schumann and R. Franz, explored Heine more thoroughly. Schubert drew from *Die Heimkehr*; Schumann, for his *Dichterliebe* song cycle, chose his poems from the *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, which will be found in any edition of Heine's *Buch der Lieder*.

To judge by the present record, which gives us the first,

second, third and thirteenth song in Schumann's cycle, we are not to have the cycle in full; but Herr Tauber renders the songs so stylishly that I, for one, would willingly listen to more. *Ich hab' im Traum geweinet* (I wept as I lay dreaming) is particularly well sung and brings out the contrast between the last verse and the others in spite of the strophic setting. The collaboration of Mr. Kahn should receive honourable mention; nor should the high quality of the recording be overlooked.

JOSEPH SCHMIDT (tenor), with orchestra under **Dr. Weissmann**.—**Wohin, wohin seid ihr entschwunden** (Oh, where has fled my life's young golden morn) from **Eugen Onegin** (Tchaikovsky); sung in German. Parlophone R2142 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

To me Herr Schmidt continues to present a baffling problem. I have heard him sing magnificently in radio broadcasts. I have yet to hear the same excellent singing from one of his records. Some of them are certainly very good indeed; others are quite disappointing.

This recording of the well-known *Lenski's aria*, for which the singer apparently has a new German text, is a disappointing one. Yet, since there was no need to cut or hurry, both sides of the record being available for the air, a first-rate result might have been anticipated. There is no need to quarrel with the interpretation or the recording; it is voice and enunciation that are at fault. It is not easy to explain how Herr Schmidt mishandles his native tongue, but his sin will be evident to all who know the sound of well-sung German; the undesirability of his nasal tone will be evident to all.

GERMAINE MARTINELLI (soprano), with orchestra.—**Marguerite au Rouet** (Gretchen at the spinning wheel) (Schubert; text by Goethe, trans. by Belanger), and **La Jeune Religieuse** (The young nun) (Schubert; text by Craigher, trans. by Belanger); sung in French. Col. LX450 (12in., 6s.).

Gretchen am Spinnrade and *Die junge Nonne*, French versions of which are offered to us here, are two of Schubert's greatest songs; yet when Gretchen's song was composed Schubert was only seventeen. I can recall two former recordings of this song but none of *Die junge Nonne*, so far as this country is concerned; and I should never have guessed that our introduction to it would be by way of France.

Both on account of the songs and the singer, who is a very capable soprano making her British gramophone debut as a soloist, this is quite an interesting record; therefore I am sorry I must be unkind to it. The impression that Schubert's piano parts to his songs may be scrapped in favour of a light orchestra is one that must be discouraged, even though with some of the songs it may not make much difference. In the present cases, however, it makes a vast deal of difference, and I regard the use of the orchestra as an impertinence and an act of stupidity for which everyone responsible, including the singer, should be censured. Those who agree with this view will find in the record little more than a misuse of fine singing and recording; those who are willing to accept the orchestra are likely to find the record very much to their taste.

***ORPHEUS**.—Opera in three acts. Music by **Christoph Willibald Gluck**. Produced at Vienna in 1762 with Italian text by **Ranieri Calzabigi**; produced at Paris in 1774 with French text by **Pierre Louis Moline**. An abbreviated version, recorded on eight records, Col. LX425 to 432; sung in French and issued with album and leaflet, 48s.

A preliminary note on this album of records appeared last month (p. 287).

Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (which Columbia translates and abbreviates to Orpheus) was its composer's twenty-first serious opera, written when he was forty-eight. With it,

Gluck created a new style of Italian opera. The work was successful and its influence was profound. Thus *Orfeo* is worth knowing for its historical interest. It also deserves hearing for its intrinsic value, though it belongs to a type that is long since dead.

Two of the weaknesses of *Orfeo* are clear from the present recordings. It is tonally monotonous, since the soloists are one contralto and two sopranos. Also, it is lacking in action; it is little more than a series of pictures. The recordings will also make it plain that to do the work justice a contralto of exceptional gifts is needed. The opera contains much ballet music, most of which has here been omitted. Given the spectacular ballets and the superb contralto, *Orfeo* may be a box-office success even to-day. The ballets explain why the French have always had a fondness for this opera. It is not surprising, then, that the present recordings hail from France.

This Columbia version has the atmosphere of the concert hall associated with it, which is perhaps inevitable owing to the nature of the music. The recording throughout is extremely good. The musical direction is equally good; M. Henri Tomasi evidently understands and loves the work.

The Columbia Company are entitled to our warmest thanks for their courage in issuing this album of records, which must of necessity have a limited sale. I hope it will not be too limited. I sincerely hope that many whose first impulse will be to pass these lovely records over as dull, old-fashioned stuff will be guided by me and give them a patient hearing. If the magic of Orpheus's music fails to make a substantial number of converts I shall be very much surprised.

I am not going to complain merely because cuts have been made; but I propose to grumble at the manner in which cutting has been done. Once it was decreed that a certain amount of abbreviation was desirable, I suggest that the *Dance of the Furies* (side 6) could have easily been spared and that there was no need for two "happy-ending" finale numbers such as we have on sides 15 and 16. The two other items from Act III are satisfactory and the shortening of Act I has been done with discretion; but Act II should never have been cut at all. The omissions from Act II, scene 1 have been judiciously chosen, it is true; they are the chorus *Qui l'amène en ces lieux?* and the air *Ah, la flamme qui me dévore*. Act II, scene 2, however, is simply left "in the air," since nothing is recorded after the aria *Quel nouveau ciel* comes to an end.

With this, my criticisms of the album come to an end, too. Jany Delille's light soprano is of a type that is more admired in France than outside that country, but the singer makes a very creditable Cupid; and if she seems to suggest short skirts and sauciness, as she may perhaps do in *Soumis au silence*, the fault is mainly Gluck's. He was not very successful with Cupid's music. The more dramatic tones of that fine artist Germaine Feraldy have a touch of French keenness in the higher register. What little this artist has to sing she does extremely well and she should be an attractive Eurydice. How was peace preserved in the Elysian Fields when she found that Cupid had bagged her solo *Cet asile aimable et tranquille?* The d'Alexis Vlassoff Russian Choir provide a very satisfactory chorus, though the sopranos are rather bashful at times.

The real vocal triumphs are reserved for Alice Raveau. She has a lovely even contralto voice and it is a joy to listen to her. She has personality that survives the microphone. It is easy to picture her Orpheus, a person of noble character, whose love for Eurydice is on a higher plane than the sex-emotion of mere ordinary mortals. Without exaggeration, without ever departing from pure, clean vocal tone, she portrays the feelings of the unhappy Orpheus with superb skill. It is a grand piece of work, finely conceived; and its execution is marked by beauty of phrasing and purity of enunciation.

The most beautiful recordings are those which deal with the music for Orpheus, with or without chorus. Space does not permit of a detailed discussion; I can only mention the simplicity and dignity of the mourning scene (sides 1 and 2), the beauty and pathos of Orpheus's lament (side 3), the drama of the scene for Orpheus and the Furies (sides 7, 8 and 9), and the eloquent outpouring of grief in the famous *J'ai perdu mon Euridice* (side 14). I feel bound, however, to draw particular attention to the aria *Quel nouveau ciel* (Che pur o ciel!). This is surely one of the loveliest things in all music, as well as one of the simplest. It needs an abler pen than mine to do justice to its ravishing beauty. It paints a perfect tone-picture of the home of the blessed spirits and of Orpheus's joy and wonder as he first views this entrancing abode, a joy that soon changes to sadness as his thoughts turn once more to his beloved Eurydice.

Enough has been said, I hope, to indicate that Columbia's "Orpheus" is a most interesting and attractive work. If it receives the measure of public favour that it deserves, its sponsors should be amply rewarded for their enterprise.

H. F. V. L.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

H.M.V. have reissued a number of songs from the complete recordings of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas on four records in an album. (DB4029-32. 24s.) The extracts are taken from *The Mikado* (six), *Gondoliers* (four), *Yeomen* (two), *Iolanthe* and *Pinafore* (one each). The antique recording is a reminder that it is time for new sets, and readers of THE GRAMOPHONE whose memories go back to the summer of 1934 will know my own feelings on G. and S. recordings and the D'Oyly Carte monopoly. Is it, for instance, in the interests of the composer to issue here the final bars of the March from *Iolanthe*, which in the opera are the culmination of what has gone before. In their isolation they lose their effect. The most modern recording here is from *The Yeomen*, which also has the advantage of George Baker, whose *Nightmare* might well have been included. Once more I plead for a modern recording of the two great overtures, and indeed of the operas themselves, only this time with good singers. I must single out for special praise Derek Oldham's *Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes*, which is a first-rate performance, and I would like to say that in my view the only Sullivan set that approaches adequacy is *Ruddigore*, where a genuine attempt has been made at balance, and where the orchestra plays its proper part. Meanwhile, these selections will please those fans who as long as they get their *Mikado* do not care a hoot how it is done.

R. W.

SOCIETY ISSUES

THE MOZART OPERA SOCIETY.—Vol. II. Excerpts from *Le nozze di Figaro*, Acts I and II. Six records, with album and brochure (12in., 33s.). Vol. III. Excerpts from *Le nozze di Figaro*, Acts III and IV. Five records, with album and brochure (12in., 30s.).

The ensembles from *Le nozze di Figaro* were issued in Vol. I of the Mozart Society's publications (for review, see issue for November 1935). The remainder of the opera is not issued in one album, as was originally proposed, but in two albums, as Vol. II and Vol. III, published simultaneously. Thus the volumes are kept approximately equal in size, the less wealthy members can acquire the work in thirds and the more wealthy can have the entire work without delay. Since the performance, viewed as a whole, is extremely satisfactory, we may begin by thanking H.M.V. most sincerely for their enterprise in issuing a complete, or rather, nearly complete Mozart opera. The cuts are not numerous. Volume II contains the solos and duets from Acts I and II and all that is now missing is the chorus *Giovani lieti, fiori spargete* from Act I. Vol. III contains the solos and duets from Acts III and IV and also the choruses from Act III; the missing items

are Barbarina's miniature aria *L'ho perduta* and two numbers that are almost invariably cut, viz., Marcellina's *Il capro e la capretta* and Basilio's *In quegl' anni*. Save for an odd line or two, all the *recitativo secco* is omitted.

In awarding praise I am inclined to select for the recipients first the recording engineers, for the excellent technical job they have made of the entire series of recordings; and secondly, the distinguished conductor Karl Ebert, for the admirable way in which he has directed the performance of the opera. Between them they can share the praise for a very striking feature of the work, the splendid balance between voice and orchestra.

One other general observation may be made, this time by way of reproach. It is unlikely that the soil of Sussex is fatal to appoggiaturas and the lack of these embellishments must presumably be blamed upon Herr Ebert. *Deh vieni non tardar*, for instance, feels the shortage acutely, though a couple of appoggiaturas have dodged the censor and found their way into the recitative. Those who would like to compare the aria "with and without" can compare the present recording with the H.M.V. version by Mme. Schumann.

The principals are as before, with one exception. As Bartolo, Norman Allin has been replaced by Italo Tajo, who renders the buffo aria *La vendetta* in capital style and with excellent enunciation. Now, having welcomed the newcomer, it shall be ladies first.

Susanna is the central figure of the plot and Audrey Mildmay is a very capable interpreter of this astute young damsel. Vocally she is best in the duets; her solos betray a slightly unsteady tone at times. The *Venite inginocchiatevi* has several imperfect notes and the first part of the solo might have been sung with more crispness, but the general result is quite good. Her *Deh vieni, non tardar* is very beautifully sung, but is possibly rather slow and deliberate for a love song. The opening duets with Figaro, the delicious *Crudel, perchè finora* with Count Almaviva and the lovely letter duet *Che soave zeffiretto* with the Countess are all excellent, but the Susanna-Marcellina duet *Via resti servita* seems to me to lack atmosphere and misfire.

Aulikki Rautawaara is just a little disappointing in the solos allotted to poor, neglected Rosina, the Countess Almaviva. She lacks the necessary smooth and elegant legato and sings with apparent effort, especially in the *Dove sono*. Luise Helletsgruber, as Cherubino, has just the right style and her arias would be ideal if only she had possessed more control over the timbres of her voice. She is apt to change capriciously from a dull to a bright timbre, and vice versa, which rather disturbs my enjoyment of the *Voi che sapete*. Her *Non so più cosa son*, however, is a very lovable performance.

We come now to the men, with Willi Domgraf-Fassbänder as Figaro. His is a splendid, full, rich baritone, never edgy, never nasal. It is a real pleasure to hear his vigorous rendering of *Aprite un po' quegl' occhi*, which has been so often cut in stage performances. The *Se vuol ballare* is not as subtle as it might be; in fact, it is rather ponderous. The *Non più andrai*, however, could hardly be bettered; I have never heard a finer recording, nor one which so clearly indicated that there is humour in the song. Incidentally, it is not disfigured by a top-note ending.

Roy Henderson, as Count Almaviva, is at his best in the duet *Crudel, perchè finora*. He does not seem too happy with the language in his recitative *Hai già vinta la causa* and aria *Vedrò, mentr' io sospiro*; his singing of them is pleasant but not very inspired.

It remains to commend the brilliant performance of the overture which prefaces the recordings in Vol. II and to mention that Mrs. Compton Mackenzie and Mr. Legge, as translator and annotator respectively, have carried on the good work they began in Vol. I. This *Figaro*, viewed as a complete work, is so admirable that its few vocal shortcomings may be condoned; I wish it well.

H. F. V. L.

THE MOUSSORGSKY SONG ALBUM

Fourteen Songs of Modeste Moussorgsky, sung by Vladimir Rosing.—Accompaniments by Myers Foggin. Issued on six 12-inch records in Album with Notes and Translations. Price 36s.

The Parlophone Company by this enterprising recording have given music-lovers one of the rarest treats in the gramophone repertory. I hear that Japan, which seems to possess a voracious appetite for good music, has ordered 300 sets; let us hope that music-lovers here will not be backward in displaying a like enthusiasm.

Moussorgsky's songs are equal to any in the world; his idiom is as individual as those of Sibelius and Berlioz and his predecessor, Dargomijzsky, is the only influence in his work discernible to any degree. His songs are the reflection of his aims in general, namely, to present life as he saw it around him. His nature was dominated by a love of justice and he could not tolerate any deviation from or distortion of the truth, as he conceived it. Music to him was not an entertainment but a means to an end. Like Dargomijzsky he sought to make the note echo the word, or in other words, to reproduce in music the vibrations of social thought and activity. The result was, so far as his songs are concerned, a form of melody which unites the inflections of human speech with musical tone. Everything in the song, the melody, harmony, form, etc., was moulded to express the idea of or character of the song. The songs in this album are all masterpieces and they are sung by a man who seems by nature to have been the predestined instrument for bringing them to life. Rosing (see THE GRAMOPHONE, April 1935) is, like Moussorgsky, a born genius, and he is unsurpassed in the interpretation of songs demanding characterisation and acting ability, whether tragic or comic.

The songs recorded are: *Yeremouska's Cradle Song* and *Gopak*, record SW1; *The Star* and *To the Dnieper*, record SW2; *Reverie of the Young Peasant*, *The Orphan* and *Mushrooms*, record SW3; *Songs and Dances of Death*, No. 1 *Trepak* and No. 2 *Death Lullaby*, record SW4; No. 3 *Death Serenade* and No. 4 *Field Marshal Death*, record SW5; and *The Goat*, *Ballade* and *Savishna*, record SW6. This selection provides a varied selection of the comic, pathetic, tragic and dramatic, and, needless to say, Rosing's inherent genius and affinity with the spirit of Moussorgsky enable him to interpret these moods with a wealth of imagination and artistry: it was not for nothing that he made these songs his own, for his temperament and outlook on life are in sympathy with Moussorgsky's. The under-dog in life always has his support and humanity is the keynote of both composer and artist. Rosing's achievement in this album is a great one: by all the arts of vocal inflection and psychological acting he gives voice to the soul of the song; in the tender pathos of Yeremouska's song, the *joie-de-vivre* of the *Gopak*, the lonely boreavement of the singer in the *Star*, the acute pathos of the poor orphan's appeal, the sardonic humour of the *Goat*, the naïve sadness of the *Idiot's Love-song* or the moving drama of the *Songs of Death*, he is always giving us the very core of Moussorgsky's intentions. If the reader has ever heard Rosing sing these songs at a recital, he or she will need no further incentive to buy this superb album; if not, let him, assuming great art appeals to him, procure it and enjoy a collection of masterpieces of which he will never tire. Apart from the interpretative aspects of Rosing's singing, there are lovely passages of vocal beauty.

Myers Foggin's accompaniments are an artistic achievement. No reader who doubts his ability to follow the Russian need hesitate for a moment as the translations, being based on a combination of the free (poetic) and the literal (word-for-word), enable every syllable, so to speak, of the original to be followed. The album itself is an attractive dark blue, and, as stated above, it enfolds a rare treasure for the music-lover.

RICHARD HOLT.

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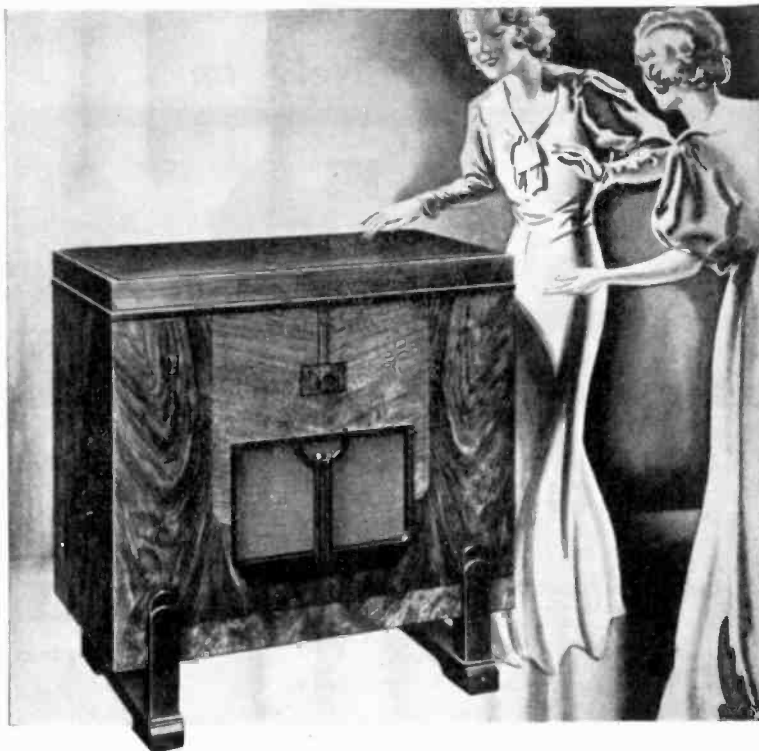


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Some of

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Latest Records

- 8618 Old Soldiers Never Die! Parts 1 and 2. 'Fall in and Follow me' 'Let the Great Big World keep turning' 'Hello! Hello! who's your Lady Friend?' 'Mademoiselle from Armentieres' 'There's a Long Long Trail' 'Take me back to Dear Old Blighty' 'If you were the Only Girl in the World' 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary.'
- 8633 Roll Along Prairie Moon : Winter Draws on
- 8636 Trees : Smilin' Through
- 8599 When You grow up Little Lady : Love Me Forever
- 8585 Red Sails in the Sunset : South American Joe

JACK PAYNE & HIS BAND

- You can't do That There 'ere
8657 A Thick, Thick Fog in London
Comedy Fox Trot
Comedy Fox Trot
- 8666 'ALADDIN'—A Potted Pantomime.
Parts 1 and 2. *Comedy*



CHARLIE KUNZ



- 8652 Charlie Kunz PIANO MEDLEY No. R. 11
Parts 1 and 2. 'I'll see You Again' 'The Desert Song' 'My Hero' from 'The Chocolate Soldier' 'The Merry Widow' 'Love will find a Way' 'The Blue Danube.'
- 8551 Piano Medley No. R. 10. Parts 1 and 2.
'I'm in the mood for Love' 'Everything's been done before' 'Dancing Time' 'In the middle of a Kiss' 'Cheek to Cheek' 'My Blue Heaven'

JAY WILBUR & HIS BAND

- 8642 The Santa Claus Express *Fox Trot*
The Wedding of Jack and Jill *Fox Trot*
- 8667 Schoolboy Howlers
With Vocal Choruses. Parts 1 and 2



REGINALD DIXON



- Famous Organist at The Tower, Blackpool
- 8615 Dixon Hits No. 3. Parts 1 and 2.
'Red Sails In the Sunset' 'A Little Dash of Dublin' 'I'll Never say 'Never Again' again' 'South American Joe' 'There's a Lovely Lake in London' 'Love is Everywhere.'
- 8568 Dixon Hits No. 2. Parts 1 and 2.
'Call me Sweetheart' 'When I grow too old to Dream' 'Rehearsing a Lullaby' 'Me and the Old Folks at Home' etc.

PRIMO SCALA'S ACCORDEON BAND

- With Vocal Choruses
- 8631 Cheerio (Here we Go) Parts 1 and 2.
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- 8629 Take your Partners!
Parts 1 and 2. Veleca and Barn Dance. 'See me dance the Polka' and 'Blue Danube Waltz' (Compered by Bobbie Comber)



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MISCELLANEOUS

Owing to the Christmas holiday and the fact that even those unflagging servants of the public, the printers, want to eat their Christmas dinner in peace, these lines are being written somewhat earlier than usual and some of the January records are not yet available. There have been, however, a much larger number of records brought forward from the first of the month lists this month to cope with the demand for novelties and jollities for the Christmas and New Year parties, and it is to these records that I shall draw your attention for the most part.

Party Records

The first record on your list for the festivities must be the **Coventry Hippodrome Orchestra's** *Happy Selection* (Regal-Zono. MR1915). **Jack Wilson** is the solo pianist and **Charles Shadwell** conducts this collection of songs that all have that touch of happiness for their theme—*Spread a little Happiness, Happy days are here again, I want to be Happy*, and so on. The drabest day will be brighter after hearing this disc.

Another grandly played medley of familiar music is *Childhood Memories* played by the **London Palladium Orchestra** under the able baton of **Richard Cream** (H.M.V. B8392), and credit must be given to the arrangement of **Debroy Somers**. Both these records are worth getting for permanent pleasure as well as for the requirements of the season of the year.

Next on the list is *Dancing through the Ages* which **Roy Fox and His Band** play on a 12-inch Decca (K804). Roy Fox himself announces the tunes—somewhat haltingly, but with that quiet charm that is particularly his own. You can trace the history of dancing from the Minuet to the Rumba and start an argument about the respective merits of the Boston-Two-step and the Fox-trot. The band also play some of the hits of 1935 on K803, while **Lew Stone and His Band** also play their favourites on K808. Both records serve as excellent reminders of what good tunes we have had during the past year, but surely it would have been possible to avoid the duplication of *Lullaby of Broadway, Smoke gets in your eyes* and *The Continental*? Without this duplication people might have been tempted to buy both records instead of being faced with a choice.

That **Steffani and His Silver Songsters** (Decca K807) also include *Lullaby of Broadway* in their *Songs with the Songsters* does not really complicate matters further, as I cannot imagine anyone who liked the first two records being interested in this one.

Two records that are sure of popularity, at any rate with the older members of the family, are Regal-Zono. MR1936-7, easy numbers to remember. These are of old Music-hall songs—*Daisy, Daisy, A Great Big Shame*, and several others. The record is described as being by **The Variety Singers and Their Chairman**, but **Fred Douglas** does most of the singing although **Charles Coborn** himself is heard in *The Man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo*.

Jack Payne and His Band have made a potted version of *Aladdin* (Rex 8666) which is as full of gay nonsense and fun as you could wish. And please note that the label credits Jack as being both the author and composer!

By far the best novelty record of the year is the new "Magic-Disc" race game that is being marketed by Decca at half-a-crown. This disc has six tracks and, like previous records of the same sort, you cannot tell at the outset which track the needle is in; you hear a voice describing the race very briefly in the same formula every time until the winning horse is announced. The odds are cleverly devised by an entirely

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H.M.V. C. 4/- B. 2/6 BD. 1/6	Brunswick 2 6 RL. 1 6
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	Rex 1/-

new method. On the label are various odds from evens to ten to one, and also "Welshed"; you are also given a "Price Selector" in the form of another paper disc which is affixed over the centre of the record. When the race is run, the "Price Selector" stops and shows the odds on the under disc. The banker pays out or receives as

the case may be. As a final touch of efficiency you are also given a card with the names of the horses printed on it to enable you to place your bets. It sounds rather a complicated amusement described in so many words, but actually it is extremely simple, the results are attained quickly, and there is enough excitement and suspense to give you a thrill for your money. No party should be without it. Ask simply for the "Magic-Disc" Race Game from your nearest Decca dealer.

Comedy, Alleged and Actual

Having decided upon the light music and your race game for the party, you will also want one or two comedy records by well-known comedians to raise a laugh when things are beginning to flag. No one is more infectious in his general air of gaiety and high spirits than **Leslie Holmes**, and what could be more appropriate a title than *Make it a Party* (Regal-Zono. MR1921)? He couples this with *The Duck Song*, but for real fun—a little spicy, perhaps, but most of us don't mind that at our party—hear him with **Leslie Sarony** in *Umpa, Umpa, stick it up your Jumper* (Regal-Zono. MR1920). On the reverse is the story of a Miss Porkington whose resolutions to slim went sadly astray whenever she was confronted with cream cakes. **Leslie Sarony** puts over two songs, *Sweet Fanny Adams* and *Skiddley-Dumpty-Di-Doh* (Regal-Zono. MR1922), with his usual businesslike and slick methods, and if you are not moved to uncontrollable laughter, you are, at any rate, aware of a job well done.

The same might be said of **George Formby**, who sings two songs from his film *Riding in the T.T. Races* and *The Isle of Man* (Regal-Zono. MR1932). This is his first Regal record and I thought the accompanying orchestra had not quite got the swing of his style—probably due to insufficient rehearsal, a complaint which often rears its ugly head in the rush of recording, but which manifests itself surprisingly infrequently in the finished product.

A new record by **Flanagan and Allen** is rather a rare event, but it is an event for all that. Their microphone technique is excellent when one remembers that they are primarily stage artists, and the music-hall stage at that—a far cry from the intimate requirements of the mike. On Columbia FB1226 they discuss divers subjects with the customary misunderstandings and explanations and call it all *Digging H"OI"ies*. On the second side you will hear them singing **Bud Flanagan's** latest song entitled *What happened to the Breakdown Man*.

I thought **Max Miller's** second record showed signs of inexperience with the microphone. He has probably found it very difficult to adapt his personality to this new medium and unless his material is very funny one misses the look of him so much on a record—that saucy face and those outrageous clothes are such a large portion of his success. *Max the Auctioneer* is not riotously funny, but I feel it is worth waiting patiently for the tip-top record I am sure he will make before long (Rex 8665).

In connection with his new record *Sex, Sobs and Slaughter* (Columbia DX719) **Sydney Howard** is running a competition to find fresh jokes and "gags." The obvious but somewhat unkind retort is that he needs them if this record is a sample of what is at present available. But as the record is also supposed to furnish an example of the sort of thing he wants

people to send him, it is a little frightening to think of what he will be inundated with in the way of futile, laboured and pointless jokes. Sydney Howard has built up a big name for himself on the English stage, but I am inclined to think that even his most ardent fans will not be satisfied that this is the comedian at his best.

The Rural Scene

For those who like their hill-billies sung by the manly-voiced **Patrick Colbert** I can thoroughly recommend **The Bunkhouse Boys** with Colbert in *Twenty Miles to Nowhere* and *Take me back to my Boots and Saddle* (Parlo. F342); and in the same style, **The Rocky Mountaineers** in *Little Red Caboose behind the Train* and *Red River Valley* and *In 1992* (Columbia FB1249); but better still, listen to a real English farmer, **Farmer Barling**, singing *Maggie! The Cows are in the Clover* and *Farmer Giles* on Regal-Zono. MR1933. This is a real breath of country air to unlucky town dwellers. So, too, is **Reginald Dixon's** organ record of Sir Edward German's lovely "Merrie England" music (Regal-Zono. MR1940); this is delightful music airily and daintily played to bring us a foretaste of spring in drear winter weather.

On Regal-Zono. MR1918 an attempt has been made by the miraculous process known as "dubbing" to collect all **Jimmie Rodgers'** most famous songs on to one record. I say attempt, because it is obvious here and there that the record is a fake and as such is only a memory of a delightful singer. On Regal-Zono. MR1943, however, a "new yodelling cowboy star" is featured called **Wilf Carter**. He sings a *Cowboy Lullaby* and *Sundown Blues* in that peculiarly melancholy style that is the way of these people, and although he does it all as well as most, he does not seem to have any great qualification for stardom in any sphere.

Melodies of the Month

Under this heading **Len Green** plays two more *Medleys* of popular tunes on Decca F5798 and 9, and **Reginald Dixon** does the same sort of thing on the organ of the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool, on Rex 8662. They are all good value if you are wanting a bunch of these ephemeral tit-bits.

Another excellent recording of tunes of the moment is by **Jack Wilson** on Regal-Zono. MR1944 of a *Selection* of the music from "The Big Broadcast" and "Top Hat"; his clever blending of the different tunes in "Top Hat" is as good as anything for the kind that I have ever heard. He is a pianist definitely to be watched.

Patricia Rossborough, too, seems to me to be more pleasing than she used to be; her style is quieter and more subtle than of old and I could almost have mistaken her playing of the tunes from "Thanks a Million" and "Seeing Stars" (Parlophone F355) for Carroll Gibbons or Johnny Green, a compliment which I hope she appreciates.

Singers, Crooners, or What-you-will

The latest newcomer to the ranks of musical comedy film stars is **Eleanor Powell**, who has set the whole town talking by her marvellous dancing in "Broadway Melody of 1936." London has been able to judge the quality of this new star for itself, but to those of you who are still waiting to see this film I would say get a copy of H.M.V. B8396 and hear, if not see, this girl with the feet of Fred Astaire and a voice that is much better than you might justifiably expect in one already so gifted. To mark her recording debut she, of course, sings two numbers from the film, *You are my Lucky Star* and *I've got a Feelin' you're Foolin'*, and she has the good fortune to be accompanied by **Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra**. I am sure you will agree that Eleanor Powell is an acquisition to the gramophone world as well as to pictures, and you will be even

more eager than before to see this super-musical for yourselves when it reaches your part of the world.

Another film star has also made a record this month; **Betty Balfour** sings the numbers from her new film "Squibs" on Columbia FB1225, and while her legions of faithful admirers will be interested to hear her voice, I do not think this can be called a really successful record. Miss Balfour has not altered her style since her early films, and although her singing voice is in keeping with her character as portrayed on the screen, I think the modern generation will find her style old-fashioned and a little simpering.

Betty Balfour is a film star turned recording artist; **Binnie Hale** is a stage and film star who has had previous experience of the microphone, but she is hardly more successful than Miss Balfour in getting her charm over on to the wax; on Decca F5815 she sings *Did you get that out of a Book?* and *You don't know the Half of It*, both from the film of the play "Hyde Park Corner." The numbers themselves are not worthy of her and one cannot be enthusiastic about what is so very much a poor imitation of a vital and attractive personality.

How versatile **Anona Winn** is! This month she is quite coy in *I can Wiggle My Ears* and *Everything's in Rhythm with My Heart* from the Jessie Matthews film "First a Girl" (Rex 8664). You may not altogether approve of Anona in this mood, but you've got to admit that she can portray the mood she is after and there is not a false note from beginning to end.

Elsie Carlisle is versatile, too, in a somewhat different way. She can be the gay lady of the equally gay 'nineties or the moaning blues singer of the nineteen-twenties and thirties, or just Elsie Carlisle, crooner. Her two records this month show her in the blues and crooning categories. On Decca F5764 she sings Ellington's *Solitude* and *Poor Butterfly*. I cannot admit that *Solitude* should ever have been expressed in words, but if you do not agree, then this is a good record of it. On F5818 she sings *Honey-coloured Moon* from Henry Hall's film "Music Hath Charms" and *Public Sweetheart Number One* from "Seeing Stars." *Public Sweetheart*



Leslie Hutchinson

suits her to perfection and I consider this is the best of the batch.

Greta Keller, on the other hand, does not even try to be versatile; she is the crooner *par excellence*. you know what to expect, and if you don't like it, don't buy her records, tune in to her broadcasts, or pretend to be interested in the news that she has recently passed through London on her way to make some more records in Germany, where she is immensely popular. Some of us like everything she does, however "corny" the modernists may call it, and the fact that she was able to find time to record four titles while she was here is a cause for rejoicing. On Decca F5813 she sings *On Treasure Island* and *In the Dark*, and on F5814 *I Wished on the Moon* and *When Budapest was Young*. I consider *In the Dark* and *I Wished on the Moon* to be the most enjoyable; and even if you suspect a plot to make you buy both records instead of one, get them just the same because you may have to wait a mighty long time before you get any more.

Another visitor from the States is **Sam Coslow**, who has recorded *I've got a Feelin' you're Foolin'* and *You are my Lucky Star* with **Geraldo and His Sweet Music** on Decca F5805. He is very popular in America and I think we are fortunate to get a record of these two good songs from him while he is with us. And to Geraldo we must say thank you for providing such a sympathetic musical background.

Our own **Val Rosling** also sings *You are my Lucky Star* coupled with *On Treasure Island* (Regal-Zono. MR1924), and he, too, is fortunate in his accompanying orchestra; it is outstanding this month. Is this the influence of George Scott-Wood at last showing itself?

Brian Lawrence is in good form, if somewhat late, with *From the Top of your Head and Without a Word of Warning* (Decca F5816), while **Turner Layton** sings *In the Dark* beautifully coupled, so appropriately, I think, with *East of the Sun* (Columbia FB1224). I always did like his solo work much better than his duets and it is a real pleasure to hear him in such good voice and all untrammelled. Listen, too, to his "Top Hat" Medley on Columbia FB1223 and to *You are my Lucky Star* and *Magic* on FB1248.

Quite the most remarkable record of the month, however, is **Bing Crosby's** attempt at *Adeste Fidelis* and *Still Night, Holy Night* (Brunswick 02054). If it were not rather pathetic it would be utterly laughable to hear this singer who is acknowledged to be the king of crooners making such an awful and complete mess of these two beautiful airs; all his little tricks are here, but they are so utterly out of place that instead of being fascinating they are merely irritating and in bad taste. No, we prefer Bing in the sort of thing he can do well, such as *On Treasure Island*, *Take me back to my Boots and Saddle* (02100) and *Red Sails in the Sunset*, or the reissued *Star Dust* on 02101.

What an artist **Leslie Hutchinson** continues to be—but, I suppose, once an artist, always an artist, they never lose their touch. He sings songs and you remark at the end of the record "What a charming song"; then you realise that it is a perfectly ordinary song and that it is simply the way he has sung it—as though his whole life depended on your sympathy and approval—that has made the song into a miniature work of art. Listen to his singing of *The Morning After* and *Love is like a Cigarette* (Parlophone FB350) and you will see what I mean.

Dick Powell, who has recently been seen in two new musical extravaganzas, "Thanks a Million" and "Page Miss Glory," sings *I'm sitting high on a Hill-top* from the former coupled with a rollicking affair called *Don't give up the Ship* from a film called "Shipmates Forever" on Decca F5823, and if you examine the label closely, you will see that no less a personality than Victor Young is in charge of the accompanying orchestra, which explains why the whole thing goes along with such a jolly swing.

Curtis and Ames are a new act who have been given a chance to show what they can do on records. I found them just another pair of duettists, but if you want to make up your own mind you can hear them in *Accent on Youth* and *By the Wishing Well* on H.M.V. BD312.

Educational Records

"**Con Moto**" Rhythmic Series: Planned by **Miss M. G. Davies** and **Miss M. Storr, M.A.** Played by David Branson (pianoforte). Col. DB1587-92. (15s.)

There is plenty of room for more recorded music that can be used to advantage in infant schools. Rhythmic training in the classroom cannot go far when the teacher is fettered to a piano-stool: but "the gramophone sets her free," says the Hadow Report, "to concentrate on the movements of the class."

This new series is, therefore, particularly welcome—and if it differs outwardly only in degree from the "Let's Pretend" records and the "Playways" series already issued by H.M.V., in application it is of another order. In all three sets the basis is a collection of fragments and miniatures by the masters, but the present pieces are piano recordings, whereas the H.M.V. pieces were played by a small orchestra. The selection is good, and it has been supplemented here and there with a few improvisations by Miss Davies herself. Rings separate the exercises on the records as in some of the other educational series. Performance and recording are commendable, though not distinctive.

The six records provide material for a course in rhythmic training for pupils between the ages of four and eleven, thus forming a groundwork for the more ambitious Dalcroze Eurhythmics later on. There is scope for many appreciation lessons based on the music itself.

A Lucky Dip

If you are looking for a few light records of music that is catchy and possibly familiar you might try any or all of the following: **The Maison d'Or Salon Orchestra** playing Ippolitov's *Caucasian Sketches* (two of them, including *The March of the Sirdar*) (Regal-Zono. MR1941); *The Jester* and *The Tea Dolls' Parade* played by the **Bravour Dance Orchestra** (Parlophone F357); an unusual orchestra called the **Estudiantina Mandoline Orchestra** in Boucheron's *Bolero* and *Mandoline March* (Parlophone F363); two old friends, *The Kitten on the Keys* and *The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers*, played by the simply-named **Novelty Orchestra** (Decca F5819); lastly, a rather charming trio **Pappy, Ezra** and **Elton** in *Red Sails in the Sunset*, who are joined by **Zeke** for *The Lady in Red* (Panachord 25813).

Late Arrivals

Brief notes on some records which have arrived too late for inclusion in their proper sections. Firstly, **Grete Natzler** in four songs from her first British film, "The Student's Romance"; they are *There's a smile in the skies, Oh! Lassie, come, Marching Along* and *I lost my heart in Heidelberg* (Parlophone R2148), charmingly sung in the true Continental fashion and giving a good idea what to expect from the film.

Another American recording by **The Light Opera Company** under **Nat Shilkret** continuing their series of *Vocal Gems*, this time from "New Moon" (H.M.V. C2808); and **Belle Baker** in a glorious skit called *Mrs. Goldberg's Bridge Party* and in sentimental and somewhat unintelligible mood in *Roadway of Romance*—all about Broadway, heartbreak, and so on (H.M.V. BD320). Two records that must not be missed.

Two crooners at the top of their form, **Phyllis Robins** in *I'm in the Mood for Love* and *Honey-coloured Moon* (Rex 8678) and **Morton Downey** in *Thanks a Million* and *You are my Lucky Star* (Rex 8675).

Finally, a strange new recording of *Rhapsody in Blue* by a **Boston Orchestra** conducted by **Arthur Fiedler** with one **Jesus Maria Sanroma** at the piano (H.M.V. C2806 and 7), about which I suspect that the less said the more likely you are not to be disappointed.

M. E. C.

"**Let's Go to Paris**": **Practical Travel Talks in French**. Spoken by Mlle. E. R. Monteil, M. Salaün and M. Vigne. H.M.V. B8354 9. Complete with Text Book and Album. (18s. 9d).

In common with most language courses, this set—which was half expected, since the parallel "Let's go to Germany" records were issued a few months ago—has the laudable aim of removing that reproach so often heard from foreigners that an Englishman can speak no other language but his own.

Assuming that the student possesses a fair grammatical knowledge, these records will enable him to enjoy a French train journey, a shopping expedition, a visit to a theatre, and so on, and conclude his travels (curiously enough) in a Parisian bear-garden! Appropriate background noises punctuate the conversations, but in no way detract from their purpose and enjoyment. It is a little depressing, however, to think that the chemist, doctor, and dentist all have to be consulted during a short stay abroad.

There is, perhaps, a tendency to cosmopolitanism, since there are too few distinctive touches either of English psychology or of French peculiarities. But for 18s. 9d. the course offers a wealth of "essential" French which would be of great assistance to students on their first trip to the Continent; and the records provide practice in intonation at a useful speed together with examples of sounds usually wrongly pronounced by the average Englishman.

Each record is obtainable separately, while the text-book (published by G. Harrap & Co.) costs 1s. 3d. W. W. J.

DANCE RECORDS

As with the records reviewed under "Miscellaneous," so with these Dance Records—the primary object of most of you who will be spending your money on records will be home entertainment of yourselves and your friends; therefore you are most likely to want the tunes of the moment that you may have heard in some of the many musical pictures that may have dazzled you on the silver screen with their magnificence, the tunes that your favourite broadcasting band has recorded, and any comedy numbers that may be worth hearing more than once.

Here, then, is a selection from the new records that may help you in your task. In every case the record has been selected because it answers one of the above demands. I hope some of them will give you pleasure and help to make your party or dance a success.

Ambrose and His Orchestra.

Schoolboy Howlers (Decca F5809). An attempt to cash in on the success of *Rhymes* and its successors. Whether the attempt is successful is up to you, but this is the most imaginative recording with **Max Bacon** contributing to the fun.

Broadway Rhythm and *You are my Lucky Star*, both from the film "Broadway Melody of 1936." Very good recordings of both tunes and worth your money (Decca F5740).

Jack Hylton's Orchestra.

Everything stops for Tea from the film "Come Out of the Pantry" and *When the Guardsman started crooning on Parade* (H.M.V. BD5006). Two important things to note here. First the apostrophe—"Jack Hylton's Orchestra" and not "Jack Hylton and his Orchestra," meaning that his band are carrying on the good work while he is away in America; secondly, the new series number which His Master's Voice have adopted for their records. Having taken all that in, you can then get the record for the absurdity about the Guardsman; it's great fun.

Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra.

Thanks a Million and *Sugar Plum* both from the film "Thanks a Million" (H.M.V. BD5001). Good tunes well played, but neither is the number that this band plays in its brief appearance in the film. Hear also, if you are interested in the film or the music,

Bob Crosby and His Orchestra.

Thanks a Million and *I'm sitting high on a Hilltop* (Decca F5820). The Hilltop song is the best of the lot, but Crosby must be careful—in *Thanks a Million* he develops a most alarming tremolo and is not always on the note. Unusual for him.

Eric Madriguera and His Orchestra.

I found a Dream from the film "Redheads on Parade" and *When the leaves bid the trees goodbye* (H.M.V. BD5000). Two typically well-played American numbers that are charming enough to be worth hearing and buying.

Roy Fox and His Band.

In the Dark and *Homestead* (Decca F5797). Sentimental, both, but how Roy Fox can put these numbers across! *In the Dark* is a little masterpiece and **Denny Dennis's** singing improves monthly.

Will Osborne and His Orchestra.

That's what you think from the film "King Solomon of Broadway" and

Paul Pendarvis and His Orchestra.

I'm in love all over again from the film "Hooray for Love" (Columbia FB1235). Will Osborne's is a band that ranks high in America and you can be sure that his records are first class and this is a good tune with a good lyric. What more can you want?

Harry Roy and His Orchestra.

I can wiggle my ears and *Everything's in Rhythm with my Heart*, both from the film "First a Girl" (Parlophone F339). It is grand to hear such good tunes as these two and to have the satisfaction of knowing they are English, and *I can wiggle my ears* is one of the most invigorating and lively records that even this bright band has made for some time. Highly recommended.

Out of the Rag-bag, Medley (Parlophone F338) and *Six-Eight Medley* (F343). Old favourites dished up with new sauce and made very appetising.

The B.B.C. Dance Orchestra.

Honey-coloured Moon, Music Hath Charms, There's no time like the present and *Just little bits and pieces*—all from the film "Music Hath Charms" (Columbia FB1123 and 1120). Naturally **Henry Hall** and the B.B.C. Band have recorded all the numbers from their film and these two are the most likely ones to take your fancy. *Honey-coloured Moon* is the best tune and *Just little bits and pieces* shows off the band to the best advantage, the little bits and pieces being principally solos by members of the band.

Carroll Gibbons and The Savoy Hotel Orpheans.

I've got a feelin' you're foolin' and *You are my Lucky Star*, both from the film "Broadway Melody of 1936" (Columbia FB1229). I make no apology for mentioning *You are my Lucky Star* twice because this recording of it has the stamp of the Savoy Orpheans on it and as such contributes something to dance music which, even though you have already got it coupled with *Broadway Rhythm*, you can still want it coupled with *I've got a feelin' you're foolin'*—no foolin'.

Maurice Winnick and His Orchestra.

Love is like a Cigarette and *I send my Love with these Roses* (Parlophone F348). And *Sailing home with the Tide* and *A little bit Independent but Easy on the Eyes* (F349). Maurice Winnick can be relied upon to be the first with the news and here he is with four brand new tunes, two at least of which look like certain winners. I leave you to back your fancy for the popularity stakes.

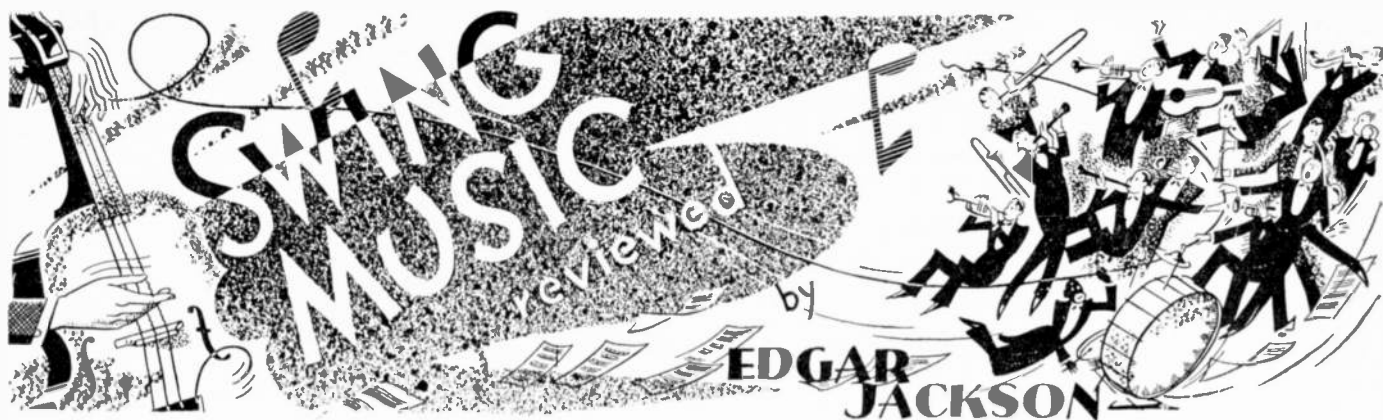
Mantovani and His Tipica Orchestra.

Love is like a Cigarette and *Just a corner of Paradise* (Columbia FB1253). If I had heard this earlier it might have gone higher up in the list, although order is not necessarily an indication of merit; from all of which you can gather that it is a good record and the band continues to show that it is a combination in the top class.

Orquesta Tipica Francisco Canaro.

Tangon and *La Copla Portena* (Parlophone OT136). The *Tangon* is described as a "Nueva Danza," and you don't need a very extensive knowledge of Spanish to guess that that means some sort of new dance. The rhythm is, as a friend exclaimed to me when he heard it, a cross between a rumba and a tango, or a tango with an exciting and urgent cross-rhythm. Anyhow, it is very attractive and will incite you to invent new steps for your rusty tango.

M. E. C.



American Monopoly on Hot Music goes Bang

New Parlophone Series proves that British Artists can do Just as Well, if not Better

THE words in the above heading seem to be sufficiently startling to make it worth while explaining exactly what it is that has provoked them, and to enable this I want you first of all to glance back to some earlier days.

Prior to 1929, Hot records were few and far between, and those that were issued were looked upon as less grotesque only than the handful of wonder-struck enthusiasts who enjoyed them.

Then Parlophone launched their first "Rhythm-Style" Series, and put a new complexion on the whole subject.

Putting it over

Having at their disposal the magnificent and unexploited American Okeh catalogue, they not only chose wisely from it, releasing regularly records so exceptionally good that many are still looked upon as "classics," but by segregating them from the ordinary dance discs, and supporting them with informative literature, gave the music a form of prestige that did more than a little towards inducing the public to realise that it was not inevitably the inebriated noise they had, for want of knowledge, hitherto assumed it to be.

That this enlightened way of dealing with the matter was a big success is proved partly by the fact that 138 "Rhythm-Style" discs have been issued during the past six years (and now a 1936 Edition of the series has been started), but even more obviously by the fact that as rapidly as they could obtain the necessary material other companies followed the Parlophone lead. As a result, Hot Music under its latest *nom de guerre*, Swing Music, is achieving the distinction of becoming, together with music that at any rate attempts to swing, a public institution.

Progress behind the scenes

With the exception of the accompaniments to four saxophone solos by Hawkins, all the 276 titles released up to the end of last year in the various "Rhythm-Style" series were necessarily by American artists. I say necessarily because, the modern dance music idiom having been created by the American Negroes, what more natural than that they, and the white American musicians in close

daily contact with them, should for a while have been the best exponents of it in its more ambitious forms!

But for a while does not mean for ever. For some time certain British musicians have been showing astonishing prowess. The full extent of their endeavour and progress has not been revealed to the public, chiefly because even in the more ambitious English efforts the bogey of "commercialism" has generally been near enough to cast its dampening influence over the proceedings. Nevertheless, quietly, behind the scenes, it has been going on, only waiting for an opportunity to show itself, and now, thanks to the Parlophone Company, it has been given that opportunity.

With that flair for being the first to take advantage of any new situation for which they have become noted, Parlophone have inaugurated a BRITISH ARTISTS' "RHYTHM-STYLE" SERIES.

By about the middle of the month the first twelve titles (six 10in. discs) should be

WISHING YOU
A VERY HAPPY, PROSPEROUS
and Musical
NEW YEAR

on sale. Each disc will be obtainable separately at the price of 2s. 6d., but those purchasing all six will be given, free, a handsome storage Album and a booklet containing the full personnels of all the featured groups and brief notes on the performances.

Next month it will be my pleasure to start reviewing the records, but I cannot resist the temptation to say a word or two about them in advance.

Some of the combinations are, to put it mildly, unorthodox. For instance, one consists of tenor saxophone, a rhythm section, and (believe it or not) three flutes! And as though this instrumentation were not in itself a sufficient novelty, Stanley Black has amused himself writing extraordinary arrangements for it.

Even so, for ideas it has little on the groups of more conventional instrumentation. All

the featured artists have made themselves conspicuous not only for their musicianship, but also by their creative ability. Some have gone so far as to write their own numbers, which compare more than favourably with the popular "evergreens" of jazz with which they find themselves side by side.

Certain of the artists have frankly followed the American example. Others have invented modes of their own.

It is the latter which have interested me the most. There is something typically British about them.

The English idea

I hesitated to write those words. In dance music "typically British" has generally meant painfully corny. The English idea here is anything but that. It has swing in a most desirable sense of the word, sometimes a rather subtle sense, and, if one may judge on these records, it infers music of a good deal better class. You will gather what I mean when you hear Hugo Rignold's immaculate performance of his own composition—*Calling all keys*. As a piece of music and an example of sheer virtuosity on the violin, it makes many of the things done by Venuti and Grappelly sound almost dowdy.

There are other records to deal with in my limited space, but before leaving these Parlophones until we return to them next month, there is one little point I ought to dispose of.

Usual disclaimer

In case it gets about in the exaggerated guise these things have a habit of assuming, I had better confess that I had a finger in this pie. I plead guilty to having urged Parlophone to give the British musician this chance and to suggesting certain artists. Subsequently I attended the sessions and one or two suggestions I offered were adopted. But you will realise that this was a negligible rôle compared with that of the performers—so small, in fact, that you need have no fear that what I have written has in any way been influenced by it.

Individually, there is not a dull record among the batch. Many are absolutely brilliant. As a collection they should create something of a sensation.

Those who think that America still has a monopoly on Swing music can prepare to receive a very big surprise when they hear this latest edition of Parlophone's "Rhythm-Style" Series.

Four Sides of New Ellington Composition

—but Orchestra's brilliance fails to conceal the music's weakness

BRUNSWICK

Duke Ellington and His Orchestra (Am. N.)

Reminiscing in tempo (Ellington)
Four sides (Brunswick 02103-4, 5s.).

Reminiscing is perhaps the culmination of all that Ellington's musicians have discovered in the course of their musical careers. What the score calls upon them to do, they do with that musicianship and individuality which have had at least a share in achieving the fame that the band enjoys.

On the other hand it is very far from being the culmination of all that Ellington has discovered—at least, let us hope so.

One expects a work that is assumed to be important enough to have been spread over four 10-inch sides to be something musically worth while. Even more does one expect this when the work is by Ellington.

As music this work is not worth while, I say as music, because it may have some other significance. For instance, my good friend Mr. Leonard Hibbs suggests in our contemporary *Swing Music* that it may be educational—to the extent that Parts 1, 2 and 3 are Ellington's explanations (or confessions) of how he reached part 4. He even infers that 1, 2 and 3 are superfluous, because Part 4 says in better language all that they said less capably. To me it seems that he looks upon 1, 2 and 3 only as the not too well given evidence which is hardly worth listening to as it can be heard to better advantage in the summing-up of the learned judge in 4.

Personally, I can see nothing to support such an explanation. But at least it is an explanation, and in offering it Mr. Hibbs goes one better than I. I candidly confess I have no idea what Ellington is driving at, and I doubt if anyone else will have until he chooses to give his own explanation.

In the absence of this one can only judge the music on its face value. And that is precious little.

But things of no value can sometimes be interesting. In the face of all opposition I confess I found these records entertaining—at times even intriguing. I admired the individual musicianship. I was tickled by the unusual noises resulting from the so-called modern harmonies, which, while they have no musical value in the composition, give it a bizarre effect. I was fascinated by the way it progressed without reason, form or relief from the one slow tempo. And, above all, I was captured by the vivid, rich and ever-changing colours, which were none the less apparent because anything much in the nature of a worth-while picture failed to materialise from them.

If the music appeals to you, you may call it a tone poem. If it doesn't, you may call it a useless noise. Please yourself.

* * *

Red McKenzie and His Orchestra (Am.)

Every now and then (Silver, Sherman and Lewis) (v by Red McKenzie)
Georgia Rockin' Chair (Fisher) (v by Red McKenzie)
(Brunswick 02105—2s. 6d.).

First side just commercial. Nice playing except for doubtful style of clarinet.

Second side brighter, but solos nothing to write home about. Afraid Red's going green.

COLUMBIA

The New Music of Reginald Foresythe

Greener the grass (Foresythe)
Melancholy clown (Foresythe)
(Columbia FBI233—1s. 6d.).

Benny Goodman and J. Muensenberger (clarinets), "Toots" Mondello and H. Schertzer (altos), Dick Clarke (tenor), "Sol" Schoenbach (bassoon), J. Kirby (bass), G. Krupa (drums), and Reginald Foresythe (piano).

If you are looking for conventional jazz, steer clear; but if you are interested in music that is different, in the ideas of people who not only have ideas, but can devise original ways of expressing them, you should get this disc.

Reginald Foresythe's compositions—and I think this description may help you to approach them in the manner that will enable you to obtain the greatest enjoyment—are almost solely musical picturisations of mental moods; that is to say, his endeavours to express in music, not so much the actual things or happenings which are the subject of his titles, but the mental impressions they create for him.

You will realise that the nice point here is, of course, that even the most ordinary objects or events impress different mentalities in different ways.

Take this case, for instance:

The late Sir William Eden, Bart., father of our Mr. Anthony Eden, commissioned the famous portrait painter, Whistler, to paint his wife, the noted beauty of her day, Sybil Lady Eden.

When the picture was finished, Sir William, a real bluff autocrat of the old days, refused to pay, because, he said, it was not like Lady Eden. Whistler sued Sir William and in court said that the picture was Lady Eden as he saw her. Sir William retorted that if that were so, it still didn't make it a good portrait, to which Whistler coldly replied that his impression of Lady Eden was an Artist's impression.

The issues seem to be: (a) was Whistler's talent supreme enough to have enabled him to convey with true artistry on the canvas his real impression of his subject?; if so (b) was it too far removed from a normal mind's impression to be accepted as a good portrait by the average cultured mentality? and if so (c) should he instead have attempted to show Lady Eden as a normal cultured taste would have been expected to see her?

Having answered these questions to your satisfaction, you can apply the questions and the answers to Foresythe's music. If it is not the greatest of music, it still seems good enough (which, of course, most jazz is not) to merit consideration on these lines.

Incidentally, too, my Eden-Whistler simile is not inappropriate, because *Melancholy clown* happens to be Foresythe's impression of a self-portrait of an American friend of his, a painter by name of Charles Rain, in clown's attire.

Greener the grass is his (Foresythe's) impression of a pastoral scene.

DECCA

Lew Davis Trombone Trio

Three of a kind (Davis)
Three's Company (Davis)
(Decca F5804—1s. 6d.).

Lew Davis, Ted Heath and Tony Thorpe (trombones), Bert Barnes (piano), Sid Phillips (celeste), Joe Branneley (guitar), Max Bacon (drums), and Dick Ball (bass).

If you want to hear what a delightful noise three trombones can make, here's your chance.

Perhaps that's wrong. What I ought to have said is what a delightful noise *these* three trombones can make. There are certainly not three other trombones on this side of the Atlantic who can combine such perfect tone and execution with such good style.

Both the tunes have been played by the Trio in the broadcasts by Ambrose's orchestra (of which they are—I should have said were—members), so I need not say more. Get this disc. No one could help enjoying such elegant offerings.

H.M.V.

Benny Goodman and His Orchestra (Am.)

Blue Skies (Berlin)
Dear Old Southland (Creamer and Layton)
(H.M.V. B8398—2s. 6d.).

"Toots" Mondello and H. Schertzer (altos), Dick Clark and Arthur Rollini (tenors), Berigan and Nate Kazebler (trumpets), J. Lacey and "Red" Ballard (trombones), Frank Froba (piano), Alan Reuss (guitar), Gene Krupa (drums), H. Goodman (bass), and Benny Goodman (clarinet).

They say enough is as good as a feast, but these two sides just prove how wrong those people who invent these adages can be. Such immaculate playing would have been enough cause for sprinkling some superlatives about, but when you have it bestowed on Fletcher Henderson arrangements it becomes a feast, by the side of which a mere sufficiency seems little short of starvation.

Among the parts I liked best is some lovely work by the sax section in *Blue Skies*. For sheer finish Goodman's is perhaps to-day the finest saxophone team that has ever existed, and it could never have better material for showing it than that which Henderson writes.

Of course, that's only one little point, but it will have to suffice for this month, and anyway it's enough to buy the record for.

* * *

Ray Noble and His Orchestra (partly Am.)

St. Louis Blues (Handy) (v by Al Bowly)
Way down yonder in New Orleans (v)
(H.M.V. BD5004—1s. 6d.).

George "Pee-Wee" Irwin and Charles Spivak (trumpets), Glen Miller and Wilbur Schweitzerberger (trombones), J. Munzenberger, Jim Cannon and Milton Yanner (altos), Bud Freeman (tenor), Claude Thornhill (piano), George Van Eps (guitar), Delmer Kaplan (bass), and Bill Harty (drums).

There is no justice.

And with Benny Goodman at 2s. 6d. and Ray Noble at 1s. 6d. apparently mighty little sense either.

Benny may or may not have the better band. If he has—and, mark you, I said if—its superiority is no shilling's-worth. Also

I know who has turned out the more entertaining records—at least as regards one side. Benny may have a swell band, and Fletcher Henderson may be a swell arranger, but neither has anything on *Way down yonder*.

Ray's band came in for some severe comments not long ago. Some were perhaps deserved, more were probably prejudice. Even the deserved ones are no longer warranted. The band has at last found its form. It you want a record that is full of sparkle, wit and interest, to say nothing of musicianship that compares with the best, get this latest version of *New Orleans*. Even if you think some of the solos are a little—er—shall we say "commercial"?—I think you will have to agree that the variety in the bright arrangement and general slickness of the whole thing are more than ample compensation.

St. Louis Blues I didn't enjoy quite so much. I think it fails in the very thing that was the main attraction of its backing—the arrangement. There is some good writing in the accompaniment to Al Bowlly's vocal, and nothing much to complain about for the next inch or so. After that it becomes forced, and anyway Glen Miller might have thought of something a little less like what he wrote for the Dorseys' Brunswick record (01892) of the same title.

Adrian Rollini and His Tap Room Gang (Am.)
Jazz o' Jazz (Burns) (v by Jeanne Burns)
Nagasaki (Dixon and Warren) (v)
(H.M.V. B8397—2s. 6d.).

"Wingy" Mannone (trumpet), Joe Marsala (clarinet), Putney Dandridge (piano), Carmen Mastren (guitar), Sidney Weiss (bass), Adrian Rollini (xylophone).

If you like little Jeanne Burns—remember her in *Got a need for you* (H.M.V. B8382)?—you will find *Jazz o' Jazz* good entertainment. The young lady's diction is not all it might be, but she's got IT in her style and personality. Instrumentally the record is bright, with little bits by Rollini's xylophone among its most colourful moments.

Nagasaki's chief claim to distinction seems to be that it's probably a very good reproduction of what goes on in the Tap Room when the tap's had time to make its influence felt. Sorry this issue won't be out in time for me to recommend it for your New Year's Eve brawl.

ORIOLE

Quintette du Hot Club de France
The sunshine of your smile (Ray)
Sweet Sue (Young) (v by Jerry Mengo)
(Oriole LV104—3s. 6d.).

Django Reinhardt (solo guitar), Joseph Reinhardt and Louis Volga (guitars), Roger Chapet (bass), and Stephane Grappelly (violin).

With two choruses given over to the most commercial of crooners, a good deal of valuable times is wasted in *Sweet Sue*. But the rest is the quintette well up to its usual form with more of Django's almost incredible technique on his guitar, and Grappelly and his violin in fine fettle.

The choice of Ray's ballad for the coupling may turn out to be a good commercial stunt, but that's about all there is to be said for it. This is not an attempt (I rather wish it had been) to make one of those noses at the tune which Wingy Mannone

(Continued in middle of next column)

Vocal

Superb accompaniment for delightful Mildred Bailey

Mildred Bailey and Her Swing Band (Am.)
Someday, Sweetheart (Spikes)
When day is done (de Sylva and Katsher)
(Brunswick 02106).

Gordon Griffiths (trumpet), "Choo" Berry (tenor sax), "Teddy" Wilson (piano), Dick McDonough (guitar), Eddie Dougherty (drums), and Arthur Bernstein (bass).

Considering what an artist Mildred Bailey is, it is amazing how few records of hers there are over here—about half a dozen Brunswick discs, three (I believe) H.M.V.s, one chorus with Eddie Lang's orchestra on Parlophone ("Rhythm-Style") R840, and that is about the lot.

But if there were twenty times as many, this new one would be none the less acceptable.

Negro singing is fascinating enough at any time, but Mildred—Mrs. Kenneth "Red Norvo" Norvelle, to give her her full name—makes it doubly so. She knows every one of their styles, tricks, subtleties and characteristics better than the Negroes know them themselves, and puts them over with a polish and ease that would be an improvement to many of the better coloured singers.

She sings only a couple of choruses on either side, but don't be disappointed; the orchestra more than keeps the show going. I don't suppose it would be an exaggeration to say that it is the grandest accompanying combination ever; in fact, I'm wondering if it were necessary to add the word "accompanying." Teddy Wilson you know (or ought to know) all about by now, so we can pass on to Arthur Bernstein. Perhaps you think you know all about him. Well, you will just take my word for it that you don't until you have heard these

made at *Ile of Capri* by swinging it. A semblance of rhythm is suggested by the maintenance of tempo, otherwise it is more like a ballad transcription. The treatment is original, in some ways possibly mildly ingenious, but doesn't add anything to jazz or ballad music, or for that matter to the Quintette's reputation for ideas that are not only different, but good.

PARLOPHONE

Mills Blue Rhythm Band (Am. N.)
Congo Caravan (Garland)
Ride, Red, ride (Millinder) (v by Lucky Millinder)
(Parlophone R2145—2s. 6d.).

Well, of all the darned bad luck! To get so near a century and then miss it by a paltry ten.

What I mean is, *Ride, Red, ride*, which is just another version of *Tiger Rag* (without the courtesy of an acknowledgment to La Rocca), would have achieved the unique distinction of having been played at a hundred bars a minute if they could just have made another ten. Even without them its over ninety to the minute creates a record, and you will have no doubt about it when you hear the opus.

With the assistance of the title, what I was able to hear in the barrage, and a

records. Such perfect tempo, tone, style and taste are, to say the least of it, rarities. Dick McDonough has a swell chorus in *When day is done*, Gordon Griffiths is more than a youngster with possibilities, and Dougherty, from Dickie Wells' Shim-Sham (Club in Harlem, is such a drummer that one wonders how on earth he can have managed to keep out of the constellation for so long.

Whatever you do, don't miss this record.

Bessie Smith (with orchestra) (Am. N.)
Give me a pigfoot (Wilson)
Take me for a buggy ride (Wilson)
(Parlophone R2146—2s. 6d.).

Bessie Smith may be a sophisticated young woman. If so, she is the only sophisticated thing about these records. For all their attempt to veil thinly a mild suggestion of the *risqué*, the words are too crude to be worth any serious consideration and the melodies and the way they are sung neither pretend to be nor are anything more than primitive Negro Blues.

As a Blues singer, Bessie Smith is excellent. I am not so certain about the songs. I have heard Blues that have seemed much more sincere and a good deal more charming.

Both records appear to have been made at the same time as Bessie Smith's *Do your duty* and *I'm down in the dumps* issued in the Parlophone Second New Rhythm-Style Series (R1793) a couple of years ago.

The Mills Brothers (Am. N.)
Lulu's back in town (Dubin and Warren)
Sweet and slow (Dubin and Warren)
(Brunswick 02093—2s. 6d.).

Good, as usual.

final superlative feat of brain power. I gather that the record is an excuse for "Red" Allen to play his trumpet. It says much for him that he almost manages to keep cool in the chaos.

If this is the best Parlophone can do to keep their American "Rhythm-Style" Series going, it's just as well they have started a British one.

Congo Caravan brings us back to something like sanity, but sanity can be very dull.

Joe Paradise and His Music
Love's Serenade (Hayes and Kurtz) (v by Marjorie Stedeford)
Twelfth Street Rag (Bowman)
(Parlophone F356—1s. 6d.).

Laurie Bookin (violin), Albert Harris, George Elliott and Joe Young (guitars), George Senior (bass), and Phil Green (piano).

Compliments to all concerned on two very practical and tuneful records. No need for me to say the guitar-playing is excellent—you have only to look at the names—but you may be surprised when you hear what a nice style piano Phil Green plays. A word for young Laurie's violin, too. And not forgetting the man who provides a steady foundation—George Senior.

The Washboard Serenaders (N.)

Black Eyes (Ferraris) (v)
Nagasaki (Dixon and Warren) (v)
 (Parlophone F358—1s. 6d.).

Well! well! If it isn't that crazy bunch of niggers again who appeared at the Holborn Empire last summer! I had forgotten all about them. Seems Parlophone must have, too, until somebody had a brain-wave and realised there were still two sides to come out.

Poor old *Black Eyes*. Nothing's sacred from the jazz fiends these days. If you can sort it out from the noise, some of it is not so bad. The guitar player is worthy of a better fate and the drummer gets pretty nimble at times with his washboard and bell plate. Nevertheless I think we might have been spared this. Jokes can be carried too far.

* * *

Clarence Williams Washboard Band (Am. N.)

I've got what it takes (v)
What makes me love you so? (v)
 (Parlophone R2147—2s. 6d.).

We all know jazz had its crude beginnings, but why must we be reminded of them?

I prefer to forget that such things could

CORRECTION

"Fats" Waller and His Rhythm (Am. N.)
Sweet Sue (Young) (v by "Fats" Waller)
You're not the only oyster in the stew
 (Burke) (v by "Fats" Waller)
 (H.M.V. BD298—1s. 6d.).

Corrected personnels, now verified by Victor, New York, with apologies for last month's errors:

Sweet Sue—Hermon Autrey (trumpet), Rudy Powell (sax and clarinet), James Smith (guitar), "Scrippie" Boling (drums), Charles Turner (bass), and "Fats" Waller (piano).

You're not the only oyster—Autrey (trumpet), Eugene Sedric (clarinet), Albert Casey (guitar), Harry Dial (drums), Charles Turner (bass), and "Fats" Waller (piano).

ever have happened. And at half-a-crown a time I expect most others will.

I refuse to take seriously the words "Race Series" which adorn the labels, but if Series is an indication that more records like this are to be foisted on us, I would advise Parlophone to think again.

REGAL-ZONOPHONE**The Six Swingers**

I'm livin' in a great big way (McHugh and Fields) (v by Marjorie Stedeford)
Truckin' on down (Porter and Blake) (v by Marjorie Stedeford)
 (Regal-Zonophone MR1929—1s.).

Fred Gardner (saxes and clarinet), Billy Farrell (trumpet), J. Flemming (trombone), J. Young (guitar), Jock Jacobson (drums), Dick Escott (bass), and George Scott-Wood (pianist-director).

The Swingers well up to form in two more of Scott-Wood's bright arrangements. Jock Jacobson, a newcomer to the outfit, proves himself to be a grand little drummer and Billy Farrell's trumpet-playing is just about ideal for the type of thing—neat but not gaudy, as the monkey is reputed to have said, and a nice neat swing withal.

Ike "Yowse Suh" Hatch and His Harlem Stompers

Love's Serenade (Hayes and Kurtz)
 (v by Ike Hatch)
Some other time (Coslow and Ilda) (v by Ike Hatch)
 (Regal-Zonophone MR1942—1s.).

Harry Smith (clarinet), Laurle Bookin (saxophone), George Elliott (guitar), Max Lewin (drums), George Senior (bass), and Phil Green (piano).

Dear Ike,—You're not exactly a reincarnation of Caruso, but I've heard worse singers. And I'll even put up with you when you go all Ted Lewis just to hear your chuckle in that chorus you patter of *Some other time*.

It's a neat little band you've got, too, isn't it? Your pianist mistakes himself for a waterfall sometimes, but there is something to be said for waterfalls. They tinkle and remind me of fairies.

But, Ike, youse ain't no sweet man fairy. Youse ain't got no wings—yet. Youse jus' one big black pic'ninny, youse is. Dis Park Av'noo stuff ain't yo' stuff. Where's dat "Yowse Suh" youse talks so much 'bout? Boy, has youse forgot de Shim-Sham so soon? Take de boys up next Sat'dy night and show 'em de life. Show

'em howse youse spin dat high hat o' yowse, an' next time let's have li'l bit more o' de real "Yowse Suh"—from everybody. Yowse Suh!

REMINDER

The complete personnels of practically all the 268 records issued in the Parlophone "Rhythm-Style" Series to the end of 1935 are contained in the booklet compiled by Edgar Jackson and obtainable from all Parlophone dealers. Price 9d.

REX**Cab Calloway and His Orchestra (Am. N.)**

Somebody stole my gal (Wood) (v by Cab Calloway)
You Dog (Hover and Calloway) (v by Cab Calloway)
 (Rex 8627—1s.).

Heaven help the sailors (and me, and you) on a night like this.

Instrumental**New Teddy Wilson and Joe Sullivan Solos****Teddy Wilson (Am.) Piano solos**

Every now and then (Silver, Sherman and Lewis)
I never dawned on me (Coots and Lewis)
 (Brunswick 02110—2s. 6d.).

Joe Sullivan (Am.) Piano solos

Little Rock getaway (Sullivan)
Minor Mood (Sullivan)
 (Brunswick 02099—2s. 6d.).

It isn't entirely to save space that I have slighted the two most famous Swing pianists by lumping their records together. The fact is, I am not so certain that they deserve more than a mildly complimentary nod.

Mind you, not that the records are not good. Neither Sullivan nor Wilson at his worst could give a bad performance. And they are not at their worst. But they are not at their best. They should be. One expects it when they have records to themselves. Instead, I have heard them play much better in choruses with bands. Is

this the reason? Do they need the inspiration of other musicians? It may be. Many artists do.

Or is it the tunes? Perhaps in the case of Wilson. His titles are the usual Tin-Pan-Alley superficialities. He plays them neatly. His delightful touch and clean execution are undeniable. His ideas are pleasant. That is all. There is little atmosphere and less inspiration.

Sullivan plays his own compositions. His records are more interesting in consequence. Even so, there is something lacking. *Minor Mood* is culled from Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in C sharp minor*. It is very nearly pretentious. Pretentiousness is often a cloak for lack of sincerity. One is seldom sincere when knowing that his work is based on that of another. *Little Rock getaway* is musically the best of the four sides. Naturally so. A good artist playing his own composition. The simple laws of nature are inexorable.

Recommended Rumbas**Genuine South American Artists**

Canción a Guarina and Són de Amor (Son)
 by Rico's Creole Band (both v in Spanish by Chiquito). (H.M.V. GV36—1s. 6d.)

Mon Loup, by Rico's Creole Band (v)
 (Coupling—by Harry Sosneck's Edgewater Beach Hotel Orchestra, not recommended). (H.M.V. GV32—1s. 6d.)

Isabelita and Moin Aimé, doudou moin by Rico's Creole Band (v's respectively by Jean Irace and the Orphellians). (H.M.V. GV35—1s. 6d.).

Fado do Amor and Sombra de Cuba by Don Barreto and His Cuban Orchestra. (Decca F5769—1s. 6d.)

La Tortugueta (coupled with *La Bordadora*—tango) (both v) by Orquesta Tipica Roberto Firpo. (Parlophone-Odeon OT134—2s. 6d.)

British and North American Artists

Beneath the curtain of the night and *Cuban Moonlight* (both v in Spanish) by Don Miguel and His Cuban Music. (Columbia FB1146—1s. 6d.)

Rumba Tambah by Don Ramon and His Cuban Orchestra and *The Lady in Red* (v) by Geraldo and His Rumba Orchestra. (Columbia FB1199—1s. 6d.)

EDGAR JACKSON.

MORE PROGRAMME BUILDING

A PROGRAMME OF CHAMBER ENSEMBLE WITH VOICE

Submitted by HENRY R. HUBBARD, of New Jersey, U.S.A.

- 1a. William Byrd (1542-1623): (1) Pavanne, (2) Galliard. (Victor 7873.) Henry Purcell (1658-1695): Chaconne. (Victor 7873.) Played by a consort of viols and harpsichord. Time, nine minutes.
- 1b. Matthew Locke (1630-1677): String Quartet No. 6, for four Viols, transcribed for string quartet by Peter Warlock. (NGS143.) Time, eight minutes.

The English composers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced a large quantity of excellent music for chamber ensembles. Its outstanding characteristic is simplicity of form combined with complexity of counterpoint. So skilful were these early contrapuntists that their art was actually self-effacing; the music flows so spontaneously that one is not conscious of the intricately interwoven parts, only of the rich texture. Much of this chamber music was written for ensembles of four, five and six viols in the form of Suites, sets of movements based upon the old dances.

The most elaborate movement of the Suite was the introductory Fantasia; the following movements differed in tempo and rhythm. Frequently the Pavanne and Galliard were conceived as a pair of movements based upon the same theme, the Pavanne treating it in double, the Galliard in triple rhythm. The Chaconne is a series of contrapuntal variations upon a reiterated theme in triple rhythm, in which the theme may shift from one voice to another.

The soft, veiled tone of the viols is a perfect medium for the expression of the delicate beauty of this old music.

The Quartet of Matthew Locke consists of Fantasia, Courante, Ayre, Sarabande. In their wholesome, good humour, their abundant vitality and their contrapuntal ingenuity, these movements are worthy predecessors of those in the Suites of Bach and Handel.

Ludwig van Beethoven: Quartet, F major, Op. 135. (H.M.V. DB2113-16.) Time, thirty-two minutes.

The modern string quartet attained its perfection in the last quartets of Beethoven. In these wonderful compositions Beethoven achieved complete equality of expression and freedom of movement among the four instruments, together with a concentration of thought hitherto unattained in symphonic writing. At times, however, he seemed to have been attempting to express something beyond the limits of musical speech, a struggle which resulted in passages quite incomprehensible to those of his generation.

The Quartet, Op. 135, is Beethoven's last composition in this form. There are four movements:

1. *Allegretto*. Terse, economical of thematic material, but eloquent in its restraint.
2. *Vivace*. A rough little scherzo, prophetic of modern music in its development from two insignificant germs.
3. A deeply brooding, transcendent *Lento* such as Beethoven wrote only in his last years when, on account of his deafness, he had withdrawn into the communion of his own thoughts.
4. *Grave: Allegro*. Preceding the movement Beethoven had written on the score two musical phrases accompanied by cryptic utterances: G, E, A flat, "Must it be?" A, C, G; G, B flat, F. "It must be! It must be!" Upon these two phrases, together with a third theme which appears later, the entire movement is built. What is the meaning? The enigma is capable of two interpretations, one serious, even tragic—Fate, Struggle, Resignation; the other, humorous. The listener must choose the interpretation which best accords with the impression which the music makes upon him. Intermission, ten minutes.

Johannes Brahms: Clarinet Quintet, B minor, Op. 115. (Columbia L2228-32.) Time, thirty-eight minutes.

Brahms had thought of ending his creative life with the String Quintet, Op. 111, when his imagination was again kindled by the extraordinary clarinet-playing of Muhlefeld. The result of this new stimulus was the composition of four fine chamber works, the two Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 120, the Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello and Piano, Op. 114, and the great Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, Op. 115. These works are noteworthy for their intellectual vigour and for the mellowness of expression that results from a lifetime of work enriched by varied experience.

In the Quintet the clarinet is not treated as a solo instrument with string obbligato, but merely as one of five voices, contributing its own strand of warm colour to the design.

This work is outstanding among Brahms' compositions in its dramatic quality. It has a vivid coloration, an emotional poignancy, not often found in his music. The prevailing mood is one of unsatisfied longing,

rising to climaxes of passionate utterance and sinking in quiet resignation.

1. *Allegro*. The sombre beginning and close are intensified by the yearning of the second theme.

2. *Adagio*. In this movement the yearning is etherialised and ecstatic. When the Quintet was first heard Brahms was criticised for writing such orchestral passages as the rhapsodic clarinet cadenzas thrown into relief by shimmering string tremolandos. Such effects, the critics claimed, were not legitimate in chamber music.

3. *Andantino—Presto*. A mood of tranquillity follows the poignant emotions of the Allegro and Adagio, but with the presentation of the theme in a new aspect (in diminution) the music becomes agitated. Before the movement closes the composer returns to the tranquil mood of the first measures.

4. *Con Moto*; a Theme with Variations. Of this form Brahms was a master. He knew how to evoke from the content of his theme visions of great beauty. In the last of these variations the main theme of the first movement reappears, becoming an integral part of the musical tissue and dominating the Coda which ends, as does that of the first movement, in restrained grief, rather than in resignation.

Intermission, three minutes.

Peter Warlock: The Curlew. (N.G.S. 163-65.) Time, twenty minutes.

The essence of chamber music is the equal participation of all the component parts of the ensemble. Most lieder cannot be considered as true chamber music, for even though the accompaniment be played by a chamber orchestra, the instruments do not participate equally with the voice, but merely furnish an appropriate background. Because of this necessity for equal participation by all the parts, genuine chamber music for human voice and instrumental ensemble is rare. Cobbett lists only about seventy works.

In "The Curlew," a setting of four of Yeats' lyrical poems for string quartet, flute, English horn and tenor voice, Peter Warlock has written real chamber music of a high order. "The Curlew" is not a song cycle, but rather a septet in four divisions, free in form, and assimilating rather than dominated by the form of the poetry.

Warlock's score and Yeats' poems transport us into the shadowy, legendary world of Celtic folk-lore, in which the curlew and the sedge, the wind and the moon become dread symbols of hopeless love and harbingers of death. By its subtlety, its elusiveness, its suggestion of the voices of Nature, the music creates an atmosphere of unreality as of distant marshy lake shores and forested hills when the grey-blue twilight is descending and the moon, invisible, calls from the black water.

Total time, 120 minutes.

PROGRAMME SUBMITTED BY SIGNOR PIERO MOSCONI

Signor Piero Mosconi's interesting and professedly highbrow programme is directed at the "intelligent listener not without culture" as well as the expert musician. The first part is in the nature of an historical progression through the various forms of music from the fifteenth century to J. S. Bach, who laid the foundation of the great period which is exemplified in the second part.

PART I.

- J. N. Geoffroy—Tombeau en forme d'allemande. Clavicembalo. Anthologie Sonore 8.
- A. Dornel—Le pendent d'oreille. Anthologie Sonore 8.
- Albert—Fest Lied. Canto, Tynaire. Lumen 32014.
- J. W. Franck—Pasionlied. Lumen 32014.
- G. Frescobaldi—Toccatà per l'elevazioni. Organo. Anthologie Sonore 4.
- J. Pachelbel—Preludio Corale. "Von Himmel hoch." Organo. H.M.V. FM43.
- D. Buxtehude—Fuga in fa magg—Organo. H.M.V. FM43.
- P. H. Erlebach—Ihr gedanken. Canto Le Marc'Hadour. Col. LFX343.
- P. H. Erlebach—Schwaches Hertz. Canto Le Marc'Hadour. BAM2.
- P. H. Erlebach—Himmel, du weist meine Klagen. Canto Le Marc'Hadour. Col. LFX343.
- D. Scarlatti—Sonata in mi min. Clavicembalo. H.M.V. DB4963.
- D. Scarlatti—Sonata in fa magg. W. Landowska. H.M.V. DB4965.
- G. S. Bach—Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben. E. Schumann. H.M.V. D1410.
- G. S. Bach—Sonata in fa min, No. 5. Per piano e violino. Col. LX304-6.

PART II.

- J. Brahms—Concerto in re min. Piano e orch. H.M.V. DB1839-40.
- C. Franck—Variazioni Sinfoniche piano e orchestra. Col. LX192-93.
- Lalo—Sinfonie Espagnole. Violino e orchestra. Menuhin. H.M.V. DB1999-2001.

Technical Talk

WHAT IS THIS HIGH FIDELITY?—II

by P. WILSON

(Continued from page 301)

DURING recent years several important additions have been made to our knowledge of what is required to reproduce all audible sounds in such a way as to be indistinguishable from the original. Extensive analyses have been made by various workers, mostly in America, and the results of their experiments have been published in the *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, the *Bell Technical Journal*, the *Proceedings of the Institute of Radio Engineers*, and the *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers*, during the past five or six years.

These analyses have proceeded in the first place to establish the characteristics of the natural sounds, then to reproduce those characteristics accurately, and finally to vary the reproduction so as to determine what amount of variation is audible either by direct comparison or by memory.

The requirements for accurate reproduction may be summarised as follows :

1. The frequency range of the transmitting and reproducing system must extend from 20 to about 20,000 cycles per second if *all* sounds are to be reproduced ; but most instruments and speech can be faithfully reproduced with a frequency range from 50 to 10,000 cycles per second. Typical exceptions are the organ and the double bass at one end of the scale, and noises such as hand-clapping at the other. Moreover, within the range of frequency, the response should be uniform : that is, with a variation of not more than one decibel.

2. The volume range from *pp* to *ff* should be at least 40 decibels for speech and 70 decibels for music. This means that the energy ratio between the loudest and the softest sounds must be of the order of ten millions to one ! Clearly, to appreciate such a wide volume range in comfort, a noiseless environment is essential on the one hand, and, on the other, the listening room should be of the same dimensions as that in which the original performance is being given.

3. Throughout this volume range and this frequency range amplitude distortion must be kept below 5 per cent. for direct comparison and 10 per cent. for comparison by memory : but if third harmonic distortion predominates, not more than half these amounts are permissible. The longer the frequency range in the treble, the more evident amplitude distortion becomes. Thus, if the frequency range is limited to 5,000 cycles, even 15 per cent. amplitude distortion is not apparent without direct comparison, and hardly so even then.

4. The reproduction must be binaural, otherwise it becomes cramped. To achieve this, several reproducing channels, each with its own microphone, amplifier and loudspeaker, are necessary ; and each of these channels must have identical characteristics as at (1), (2) and (3) above.

Even when all these requirements have been fulfilled, room conditions both at the studio and at the listening end are apt to upset the balance. For particular types of sound there are limits within which the reverberation time must fall if the reproduced sound is to be neither " flat " nor " echoey."

Having regard to the stringent character of many of these requirements, it is clear, as I indicated last month, that accurate reproduction is impossible save in conditions that render it valueless. But the ear is a tolerant organ, and in sound reproduction we are not so much concerned with accuracy as with æsthetic satisfaction. Our standard of values is measured, not in terms of percentages, cycles per second, or decibels, but in less clearly defined sensations. Our

scale might thus be something like this : Delightful, Comfortable, Tolerable, Uncomfortable, Intolerable. It is easy to fill it out more fully, and the actual words do not matter. The sensations do. After all, our ears hear an original assemblage of sounds within a wide range of different conditions. It is a commonplace that there is no " best seat " in a concert-hall, nor are there two seats from which the sounds are exactly alike.

The next step in the analysis of reproduction is therefore to examine practical listening conditions, discover their inevitable limitations, and determine what modifications of the " ideal " or " abstract " requirements, as indicated above, are necessary to give the greatest satisfaction to the greatest number of listeners. I am not so sure about the last few words. Should the criterion be the satisfaction of the greatest number of folk, or is normal hearing like normal eyesight—a rare phenomenon considerably different from the average? I must leave our philosophers to fight it out, knowing full well that they are sure to fight in any case.

Let us in the meantime look in our innocence at some of the inevitable characteristics of listening conditions. Here, I think, the first important point to notice is that the greatest amount of listening to reproduced music will be done either in small rooms or in cinemas. We are by no means justified in assuming that the same conditions apply to both types of listening. There is, indeed, a good deal of evidence to show that they are vastly different ; that is one reason why public demonstrations of equipment designed for use in home conditions so often fall flat. The point is important because the greater part of the experimental work that has been done in this connection has been concerned with motion picture conditions.

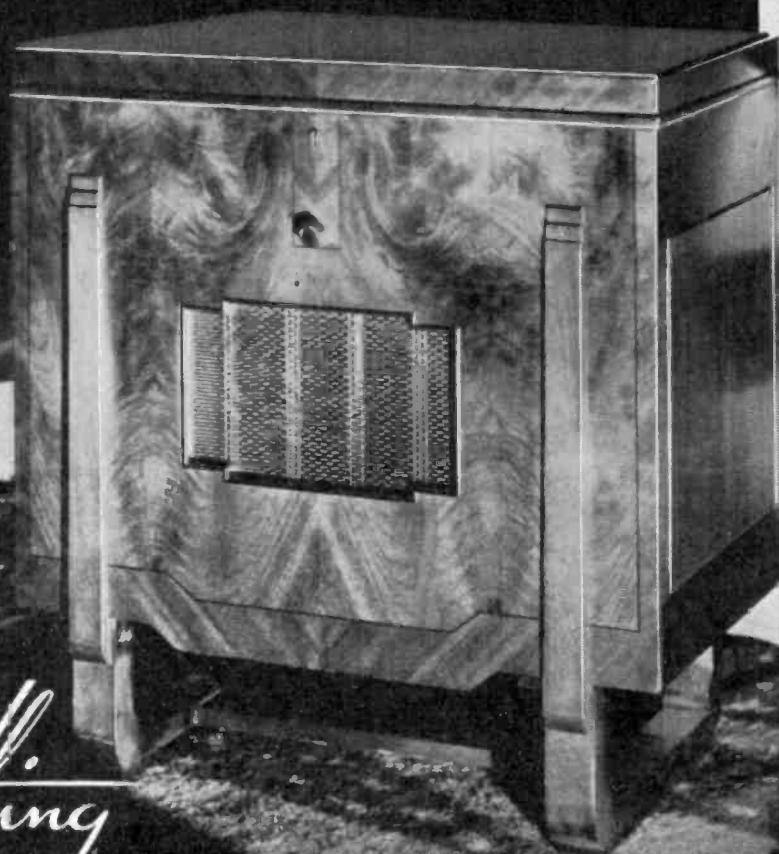
In what follows I shall ignore this type of listening almost entirely and devote myself to home conditions. Here, two or three limitations are at once apparent. In the first place, the permissible range of volume is very much less than the 70 decibels referred to above. I understand that the range of B.B.C. transmissions is something rather less than 30 decibels, and there are very considerable technical difficulties in broadcasting more than 40 decibels satisfactorily. For records, the range is even less. Some of these difficulties might be overcome by an automatic contraction and expansion arrangement—what H.M.V. have called Contrast Amplification—by which the volume range is deliberately contracted in transmission according to a definite law (for example, by taking the square root which would halve the decibel range) and expanded again in reproduction by the inverse law. This, however, in itself is not free from difficulty, as a consideration of the power output required will readily show, and, in any case, it ignores the fact that most living-rooms will not stand a large volume range.

Here, again, we must bear in mind that there are two well-defined types of listener. One type, and it is not by any means confined to the jazz fiend, likes to hear a lot of noise, or, at any rate, big contrasts. The other type finds the greatest satisfaction in quiet music ; and here I am thinking rather of those good folk of keen perception who are thrilled by the patterns in music and not of those who use it as a background to casual conversation.

These divergences from the conditions of an original performance are wide enough in all conscience, and, as we shall see, they are not the only ones. How can we reconcile these with any notion of high fidelity?

(To be continued)

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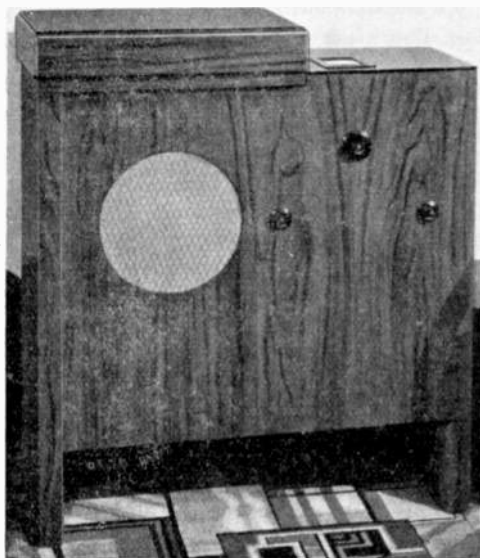
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TECHNICAL REPORTS



The Murphy "28" Radio-Gramophone Price £32 10s.

Before proceeding to pass any comments on this Murphy "28" radiogram we must first attempt to explain away an error which occurred in the specification in the report of the "28" console receiver published in the November issue. How on earth both motor and pick-up came to be included in the specification of a console receiver goodness only knows, but there they are. Perhaps it was sheer anticipation of receiving the "28" radiogram, or the effect of a "single-track mind," probably the latter.

However, both pick-up and motor are in their proper place this month; these components, a higher power consumption and, of course, a different type of cabinet constitute the only basic differences between the "28" console and this radio-gramophone.

Perhaps we had better deal with the cabinet first, for we are convinced that the internal lay-out and construction have an important effect on the tonal quality in general. To save unnecessary explanations we give an illustration of the interior arrangements. It will be seen that the cabinet is divided into four compartments: one houses the receiver chassis; beneath this is the power pack; side-by-side with the receiver compartment is the gramophone motor; and beneath this is the speaker compartment. Thus, raw A.C. of high voltage is isolated from all grid circuits and the speaker is virtually in a separate cabinet where vibrations set up by the vibration of the diaphragm can have no ill effect on the valves and components in the receiver.

The possibility of wood resonance is dealt with in the usual but thorough Murphy fashion by lining the whole of the baffle area with thick fibre-board. Air column resonance, too, is minimised by leaving the speaker compartment acoustically open and by restricting the depth of the cabinet to as small proportions as are compatible with other mechanical dimensions of the equipment. Note, too, that the speaker is well away from the floor.

Altogether most sensible and convenient arrangements. Now as to the instrument's performance. The radio efficiency is similar to that of the "28" console receiver: the selectivity and range are adequate for all normal requirements and the precautions taken to ensure a reasonably clean background and a minimum of fading and mutual interference between

Specification.

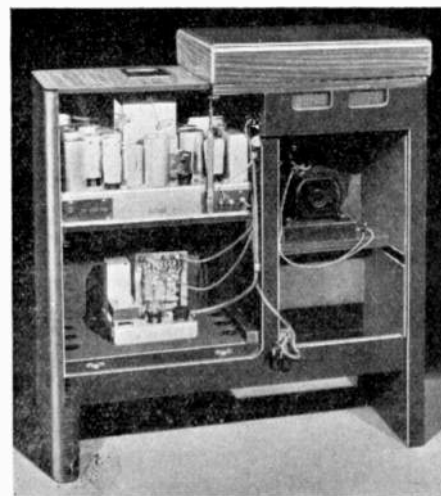
H.F. Stage :—Mazda AC/VP1 Valve.
Frequency Changer :—Mazda AC/TP Valve.
I.F. Amplifier :—Mazda AC/VP1 Valve.
Second Detector :—Mazda V914 Valve.
Noise Suppressor and L.F. Stage :—Mazda AC SP1 Valve.
Power Stage :—Mazda AC/2 Pen Valve.
Power Output :—3 Watts (approx.).
Automatic Tuning :—Mazda V914 Valve; Mazda AC/SP1 Valve.
Rectifier :—Mazda UU3 Valve.
Loudspeaker :—Electro-Magnet M.C.
Speaker Coupling :—Transformer.
Motor :—Synchronous.
Pick-up :—Needle-Armature.
Wave Range :—195–550 and 900–2,000 Metres.
Voltage Range :—200–260 A.C.; 50 Cycles.
Consumption :—110 Watts (approx.).
Automatic Tuning, A.V.C., Tone Control Switch and Provision for Auxiliary Speaker.

stations function well. The automatic tuning circuit, too, about which we commented in the November issue, never fails to perform its allotted duty of accurately pulling the receiver into tune for the reception of any given station and so ensuring that the best possible quality is obtained.

On radio there seems to be cleaner articulation in the lower register and perhaps a brighter tone in the treble than the "28" console exhibits.

Comparing the reproduction of records with that of the A26 radio-gramophone, which we happened to have in the office, the "28" showed a considerable improvement in breadth and depth of tone. The bass is more prominent, and having regard to the strength, as distinct from the range, of the treble, this extension of the lower frequencies is productive of a most satisfactory tonal balance. Very much more bass would be too much. When reproducing symphonic works at large volume levels, in which there are movements for massed strings, one can detect a certain hardness or brittle quality, which it may have been possible to mitigate had the tone-control been of the continuously variable type.

On the whole we are inclined to the opinion that the quality of reproduction given by this "28" radiogram is somewhat superior to that of the console or to any previous Murphy instrument. The differences in some respects are most marked and in others they are not so appreciable, but anything, however small, which has a favourable effect on reproduced music will, no doubt, be welcomed by all; and here, since the main standard of comparison is the excellent tonal quality of the "28" console, just that little extra refinement counts for a good deal.



The internal layout of the "28"

The Columbia Console Receiver, Model 358 Price 17 gns. The Rola G.12 Loudspeaker Price £7 15s.

Specification.

Frequency Changer :—Marconi MX40 Valve.
I.F. Amplifier :—Marconi VMS4 Valve.
Detector and L.F. :—Marconi MHD4 Valve.
L.F. Coupling :—R.C.C. Transformer.
Power Stage :—Marconi M.P.T.4 Valve.
Power Output :—2 Watts (approx.).
Rectifier :—Marconi MU12 Valve.
Loudspeaker :—Electro-Magnet M.C.
Speaker Coupling :—Transformer.
Wave Range :—200-550 and 1,000-2,000 Metres.
Voltage Range :—200-250 A.C. ; 50-100 Cycles.
Consumption :—70 Watts (approx.).
Silent Tuning, Anti-Static and Tone Controls, Q.A.V.C., Mains Aerial and Provision for Pick-up and Auxiliary Speaker.

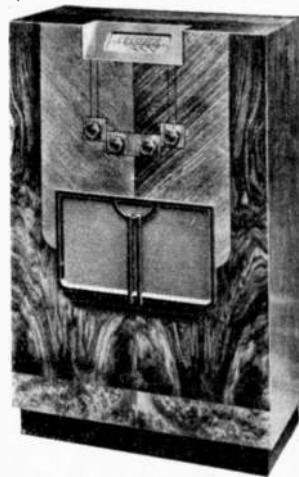
This Columbia superhet receiver is of the four-valve, six-stage type which, during the past year or two, has proved so popular with manufacturer and general public alike. It is popular with the manufacturer because it presents no technical difficulties and can be made under mass-production conditions with a high degree of uniformity ; and it is popular with the public because of its comparatively high performance and, inversely, its fairly low price.

This particular model, being of the console type and consequently allowing of a larger baffle area than is possible in a table type receiver, is capable of maintaining a clean and articulate tone at fairly large volume levels, as well as providing entertainment from a variety of European radio stations. Moreover, the background noise-to-music ratio can be reduced to a low level, and in some cases interference from stations of low field strength can be entirely eliminated by the adjustment of the silent tuning and anti-static controls. Thus, programmes that otherwise may have been valueless as entertainment can be received fairly free of extraneous sounds.

Since the instrument is fitted with a mains aerial, which provides a strong enough signal for the reception of at least half a dozen transmissions (and without an earth connection), it can be transported from room to room. The best results, however, both as regards efficiency and quality of reproduction, are only obtainable with an outdoor aerial and earth connection. Note: a diode signal rectifier gives the most nearly linear rectification when handling a strong signal.

As a reproducer the 358 attains pretty near the same standard as the 621 radiogram, which we reviewed in the November 1935 issue. Here, again, for the majority of transmissions there is always a little high-note response in hand ; the only exceptions being very heavy orchestral works and grand organ broadcasts. In these, the most satisfactory balance of tone is obtained with the tone-control set for maximum treble. This type of broadcast reveals also that there is a tendency for a low-frequency discoloration, but it only becomes obtrusive at comparatively large volume. At the other end of the scale the quality is clean and definite ; strings and wood-wind are not too hard and are clear and intelligible, though a little more definition here would have been welcome.

Altogether a likeable instrument.



The Columbia Console 358

Apart from the introduction of piezo-crystal loudspeakers, there have been no fundamental speaker developments for some considerable time. Nor does the near future promise anything of a startling nature.

This does not mean that loudspeaker technique is at a standstill ; far from it. Most of the experiments, however, have been concerned with modifications of earlier ideas, such as the size, shape and material of diaphragms, the method of suspension, the physical dimensions of the speech-coil in relation to the gap, etc. The improvement in quality has been more marked in some cases than in others.

An examination of this Rola speaker reveals at once that the details in speaker design—the balance between speech-coil and diaphragm, the cone suspension and centring device, etc.—have received a good deal of attention ; and listening to the speaker confirms our first impressions that the care taken is amply justified.

The first thing that strikes one about the reproduction is the cleanliness of the whole characteristic both at normal volume levels and when the speaker is being fed with inputs of the order of 6 to 8 watts. Another point is that large inputs do not appreciably affect the balance of tone ; there is little over-accentuation or hardening of the treble register. This in itself is significant of smoothness of the speaker's characteristic, for if resonances were prominent they would be emphasised at large output levels.

We have no doubt that the range of frequencies which the speaker is able to reproduce effectively is a particularly long one ; the strength of heterodyne whistles when the speaker is used on a local station receiver tell their own little story with regard to the high notes, but the individual character of the instruments of a symphony orchestra—the timbre and firmness of the double basses, the nasal tone of the 'cello, the sourness of the oboe, etc.—shows the best analysis of both range and quality. Strings, too, are well reproduced ; in fact, the only thing we missed was just that extra shade of delicacy and wispiness which is so easy to talk about and so difficult to attain. We admit this is being hypercritical, but this instrument is a high fidelity model.

Later on in our tests we had an opportunity of trying the speaker in conjunction with a Rothermel-Brush 155 tweeter speaker and a balancing circuit consisting of a .05 mfd. condenser and a 25,000-ohm potentiometer. The combination not only produced that little extra something in the treble, but showed an improvement lower down the scale, and especially in the deepest bass. The quality was excellent.

Actually two speakers were tried, one an A.C. model with valve rectifier and smoothing equipment, and the other a D.C. model with 1,000-ohm field coil. The results were almost identical ; if anything, the 1,000-ohm model was slightly more efficient.

For the mechanical construction and general finish we award full marks ; it is both robust and neat.

The price given at the head of this review applies to the A.C. speaker ; the D.C. model, which is available with any value of field-coil resistance, costs £5 10s.

A speech-coil impedance of 8 ohms is common to both models.



The Rola G.12

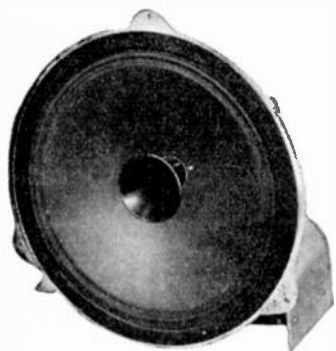
The Stentorian Duplex Speaker

Price 4 guineas

In some ways this particular Stentorian speaker is similar to the Senior model reviewed below; e.g., it is of the low-impedance permanent magnet type, it is fitted with the same ingenious device for quickly matching the speech-coil impedance to almost any receiver output, and the diaphragm is of similar type and size.

In other respects the speaker differs considerably from the Senior model and, indeed, from any other type of speaker we know of. Actually, there are two speakers within the confines of a single permanent magnet and cone assembly. Hence the name "Duplex."

One is an ordinary moving-coil P.M. speaker and the other is a moving-coil high-frequency horn speaker. The method of combining the two is one of the most sensible and practical ideas we have come across. The centre pole of the magnet is hollow; to the rear of the magnet is fitted a tiny metal diaphragm and speech-coil and at the front end of the centre pole a small bakelite or ebonite horn is fitted. Thus, one magnet provides the flux for both speakers, and the fact that the tweeter is situated in a position relative to that part of a speaker diaphragm which radiates the high frequencies most strongly ensures almost perfect fusion of high and low notes. There is also one other point to be noticed: the high notes are projected further into the room, as it were, by virtue of the directional properties of the small horn.



The Stentorian Duplex Speaker

importance since it only reproduces the lower frequencies.

In practice the combination works well; the high-note range is particularly good and extends well above 8,000 cycles. But owing to the fact that the bass is relatively weaker—an energised low-frequency speaker would improve this—full advantage cannot be taken of the high-note range, and so for the best tonal balance the tweeter range has to be attenuated by means of the volume-control.

However, once the matching has been carried out correctly and the tweeter output carefully balanced with that of the low-frequency speaker, the combination is capable of giving good results. Particularly is the tweeter effect noticeable when reproducing items which have a fair transient content.

The Stentorian Senior Speaker

Price 63s. 6d.

Although this instrument is primarily designed as an auxiliary speaker to an existing receiver or radiogram, it may also be used as the parent speaker, since it is fitted with the necessary matching transformer. Not only is the transformer suitable for use with single-valve power stages—triode or pentode—but it can be incorporated in the anode circuits of sets with push-pull power stages with equal success.

Many of the present-day speakers which are sold as separate components can be used in a similar manner, but few are provided with the facility for matching speech-coil impedance

to the optimum load of the power stage so simply and expediently.

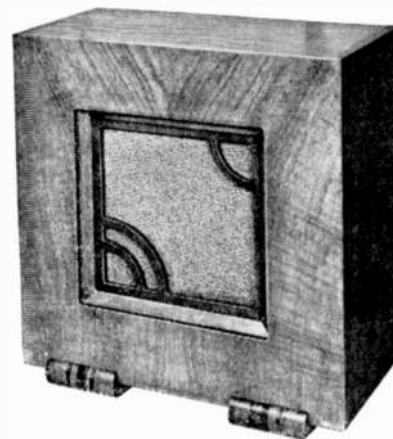
Fixed to speaker chassis are two switches and five terminals; one switch is for cutting out the multi-ratio input transformer so that the speech-coil can be directly connected to a low impedance output, the other switch is a selector arrangement which enables any one of the nine step-down ratios provided to be used. It is also possible to vary these ratios by choice of connection to the three primary terminals. Thus there are eighteen ratios to choose from, and the fact that they can be brought into circuit quickly enables the user to select the right value.

This simple and facile method of matching the two impedances is an invaluable adjunct no matter whether the speaker is being used as the parent or as an extension speaker.

The remaining terminals are for the connection of a volume-control.

In our playing tests, both radio and record inputs were used with little variation in tonal result. The efficiency of the speaker is about the average for a permanent magnet model of this size and type, and so, too, is the power-handling capacity. Providing the impedance matching is carried out carefully and correctly, as much as three or four watts may be fed into it before any sign of discomfort becomes apparent.

At normal volume levels the characteristic seems to be fairly smooth and the range quite good. The treble certainly possesses no stridencies or coarseness, and it is reasonably articulate. At the other end of the scale the response is strong, though a little more firmness and clearer definition would be an advantage. Thus a large orchestra has a tendency to produce a "hollow" tone. It must be borne in mind, in this connection, that the cabinet in which the speaker is mounted measures only $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches square by $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, so that the effective baffle area is not very large. The whole of the casing is damped down with Cellotex or some similar absorbent material, so as to reduce wood vibration. But we fancy, though as yet we have not had the opportunity to test the point for ourselves, that the speaker would give a better account of itself mounted in a larger cabinet or on a baffle.



The Senior Stentorian

A New H.M.V. Loudspeaker

The Gramophone Company Ltd. have produced a new permanent magnet loudspeaker housed in an attractive walnut cabinet. It is designed primarily as an extension speaker for all His Master's Voice instruments with the exception of the 800 and 580 radiograms. The speaker is fitted with a volume-control, which does not affect the output from the parent speaker. There is also a multi-ratio input transformer which provides ratios for the matching of the speech-coil to most types of output stage. Thus it may also be used successfully as a parent speaker where the undistorted output does not exceed 3 watts; $2\frac{1}{2}$ watts is a more safe limit.

At 3 guineas this model 172, as it has been designated, seems an attractive proposition. More about it later.

Trade Winds and Idle Zephyrs

A NEW DECCA RADIOGRAM

A new radio-gramophone will shortly be produced by Decca. It is an A.C. superhet based on an existing Decca three-valve (excluding rectifier) receiver.

Briefly, the valve sequence will be a heptode frequency changer, a variable-mu I.F. amplifier and a double-diode power pentode. As in other Decca instruments, "Robot" control will be employed. Probably the most interesting feature is the price of the radiogram—16 guineas.

Voigt

An unfortunate error occurred in the Voigt advertisement last month. The caption to the illustration of the "Corner" Horn Loudspeaker read: "Corner Horn in Unfinished Wood." The prices quoted were £29 5s. D.C., and £32 5s. to £36 5s. A.C. The correct caption and prices tell a very different story. They are: "Corner horn in luxury cabinet"; £46 15s. D.C., £53 15s. A.C., or corner horn in unfinished wood with unit, £29 5s.

To clarify the position still further, here are the individual prices: Speaker Unit, £15 10s.; Rectifier, £7; Horn in unfinished wood, £14 5s.; Luxury Cabinet, £31 15s.

A New Monthly

Published by Bernard Jones Publications Ltd., 37-38, Chancery Lane, W.C.2, and edited by that versatile fellow Ralph Stranger, a new monthly magazine made its bow last month.

It is entitled *Ralph Stranger's Science Reviews*. Its object is perhaps best explained in Stranger's own words:

"This is rather an unusual journal. It represents a bold experiment and a mission. The nature of the experiment will be readily understood by our readers. Our mission is to give the public a clear idea of up-to-date science in all its branches, of the work done and the methods employed by scientists in the study of natural phenomena."

The book is well produced and this first issue covers a good many subjects. Some idea of the scope may be gathered from the following list of articles and authors: "Shall we ever fly at 10,000 m.p.h.?" "Splitting the Atom" (Dr. Bernard Childs, Ph.D., A.Inst.P.); "Cosmic Radiations" (L. G. H. Huxley, M.A.D.Phil.); "Is there Life in other Planets"; "The Invisible World" (Ralph Stranger); "On the Short-wave Band" ("Positron"); "The Microscope and its Wonders" (Prof. M. Grimes, M.Sc., Ph.D.); and, of course, Ralph Stranger contributes the first instalment of a series "The Elements of Radio." These are only a few items picked at random.

It should also be noted that the Review has succeeded *World Radio* as the official organ of the Radio Research League.

Now, you "armchair science" enthusiasts, what about it? The journal costs 1s. monthly.

Marconiphone

The scope of modern public address amplifying equipment is extending rapidly. New and novel uses are found almost daily, and difficulties hitherto regarded as insuperable are now overcome with a minimum of effort and with complete satisfaction.

To take an example, the Marconiphone equipment which is now installed in the principal Examination Room of the Civil Service Commission in Burlington Street is one which has proved itself a real boon to examiners and candidates alike.

This apparatus is used in conjunction with the dictation examination. Before the installation of this equipment, students at the back of the Examination Room very often had the utmost difficulty in hearing the dictator, and it was

realised by the authorities that for students to have to strain their ears to hear what was being said was not conducive to a high standard of efficiency.

The disposition of the loudspeakers in the Examination Room is of interest and of importance. No less than ten loudspeakers are used in a room which could normally be addressed by only two. These loudspeakers are suspended directly from the ceiling and over the heads of the students. As the sound comes from directly overhead, there is no interruption to the free passage of sound from the loudspeakers to the students' ears, nor is there any possibility of an interfering echo from the surrounding walls.

The whole system is designed to give first-class quality, and provision is made for adjusting the volume on any individual loudspeaker, besides a master control governing all speakers simultaneously. By means of a pitch control the pitch of the voice of the person dictating can be either raised or lowered, as required.

N.B.—Look out for the 1936 Stagecraft Show—"A Marconi-Man's Guest Night." Unfortunately time and space does not permit of an account here. Next month, perhaps.

Two New Books

The first is the third edition of *Wireless: Its Principles and Practice*, by R. W. Hutchinson (published by the University Tutorial Press, Burlington House, Cambridge, at 3s. 6d.). That a book of this nature reaches its third edition is ample evidence of the author's grasp of his subject and his ability to discourse upon it in a style that seldom becomes tedious or too text-bookish.

For such a small volume the ground covered is considerable and up-to-date even to the extent of adventure into Television and Tele-Photography.

Those of you, however, who are mainly interested in Television and who would know more of the principles involved and of the various systems than the space in this book allows for, would do well to get *Television Up-to-Date*.

This is a new book by the same author and published by the University Tutorial Press.

It is essentially a book for beginners and as such should succeed in giving the student a clear insight into and a firm grasp of the subject. With this end in view Mr. Hutchinson skilfully avoids the more technical aspects of Television and yet manages to give a fair account of both theory and practice.

The volume is well produced and the text is clarified by numerous illustrations and diagrams. The price is 2s. 6d.

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BEETHOVEN—THE MAN

by AURAL GRAY

ALTHOUGH there are still many people who express a passionate dislike of Beethoven's music, none can deny his greatness in the history of the art.

The merits and demerits of his music have been fought out for more than a hundred years; but of the man himself, as apart from the musician (if it is possible to separate the two), far less has been written.

His deafness, however, is well known. A post-mortem examination showed that the nerves of the ear were virtually paralysed, and that the liver was deformed and shrunk to half its normal size. These and other evidences of chronic ill-health explain much of Beethoven's sudden fits of nervous depression, not to say melancholia.

Moreover, his method of living was not conducive to good health. Irregular meals, hastily eaten and carelessly chosen, combined with abnormal periods of work and sleep, must have worked havoc with a constitution of unusual strength. It is possible that Beethoven's passion for fresh air, and for bathing—two most unusual, not to say eccentric, attributes at the end of the eighteenth century—did much to counteract the many organic maladies from which he suffered.

Nor were the conditions of his childhood likely to build a foundation of good health in after-life. His father, Johann, could apparently make no more than a beggarly £25 a year from his services as a musician to the chapel in Bonn, and there were three other brothers and a sister to be kept.

But at least his father, a tenor singer, realised his son's abilities and gave him the best instruction he could afford, and saw to it that young Ludwig kept to his studies.

In his fourth year he began to teach his son the violin and the clavier, and it is on record that the child acquired his learning not without tears.

Five years later his father confessed that he had taught his son all he could, and handed him over to an opera singer of the name of Pfeiffer.

At eleven years of age, Beethoven was appointed deputy chapel organist, a post from which he derived no pay but a great deal of experience.

Little more than a year later the young genius was appointed "cembalist" to the local opera, a position comparable in modern usages to that of rehearsal pianist and chorus coach. Despite the responsibilities of this position, there was no emolument attached thereto, but at least it gave leisure for composition, and three piano sonatas and a song were issued in this year by the boy—for he was no more.

In the following year, the circumstances of the family went from bad to worse. The youngest brother died, the father's voice began to fail, the opera was disbanded, and the post of deputy-organist at the chapel was abolished. Nevertheless, with occasional compositions and chapel-organ playing, the family managed to exist, in direst poverty.

This state of affairs lasted for three years, when Beethoven embarked on his momentous journey to Vienna, during which he met Mozart and received a few lessons from him. It is on record that Beethoven thought little of Mozart's playing, although the older man expressed his belief that the boy would "make a noise in the world some day or other."

At the end of this year Beethoven made his first real friends in the parents of some children to whom he gave music lessons. This family, the von Breunings, did much towards educating his mind in literature and general culture, and a great deal of his time was spent in their house.

Through the influential people Beethoven met in the von Breunings' home he began to receive a little recognition, and,

at the age of seventeen, received a responsible post in the newly formed national theatre, playing viola in the opera and chapel, as well as organ in the chapel.

Thus he remained until he was twenty-two, ever widening his circle of friends through the von Breunings, increasing his experience at the opera and the chapel, and diligently studying all the time. At the end of this period he so impressed his patron, the Elector, that he was sent to Vienna to study at the latter's expense with Haydn.

The first payment to Haydn for an hour's lesson was 9½d. ! But Ludwig was dissatisfied with his progress and took lessons, it seems, from several sources. His unorthodoxy, however, seems to have shocked most of his teachers, and there is a record of one of them complainingly bitterly of this pupil "who regarded everything in music, even consecutive fifths, as an open question."

Whilst in Vienna, which, incidentally, he never again left for any appreciable period, Beethoven again came in contact with aristocratic patrons of music. His greatest friends were Prince and Princess Lichnowsky, who did all they could to assist him, even to the extent of an annual pension of £60.

He was a constant visitor in the houses of the nobility where no doubt he performed as well as taught, and it is to the credit of his great genius that he maintained his hold on the affections of his patrons although he treated them with ever-increasing contempt.

On one occasion, whilst playing before a gathering of Viennese society, Beethoven took exception to some muttered conversation at the other end of the room, and said: "I will not play for such hogs." Nor would all the entreaties of those present move him from his decision.

He was, it seems, acutely independent, and any suggestion of patronage infuriated him. Prince Lichnowsky, knowing how sensitive Beethoven was to imagined slights, ordered that his servants attended to the composer's wants first and his own afterwards. Beethoven, hearing of this, flew into a passion, engaged a servant himself, and declined all service from Lichnowsky's menials.

He seems to have been singularly unable to appreciate a joke against himself, although not above making others look foolish, as witness the occasion when he modulated in the middle of a piece deliberately to put off a singer to whom he had taken a dislike.

But on another occasion Beethoven played a new composition to a friend, who, delighted with it and memorising parts of it, played it in private to Lichnowsky, himself an amateur pianist of no mean order. Shortly afterwards, the Prince, by way of a joke, told Beethoven that he had composed a new work, and thereupon played Beethoven's own new composition to him. Beethoven was furious, and swore never to play again to friends. Nor would he, except on rare occasions, when he was actually carried by force to the piano, which he would strike with the back of his hand. But once he had been persuaded to start, he would go on for hours, extemporising on a theme with a fecundity of ideas and a digital technique which were astounding.

Though on these and other occasions he would behave like a boor, sneering at the applause and tears he evoked, he seemed unable to alienate the affections of his admirers, who suffered all his opprobrium and insults in gratitude for his musical genius.

As a pure technician of the piano, apart from his abilities as a composer, he was a phenomenon. Enormously difficult pieces by Bach he played at sight, and he transposed his

Concerto in C into C sharp when he found that the piano, with which he was to play with the orchestra, was a semitone flat.

As a courtier he was an immense success with the ladies, and his loves seem to have been many and various, ranging from royalty to tradesmen's daughters. Many of his works were dedicated to his innamoratas, and he made no secret of his relations with his aristocratic admirers and pupils, although it appears that most of his associations were strictly moral.

His religion was on a par with his manners—non-existent—and his clothes were strange in the extreme. Czerny describes him as appearing in a suit of some loose hairy cloth which made him look like Robinson Crusoe, with half an inch growth of beard, his black hair in a thick tangle, and his ears stuffed up with plugs of cotton-wool which had been soaked in some yellow substance.

Other observers, however, speak of him as being undeniably ugly, but with a smile both genial and winning. He had a broad jaw, a high, intellectual forehead, a determined mouth, protruding lips, and bright black eyes of almost magnetic attraction which dilated in an extraordinary manner in moments of elation.

He was of less than medium height—five feet five inches—but broad of shoulder and muscularly built. His hands were covered with black hair, and of a surprisingly small stretch—he could barely span a tenth—with the finger-tips spatulate through excessive playing as a child.

Through his rough manners and eccentric behaviour (on occasions he would stand in front of his window clad in nothing but a nightshirt, allow water to pour all over the floor in floods, accuse his servants of being unable to make good soup because they told lies, and even throw a whole batch of eggs at his cook, one by one, because they were not fresh!) he changed his abode often, sometimes of his own volition, sometimes because of his landlord's. He actually abandoned one lodging because the landlord insisted on removing his hat every time he encountered his distinguished tenant!

His greatest trial must have been his deafness, which first began to show itself when he was about twenty-eight. He was in mortal dread of this infirmity being discovered, and would go to endless lengths of pretence that he could hear.

When he was fifty-two his deafness was so bad that he was unable to hear his orchestra as he conducted it, a fact which nearly wrecked the production of his *Fidelio* at the Josephstadt Theatre, and led to him having to leave the orchestra.

At the performance of his Choral Symphony he was completely deaf and had to be turned round so that he could see the applause which his music inspired. From this period onwards he carried out all communications in writing, and carried with him a block of paper and a thick pencil.

As the result of a violent cold in the stomach, inflammation of the lungs and dropsy took a firm hold of him, and after lingering for a long time, Beethoven died on December 26th, 1827, at the age of fifty-six.

The funeral took place three days later, and was attended by an immense concourse of people. Thirty-two torch-bearers and eight pall-bearers were drawn from the famous musicians of the time, including Kreutzer, Czerny, and Schubert. A choir of sixteen and a quartet of trombones sang and played two *Equali*. Soldiers were needed to control the crowds and it took the funeral procession nearly two hours to proceed the short distance from the house to the church.

The sale of his manuscripts and notebooks, together with his two pianos, produced curiously little. The total estate, including some bank shares and an advance sum from a concert, was a little over £1,000.

Thirty-seven years later his remains were exhumed from the neglected grave, and re-buried under a monument, which bears a stone obelisk on which is engraved the one word "Beethoven."

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VIBRATO v. TREMOLO

The desire of Mr. P. G. Hurst for an *ex cathedra* utterance on the *Vibrato v. Tremolo* controversy is shared by many other earnest seekers after the truth. His letter, which heads this symposium, determined us to settle the question once for all by going to the fountain-head of knowledge.

So we approached Mesdames Emma Eames, Zélie de Lussan, Blanche Marchesi and Emma Nevada, Mr. Ernesto Baraldi and Mr. Ben Davies. The generous response of these distinguished singers and teachers, whose opinions we print below, should surely set our minds at rest. Though each reply is delightfully stamped with the artist's individuality, the nett result is unanimity, and we are all immensely grateful to them for so effectually clearing the air for us.

Miss V. A. Davies' letter emphasises yet again the confusion that seems to exist, even among knowledgeable people, about this *vibrato* question, and which is leading me to conclude that our ears are not as reliable as we may think them to be, so that some hearers may be far more sensitive to the vibrations in sound than are others. This may be a well-recognised fact, but I doubt whether ordinary musical listeners fully realise it.

We ought to be a good deal clearer than we are as to what we mean when we speak of a *vibrato*, especially if we think of it as a defect *per se*. No one who, like myself, has been privileged to observe from a distance of a couple of paces the movements of the throat, jaw, and tongue of singers of international repute in full song, could possibly be deluded into thinking that the *vibrato* was an accidental and unfortunate weakness; the co-ordinated and complicated oscillations of those parts of the vocal machinery, as well, probably, as of many others which were invisible to me, would leave one in no doubt that the true *vibrato* could be acquired only by intensive study and application. The singer's use of it may become excessive, and therefore inartistic; it may even become a vice—to certain listeners—but even supposing that Mme. Supervia had fallen a victim to it, she still should not be accused of a *tremolo*, which is a very different thing.

But instead of this constant nibbling at the subject, which has been going on so long in and out of "C.C.," I wish we could get some sort of *ex cathedra* utterance by an undisputed authority, which would tell us exactly what *vibrato* is, what it does, and why; also, if such a thing be possible, why certain critics are never tired of complaining of what is, after all, nothing but an essential part of fine singing.

P. G. HURST.

The question of voice emission and production would permit one to write volumes. However, the question is not of that, but of Conchita Supervia whom I both admire and enjoy. She is unique and cannot be judged by conventional standards. I, however, have never heard any semblance of a *tremolo* in her singing. To the British—or rather English—ear the ideally beautiful sound is that which approaches as nearly as possible the flute or wood-wind. The ideal sound for other countries is based on the stringed instruments and its perfect legato with a strong timbre. The voice of Madame Supervia is very vibrant and is of this sort, which may in consequence give rise to the impression of a *tremolo* to those who enjoy the voice with less timbre. I hope I have understood and answered your questions. It gives me pleasure to write your name as I have enjoyed and own all Compton Mackenzie's books.

EMMA EAMES.

The term *vibrato* is more often than not used erroneously, and the average person, when speaking of a singer with a *vibrato*, means nine times out of ten a voice with a *tremolo*; but since that evil tendency cannot be tolerated, the term *vibrato* has taken its place. *Vibrato* in Italian and French means *une voix vibrante*. No beautiful voice or instrument exists without it.

The most noble of all instruments is the organ, which has, as everyone knows, an especially appealing stop called

vox humana. All my contemporaries, and their name is legion, the de Roszkes, Caruso, Plançon, Alvarez, Calvé, Melba, Nordica, Eames, Ternina, and many more too numerous to mention, and all those who enchanted the musical world long long before our time, and the present artists, Tauber, Melchior, McCormack, Ponselle, Leider, and so many more than I can, in this short article, pay homage to, had and have *des voix vibrantes*, and could never have attained their great reputations without *vibrante* voices.

ZÉLIE DE LUSSAN.

These questions, laid before me in your letter, really ask for a small pamphlet as an answer. But neither readers nor I have time at our disposal, so I will try to be clear and short. If there is anything that makes listening to singers a torture it is singing out of tune, and the *tremolo* singing out of tune is curable if the reasons lie in false production, ill-health, or straining, and not in a faulty hearing. The first can be cured, the latter with great painstaking bettered, but a person with a bad ear will, even after hard work, never give hearers a pure joy. But the *tremolo* is quite another matter. This horrible fault comes from various causes. They all derive from using wrong methods, which means having worked at singing ignoring the rules without which a voice cannot be trained in beauty, health and endurance. The one must be excepted: physical defects which produce *tremolo*. People generally believe that *tremolo* is taught in Italy, and that it is the result of work aiming to produce it. I do not think that there can be one such fool in the whole world as to teach it, but I firmly believe that there are many wrong methods which, unless taught, have as an inevitable consequence this ugly fault. Then, also, there is an explanation for its continuous appearance, especially on Italian stages: the Italians simply hate *cold* voices that possess no sympathetic vibrations. They call them "railway whistles" and they prefer a *tremolo* to a stiff, lifeless sound.

The vibrations of the human voice form its sympathy. But the vibrations must be natural, deriving from the quality of the vocal cords. Vibrations can never be mistaken for *tremolo*. The first is a quality, the second is a fault—more than fault.

When you hear the *tremolo* in a voice, you will know that it will steadily increase with time and that at the end the career of the artist will be stopped. But, as I mentioned, this is curable in the first and second degree. The *vibrato* of some known artist mentioned in your letter is a sister question not less serious than the one of the *tremolo*. It is in this case the consequence of forced registers of the voice, and it also can be stopped if taken in time.

It is the *over-vibration* of the vocal cords themselves, not the shaking of the whole larynx as occurs in the *tremolo*. I explain this in detail in my book. These *over-vibrations* I have detected and observed in several cases where the pupils had never sung and had never been wrongly taught, and the reason for these exaggerated vibrations must be found in some weakness in the body, that is, the heart. Doctors consulted came to the same conclusion as I and when the cure had been accomplished the *vibrato* had disappeared for ever.

So there are three things: natural vibrations, *vibrato* and *tremolo*. The first is all right, the second should be cured, the third *must* be stopped.

I hope I have not been too long, but even as it is I should and could add a small volume to all this.

BLANCHE MARCHESI.

I don't know what is meant by *vibrato* as used in this sense. Every well-trained voice has *vibrato* in some degree, just as every violin or 'cello depends on the vibration made by the player's fingers for its tone. All good things can be spoiled by exaggeration, and *vibrato* is no exception.

There is no comparison between *vibrato*, as I understand it, and *tremolo*, which is a serious fault caused by wrong breathing and production or ill-health.

Vibrato is life and *tremolo* is disease.

EMMA NEVADA.

I have read with much interest Mr. P. G. Hurst's letter on the vexed subject of *vibrato*. The confusion about this question seems to arise from the fact that the word "*vibrato*" is used by some in the sense of "vibrant sonorous," and by others, the majority, to express a shaky tone.

The singing voice must vibrate to a certain extent, and must do so in obedience to our will if we want to express emotion in singing. Tone and sound vibrations are formed at the larynx, and are amplified by the vocal resonators. We obtain a good tone if we are able to control the laryngeal mechanism, and the walls or movable parts of the resonators.

On the contrary, if we cannot control the vocal organ, we instinctively increase the air pressure and tension of the laryngeal muscles and we produce a forced tone, that is, a tone incorrectly amplified. Forced tone and forced tension produce a disagreeable *vibrato*. It is in our power to control the vocal organ, and to produce a pleasantly vibrating, sonorous voice.

Mr. Hurst has observed and heard such voices, and these singers were instinctively controlling the jaw, tongue, and muscles of the throat during phonation. Without this control they could not produce a good tone and what Mr. Hurst calls a "true *vibrato*." As he says, "*vibrato* may become excessive"—in that case, the voice shakes because the muscles of the vocal organ are not kept at their right tension. Thus, a *tremolo* is produced.

I would describe *vibrato* as an instinctive effect, a rapid but very slight variation in pitch, the frequency of the note produced rising and falling about the true note.

A certain amount of *vibrato*, which is instinctively produced by a singer, is effective and necessary, but an exaggerated *vibrato* or uncontrolled use of the device might easily develop a *tremolo*. *Tremolo*, as usually understood, is a rapid alternation of the volume of tone, caused by a similar alternation in the air pressure below the larynx. Excessive *vibrato* and *tremolo* are produced, as a rule, by lack of tension of the muscles controlling the laryngeal mechanism, and by faulty control of the vocal organ.

ERNESTO BARALDI.

People are greatly in error when they call a *tremolo vibrato*. *Tremolo* is nothing more than the escape of breath over the vocal chords—the breath comes *before* the note. The great singers of the past were taught to pay particular attention to the note being in front of the breath, the voice *resting* on the breath—by this means all *tremolo* is avoided. A true *vibrato* is on a steady note and is the result of intense expression—just as a violinist vibrates on his violin. A *tremolo* is on two notes. I never heard a *tremolo* with the really great ones such as Reeves, Patti, Melba, Battistini, the de Reszkes, Plançon and Caruso, but I often heard a *vibrato*, which is quite a different thing.

BEN DAVIES.

TURN TABLE TALK

Fred Stokes

It was typical of Keith Prowse thoroughness and good taste that the farewell dinner given to Mr. Stokes on his retirement after forty-two years' service on December 10th was the most elegantly and sensibly designed entertainment imaginable; and the seventy guests, including the heads of the firm and its branches, and representatives of the manufacturers and distributors of musical merchandise and the Press, were regaled with food and wine, cigars and entertainers in so agreeable an atmosphere that one and all felt the occasion as memorable as it must have been to the central figure.

Mr. Stokes was honoured in the speeches of Messrs. Herbert Smith (chairman), Richard Haigh (H.M.V.), Moorby Smith, Herbert Sinclair (*Pianomaker*), J. Davis, Fred Smith and Campbell Smith; and responded to the toast in a low voice with the quiet emotion that confirmed the justice of all the warm-hearted and respectful praises showered upon him by his friends and colleagues. To have received such compliments falls to the lot of few men when they retire; to have earned them, to the lot of still fewer. But Mr. Stokes has maintained a fine tradition throughout his association with Keith Prowse and hands it on to his successors greatly enhanced by his personality.

Records for Distribution

Occasionally readers send us parcels of discarded records, electric and pre-electric, for distribution among fellow-readers unable to afford as many records as they would like to buy. Applications are now invited and should state their claims very briefly. These should be sent to the London Office and the coupon on page xviii attached.

Free!

The "Educational Catalogue," issued by the Central Educational Offices, 98, Clerkenwell Road, E.C.1, has now been revised and enlarged and changes its name to "Handbook of Educational Records." Invaluable to teachers who use the gramophone in school, and sent free on application.

Recordings wanted

Mozart: Rondo in G major for violin and piano.

Sarasate: Introduction and Tarantelle, and Zapateado, played by Szigeti or Heifetz.

Beethoven: A new recording of the Seventh Symphony.

Vaughan Williams: Constant complaints from readers of the neglect of this British composer convince us that something must soon be done about it. A Vaughan Williams Society has been suggested. And what about Arnold Bax?

Folk Dance and Song

The National Folk Dance Festival at the Albert Hall on January 4th (8.15) will be enlivened by the Basque Mascarade Dancers from the French Pyrenees. Tickets 1s. 6d. to 7s. 6d.

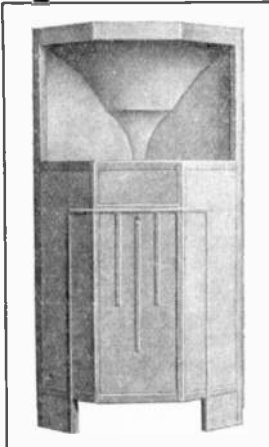
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Reader's Request

Can any reader supply the translation of the Wine Song, "Fin ch'han dal vino," from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

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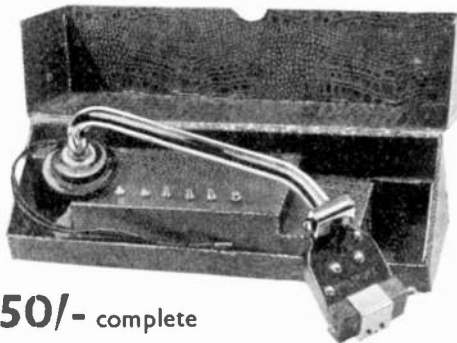


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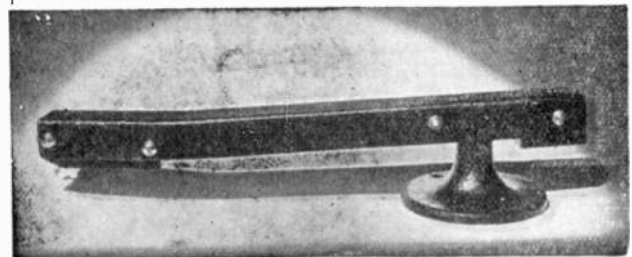
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COLLECTORS' CORNER

by P. G. HURST

[Collectors wishing for replies to queries are asked to write (not call or telephone), enclosing stamped, addressed envelope.]

IT is heartening to all of us that I am able to report some further finds of the very first importance, both at home and abroad, as these go to show that the sources are not yet dry, and that sale rooms and junk shops may still produce unsuspected treasures. Moreover, it is small satisfaction to the newer collectors to feel that they can hope to see or hear the real prizes only in the collections of a few individuals. It is, indeed, desirable that the rarer records should be more widely available if the interest is to be maintained; and it is interest, and not mere scarcity, which creates value.

But I do not wish to be misunderstood: by value I mean sentimental and artistic value; directly anything becomes valuable in terms of money it becomes a worry and an anxiety. A collector recently informed me that the "market" in early records seemed to have "slumped"—a statement that left me very much where I was, because I was quite unaware that there was a market. There are, of course, many specimens from which their owners would never consent to be parted for any sum of money within the present bounds of reason, but, on the other hand, the general run of records which are gladly accepted by the less austere collectors do not seem particularly attractive at ten shillings apiece. But as I have hinted before, not even the mulish attitude of "C.C." will in the long run avail in maintaining the sublime aloofness of English collectors towards the real or potential money value of their treasures.

Despite the pessimism of the older collectors, I believe that the surface of the collecting field has hardly been scratched, and that a widening knowledge will bring to light such treasures as will excite the curiosity and even the cupidity of hundreds who hitherto are unaware of the very existence of record-collecting.

Much of the foregoing was inspired by a further letter from L. H.-R. (Melbourne), whose splendid start as collector was commented upon in September, and whose latest achievements are so remarkable that I will quote them *verbatim*, as both the finds themselves and L. H.-R.'s comments upon them will be found equally interesting. He writes as follows:

"Since I wrote to you the last time, some very nice things have come to light, the standard of which is good enough in some cases to be equal to anything found in England or on the Continent. I will come to these finds later.

"About a week after I had written my first letter to you, I visited my friend R. E. H. (Geelong), and returned with the following: 2-2862 *Simon the Cellarer*, by **Santley**; 3-2026 *The Holy City*, by **Lloyd**; 2-23065 *Aria Violetta, Traviata*, by **Michailowa**; and 053073, *Shadow Song, Dinorah*, by **Huguét**. All originals.

"The Santley is splendid, and I think the best of the batch, with the Michailowa and Huguét coming soon after. The Lloyd is too battered to be of much value, and blasts on most of the high notes.

"My next acquisition was **Melba's** 1904 *Caro Nome*, in which I was very disappointed, and later got rid of it for **Plançon's** *Pif-Paf-Pouf* (1902), which is magnificent. Later came **Patti's** cut-out 1905 *Kathleen Mavourneen*, which is too long-drawn-out for my liking; and **Melba's** 1905 *Home, Sweet Home*. My next find of any importance was an original of the **Caruso** and **Scotti** duet from *La Forza del Destino*, which is in good order, but seems to be rather 'muzzy.'*

* A little worn, I expect.

"Then came (for me) the find of the month. Visiting an auction room, I found, and had given me, the following: 52419 *No. più nobile* (*Adriana Lecouvreur*) by **Caruso** (oh, Mr. Drummond!); 52345 *Il Sogno* (*Manon*) by **Caruso**; 03021 *Sweet Bird* by **Melba**; and 053170 *Dolce Amor* by **Sembrich**.

"The *No. più nobile* is simply wonderful, and has to be heard to be believed, and the high notes are taken with an ease that is certainly lacking in his later records (and also in some of his earlier ones). The *Manon* air I am disappointed in, not liking the song itself very much. The *Sweet Bird* is certainly very brilliant, and must rank among **Melba's** best coloratura songs, and is far ahead of her rendering made about three years later. A week later came **Melba's** 1905 *Good-bye*, and two Odeons, **Hempel's** *Last Rose of Summer* and *Il Bacio*, and *Questa o quella* and *Aria Faust* by **Affre**.

"After these, about twelve days later, came **Magali** by **Calvé** (1902), unfortunately cracked, but still playable with the fibre. This, with **Santley's** *Vicar of Bray* on a Black Label, which seems to be an original but owing to the colour of the label has rather baffled me, was quite a nice find, which also included two **Wm. Paull** records—*The Heart bowed down* and *It is enough*.

"Then I had a find which was one of the best out here for quite a long time. Returning home from a choir practice one evening, and feeling sick, I was hailed by a friend, who in course of conversation mentioned that he had some records, and that if I felt like it I could come up and see them. I decided to go there and then.

"My friend doubted whether there was anything there to suit me, as they were so old, but on arriving this is what I found:

32077	<i>Voici des Roses</i>	Renaud.
2-2767	<i>Mikado's Song</i>	Richard Temple.
47927	<i>Fantasia von Leonhardt</i>	F. Drdla.
47928	<i>Serenade Pierne</i>	F. Drdla.
2-2667	<i>Air du Toréador</i>	Plançon.
7956	<i>Serenade (Drdla)</i>	Kubelik.
52678	<i>Di quella pira</i>	Tamagno.
2-2715	<i>Der Sangerkrieg</i>	Van Rooy.
3281	<i>Habañera</i>	Calvé
3286	<i>Voi lo sapete</i>	Calvé
52374	<i>Prologo</i>	Sammarco.
2-2702	<i>Star of Eve</i> (two copies)	Renaud.
1235	<i>A Friend</i>	Carmen Sylva.
2-2612	<i>A Jovial Monk</i>	Win. Paull.
2-2527	<i>Nini, Ninette, Ninon</i>	Maurice Farkoa.
33618	<i>Waltz, Romeo</i>	Farrar.
3-2889	<i>A Farewell</i>	Lloyd."

The next thing I expected to read was, "Then I woke up": but apparently not, as L. H.-R. continues his thrilling narration:

"All the above are originals, except one of the copies of the *Star of Eve*, which has a Black Label, and is perhaps one of those issued before the advent of the Red Label; or was it an odd one that slipped out?

"I can quite understand your saying that the **Renaud** *Star of Eve* is the only one you want to hear, and I now, like you, think it infinitely better than the **Journet** version. It is impossible to pick out the best of this little lot, as all are so good, but I like, I think, the *Prologue* by **Sammarco** best, and although cut, it is the best version I know of, though I have not heard **Ancona's** rendering. The **Renaud** *Voici*

des Roses is good; and the *Drdlas* are unexpected finds. From the historical point of view, I suppose the *Carmen Sylva* is far and away ahead of any of the others, and if anyone deserved to be a celebrity, it was she. This record seems to be unique, as I don't seem to remember seeing any record of hers reported before. It is really a treat to hear English so well spoken. Is it because they are so rare or because they are not considered worth reporting by collectors that we never hear of them? The *Calvés*, *Plançon* and *Tamagno* are good, but the *Van Rooy* is disappointing—again owing to the fact that I am not too fond of a number of the Wagnerian songs.

"Lately it was my good fortune, or bad fortune, to hear three of the G. & T. *Suzanne Adams* records (*Jewel Song*, *Home, Sweet Home*, and *Printemps Nouveau*), and I was terribly disappointed with all three records, and more especially with the *Jewel Song*, as it has always been given great praise in "C.C." The voice does not seem to be outstanding, and it seems to me a surprise that she ever reached the Red Label discs. The same thing applies to *Edouard de Reszke*; and the way he cuts off the phrases in the *Infelice* is, to say the least of it, very queer. He gives me the impression that he is worrying about the next phrase, and he seems to be thinking 'will I be able to get another breath in time for the next phrase?' . . ."

I will hazard the opinion that no collector who has just finished reading the above is feeling quite the same as he felt before he read it! Here is a collector who, whether young, old, or middle-aged, after a few months of collecting has acquired a collection of a quality which many, indeed most, collectors will never acquire; but all will wish to join in congratulating him. Moreover, L. H. R.'s "running commentary" adds greatly to the interest of the recital, especially where it differs from some of our pet fancies. I think, for instance, that everybody who knows *Suzanne Adams'* records will agree that there must have been something wrong when L. H. R. heard those three. Admittedly the *Home, Sweet Home* is the least satisfactory of the series, but may I suggest that it is often overlooked that the playing speeds of the original records vary very much, and that unless the Adams records are played at about 74 revolutions, an entirely wrong impression of the delicious voice will be produced. For phrasing and colour, besides its voluptuous sweetness of tone, I have never in all my life, on or off the stage, heard a *Jewel Song* to compare with this, and I have heard them all—oh, many times. Otherwise, were these copies much worn? or is the instrument capable of reproducing with fibre? There must have been something wrong somewhere.

The case of *Edouard de Reszke* is different; and frankly, I do not feel myself technically equipped to deal with it. I know quite well what L. H. R. means about the clipped phrases, but I do not agree that they indicate any lack of vocal power; rather the reverse, in fact. Is it not noticeable (I stand to be corrected) that as singers mature in their art, they tend more and more to throw off the exuberances of former days, and settle down into a style austerer and more classical? I hate to use the term "vulgarity" in connection with Verdi's music, but it is a fact nevertheless that it has pursued him from his earliest composing days; and I think it is also a fact that in its very style it permits vulgarity in its interpreters, if they have no mind above it. Those of us who have been in a position to judge the music of the master by such recognised Verdian artists as Maurel, Tamagno, Boninsegna, Destinn, Battistini, Caruso, Edouard himself, and, in our own day, Dusolina Gianinni, will understand this well enough. Now consider de Reszke's *Infelice*: whatever its shortcomings, and I do not claim there are none, it certainly is not vulgar; nor is it decorative, nor exuberant, nor showy: on the contrary, it is decidedly restrained; but it is also a well-balanced, symmetrical, and just sufficiently rhythmic

performance, which is the ripened work of a mature artist who, having found the very shape and soul of the music, is content to leave well alone. I need not add what is common knowledge about the state of Edouard's vocal organ at the time he made his records in 1902 or 1903, but the suggestion that he had not the breath to sing a short aria into the gramophone may surely be summarily dismissed. Actually, the voice is freer and more resonant in the *Don Juan Serenade*; but the clipping of the phrases is still more marked. Mr. Klein has remarked upon the "matchless phrasing" of the *Infelice*, and I think he would have agreed that as we grow older, we come to look for qualities other than those which appealed to us in our youth: indeed, if it were not so, what would be left for us by middle-age?

In reply to L. H. R.'s query as to the Black Label *Renaud*, it is true that certain of this artist's Paris records date from 1901, and, therefore, precede the Red Label issue; but this was not one of them, and belongs to the London Red series of 1902. Quite a number of the original Reds were later relegated to the general (Black Label) catalogue either in England or abroad, this evidently being among them. The same applies to the *Santley Vicar of Bray*; and the exact year of issue can be determined by the usual signs.

Sammarco's 10-inch *Prologue* is still unknown to me, though I have his 12-inch of 1904. I had the advantage of hearing both *Sammarco* and *Ancona* in their terrific renderings of *Tonio*; and if *Sammarco's Prologue* did not "thunder forth sonorous" quite in the manner of *Ancona's*, it had an easy lightness and resiliency which those who heard it for the first time hailed as a "new rendering." As I have remarked lately, to hear *Sammarco* properly, one should possess one of his early Fonotipias; but I should like to hear this *Prologue*.

Whatever were the errors and omissions in "Recorded Memories," the compiler did not omit the records of *Carmen Sylva*, although feeling much the same doubts about them as moved him to omit the *Figiers* and *Vialtzeva*—namely, that they were dead and buried; and a deplorable decision it was! It is true that the records of the late Queen of Roumania have not found much notice in "C.C.," but so far as I know only two copies are known in English collections, one of which was snatched from under my hands, to my cruel disappointment. Being spoken recitations, their appeal would be somewhat limited, but I imagine that any collector would be happy if he found one.

"The *Van Rooy* was disappointing": well, well; tastes must differ—it is a way they have. But although *Gazing around* is a study in formality, it gives fine opportunity for lyrical declamation, and I, for one, would never willingly miss hearing it finely rendered; and it was child's play to an artist of *Van Rooy's* calibre to give a little manhood to the deplorable *Wolfram*, and so to impart some of his own splendid virility to his interpretation.

I was fortunate enough to have had my first hearing of *Il Sogno in Manon* from *Caruso's* record of 1902, and so to have avoided the prejudice from hearing it from anybody else, as I doubt whether anybody, except *de Lucia*, could have given it such an air of romance. I would like to hear *Fernande Annseau* sing it, as he, at any rate, could be relied upon to treat this fragile fragment with becoming grace. *Annseau* is a truly great tenor, and possibly the last one surviving—a reflection which was powerfully brought home to me by a recent broadcast of records in which he followed immediately upon one of the robot-like tenors who so depressingly function on most of our imported records. Fortunately, his acoustical records are still to be found: (it may be as you say, Mr. Reimens, but *you never can tell!*).

A printer's error in the second column of "C.C." last month altered *Gerster* into "Ginster."

CORRESPONDENCE AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY REPORTS

De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum.

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, THE GRAMOPHONE, 10a Soho Square, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of the manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasize the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

Miliza Korjus

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

For the benefit of Miliza Korjus "fans" I have compiled the following list of her Continental records, which includes rather more than those listed in THE GRAMOPHONE for March 1935. They cost 4s. each.

H.M.V.	{ Schattentanz. <i>Dinorah.</i>
EH905	{ Air de Olympia. <i>Tales of Hoffmann.</i>
H.M.V.	{ Frühlingsstimmen.
EH860	{ Variationen (Proch).
H.M.V.	{ Martern Aller Arten.
EH898	{ Der Holle Rache.
H.M.V.	{ Frag ich mein. <i>Barber of Seville.</i>
EH864	{ Teurer name. <i>Rigoletto.</i>
H.M.V.	{ Aufforderung zum Tanz.
EH887	{ Schlafe mein prinzchen.
H.M.V.	{ Parla (Walzer).
EH908	{ Kuss (Walzer).
H.M.V.	{ Bravour Variationen (Mozart—Adam).
EH876	{ Die Nachtigall.
H.M.V.	{ Variationen uber <i>Drei Roslein.</i>
EH863	

Altogether fifteen sides. These records are available from The Gramophone Company by special order only. In some cases duty may be charged if the desired record is out of stock and has to be obtained from abroad, though the charge is small. In most cases, however, the records are to be had in England. Any authorised dealer can obtain them.

The following three records have given me great pleasure, and I can recommend them wholeheartedly:

1. Die Nachtigall-Bravour Variationen (Mozart—Adam).
2. Martern Aller Arten-Der Holle Rache.
3. Frühlingsstimmen-Variationen (Proch).

Doncaster.

JOHN RICHARDSON.

Melba

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

Mr. Grant Bartlett's rather ludicrous attack on collectors in general and Melba in particular makes one wonder just how much or how little he has heard, also who the pre-Caruso "decrepits" are that he has in mind—as many of the artistes of the 1900-6 era are still with us!

It was a curious coincidence that in the same issue of THE GRAMOPHONE Melba's voice should have received a tribute for its beauty—her rendering of *Clair de Lune*! Has Mr. Bartlett ever heard her record of *Chant Venitien*? Or of the mad scene from "Hamlet"? Or her shake at the end of *Pastorale*? Or—leaving the despised tin trumpet era behind—some of her electrical records taken at her farewell, in particular the second part of the *Salce* and the *Ave Maria*? Do they convey nothing more than monotony to him?

While her acting abilities are generally admitted to have been very limited, she was nevertheless able to convey much more with her voice than many other artists more gifted histrionically.

Speaking of Grace Moore's singing of excerpts from *La Bohème*, a critic recently remarked that good though it was it was not the flow of molten gold one associated with Melba.

To many of us, whether we heard her in person or through the medium of the gramophone, Melba's voice will remain a thing of fragile beauty, the peculiar loveliness of which is not likely to be met with again in our time.

Hampstead.

DUDLEY SHOLTE.

The Golden Age

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

Allow me to express through your columns a few words in reply to W. Grant Bartlett. Never have I read such rubbish as the latter part of his article—or rather letter. It is not a matter of *opinion* as to whether modern voices are as good as the ones of thirty or forty years ago, it is a matter of *fact*. I should be glad if Mr. Bartlett could find to-day any voices (I speak of voices purely and simply, that is voice production) to compare with the galaxy of the Golden Age. There are one or two exceptions undoubtedly—Rethberg, Chaliapine, Eva Turner, and one or two others—but how many singers of to-day will be in full possession of their powers at sixty and sixty-five years of age? Very few—simply because they do not *produce* the voice properly. All they seem to aim for is power, power, power. "Never mind the *perfect* quality, if I can sing louder than anyone else."

And then to assist them in their campaign, the microphone comes along, and the volume knobs are turned higher and higher! With what result?—we have "big" voices like Melchior, Tibbett, Gigli, and that whole galaxy of singers one hears in most of the opera houses of Europe, but no real quality as De Luca, Battistini, Amato, Bonci, De Lucia, De Reszke, Destinn, Patti, Arnoldson, Melba, Scotti, and many others of this calibre used to give us, and still could do so at an age when the modern singer will be retired and "teaching"—unfortunate pupils!

As to the merits of acoustic and electrical reproduction and recording, to the discerning critic there is only one answer—acoustic. That terrible steely quality one hears on most modern vocal records is not *natural*. Listen to a record of Gigli and compare it with one of Caruso's 1904 or 1905 records. In the latter is the pure natural voice, the only drawback being the heavy surface noise. I have yet to hear Gigli sing anything that can compare with the perfection of Caruso's rendering of anything he touched. Gigli's mezza voice is in complete control, but absolutely toneless.

May I then end this perhaps somewhat disjointed letter with a most appropriate quotation: "Phases and vogues there must always be in which even the leaders of opinion will seem unanimous for the moment. All these come to the test of time. Slowly but surely the real artist finds his rightful place in the long rôle of names, when the exaggerations and enthusiasms of each generation fall into their true perspective."

I would make it clear that the above words are intended to show that modern conditions are not conducive to the production of great singers and true artists, as speed (in training as in everything else) and "quantity" rather than "quality" are the goals aimed for, with the result that the present-day singers cannot compare with those who took *years* over their training, and then *never* forced the voice under any circumstances. How else could Melba have sung as she did at sixty-five, or Battistini at seventy-four?

Cheshire.

G. C. SIMPSON.

Advance Echo

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

During all these months of bewildered discussion of that annoying phenomenon, "advance echo," I have been wondering why our old friend Captain Barnett has not advanced to the fore and nonchalantly set us right. Since he apparently does not mean to do so, I am taking the liberty of quoting from an

article contributed by him to the February 1928 issue of the now defunct *Phonograph Monthly Review*:

ECHO

"On some records when the needle goes over the groove immediately preceding the first music groove there will be heard a faint ghost of the opening notes. One might reasonably suspect this to be caused by a deformation of the groove wall under the action of the recording needle if it were not for the fact that one sometimes hears an echo of the closing chords of a piece after the music is finished. Now the groove in which this fore echo occurs was not cut when the needle was recording the echo note and, not being cut, most certainly it had no wall capable of distortion, therefore it is amply clear that one must look to some other cause other than the action of the recording needle for production of this defect. It is indeed a most serious defect not so much on account of the ghost noises themselves which are of little importance, but because if this imperfection occurs on the playing grooves it is certain that the same principle in action must be spoiling the music in those grooves where the music is engraved.

"By a careful series of experiments Mr. Tom Hough has traced the trouble to its source and he found it where I should never have expected to come across it. After recording the wax (or soap) disc is dusted and cleaned by a rotary brush. If the hairs of the brush are too stiff or if the brushing has been too thorough then echo will be found on the records, the fault having originated by actual transference of vibrations from groove to groove through the centrifugally stiffened hairs on the brush. The same trouble may be set up even in cleaning the metal masters or pressers made from the wax mould. Of course, records made from moulds so carefully (?) treated cannot contain very pure sounds and should be avoided."

So it appears that the manufacturers need to exercise more care in brushing and advance echo will be done away with! To Captain Barnett's remarks I may add that faulty sound-box adjustment may cause such echo effects. I had more than twenty Edison Diamond Discs which showed "advance echo," but having the reproducer adjusted removed the trouble and made the records, which I had thought worn out, appear as good as new.

Mentioning Edison records reminds me to express my hearty approval of the remarks of Messrs. Hurst and Welch. Such diatribes as theirs against the senselessly blaring, over-amplified records of to-day are badly needed. A friend of mine once wrote to me about being visited by the charming comedienne Aileen Stanley. He had an Edison instrument and, placing one of her records upon it, asked her to sing in comparison with the reproduction. The experience of his family, listening at the other end of the room, was the same as that of five million other hearers of "Tone Tests" in concert halls: the talking machine simulated Miss Stanley's voice so perfectly they were never able to tell which was singing, the lady or the Edison!

On one occasion a friend of mine who was a recording artist decided to see if a tone test could be given with another make of instrument—an elaborate electrical machine costing seventy-five pounds. We tried adjusting it in every conceivable way but never could get it to sound anything like his genuine voice. There was always a wiry, "boomy" over-amplification which completely took away the similarity between voice and reproduction. Disgustedly, my friend said:

"And they call this electrical business progress! Why, if I had made an acoustic Edison record you could have stood six feet away from me and the machine and never been able to tell which was which!"

I agree, too, with Mr. Welch that electrically recorded Edison records contain unnatural resonances which would prevent their being used successfully in Tone Test comparisons. . . . But I'd best drop this Edison subject altogether. I long since learned that nothing so infuriates die-hard "electrical" fans as having the name "Edison" thrown up in their faces!

EDISONITE.

An English Gesture

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

In November's "Round and About," W. R. A. quotes a correspondent's remarks about Furtwängler holding up a score for the audience to applaud after a performance. He adds: "An English conductor might be too shy to make this gesture."

Let me relate an incident which happened during the Bach-Händel Festival at Oxford in May. There was much applause after an excellent performance of *Messiah*, by the Oxford Bach Choir and the Oxford Orchestral Society, right through, without cuts and with Handel's original orchestration. Dr. Thomas Armstrong left the platform to return with the full score, holding it aloft to indicate where credit was due. Then both singers and players joined with the audience in paying tribute to a great composer.

Cheltenham.

J. BROOKE.

Quality Reproduction

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

In a letter last month Mr. G. N. Sharp stated a fact. Modern records in conjunction with a good gramophone—and it must be a first-class one—do sound every bit as good as a performance in a concert hall. This statement would have been a daring one to make a year ago, but during the last twelve months some magnificent recordings have been released. As examples from many I give *Prince Igor Choral Dances* (LX369-70), the *Overtures to Beatrice and Benedict* (LX371) and *The Picaresque Comedy* (LX394), and Tchaikovsky's *Fifth Symphony* (H.M.V. DB2548-53).

It may be noticed that these are all concerned with good, hefty-sized orchestras and, in the *Prince Igor*, a chorus as well. The results in every case are excellent, both as regards the balance of the large orchestral forces employed and the tone of the individual instruments.

In this advance records of the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham and Sir Hamilton Harty have been well to the fore. This orchestra I claim to be the equal of any in the world when directed by either of these conductors, and both of them, but especially the latter, are authorities upon the interpretation of Berlioz.

Now, after this roundabout beginning, I have reached my point. Berlioz, after years of neglect, is undergoing a revival similar in many ways to that of Rossini. In Glasgow his masterpiece, *The Trojans*, was produced by amateurs for the first time in this country last March. A coming concert organised by the B.B.C. is devoted to two major works, the *Symphonie Funèbre* and the *Messe des Morts*, both conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty. Even in the monthly gramophone lists something of this revival may be seen in the two overtures, the *Symphonie Fantastique* and the *Funeral March for "Hamlet,"* all issued by Columbia.

I am positive there is as large a public for the longer works of Berlioz as there is for Delius, Purcell, and Sibelius, who all have society issues, and much modern music which finds its way into Collectors' Lists and Connoisseur Catalogues.

Let us have the Overtures to *Les Franc Juges* and *King Lear*, the *Symphonie Funèbre* which so impressed Wagner, *Romeo et Juliette*, *Harold in Italy* (why do our viola players complain of a slender repertoire and never play this work?).

It might be too much to expect the *Messe des Morts*, *L'Enfance du Christ*, or *Les Troyens*, but there is a wealth of fine music in all of them and even excerpts would be welcome, provided the recording was of the same standard as the *Prince Igor Choral Dances*.

Berlioz's music is the music of a poet. Even nowadays it still strikes one through its originality. The trouble is that, apart from the *Symphonie Fantastique* and some short pieces, very little of this intensely personal and exciting music is ever performed. The gramophone is the only adequate method of arriving at a proper understanding of it.

Berwickshire.

D. M. COOKSON.

The "Gentleman" Composer

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

Evidently there is a demand for more Mendelssohn. Mr. Hugh Liversidge's appeal in your November number was matched by a similar appeal by Mr. Filson Young in the *Radio Times*. Unfortunately, to both appeals was attached the same deplorable portrait of the composer, from which his reputation has suffered more than from any defect in his music, whether supposed or actual. That portrait—*likeness* it cannot be!—is the very embodiment of priggishness, smugness, and prim complacency. It says unmistakably to every beholder: "Be good enough to kick me, for no man possessing such a face as this could deserve anything else at your hands, or (to speak more correctly) at your feet." Mendelssohn was not a bit like that, if one may judge from other portraits, or from contemporary descriptions. Where is the alert intelligence, the attractive force, which he is known to have possessed? Where a suggestion of the practical joker, who loved to travesty his friends on the piano, and slid down the banisters after conducting *Elijah*?

I venture to claim that Mendelssohn's music has never ceased to be popular with the bulk of discerning musical opinion in this country. Mr. Liversidge recalls the fact that the Mendelssohn Prom. two years ago filled the Queen's Hall. He might have added that, for two years in succession, the *Elijah* in its pageant form has crowded the Albert Hall night after night; and that the prolonged run of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* in Regent's Park last summer owed much of its attractive charm to the Mendelssohn music.

No, the partial eclipse of the great Felix is due to two principal causes: (i) the perversity of *some critics*, and (ii) the negligence of *all conductors*.

(i) Some critics systematically belittle the composer. Not, of course, men like E. N. and E. E., who really know their business, but certain lesser lights, chiefly young men, not long out of their cradles, who consider it essential to their reputations to disparage nearly everything which dates from the Victorian age. For instance, one of these clever young men, discussing the *Italian Symphony* over the wireless some time ago, had the audacity to describe it as "not the highest art." As though F. M. B. did not possess more art in his little finger than fifty of these young gentlemen in their entire bodies! In a sense, Mendelssohn was *too* artistic, too tied and bound to the rules and regulations of art. And one reason for this, was that he happened to be that rarity among great composers a *gentleman*—by the accident of birth, by nature, and by upbringing. Of what other great composer could as much be said, except perhaps—*perhaps*—of Chopin? The fact was not an unmixed blessing to him as musician; for while it gave him a somewhat wider outlook on life—he had all sorts of interests beside music—it imposed upon his art a restraint, a fastidiousness, and a disinclination to let himself go, of which such rough old giants as Handel, Beethoven and Brahms knew nothing.

But (ii) all conductors, without exception, agree in giving us too little Mendelssohn; or rather, they give us a handful of his works, almost *ad nauseam*, and the rest of them not at all. Take the Concert Overtures. The *M. N. D.*, *Hebrides*, and *Ruy Blas*, are heard again and again; but the equally fine *Melusina*, and the *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, scarcely at all. *Elijah* is regularly performed (its drawing power is needed financially); but what of *St. Paul*, the *Hymn of Praise*, and, above all, the choral Psalms? Some conductors have recently discovered the *Italian Symphony*, but leave the far finer *Scottish Symphony* on the shelf. The *Violin Concerto* is always with us (violinists see to that), but the *Piano Concertos*, and the other brilliant works for piano and orchestra, might as well never have been written. And what of the wealth of chamber music—trios, quartets, sextet and octet?

What is true of conductors is equally true of gramophone companies, and (to a less extent) of the B.B.C. The promised performance of the *First Walpurgis Night* on January 29th

by the B.B.C. should be a treat (thank you, Dr. Boulton!). Columbia gave us last month two delightful quartet movements, but why not an entire quartet?

Each of the great composers has his special contribution to the world's happiness, and that of Mendelssohn is by no means the least valuable. Music so optimistic, so tuneful and varied, so brilliant and yet so sincere, should be welcome at all times, but especially in this disheartened and war-stricken age.

H. H. E.

Sanderstead, Surrey.

A Protest

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

My attention has been caught by the letter signed William Brown in your December issue. I do not know whether this correspondent is correct in his statement of the ages of those great pianists, Horowitz and Solomon, but in my case he has certainly overshoot the mark very considerably. You must pardon my feminine sensitiveness on this point. True, there are only three ages for an artist, who is either tentative, mature or *passé*; but it is the tragedy of our sex that, as women, we do not like to be considered any of these.

London, N.W.3.

FILEEN JOYCE.

Reminiscences

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

Mr. Hurst, who does such excellent work with your "Collectors' Corner," has suggested to me that many of your readers would be interested in some of my reminiscences of great operatic artists of bygone days. My memories of opera extend over rather more than sixty years, so the subject is a very large one and in the limited space I can hope for in your columns I think I must confine myself to impressions that I received from a few of the greatest of these artists.

I would first and foremost place that incomparable artist Jean de Reszke. It was my privilege to hear him as far back as 1875 in the title rôle of Don Giovanni. He then sang as a baritone, and I well remember his beautiful voice and his handsome presence. After his retirement to study as a tenor I heard him very often in nearly all his great successes. It is no exaggeration to describe him as the ideal artist. It seemed impossible to find in him anything to criticise. His voice had a timbre so beautiful that the very listening to it filled the heart with emotion and the eyes with tears. I have seen it stated that his voice was lacking in power, but this was not so, for his ringing high notes thrilled me hundreds of times, although the voice had not the stupendous trumpet-like quality of the great Tamagno. But his control of it was just perfect, as was also his taste and refinement in the use of it. And to add to these great gifts he had a beautiful diction, histrionic ability that enabled him to identify himself completely with every character he portrayed, a very fine physique, and perfect taste in the art of make-up and costume. Possibly Tristan, as he sang and played it, stands first in my treasured memories, but even that seems doubtful to one who remembers perfectly his Romeo, his Lohengrin, his Walther, and his Siegfried.

What a galaxy of wonderful artists Jean de Reszke had in those days as his companions on the opera stage. His brother, Edouard, with a voice of enormous sonority and yet of a beautiful quality, a lovable Frère Laurent, a genial Mephistopheles, an impressive King Mark, and a Hans Sachs the embodiment of human sympathy. Pol Plançon, another physically fine bass with a huge voice and a technique so complete that I once heard him in an old opera, I think it was *Le Châlet* by Adam, sing vocal gymnastics such as scales and shakes as well as any accomplished coloratura soprano. Then that great singer and magnificent actor Victor Maurel, equally great in tragedy or comedy, in Mozart or Wagner, who gave one thrills in his Iago as moving as Henry Irving did in *The Bells*. I had the privilege of his friendship for a few years before his death, and one day he took me by the

arm and sang to me Tosti's *Ninon* so that I could see how he produced tone and diction with his lips. He had a charming personality and, incidentally, was an excellent painter in oils.

Further back in the long, long past the names of many great opera singers that I heard occur to me. That great singer Titiens with her noble stage presence and glorious voice, that remarkably beautiful woman Christine Nilsson with a timbre in her voice something like that in Jean de Reszke's, and whose Marguerite was easily the most beautiful I have ever seen, Minnie Hauk, the perfect Carmen, and Fancelli, the Italian tenor, with a voice of gold and a marvellous top C in *Salve dimora*. He dearly loved pouring out his vocal efforts to the gallery gods, and on one occasion I saw Nilsson drag him away from the footlights by his cloak so that he should properly make love to her in the Garden Scene in *Faust*. A great singer but a poor actor.

Great days of singing, those! It is a tragic misfortune that electrical recording was not invented generations earlier so that opera-lovers of to-day might know something more of what old opera-goers like myself mean when we talk about "The Golden Age of Opera."

Wimbledon, S.W.19.

PERCY A. BULL.

Hänsel und Gretel

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

In the Editorial of the current issue of THE GRAMOPHONE you enquire if any reader can supply the names of the singers who appeared in the original London production of Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*.

I think I am right in stating that Jeanne Douste was the Gretel, Marie Elba the Hänsel, Edith Miller the Witch, Charles Copland the Peter, while the smaller parts were represented by Jessie Huddleston, Julia Lennox and Marie du Bedat. Arditi was the conductor and the year 1894.

In the correspondence page of your December issue I notice that Mr. William Michael White complains of the lack of records obtainable in this country by modern Italian sopranos. I do not think this complaint is quite justified, since the recording companies have, from time to time during the last few years, issued records by what are presumably considered to be the most distinguished of present-day Italian song-birds. Relying entirely on memory, the names of Bianca Scacciati, Rosetta Pampanini, Iva Pacetti and Gina Cigna occur to me. All four of these ladies have had records issued over here, and we have also had opportunities of hearing their actual performances at Covent Garden. With the possible exception of Pampanini during her first season here, none of these singers seemed to justify transplantation from her native soil. They all suffered from *tremolo* to a degree which was most distressing, and one really felt that the vocal art of Italy must be in a very low state if these were the best exponents to be found.

I do, however, support Mr. White in his plea for records by Claudia Muzio, a fine singer who belongs to the pre-war generation of sopranos, having made her debut in London in 1914. She has been heard at Covent Garden as Manon, Mimi, Desdemona, and Margherita in *Mefistofele*. Muzio has recently made some records for the Italian Columbia company which can be obtained here by special order. I have some of her American Edison records which reveal a glorious dramatic voice of great range and flexibility and a particularly exquisite *mezza voce*.

If the recording companies do, however, want to give us some first-class operatic soprano records, they need not go to Italy or anywhere else on the Continent. All they need do is to go to Islington. There, at Sadler's Wells Theatre, our true British Opera House, they will find Miss Joan Cross singing throughout the season a variety of rôles which would probably perturb any ordinary international *prima donna*. But then Miss Cross is not an ordinary *prima donna*, for in

addition to possessing a lyric soprano voice of the loveliest quality, she has a brain, and what is more, is not afraid to use it. This is apparent in the intelligence and care she brings to all her parts as well as in her sure sense of style, whether she be interpreting Mozart, Puccini, Wagner, Verdi or Rimsky-Korsakov.

H.M.V. is not quite in ignorance of the existence of this singer, for it has included a few snippets sung by Miss Cross in two records of surprising banality, dealing with the stories of films starring a charming, but to my mind over-praised, American soprano.

The only things to be said in defence of these two records are that Miss Cross sings in them and that her voice reproduces excellently. At least, they whet our appetites for more "full length" recordings by this distinguished artist.

Chelsea, S.W.3.

NEVILLE WALLIS.

Gillingham (Kent) Gramophone Society

On November 25th Mr. E. S. Kerslake gave an interesting recital of vocal, instrumental and orchestral recordings. H.M.V. DB2375-6 (Simon Barer's new records of Liszt's *Rapsodie espagnole* recently recommended by John F. Porte in these pages) earned immediate approval, and it was agreed that these are two of the most brilliant piano records yet issued.

The meeting on December 9th took the form of an impromptu recital, each member contributing an appropriate Christmas record. After the interval, Mr. W. W. Johnson presented his gramophone competition—a short story with certain omissions, the omissions being the titles of well-known recordings. Fragments from the records were played without comment, and the company invited to suggest the titles, thus completing the story. Much amusement was caused when the solution was revealed.

Liverpool and District Gramophone Society

Excerpts from the Paris Opera recording of *Faust* formed the Society's programme for November 8th. The performance is of a high standard throughout, and the inclusion of the Ballet music and the less-known Walpurgis Night scene give completeness to a very satisfying version of the opera.

On November 18th Dr. Clifford Marshall gave a vastly entertaining talk on "Humour in Music." After first "preparing" the audience by relating a number of funny stories with musical connections, Dr. Marshall suggested that this type of music might be arranged in three sections: (a) the ordinary humorous song; (b) realistic music, e. g. representative of extraneous sounds or events; and (c) orchestral music in which one or more of the instruments are given parts which produce a comical effect—in this case the composer is having his little joke at the expense of the performer or the audience, and the humour is of a more subtle character.

Section (a) was well illustrated by Messrs. M. Thompson and A. Rowlands, whose songs included "Five Eyes," "Yarmouth Fair," "The Ninepenny Fiddil," etc. Dr. Marshall himself illustrated section (b) with a delightful group of pianoforte solos (e.g., "Golliwog's Cake Walk," "Fireflies"), and as other instances of this type mentioned the bleating of sheep in "Don Quixote," the pompous introduction followed by the simple tune in Dohnányi's "Nursery Suite." Section (c) was represented by the crashing chord in Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony, the double bass part in the third movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the drum part in the scherzo of the Choral Symphony, and so on. The final vocal duet, "Old Mother Hubbard" (Hely-Hutchinson), although not orchestral, should also come in this last category, being a setting of the old nursery rhyme in the style of Handel. The combination of childish words and oratorio-like arrangement was irresistible and brought down the house.

Records for the Lover of Chamber Music

BACH

Sonata No. 1 in G major, for 'Cello and Piano. Played by John Barbirolli and Ethel Bartlett. 2 records, 133-4

Sonata in E \flat major for Piano and Flute. Played by Kathleen Long and René le Roy, three sides, and HONBGER. "Danse de la Chèvre," Flute solo. 2 records, 135-6

Concerto in F minor for piano and strings, and "Blessed Jesu, here we stand." (Chorale, arranged for piano by Rummel.) Piano, Ethel Bartlett. 2 records, 151-2

ARNOLD BAX

Oboe Quintet. Played by Leon Goossens (Oboe) and the International String Quartet (André Mangeot, Boris Pecker, Frank Howard and Herbert Withers). 2 records, 76-7

String Quartet in G major. Played by the Marie Wilson String Quartet (Marie Wilson, Gwendolen Higham, Anne Wolfe and Phyllis Hasluck). 3 records, 153-5

Sonata for Two Pianos, and HARDANGER. Played by Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson. 3 records, 156-8

BOCCHERINI

String Quartet in E \flat . Played by the Poltronieri String Quartet of Milan. 2 records, 92-3

BRAHMS

Trio for Pianoforte, Violin and Horn in E \flat , Op. 40. Played by York Bowen, Spencer Dyke and Aubrey Brain. 4 records, 65-8

Pianoforte Quartet in C minor, Op. 60. Played by Olive Bloom (piano), Spencer Dyke (violin), Bernard Shore (viola) and B. Patterson Parker ('cello). 4 records, 88-91

String Sextet in G major, Op. 36, played by the Spencer Dyke Quartet with James Lockyer and Edward Robinson. 4 records, 105-8

Trio in C minor, Op. 101. Played by the Pirani Trio (Leila Pirani, violin; Charles Hambourg, 'cello; Max Pirani, piano). 3 records, 147-9

CORELLI

Concerto for Christmas Night. Played by the N.G.S. Chamber Orchestra, conducted by John Barbirolli (leader, André Mangeot.) Three sides, 69A

BACH

Schafe können sicher Weiden. Sung by Martha Amstad (Soprano) with Bernard Ord (Harpsichord), Edward Walker and Evelyn Claye (Flutes). One side 69B

DEBUSSY

Deux Danses for Piano and Strings. Played by Ethel Bartlett (Piano) and the N.G.S. Chamber Orchestra, conducted by John Barbirolli (leader, André Mangeot). Three sides and *Pour invoquer Pan, dieu du vent d'été*, and *Pour remercier la pluie au matin* from *Six Epigraphes Antiques*, duets for one piano. Played by Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson. One side, 70-71

Sonata for Violin and Piano (1917). Played by André Mangeot and Lyell Barbour, three sides, and *Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir*, from *Preludes Set 1*, played by Lyell Barbour. 2 records, 127-8

HANDEL

Sonata No. 3 in G major for Flute and Piano. Played by René le Roy and Kathleen Long. 1 record, 137

HAYDN

String Quartet in B \flat major (The Sunrise), Op. 76, No. 4, played by the International String Quartet. 3 records, 109-11

Pianoforte Sonata in C minor, three sides, and RAMEAU. Variations in A minor, one side. Played by Kathleen Long. 2 records, 138-9

String Quartet in E \flat , Op. 76, No. 6, five sides, and PURCELL. Four-part Fantasia No. 4 in C minor, one side. Played by the International String Quartet (André Mangeot, Albert Voor-sanger, Eric Bray and Jack Shine-bourne). 3 records, 140-2

PAUL JUON

Chamber Symphony, Op. 27. Played by the New Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Charles Kreshover. 3 records, 144-6

MATTHEW LOCKE

String Quartet No. 6. Played by the International String Quartet. 1 record, 143

MOZART

Quartet in D major (K285) for Flute, Violin, Viola and 'Cello, played by René le Roy, André Mangeot, Frank Howard and Herbert Withers. 2 records, 112-3

Quintet in E \flat major, for Piano, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon. Played by Kathleen Long, Léon Goossens, Frederick Thurston, Aubrey Brain and J. Alexandra. 3 records, 121-3

Piano Sonata in D major (K576). Three sides; and GOTTLIEB MUFFAT. (a) Minuet, (b) Air, from Suite in B \flat ; and FRANCOIS COUPERIN "Le Tic-Toc-Cloc" ou "Les Maillottins." One side. Played by Kathleen Long. 2 records, 129-30

String Trio in G major, No. 5 (K.564), Played by the Budapest Trio (Nicholas Roth, violin; Georges Roth, 'cello; and Lyell Barbour, piano). 2 records, 159-60

Trio in E flat major, No. 7 (K498). Played by Rebecca Clarke, viola; Frederick Thurston, clarinet; Kathleen Long, piano. 2 records, 161-2

VIVALDI

Sonate en Concert, No. 5 in E minor for Violoncello and Strings (arranged Vincent d'Indy). Played by Georges Pitsch and String Quartet, three sides, and Three Pieces (arranged Ethel Bartlett): (a) "Golden Slumbers," (b) "An Ancient Lullaby," (c) "My Love's an Arbutus." Played by John Barbirolli ('cello) and Ethel Bartlett (piano), one side. 2 records, 131-2

PETER WARLOCK

"The Curlew" (W. B. Yeats). John Armstrong, R. Murchie, T. Mac-Donagh, and International String Quartet. Conducted by Constant Lambert. 3 records 163-5

WOLF

Italian Serenade. Played by the International Quartet (Mangeot, Voor-sanger, Bray and Shinebourne). 1 record, 150

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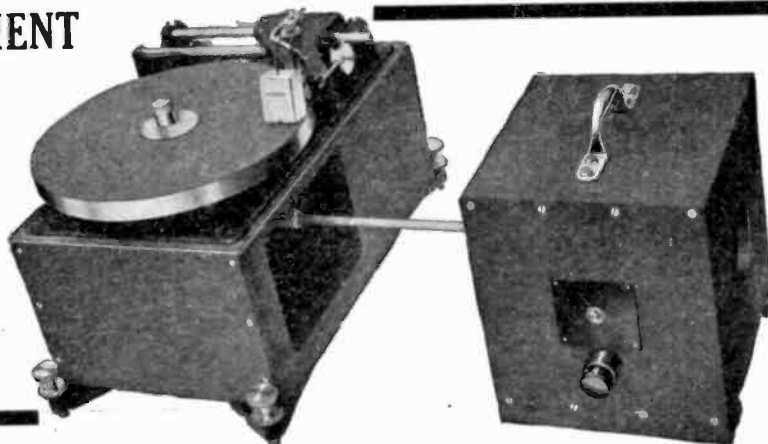
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