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*edited by  
Compton Mackenzie  
and  
Christopher Stone*



**JUNE  
1932**



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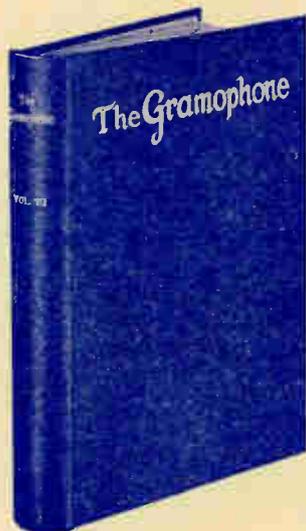
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JUNE 1932

No. 109

## EDITORIAL

THE last month has been delightfully occupied with playing through the second issue of the Connoisseur's Catalogue. As our reviewers have not yet delivered their verdicts, I ought to wait before saying much about the records; but I have had such intense pleasure from this new issue that I cannot resist a few premature words.

The first recording I chose to play was the Mozart Concerto in D major for flute and harp, with Marcel Moyse as the flautist, Mlle. Lilly Laskine as the harpist, and Piero Coppola in charge of the orchestra, on three 12in. plum-coloured discs. Years ago there was a record of part of the first movement of this concerto with a piano accompaniment on one side of a 12in. black H.M.V. disc. The harpist was Ada Sassoli, and the flautist was John Lemmoné, and they were accompanied on the piano by Maurice Lafarge. The recording was really a joke except, of course, for the flute, and nothing illustrates so admirably the advance that recording has made as the difference between that old black disc of years ago and these three superb plum discs of to-day.

Here is what Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell in his new biographical study of Mozart (Peter Davies, 5s.) says about this concerto:

"But the best of the series is the concerto for flute and harp (K299) which was written for the Duc de Guines and his daughter, to whom Mozart gave music-lessons. There are some amusing letters about this father and daughter, and she seems to have been an excellent performer. Mozart did not like the harp any more than he cared for the flute; though there are no traces of it in the concerto, which is a charming conversation-piece, in the sense that it renders so well an elegant assembly of people and the delicacies with which their ears are flattered while they can be constrained to stop talking, just for a few moments. This concerto is still given, and is, perhaps, more effective in its associations than in actual content, for these two instruments, in spite of their lovely sound and the mastery with which they are employed, make an unsatisfactory combination."

By this time no doubt Mr. Sitwell has acquired these new records, and I wonder if he will want to qualify his remarks in a future edition. Surely the second

movement provides a deeper emotion, and surely the two instruments as played by M. Moyse and Mlle. Laskine provide an exquisite combination. I am writing without an opportunity of referring to the records of Beethoven's great 14th quartet in C sharp minor played by the Léner Quartet (in a Columbia album); but is my memory playing me false, or is the *rondo* in this harp and flute concerto curiously like some brief scherzo in the Beethoven quartet?

I have played this concerto almost every night since it arrived and, for all its apparent simplicity, find in it fresh delights every time.

There are two Haydn symphonies, both played by the London Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Hans Weisbach. One of them is the so-called Oxford Symphony, which the Vocalion Company gave us in days gone by. The opening *adagio* is of a rich, tranquil beauty, and indeed the whole symphony is full of charm. The other one is in C major from the Salomon Set, and it is also most attractive.

I have never heard Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* and so the greater part of the album of ten 12in. plum-coloured discs was new to me. It is, of course, not an opera at all, but a kind of dramatic oratorio, and is obviously much better adapted to the concert-platform than to the stage. There is no attempt to construct a logical drama. A series of isolated incidents from the Faust legend provided Berlioz with an excuse for fine choruses and rich orchestral writing. Gounod's *Faust* may be a sentimental affair, but it will always hold the stage more successfully than *La Damnation de Faust*. Isolated airs like *Voici des Roses* and the serenade of Mephistopheles will always please, but lack of dramatic interest is not compensated for by the music. The libretto contains too many careless misprints in the French and should be read through again by a pair of practised eyes. On the whole, I think most people will find *La Damnation de Faust* a little dull.

The chamber music in this second Connoisseur Catalogue is welcome indeed. There is an album with Schumann's Quartet in A minor, Op. 41, No. 1, played by the Flonzaley Quartet on four 10in. discs, and also by the Flonzaley Quartet a performance on three 12in. red discs of Smetana's Quartet in E minor (*Aus meinem*

*Leben*). It may be fancy, but I did not think that wonderful *Allegro moderato à la Polka* sounded quite so wonderful as once upon a time it sounded on an old single-sided red disc played by the same players.

The new catalogue is rich in violin and piano sonatas. Cortot and Thibaud give us Fauré's Sonata in A major, Op. 13, on three red 12in. discs, Erica Morini and Ludwig Kentner give us Mozart's Sonata in B flat major (KV454) on three 12in. red discs. Adolf Busch and Rudolf Serkin give us Beethoven's Sonata in E flat major, Op. 12, No. 3, on two 12in. red discs. Yehudi Menuhin and Hubert Giesen give us Beethoven's Sonata in D Major, Op. 12, No. 1, on five sides of three 12in. red discs with the *Andante sostenuto* from Mozart's Sonata in C major (KV296) on the last side. All these discs provide exquisite music; but perhaps the Beethoven Sonata in E flat major provides the most exquisite playing. Adolf Busch in the *adagio* of the second movement ravishes the ear.

A charming surprise was the set of Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, sixteen of the loveliest songs extremely well sung by Thom Denijs, a tenor I have not heard before, but one I shall hope to hear often again. These songs occupy three 12in. black discs, and by the sale they have His Master's Voice will be able to estimate the demand for recordings of German *lieder*. I wish that a booklet of the words could have been added together with the literal English prose translation. However, we shall be glad to print the words and translations in THE GRAMOPHONE if we can be of any help in doing so. This recording is really beautiful.

One of the ballets I remember best from that great season of the Russian Ballet in 1911 at Covent Garden is *Thamar*, and Balakireff's music on two 12in. red discs played by the orchestra of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire under Piero Coppola revives old splendours. I think it was this ballet which inspired Francis Brett Young to write one of the best poems he ever wrote, and there is a moment when the distant drum taps coming up the gorge provide as good a *frisson* as one can get on the gramophone.

Another welcome piece of music is Ravel's Trio on three red 12in. discs, played by M. Merckel, Mdme. Marcelli-Herson, and Mlle. Eliane Zurfluh-Tenroc. Excellent playing, and essential Ravel.

Dvorak's *Dumky Trio* played by the Pozniak Trio is a delightful performance on three 12in. plum-coloured discs. The B.B.C. announcers could have a glorious time with this trio, for the five movements between them contain no less than thirty-three directions in Italian, and there is nothing that B.B.C. announcers enjoy more than reading out such directions.

Cortot plays the whole of the first book of Debussy's Preludes (in an album of six red 10in. discs), in which are included such favourites as *Les collines d'Anacapri*, *La Cathédrale engloutie*, *Minstrels*, and *La fille aux cheveux de lin*.

Rachmaninoff plays Chopin's Sonata in B flat minor, which has the Funeral March in it, in an album of four

red 10in. discs, with the *Waltz in E minor* on the last side.

It seems odd that the bugle calls of the British Army should never have been recorded before. Now Sergeant G. Morgan and Musician Ware of the Coldstream Guards sound on two 10in. plum discs all the bugle calls for Infantry and Mounted Infantry of His Majesty's Army in Camp and Quarters, and how the deuce any of them know what's wanted at any particular moment is a mystery. What an invaluable present these two discs will make for a budding bugler!

There is plenty more to write about this Second Connoisseur's Catalogue, but I have already suggested a large enough expenditure.

Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell's book about Mozart, which I mentioned just now, is extremely modest, and claims to be no more than the work of a "complete and uninitiated amateur." It is indeed the sort of book that an amateur like myself would be proud to have written, and I am prepared to argue that it is the kind of book about a composer which the general public wants to read. Mr. Ernest Newman, in his review of it, would probably not have rapped Mr. Sitwell so hard over the knuckles if Mr. Sitwell had omitted that sneer at Wagner. As soon as I read that, I knew he was in for it with Mr. Newman. And he was. Then Mr. Sitwell wrote to the *Sunday Times* to remind his critic that some twenty years ago he had been finding it difficult to appreciate Mozart. I fancy that most lovers of music pass through a phase when the claims of Mozart and Wagner are irreconcilable. Mr. Newman has long ago returned to Mozart without losing any of his taste for Wagner, and I, though, of course, I do not pretend to know a tenth as much either about Mozart or about Wagner as Mr. Newman, find I have outlived that period of one's development when I could not enjoy both. It would not surprise me if in another ten years Mr. Sitwell were to find himself esteeming Wagner without appreciating Mozart any the less. I am emboldened to make this speculation because I find that Mr. Sitwell considers the *Adagio* of Schubert's Quintet in C more poignant than any music in the world. That is exactly the same effect it has on me, and if we agree about Mozart and Schubert, what more likely than that we should ultimately agree about Wagner? I think I understand exactly what Mr. Sitwell dislikes in Wagner's music, and possibly my own lack of esteem for *Parsifal* is a relic in me of the mental attitude which Mr. Sitwell still preserves towards the whole of Wagner's music. In his review of Mr. Sitwell's "Mozart" Mr. Newman asked with a suggestion of scorn, "Cannot Mr. Sitwell read a score, especially a score of this extremely simple kind, for himself?" Obviously Mr. Sitwell cannot. Nor, I regret to say, can I. Nor, I venture to assert, can ninety per cent. of the readers of THE GRAMOPHONE, though perhaps if we had been taught music as children are being taught it nowadays, we might have been able to do so. I am not perfectly convinced that this failure to be able to read a score

necessarily debars one from a full appreciation of music. In his reply to Mr. Sitwell's accusation that twenty years ago he had scoffed at Mozart's music, Mr. Newman said, "In those days I had not yet learnt the first and last lesson the musical critic must learn if he is to see things *sub specie æternitatis*—not to base his opinion of any work on the performances he may hear of it." But surely, if Mr. Newman was able to read Mozart's scores twenty years ago—as, of course, he was—that is not a valid excuse for his failure to appreciate Mozart then, for I cannot believe that Mr. Newman was ever not much too good a critic to be dependent on a conductor or a set of musicians. On the other hand, Mr. Sitwell and myself are to a large extent dependent on the interpreters, yet we should both of us be entitled to condemn a performance of some symphony of Mozart if we found that such an interpretation conflicted with our theory and our knowledge of Mozart's intention, which might be divined without being able to read the score. I confess I was glad to find support from Mr. Newman over the *Jupiter* Symphony, because I have always thought that admirers of Mozart were apt to esteem it a little too highly. Mr. Newman thinks Adonis or Ganymede a more suitable name for it than Jupiter; but I disagree there, for Jupiter has always seemed to me just the right name for it. Had it been called the Zeus symphony, that would have been to overweight it. Jupiter lacks awe for the student of mythology, and Jupiter does not sound cosmic. You could not paint Zeus in a bagwig; but Jupiter is capable even of donning silk breeches. Mr. Sitwell makes some admirable observations about the operas of Mozart.

By the way, when are we going to have the three great operas of Mozart complete for the gramophone? No doubt the publication of them is also being considered, and let us hope great care will be given to the choice of the singers. It may be questioned whether the art of singing a Mozart opera be not lost. The continuity of tradition seems to have been broken. I should like a recording in which only the instruments were used for which Mozart scored his operas. I am not sure that I agree with the following sentence from Mr. Newman's criticism of Mr. Sitwell's book:

"As for my one-time comparison of Mozart as a psychologist in music with certain moderns, to the occasional disadvantage of the former, I am quite unrepentant. It would be a sad reflection on the human race if everything that could be known about the human mind and expressed in music had been summed up for all time in one young man who lived a century and a-half ago, at an epoch when neither had the musical consciousness in general begun to explore certain obscure byways of thought, nor was the language of music as yet equal to the task of expressing certain subtleties, especially morbid subtleties, of the human spirit. At the risk of horrifying Mr. Sitwell, I contend that Wagner and Strauss and Wolf and Berg and a dozen other moderns have explored tracts of human thought and feeling of the bare existence of which

Mozart was quite unaware, and of which, even had he been aware of them, the musical language of his epoch was totally unable to give an adequate account."

I feel inclined to put up against that some remarks of my own in the essay I wrote on gramophone chamber music for Cobbett's *Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*:

"We are inclined to talk about the externality of Haydn's and Mozart's music, and by that epithet impute to them a lack of depth. I think we assume too easily their innocence of life's profundities. It is true that progress has added so much to the complication of existence that numbers of people have sought from music the expression of an inward emotion and an assurance of something permanent behind the rapid shifting of external circumstance; but really it is the contemporary composer of chamber music who scarcely ever does reach beyond external circumstances. His music, in fact, is far more truly external than that of Haydn. It is far more the illustration of a state of affairs than the expression of a mental or emotional attitude. Ugliness is nothing new; but the self-consciousness of the modern artist causes him to be overwhelmed by it, and with a desperate optimism he strives to perceive beauty in that ugliness and to extract beauty from it. His art is a kind of homœopathy or inoculation; the art of Haydn and Mozart was an antidote. Not that I would suggest for a moment any deliberate attempt to uplift poor humanity or soothe its ills. Such an express determination would have appeared presumptuous to composers whose music glows and blushes with a beautiful modesty. It is a commonplace of criticism to say that Mozart's music reflects none of the trials of his workaday existence; and if this means that his music is never a defiant exploitation of himself it may pass unchallenged. Yet I cannot believe that anybody like myself, who has rarely allowed a day to pass without turning to a trio or quartet of Mozart's as he might turn to a crystalline spring for refreshment, could be content to perceive no more in that music than the bright hours of a sundial. It is true that the pointer marks only the sunny hours, but it marks them with a moving shadow. And for me Mozart's music is like that shadow travelling over the dial of our life."

The question really is whether the expression of morbid subtleties of the human spirit can be regarded as anything more than an optional supplement for the artist, the rejection of which should not count against a recognition of a composer's creative force. The older I grow the less variety am I tempted to attribute to human character, and I am beginning to wonder whether a writer like Lavater did not penetrate just as deeply into human nature as a writer like Freud. I should be prepared to argue that a symphonic poem like Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* is completely superficial compared with Mozart's Quintet in G minor, and that, for instance, as an expression of religious aspiration the *Ave verum Corpus* of Mozart soars high above anything in *Parsifal*.

This brings me up against the question I raised last month over James Joyce and Stravinsky. I believe that the supporters of Stravinsky condemn Mr. Newman for not perceiving that Stravinsky has penetrated more deeply into the human mind than Strauss; but personally I am content to follow Mr. Newman's lead, which justifies with knowledge and experience a point of view I can only reach by intuition. Would that English letters had had a critic of Mr. Newman's quality during the last quarter of a century!

I should like to return to the James Joyce and Stravinsky discussion this month, but it must wait for another occasion, and the correspondent from Cambridge who sent me a most interesting letter on the subject must not think that I have no reply to his contentions because I do not reply to him at once.

### May Records

I suppose that the Max Bruch Concerto in G Minor is not great music, but the performance of it by Yehudi Menuhin and the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Landon Ronald on three 12in. red H.M.V. discs is most pleasant to listen to, and the young violinist's performance of it is masterly. And now, what about Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*? Surely it is time we had a complete recording of this most popular work full of delicious melodies and so often asked for by readers.

In the Columbia May issue the condensed version of Rutland Boughton's opera, *The Immortal Hour*, with Miss Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies in her original part, will be widely welcomed. I think myself, that without the famous melody of the "Faery Song" the opera would not have been heard of again, for most of it is fustian Celticism like everything that Fiona Macleod wrote. These two 12in. dark-blue discs preserve all that it is necessary to preserve for the gramophone, and Mr. Bruce Flegg sings charmingly as Midir.

My favourite folk-song is *The Wraggle Taggle Gipsies*, O! and I was glad to find a record made of it by Miss Annette Blackwell on a 10in. dark-blue Columbia disc last month. I think actually she is more successful in the dear old song *Hares on the Mountain*, and in *The Crystal Spring*, a beautiful air sung perfectly.

Martini's song, *Plaisir d'amour*, is certainly for me among the six most haunting melodies ever written, and the joy of hearing it sung by Yvonne Printemps with a harpsichord accompaniment was great; but she really should have left out that sob in the last line. Her voice requires no catch in the throat to move her listeners. On the other side of this exquisite disc she sings *Au clair de la Lune* as perfectly as one would expect her to sing it. This 12in. red H.M.V. disc will be among the treasures for the gramophone.

Conchita Supervia surpassed herself last month by making a wonderful record of Henry Bishop's *Should he upbraid*, and of that once popular old-fashioned song, *A Lesson with the Fan*, which usually makes me writhe. Judged by her diction in these two songs there are no

English songs which Madame Supervia's voice would not adorn. She is incomparably the most vital woman singer of our time, and the prospect of hearing for the first time the words of various English songs fills me with pleasure. The Parlophone Company are to be envied the privilege of publishing her records.

I am rather unwilling to be dragged into the controversy which seems to have started about "hot rhythm" and "busking," and all the rest of it, because it must be perfectly clear to every reader of THE GRAMOPHONE that I am unutterably bored by most modern dance music, and if not bored, irritated. Frankly, I do not understand why the exponents of it crave to be taken so seriously by academic taste; but a magazine calling itself THE GRAMOPHONE must attempt to present all sides of the gramophone's activities, and it is up to Mr. Jackson and the Editor of *The Melody Maker* to annihilate "Feste" of the *Musical Times* or to be annihilated. At any rate, we allow much harder hitting by our critics and correspondents than most papers allow in these days of kid-glove controversy, and I have started so many controversies in the last few months that I am left this month with at least half a dozen letters, to answer any one of which adequately would take up the whole of the Editorial.

Actually, what I have been doing has been to play through and through His Master's Voice new Connoisseur Catalogue and let controversy go to the deuce this month while I was finishing the third volume of my war memories. However, if hostilities extend themselves on the musical front next month, I shall probably be dragged into the area of operations. Meanwhile, I have before me indignant letters from:

1. A correspondent who says that I am letting Christopher Stone drag the paper down into the sub-human world of jazz.

2. A correspondent in a great state of indignation with me for what I said about Brahms and Milton last month.

3. A correspondent still more indignant with me for what he calls launching an attack on James Joyce.

In addition to these, I have rashly allowed myself to intervene in the Ernest Newman and Sacheverell Sitwell duel now in progress, and finally I have just cancelled some remarks I had written in complete agreement with Mr. Ernest Newman's attitude towards the plight of musicians in deference to the peaceful Rajah of Bong mood wherein I find myself after wrestling with my own war memories.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.



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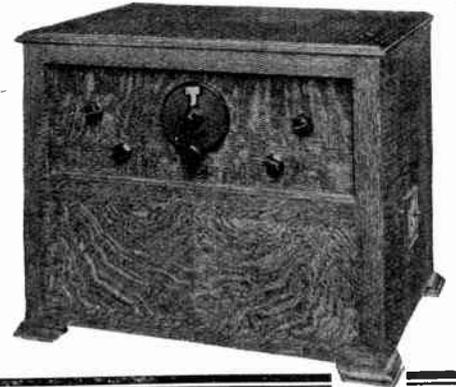
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## The Gramophone and the Singer

# GERMAN OPERA AT COVENT GARDEN

by HERMAN KLEIN

IT was doubly fortunate that Sir Thomas Beecham got back from America in time to conduct *Die Meistersinger* on the opening night of the so-called Wagner Festival at Covent Garden. Not only did his co-operation heal unnecessary wounds and lend valuable prestige to the occasion, but invested with something more than *routinier* interest the otherwise familiar features of the cast. Then again, he contrived to extract with his personal magnetism certain qualities that the orchestra rarely if ever yields under the baton of the best foreign conductors. It would take too long to describe them; I only know that he achieved a combination of delicacy and strength, of Hans Richter and Anton Seidl, such as no other Englishman has ever brought about in this opera. Never mind if many of the tempi were too fast. It did less harm to Wagner than it does to Handel; and the worthy baronet—seated for once and with the score in front of him—always knew how to slow down when necessary.

From the overture onwards it was a definitely-planned, coherent reading of *Die Meistersinger*. The climaxes were big without being thundered out with deafening sonority; and I refuse to find fault with the balance of the quintet, which, together with the final scene on the Pegnitz, I raced home to listen to by wireless. I mention this because it seemed to me that the voices in that wonderful ensemble were not evenly caught or distributed by the microphones. And yet there Mme. Lotte Lehmann's tones sounded no less clear, musical, and fresh than at any time during the evening; indeed, I have never enjoyed her Eva so much. Friedrich Schorr was in his best voice, which means that the music of Hans Sachs received a wholly perfect interpretation; while Fritz Wolff, if not a very handsome nor elegant-looking Junker to those who remembered the Walther of Jean de Reszke (oh, those irritating souvenirs!), certainly sang with spirit and "stayed the course." Thus on the whole we entered upon the season (an enthusiastic crowd), too, enjoying our gramophone friends with eye as well as ear, feasting on the beauties of a glorious opera, and appreciating the intelligent efforts of the native artists who, besides acquitting themselves ably, benefited by their association with the stars from the Continent.

On the second night came the preamble to the *Ring*—first of two promised cycles—and therewith some disappointment. I can call to mind many a better *Rheingold* than this. Robert Heger, excellent conductor as he is, could not maintain the "driving force" that had inspired *Die Meistersinger*, and more than one scene fell

flat. The best thing of the performance was the Alberich of Eduard Habich; it was better even than his Beckmesser. Alike in the depths of the Rhine, the fogs of Nibelheim, and the vision of Valhalla he was simply superb. No gramophone records had preceded the new Wotan, Ludwig Hofmann—why, I cannot exactly say, for one is reviewed elsewhere in this number. His voice sounded somewhat thick and throaty in the theatre, but he is a good declamatory singer, and has all the needful stage traditions for the part. On the other hand, the singing of Fritz Wolff entirely satisfied, whilst the requisite lightness of touch and variety of fantastic posturing were lacking in the difficult part of Loge. The giants Fasolt and Fafner were sonorously and subtly portrayed by Otto Helgers and Norman Allin; the former might even have had a little tone to spare to help Rispah Goodacre, what time her un-Erda-like head was exposed above the top of what looked like her own gravestone. The lovely picture presented by Maria Olszewska, together with her classical attitudes and fine facial expression, lent due importance to the rôle of Fricka; but it was not in the power of Josephine Wray to bring similar qualities to that of Freia. Anyhow, both are most ungrateful parts and not nearly so interesting as those of the three Rhine maidens, whose singing in the distance happened to be particularly moderate.

The *Tristan* of the following night came very nearly, if not quite, to the level of the *Meistersinger* performance, and I suggest that the presence of Sir Thomas Beecham in the conductor's chair again had much to do with the smoothness and unity of the entire interpretation. I should have to go back many years to remember a better—in fact, to one that Toscanini conducted at the New York Metropolitan in 1907, or else one that Jean de Reszke and Ternina sang in at Covent Garden in 1908. Both of those were ideal, unsurpassable. The differentiation in the present case would take too long to explain, nor is explanation really required. Enough that Frida Leider, Maria Olszewska, Lauritz Melchior, Otto Helgers, and Herbert Janssen, all at the very top of their form, furnished a quintet of convincing merit and distinction, and perhaps as strongly equipped at all points as any that the lyric stage of to-day could offer. In their duets the first three singers preserved with supreme art the pure quality of their tone (as all true gramophone artists should and must) whilst varying its strength from passages of the softest pianissimo to the loudest fortissimo. Perfect examples of the former were forthcoming from Frida Leider and

Melchior in the prolonged love scene of the second act ; while the voice of Brangäne floating above them from the watch-tower—beautifully sustained by Olszewska in her richest notes—created just the exquisitely ethereal effect that Wagner intended. For me this was the great moment of the performance. Nowhere did Sir Thomas Beecham's beat falter. He contrived, with marvellous judgment, to keep the tension of both singers and orchestra at its maximum from *Prelude to Liebestod* ; and in the actual music-drama that represents a "lap" which takes some doing.

The place that *Die Walküre* holds in the esteem of amateurs was evidenced by much enthusiasm and genuine gratitude for a performance of superlative excellence, whereof every prominent feature was familiar. There is no more need at this time to tell how Lotte Lehmann and Lauritz Melchior acquitted themselves as Sieglinde and Siegmund than to describe the Fricka of Maria Olszewska and the Hunding of Norman Allin, or to bestow fresh eulogies upon Frida Leider and Friedrich Schorr for their truly magnificent singing in the glorious duet of the last act.

The derogatory remarks made in one or two quarters about Frida Leider's voice after the *Siegfried* were wholly unmerited. After all, her high notes were never her most beautiful, and her "Hei-yo-to-ho" may not be as impeccable as some we have heard. But I would not for either reason wish to dispense just yet with one of the grandest Brünnhildes that has adorned the Wagnerian stage. In *Götterdämmerung* her medium and lower head registers sounded as beautiful as ever and her declamation was, from her first entry with *Siegfried* down to the last note of the closing scene, worthy of the finest Bayreuth traditions. I agree that the final section of the cycle ought not to have been taken out of the hands of Herr Heger and placed in those of Sir Thomas Beecham. It is bad enough to find the principal characters in different hands, as we sometimes do, but to change the conductor of *The Ring en route* is even worse than swopping horses whilst crossing a stream. Nevertheless, taken for all in all, the first cycle may be said to have gone exceedingly well, and there can be no questioning the fact that it drew demonstrative crowds from start to finish.

A long-standing engagement prevented my hearing *Tannhäuser*, but I may say a few words, chiefly of praise, concerning the representation of *Der Fliegende Holländer* on May 18th. The best thing in it was the rendering of the duet between Senta and the Dutchman in Act II by Odette de Foras and Friedrich Schorr, and I can congratulate the Canadian soprano upon the skill with which she here overcame the difficulties attendant upon an incipient head cold. In the Ballad she was less successful, the attack of the G in the opening phrase being hard and forced, while just previously the same note, sung pianissimo, had refused to make its exit from the singer's throat. Still, she did very creditably for a first appearance in a big character during the German season.

### New "Connoisseur" Issues

Under editorial instructions, I propose to review here month by month, until completed, the new records just added by H.M.V. to their "Connoisseur's Catalogue." Speaking of them as a whole, I may say now that these supplementary records fully maintain the standard of the first collection. One might, indeed, have expected as much.

The first items calling for notice are four Russian songs by the Balalaika Orchestra and Chorus (B4129-30, two discs, 10in.). These are of the usual strongly-marked character, and fortunately the solo voice, having much to do, is a good one. I need not give the titles. Four ballads by Carl Loewe, including *Heinrich der Vogler* and *Tom der Reimer*, are welcome because sung by that admirable baritone-bass, Rudolf Böckelmann (B4115, 10in., C2376, 12in.), and well accompanied on the piano (as written) by Clemens Schmalstich. A rival effort by Cornelis Bronsgeest, with *Archibald Douglas* in two parts (C2396, 12in.) and two less well known (D2390, also 12in.), will also repay careful listening. Here is a first-rate singer, and only on that account may his *Archibald Douglas* be pardoned the use of an orchestra.

Four new recordings by Theodore Chaliapine form a notable addition to this list. Most remarkable, and therefore most valuable, because of their freshness and vigour at this advanced stage of the artist's distinguished career, are two excerpts from *Boris Godounov* (with orchestral accompaniment conducted by M. Steimann), viz., the *Clock* scene and the famous *Monologue* from Act 2 of Moussorgsky's opera (DB1532, 12in.), the former of which, if I am not mistaken, appears in the H.M.V. catalogue for the first time. It is scarcely necessary to add that they embody Chaliapine's fullest art of dramatic expression and characterization. The English title, *I have attained the highest power*, seems to be an indication of the artist's achievement quite as much as a reflection of what is passing in the mind of the conscience-stricken Tsar. Anyhow, it is a wonderful bit of singing. Two airs, *Doubt* and *Stenka Rasine* (DB1469, 12in.), are also welcome from the same source. The first-named, by Glinka, has a charming *obbligato* for 'cello played by Cedric Sharpe, with Ivor Newton at the piano.

The choir of the Berlin Singakademie contributes an extremely fine performance of Brahms's *German Requiem*, conducted by Professor Georg Schumann. It is done on four 12in. discs, numbered C2377 and C2381-3. To descant upon the beauties of such a well-known masterpiece would be superfluous, for it has been a favourite in this country for more than forty years. The voices are well-balanced, refined, and admirable in their regard for light and shade. The intonation, too, is faultless, while the tempi are just right and the orchestration comes out splendidly. High praise, but thoroughly well deserved.

HERMAN KLEIN.

## Re-Views

## BEETHOVEN'S "EROICA"

by W. R. ANDERSON

I WONDER if in these times we are in the mood for facing up to a work which its composer was not afraid to label by the noble name *Heroic*? After all, we are heroic in these days, willy-nilly. So perhaps it will do us good to take down our *Eroica* again and let it stimulate us anew; for that it can surely never fail to do. I have occasionally found people who were prejudiced against the work because Beethoven, considering Napoleon the saviour of his country, dedicated it to him; but although the fame of Napoleon has been much blown upon by sociologists, whom many now support in deeming the Napoleonic mind diseased, we can easily conceive how one fiery spirit was taken with the best aspect of the other's energy and aspirations. We can admire Beethoven all the more (if we happen to have faith in democracy) because the title of "Emperor" revolted him, so that he tore off the title-page of the symphony, whereon he had written Napoleon's name, and significantly sent the work out with, as sub-title, the phrase: "To celebrate the memory of a great man"—a genius who was once something more.

Wagner saw truly when he declared that the title should be taken "in its widest sense", not as implying a minute study of a life, or the sort of pictorial or suggestive intent of a Strauss in *Heldenleben*, but as indicating the generous mould of the work, its greatness of tone and temper, "all the intensely reciprocal sensations of a powerful, perfect individuality which . . . comprises in its being everything truly human." We shall perhaps best fit ourselves to enjoy the *Eroica* if we put away all but the one qualifying word in its title, and summon up our appreciative faculties to the measure of the stature, not of any one fallible hero, but of the heroic imagination of Beethoven: conceiving rather the potential perfect nobility of life than its too often faltering demonstration in that faulty specimen, man.

The fashioning of the work is a marvel for musicians, for it marks the adoption of that "new path" which Beethoven in 1802 declared he meant to take. The *Eroica* was the first rich fruit of that resolve, and those who have even a brief acquaintance with Nos. 1 and 2 will hear, from start to finish, how strongly in No. 3 he struck out, how boldly blasted and carved his way to more powerful expression, both in form and meaning.

I take the Decca-Polydor records for illustration, as being the latest. (This was in print before the H.M.V. *Connoisseur* list announced a new set, DB 1599-1605.) Those who wish to compare recordings may note

that the Columbia set (Wood and Q.H. Orchestra, L 1868-74) was reviewed in the April 1927 issue, page 455; and the H.M.V. centenary set (Coates and Symphony Orchestra, D 1158-63) in the issue of March 1927, page 414. Those who have any of these sets will have no difficulty in finding the places corresponding to those I indicate on the Decca-Polydor discs, which were reviewed in May 1932. Their numbers are C.A. 8047-52 (Berlin Philharmonic: Pfitzner). There are Philharmonia (4s.) and Eulenburg (3s.) scores.

FIRST MOVEMENT.—Two chords set open the doors through which we view the new vistas—prospects both long and spacious. There is a sweeping breadth in the first subject, with its arpeggio swing and its pulsating accompaniment, suggesting the joyous yet restrained eagerness of the athlete, trained to the minute, ready to run his race. A characteristic, impulsive rhythmic urgency of Beethoven's is this (three-quarters of an inch in):



which is heard elsewhere in the movement.

A second idea, gently upborne by wood-wind (an inch in), glances at a tenderer happiness. From this much is soon to grow.

In a third subject (1½ inches in) wind and strings call to each other in happy confidence, with perhaps a hint of gentle longing in those high flute notes of the third and fourth bars:

This theme occurs again only in the recapitulation, not in the body of the movement's building-up.

In this building-up (development), beginning on side 2, we witness a masterly outspreading and gathering up of these various elements in the bundle of life. After some treatment of the second idea, the opening theme is heard in the bass, and in the minor key, accompanied by the scurrying rhythm of two-shorts-and-a-long, that

jumps up and down in arpeggio. This comes in the first inch of side 2. The excitement is worked up by an episode in which the strings, one after another, take up imitatively a phrase in the rhythm of the second idea, and weave for a few moments a close texture, very minor-keyedly earnest and brow-knitted about it (side 2,  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches in). The solid, steady progress does not last long. As in life, distraction (? conflict) breaks in, and the cross-rhythm (see A above) batters the traveller furiously. The climax of the brief storm is reached with those repeated ejaculations upon a strong discord ( $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches in), that must have made them sit up and exchange glances on that December day in 1804, at Prince Lobkowitz's, when the symphony was first brought to a hearing. Immediately follows a stroke of genius—the remarkable episode of pure, austere beauty, that purges the soul of anxiety :



After this, which occupies but a tiny space near the end of side 2, the confidence of the opening is restored, and the first theme is again prominent. We are made aware that the development is drawing to its close, and just before the recapitulation of the opening matter, when the violins alone remain poised in suspense, in readiness for the return, there occurs the famous passage in which the horn anticipates the theme. It is surely strange that this should ever have been thought either an error or a pleasantry. With the strings' A flat and B flat, the E flat (palpably seeking its home) makes a chord which puts an edge upon our anticipation of what is to come. The last fifty bars of this "working-back" passage form a fine illustration of what William Archer, in *Play-Making*, describes as the great art of plot-building—letting us see, as the drama goes on, where we are to go, but not how we are to get there.

The recapitulation of the first third of the long movement follows, and the full tailpiece, after recalling for a little the theme of C, dashes on to the end in the fullness of strength—the hero cheerful and triumphant.

SECOND MOVEMENT.—This is the famous *Funeral March*. When Napoleon died, Beethoven said that he had already written music meet for the occasion—not, of course, in that anticipating the event. We may well conceive this element in the symphony as the "catastrophe" of Wagner's imagining, towards which the masterful course of the generalized "hero" of the title, like that of many other noble minds, is by fate unalterably bent. The solemnity of its pace, with the long initial note of the bars, and the hint of the drums, first in the double basses (to keep the pure string tone, without intrusion) and later in the other strings, set the stage for the sad procession.

There follows a moment's strengthening of the spirit

(an inch in, side 5), and then the grave progress is resumed. With the middle section (start of Part 2):



comes the comfort of the look forward or backward—a brief space of reflection and hope; then, with the inexorable sorrowful rhythm of the beginning, we are drawn again to the contemplation of the procession. But this time other thoughts ensue; there is a bracing of the nerve and heart in the contrapuntal passage that immediately follows, and occupies almost all the rest of the side. This, with its classic dignity, is aloof, yet strengthening. The spirit soars, unconquerable; but the funeral theme breaks in (last three-quarters of an inch), to remind us that "The glories of our blood and state are shadows, not substantial things. There is no armour against fate." Is there not? The spirit rebels: the daunting phrase is answered by the call to arms (Part 3), and the answering rally (strings). But the march prevails, as it must; and it moves with all the terrible leisureliness of death, that can afford respites enough:



(Part 4,  $1\frac{3}{8}$  ins. in), but grants no sure reprieve. The flagging end is finely imagined. "Early or late, they stoop to fate, And must give up their murmuring breath, When they, pale captives, creep to death."

THIRD MOVEMENT.—Life arises from death—busy, multitudinous life. There is here bustling cheerfulness, with the finer, almost rhapsodical exultation of the creator who sees the end in the beginning, and controls all, like a god. Remembering the limitations of the old Third Movement (the Minuet), we see where Beethoven's "new road" was taking him. There are few, if any, more magnificent examples in all music of the irresistible power of controlled impulse.

The Trio ( $1\frac{1}{8}$  ins. in) brings a quieter beneficence, with its rich horn harmony in the tune that winsomely invites us into the open air and Spring sunshine. Did Mendelssohn get an idea from the horns for the corresponding movement of the *Italian*? The first part of the movement is duly repeated, and the coda follows; it is marked, half an inch from the end, by the impulsive prank of four bars in two-time—an amusingly emphasized form of the downward-bounding syncopated arpeggios that we noticed just before the first part of the Scherzo was wound up.

LAST MOVEMENT.—A showy prelude ushers in a queer little staccato tune, interrupted by a menacing roar

from the wind. Its continuation has all the charm of youthful curiosity. There follow variations; in the first two, one of the violin parts is occupied with the tune, whilst the other strings weave around it. This seems rather too simple to be the whole truth, and so it is; for when the horns take up the theme, in the third variation ( $\frac{3}{4}$  in. from the end of this side), there appears blandly on the wood-wind a new theme, of which the first is found to be the bass:



Beethoven used this tune in several other works, one being the set of fifteen variations, Op. 35, where he adopts a similar plan as to the announcement of the treble and bass.

One of the happiest of the variations which follow is that (starting on side 2) in which a brisk section is worked up in fugal style, the first violins leading off with a subject founded on the bass theme, the fugato leading to a dainty variation for strings, flute and oboe.



**Book Review**

**THE WOMEN IN WAGNER'S LIFE.** By Julius Kapp (Routledge, 12s. 6d.)

Do not be put off by the title, or by the opening sentence: "The Prime force in creative art is Eros." The book is one of those scientifically documented and comfortably detached sectional (not sensationally sex-tional) surveys of the astonishing Richard's sojournings and travailings, which anyone who has read his autobiography needs, as a corrective. Whether it may also prove a corrective for anyone's love of his music I do not know: I hope not, for though that music was clearly inspired by love-affairs (to use for an often curious and perhaps pitiable weakness the so often corroded term), nothing can corrode the gold of the music. Herr Kapp, who issued the book in a first (German) edition in 1912, has lately had access to many more letters, including some in the famous Burrell collection. There is enough here to make the story plain; and it can never fail to fascinate us, and arouse sympathy for all concerned, this odd tale of Minna, and Mathilde and Cosima, to say nothing of the "tweenies"; most astonishing of all is the unselfish devotion that Wagner (or his music) inspired in the people he most deeply wronged. He was monumental in

Now the wood-wind and violins ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  ins. on side 2) devise a new minor-key tune over the repetition in the bass of the tonic and dominant (*doh-soh*) notes which make up the first four bars of the staccato tune that began the finale. The four notes tramp about as a ground bass for a little, and then fly up aloft. The climax of energy which soon follows is succeeded, after some more contrapuntalism, working up finely, by a moment of sweet expressiveness, when the wood-wind gives out, *poco andante*, the main theme, and the strings take it up, oboe and violins continuing thus (start of last side):



From here to the coda the music grows and glows with noble fervour, its power touched with a new tenderness.

Few perhaps will care to follow Wagner's adaptation of the heroic idea to the last two movements, or to agree with Bekker's view of the work as "Beethoven's true *Prometheus* poem in symphonic form" (the theme in the last movement having also appeared in the finale of the *Prometheus* ballet music). Those who prefer to interpret the music for themselves may find its "meaning," the symphony, so generously and athletically proportioned, is extraordinarily stimulating and refreshing to the mind. It has upon us something of the uplifting effect that Drinkwater speaks of in *Abraham Lincoln*:

"When the high heart we magnify,  
And the sure vision celebrate,  
And worship greatness passing by,  
Ourselves are great."

W. R. A.



**Films**

The astonishing popularity of the film version of "Goodnight, Vienna," the many records of Maurice Chevalier's latest "vehicle" "One Hour with You," and the well-organized identification of "Il est Charmant" at the Rialto Theatre with the Decca records of Henry Garat, are my excuse for a note on a subject which is abhorrent to the bulk of our readers. But even these non film-goers may be interested to hear that the quality of sound-reproduction in films has improved more rapidly in recent months than in disc-recording, and that in some—"Shanghai Express" and the French war-film "La Croix de Bois," for instance—it must extort praise even from the most critical. The time has come when the operas and operettas ought to be taken in hand by acknowledged authorities. The technical apparatus is worthy of the material.

C. S.

# I LOVE THE GRAMOPHONE!

by JOHN C. W. CHAPMAN

I LOVE the gramophone! Pray pardon me if I am hopelessly behind the times, for I love the *gramophone*—not the miraculous electrical hybrids, which threaten to exterminate the race of aristocratic acoustic models. I may, of course, modernise my ideas in the future; but as radio has never appealed to me I have no practical knowledge of its multiplicity of complicated principles and curiously named components. With emotion too deep for words have I witnessed the frenzied anguish, inhuman joy, and astounding exertions of radio enthusiasts who grapple with these electrical mysteries; and I find a more reposeful happiness in the soothing companionship of my small but extremely efficient modern acoustic gramophones. The all-electric vista (with or without radio) at present leaves me comparatively cold, though I should be less than human if I could contemplate its marvellous potentialities without a thrill; but I have loved the gramophone in its familiar form since the days of my childhood, and I hope it will long continue to brighten my leisure hours.

Though I cherish the gramophone as the most desirable musical instrument of our time, I still have a tendency to regard it as the wondrous toy of my childish affections. I play with my gramophone: I see nothing irksome in winding up the motor, making necessary adjustments, cutting fibres, and other pleasant ceremonies I would not care to dispense with. Automatic stops have not earned my unqualified approval, as they abolish that thrilling rush to lift the soundbox and apply the brake at the end of a record which is such an excellent thing for the maintenance of physical fitness. The growing use of automatic devices and non-stop electrical models must have increased a thousandfold the sale of Andrews' Liver Salt and similar excellent preparations!

The youthful charm of my father's first gramophone has survived with undimmed lustre down the years, and has been embodied in every instrument I have possessed. It is a fine thing to be the owner of a gramophone endowed with this "inward spiritual grace."

Not only do I love my own gramophones; I have an abounding affection for the whole tribe. I cherish happy memories of weird contraptions which have in various climes and on the ocean wave yielded me much pleasurable, if not highly musical or intellectual, entertainment, of beautiful and costly instruments whose manifold virtues have filled me with rapture, of humble specimens whose performances were worthy, if uninspired. I even bestow sympathetic glances on those aged and dilapidated relics which sometimes adorn the windows of rag-and-bone establishments and are more usually to be found by the kerb, mounted on decrepit perambulators, earning—I hope—a goodly harvest of coppers for their pathetic proprietors whose principal support they have, alas! become. A sale of out-of-date models affords me the liveliest interest and an insatiate longing to buy the most presentable amongst them—from which catastrophe I am saved by the knowledge that such instruments are useless for the proper reproduction of modern discs.

I love the gramophone because it has made available to me the inestimable treasure of supreme music. Without this marvellous medium I could not have enjoyed so large a share of the priceless legacy to mankind of the great master-minds of music, though I might possibly have formed a nodding acquaintance with the classics by means of radio and infrequent attendances at opera house and concert hall. It is by that stupendous gift of unlimited repetition that the gramophone scores so heavily, for not only does it immensely facilitate the appreciation of musical artistry but it provides the opportunity to attune the mind to the most exalted inspirations of immortal genius.

I love the gramophone for its gift of the ephemeral—dance music, the tune of the moment, the song of yesterday that will die to-morrow, the laughter-mixture: all these have their place in our lives to brighten a few spare moments, if they do no more than that. Let us not despise this lesser gramophonic gift because the greater boon means so much more.

I love the gramophone because, in my time of bereavement and bitter sorrow, recorded music was an ineffably sweet solace when other things were of little avail and life seemed hopelessly dark. To the gramophone, also, I owe my introduction to many friendly and charming people and the happy memories of pleasant hours spent in their company.

As the years have passed my love for the gramophone has become mellowed, my affectionate veneration for supreme music greater; and my hero-worship of "celebrity" artists is now largely governed by the quality of the compositions they render. Recorded music is more important to me than "real life" performances; I can enjoy the former at will, the latter only occasionally. I have little interest in the personalities and private lives of artists, though if my life entered their environment I should doubtless feel differently. I deeply value their interpretative gifts; I greatly admire the achievements of the recording technicians. But I am inclined to regard them all as means to one end—the production of the finest recorded music!

I love THE GRAMOPHONE because it has taught me more about supreme music than all other journals of a similar nature put together. I owe more than I perhaps quite realise to the writings of the Editor, the London Editor, W.R.A., N.P., Herman Klein, Cyril Crabtree, and numerous contributors. I think the Editor has a special claim to the affection of *gramophonists*, as distinct from professional or amateur musicians, because he writes as a *lover of recorded music*, and his criticism is based on his cultured taste, wide outlook on life, mordant wit, and sound commonsense rather than on purely musical or scientific considerations. My enthusiasm for N.P. in the early days of THE GRAMOPHONE is now vested in W.R.A. No other gramo-musical critic in my experience combines such extensive knowledge of recorded music with so open a mind, so much kindly, honest commonsense with such a complete absence of snobbery. I quite realise that differences of opinion amongst musical enthusiasts are inevitable, but I cannot understand the state of mind that makes for acrimony where W.R.A. is concerned. Judging by his writings he must be a singularly lovable individual. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Mr. H. F. V. Little, whose translations of operatic arias and foreign songs have been of immense service and pleasure to me.

If I were a radio enthusiast I should launch out into a panegyric about the London Editor's B.B.C. activities, as I have heard many people do with sincere gusto. Not being one, I merely say that I am utterly unable to visualise the edifice of THE GRAMOPHONE (past, present, or future) without its foundation Stone. It speaks volumes for the magazine's vitality that it has emerged unscathed and triumphant from the bad times which have slain so many journalistic ventures.

I love THE GRAMOPHONE for turning my thoughts to the best music, for directing me to splendid records I might otherwise have missed, for its notable influence on the constructional betterment of instruments, for converting me to E. M. Ginn's wonderful fibres via Mr. Wild's early essays in gum doping, and for innumerable hours of pure pleasure in reading its pages—from Number One onwards. The gramophone created THE GRAMOPHONE: send them victorious, long may they reign!



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Photo by Vandyk, London

CONSOLATION (Liszt)—MY HEART EVER FAITHFUL. Mark Hambourg B4180 2/6

### "Old Folks"—in Strange Guise

How do you feel about bag-pipes? You may feel strongly now, but when Kevin Buckley, with the organ of the Regent Cinema, Bournemouth, starts showing you what bag-pipes might do to "Old Folks at Home" . . . Hoots, mon! However, he quickly goes on to express these same familiar strains in the Spanish, Hungarian, Chinese—and American manner; and you begin to see what a very fine tune it undoubtedly is—wherever played! On the other side, again with the organ, he gives Billy Mayerl's really astonishing revelation of what "Chopsticks," that piano torture of the child next door, can become in the hands of an artist.

OLD FOLKS AT HOME AND ABROAD —CHOPSTICKS. Kevin Buckley B4184 2/6

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DINAH, Fox-trot—SAM AND DELILAH Fox-trot. Duke Ellington and His Cotton Club Orchestra. B6175 2/6

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MODERN COLOUR POEMS. The Hulbert Brothers (Jack & Claude) B4182 2/6



Photo by Courtesy of B.B.C.

### Peter Dawson

I lost my heart to a melody—Just a corner of Heaven to me B4174 2/6

### Male Voice Ensemble

Watchman, what of the night—The moon hath raised her lamp above ("The Lily of Killarney") B4175 2/6

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### New Mayfair Orchestra

"One hour with you," Medley B4188 2/6

# RECORDS HIS "FALSTAFF"



## 1ST JUNE RELEASES



Photo by Mannell, London

### Songs from "The Dubarry"

Derek Oldham and Winnie Melville, famous alike through record and radio, are given fine material in these two attractive songs—the high-lights of the show—from the lovely operetta "The Dubarry." "I give my heart," which is captivating Londoners, is most attractively rendered, and the faithful recording does justice to the artiste's fine voice, making this one of the best releases of the day among light music.

I GIVE MY HEART. Winnie Melville—  
IF I AM DREAMING. Derek Oldham

B4179 2/6

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Photo by Frank Davis

Every Sunday evening you can hear Tom Jones broadcast from the Grand Hotel, Eastbourne. Now this gifted violinist has made his first record for "His Master's Voice"—so you may enjoy him at any time you wish. The rounds of applause which greet his hotel performances will find echoes in your heart when you hear him play with his usual finesse that delicious song "Speak to me of Love." On the reverse side is an equally delightful piece from his inspired bow.

SPEAK TO ME OF LOVE—POEM.  
Tom Jones and His Orchestra B4183 2/6

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SELECTION FROM "THE MIRACLE"  
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# ERMYNTRUDE'S VICTORY

by ERIC N. SIMONS

I AM ashamed to confess it, but the truth must be told. Ermyntrude has scored a victory. I have been routed, positively routed. Like a Chinese general, I have withdrawn my forces, and gone for a rest cure. But I shall break out again in a fresh place, never fear. I am determined that her victory shall be a Pyrrhic one. She knows it. She has found two more white hairs since she won. But let me tell the story.

It began with an evening in Scotland at the house of my friend MacPherson. MacPherson had just bought a radio-gramophone, and he was anxious to impress me with his acquisition. Unfortunately, he succeeded. Hitherto I had scorned radio-gramophones. They were, I declared, inventions of the devil for idle hands, inducing knob-turner's cramp and similar deadly diseases. It was, I insisted, impossible to tell with them whether one was listening to Bela Bartok or the oscillations of the man next door. They were mechanisms producing innumerable flats for the innumerable flats living in flats who liked them. But MacPherson perverted me, and without the aid of whisky. I came back to Yorkshire lusting—and when I say "lusting" I mean it, though Ermyntrude insists that it is a horrid word—for a radio-gramophone.

For a fortnight, without saying a word to Ermyntrude—one does not discuss these things with her in advance—I went about stealthily listening to instruments of numerous kinds, from the humble "XYZ" to the noble eight-valve "123" that made Jack Payne's Orchestra sound like a steam-hammer pounding red-hot steel. When I got home later than usual after these orgies, I told Ermyntrude I had been detained at the office. (It is no use telling her original lies, she sees through them.) Then, one day in London, I heard the "Zodiac," and knew that henceforward nothing else would satisfy me. But the "Zodiac" cost £80, and already Mr. Snowden was talking of more income tax . . .

It took me a month to screw up my courage and broach the subject. My plan of campaign was carefully worked out. I began by making a mighty fuss of Augustus, presenting him with peppermints, and allowing him to lick the label off my latest celebrity record. That made Ermyntrude beam, and she told me she thought I was growing a little more human. Next I referred to the terrible financial situation in which this country found itself, and drew her attention to the way in which our dividends had vanished, the capital value of our industrial shares depreciated. That sounded impressive, but her only response was to tell me she had always said Savings Certificates were the proper investments for poor folk like us, and if she'd had her way, we'd never have bought any shares, and men always did say women knew nothing about finance, but they had more sense than to gamble with their money like men. However, I pointed out that even Government securities were tottering, and an article in the morning paper at that time shook her a little, since it bore out my argument. Only daily papers can shake Ermyntrude.

It enabled me to declare, with some show of knowledge, that really one's money was as safe in goods as in certificates, and that I felt tempted to spend "wisely," as I believe Mr. MacDonald was then urging, on British products that would provide more work for British men. Whereupon Ermyntrude pointed out that if I wanted to spend more, she could very well do with a little extra housekeeping money, as Augustus needed new shoes and Veronica's dressing-gown was in rags, and although she'd cut up my old dressing-gown there wasn't enough sound material in it to suffice. Until then I hadn't known I had an old dressing-gown. It was my one and only. But I let that pass.

To prove my faith in my own ideas, however, I proceeded, with diabolical cunning, to order myself a couple of new suits and buy myself a new hat or two. Regrettably, Ermyntrude began to suspect that there was a woman in the case, since she insisted that it was the first time in our married life I had ever looked smart, and there was surely a reason for it. She reminded me, unnecessarily, that I got married to her in a black velours hat. Why that error of taste has stuck in her gizzard all these years I do not know; but Ermyntrude is like that. I always hear about that black hat in moments of domestic crisis.

Well, my next move was to bring her home a bunch of violets one Saturday at mid-day. I will do her the justice to say that that touched her. It made me feel dishonourable, until I remembered that on the last occasion Ermyntrude baked my favourite macaroons, she wormed a good seat at the pantomime out of me. And then, as the climax to this series of strategic operations, I began to talk of a radio-gramophone.

As far as I remember, I spoke eloquently for some moments on modern progress, on the need for the open mind, on the importance of keeping ourselves abreast of new ideas so as to guide Augustus and Veronica efficiently in the future, on the immense strides made in the electrical world, on Marconi and Edison and Christopher Stone—I had to drag him into it, because my wife's best friend, Mrs. Winterbottom, says she enjoys his broadcasts so much, and Ermyntrude respects Mrs. Winterbottom. Warming to my theme, I failed to notice that Ermyntrude had quietly left the room in search of her sewing-basket or Augustus's orange-juice, or whatever else it is that causes women to vanish mysteriously without explanation at unusual moments. . . .

When she returned, I was justly aggrieved, but I suppressed my feelings. I went on, ignoring the hiatus, to point out how lonely she must feel when I was in my study writing articles, how nice it would be for her if she could just sit back and listen to some form of entertainment, how much better Jones and Brown and Robinson thought gramophone records sounded when reproduced electrically. And all the time Ermyntrude merely sat and darned in a kind of obtuse and irritating silence she affects on these occasions. There was a look about her that said, as plainly as if it had been bawled through a megaphone: "Poor fool, does he think I don't see through him?" So I cut the cackle and came out with it.

You don't know Ermyntrude. She doesn't just say "No." She just looks at you with clear grey eyes, as if you were not quite right in the head. And all your plausible arguments trickle away into a despairing mumble. Then she begins. With admirable histrionic art, she thrusts towards you a pair of pants, and says, in gentle, sad tones that utterly bely her real character: "And here I sit, wearing my fingers to the bone, trying to save ten shillings by mending your wretched garments, that any self-respecting man would have cast away years ago, and that would make me ashamed to be your wife if you were knocked down by a motor-car and taken to hospital where everyone could see what you were wearing. And you talk of going and spending £80 on a blessed radio-gramophone."

I pointed out that by reason of my personal friendship with Jones, who was in the trade, I could get this wonder, this miracle of science, this master instrument, for the mere sum of £50, a bargain if ever there was one. I spoke of the Children's Hour, and babbled in maudlin fashion of Veronica and Augustus hearing their birthdays read out. I even hinted, treacherously, that I might be seduced into giving up buying records and concentrating on wireless. But Ermyntrude's answer to that was why not have just the wireless!

Then she pitched into me. That is the only way of putting it. She pointed out in her cold, dispassionate tones that I needed three new vests, that she hadn't had a decent rig-out for the last five years, that Augustus was beginning to cost us money—as if there had ever been a time when Augustus didn't—that Veronica would soon be going to school, that I'd just borrowed a fiver from my father-in-law, that I had an overdraft at the bank, that there was income-tax to pay, and I'd just been let down by a paper that had gone bankrupt before paying for my articles, that the maid hadn't had an advance, that there were these coming "reinforcements" to pay for, that as a result of their coming she might be laid up for years, that the house wanted new bells, that I always was a fool with money, that

she was sick and tired of scraping and scratching, that only two years had elapsed since I bought the newest H.M.V., and I'd promised and vowed that that should be my last big purchase, that I'd always pretended to hate wireless, that I had no consideration for her or the children, that I could buy the blessed thing if I wanted to, but she'd get no pleasure out of it, and she could see us all begging in the streets before I'd done. . . .

Well, I ask you! Could you have stood up to that?

I gave in. There is no radio-gramophone in my home. Ermytrude has won a sweeping victory. But wait! I have not done. An idea simmers in my mind. Ermytrude shall suffer for this!



## GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY REPORTS

**Association of Gramophone Societies.**—The first joint meeting of the Associated London Gramophone Societies was held on May 5th, when a demonstration of the Pamphonic Reproducer was given by courtesy of Messrs. Keith Prowse & Co. The meeting was something of an experiment, but fortunately turned out a successful one, as the audience, respectable in number and admirable in enthusiasm, was drawn from nine different societies. Considerable expectations had been aroused by Mr. Wilson's report on the Pamphonic, and it is high praise of the instrument to say that they were not disappointed. Its range of power would have been adequate to a far larger hall and audience; even kept on a short rein it was at times overwhelming, but the ear can enjoy great volumes provided it is undistorted. Some music, indeed, needs quantity as well as quality, for instance the *Siegfried Death March*, which, amplified from the recent Columbia recording, gave something of its true cosmic effect. The new Columbia *Egmont Overture* also sounded impressively heroic; and a Polydor record of the *Rakoczy March* (95411) struck one, for the first time on the gramophone, as having vigour as well as excitement. A record of the Liszt *B.A.C.H. Prelude* (Col. DX340) preserved much of the organ's massiveness, without which that instrument seems to have little but its limitations to offer. But not all the programme was in Ercles' vein; Mozart's graciousness made its full appeal in the *Minuetto* from the *Divertimento in D*, and a fragment of the *Piano Concerto in A* (both H.M.V.). Interesting foreign recordings included: a Hungarian Gypsy Band item with immense vitality and the disconcerting title of *K'ar a sudor jegenyenek* (H.M.V. AM3038); a *Ballade* (Op. 19) by Fauré (Col. LFX55); and a choral record of Grieg's *Landkjending*, returning Vikings hailing the sight of their native shores in unexpectedly sympathetic tones (H.M.V. Z178). The demonstrating was genially and efficiently done by Mr. Green, to whom and to Messrs. Keith Prowse the Association's thanks were voted with acclamation.

**The South London Gramophone Society.**—The advantage of the advent of electrical recording was the ability to register large works, which hitherto it had only been possible to hint at by the methods previously existing.

These remarks are called into being by the fact that at the meeting of the above Society on April 30th we were treated to three representative examples of Orchestral playing, the third *Leonora Overture* by the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, and one movement each from Franck's *Symphony in D* by the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Schubert's in *C major*, by the London Symphony Orchestra. The last two are issued by H.M.V., and represent a particularly good recording period which many think has not been surpassed. The *Leonora No. 3* has now for its companion the first *Overture* of this name, played by the same orchestra, and it is to be hoped that *No. 2* will shortly follow, thus forming an historical triumvirate

in recorded form. Schumann's essays in the symphonic form are generally considered unequal, but his *Pianoforte Concerto in A minor* holds its place securely. And we had the first movement played by Fanny Davies (that ever green veteran) and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, under Ansermet, a Columbia record.

Many people are unaware that Handel wrote anything else besides *The Messiah* and the *Largo*, and it is not to be wondered at, perhaps, as we seldom hear anything else. We heard the chorus "O thou that tellest" by the B.B.C. chorus and two movements by Rudolph Dolmetsch from a Sonata for Harpsichord (both Columbia).

S. F. D. HOWARTH, Reporting Secretary.

**Leeds Gramophone Society.**—At the May meeting, Mr. Edward Pybus, L.R.A.M., gave a lecture-recital entitled "The Charm of Melody." He took for his subject the Fourth Movement of the *Trout Quintet* by Schubert, which was composed in 1819, and as he had provided the members with a diagram which he had drawn up, they were able to follow the playing of the different instruments on the records which he used to demonstrate, namely H.M.V., played by Backhaus and the International String Quartet. He also used the piano to illustrate the various points, and he made the members realise what a wealth of pleasure can be got out of hearing good music with a little understanding.

The new Hon. Sec. is Mr. F. H. Large, 8, Fifteenth Avenue, New Wortley, Leeds.

**Manchester Gramophone Society.**—Seven "G's" gave Mr. C. J. Brennan, the Hon. Sec. and Treasurer, scope for a characteristic recital on May 2nd, based on Glazounov, Giordano, Goldmark, Gounod, Gluck, Gomez, and Giordani. With splendid notes, well-chosen records, and enthusiasm born of experience, he made the most of such a range of master works. The *Rustic Wedding Symphony* and *Sakuntala Overture* were sheer delights, and also *Il Guarany*. Gigli sang *Salve dimora* magnificently, and Borgioli's rendering of *Caro mio ben* was superb. The *Che faro* of Sigrid Onégén was of rare vocal beauty and expression. The audience greatly appreciated the evident care taken with the programme, and its instructive and entertaining value.

On May 7th a Hot Pot and Social, with music, was held, its object being to increase the Social and fellowship spirit, which should be shown by those who delight in harmony. A splendid table, a fine body of artists, helped the large company present to forget what brow they were, and so passed a really happy evening. The artists were: Mrs. Naylor, soprano; Mrs. Kelly, contralto; Mr. Harold Marsden, tenor; Mr. Tom Case, baritone; Miss Millner and Mr. F. H. Puxty, pianists; and Mr. Norman Evans, entertainer.

# ADDITIONS TO THE H.M.V. CONNOISSEUR CATALOGUE

DB1645-7. **DE GREEF** with **London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Sir Landon Ronald**: **Concerto No. 2 in A major** (Liszt). Min. score, Eulenburg. On the sixth side, **London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Albert Coates**: **Hungarian Storm March** (Liszt).

The motto theme, heard at the start, should be remembered. It and a little more matter are worked on up to about the middle of side 1, where the horn's smooth tune is noted (piano scaling around it). The soloist touches the motto again, before launching the bass thunders which bear up a fresh theme. The development of this idea runs on to side 2. A declamatory pause leads to a new section, about  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. About here, neither pianist nor orchestra is entirely happy. The orchestra carries on, romping and ranging the  $\frac{6}{8}$  time country, until the piano quietly reminds us of the motto ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  ins. from end of side 2), and the band soothes with a gentle version of the  $\frac{6}{8}$  rollick. On side 3 the 'cello treats the motto, the piano cadenzing and interluding, hinting at a tune which is fully expounded  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ins. in (with a suggestion of the motto near the end of the side, from the orchestra); and on side 4 starts a brisk section which touches on several of the foregoing ideas. In the middle of this side we retake the  $\frac{6}{8}$  romp, and some of the matter that came before it. This lasts out the side. Side 5, *marziale*, starts the motto on an extension of life, which is not an extension of dignity. There may be a cut here: I speak without the score, and memory seems to indicate a longer stretch before the coda; but I may be wrong. Then the wind-up (longi—I am afraid the music has lost the power to enforce the short i). The *Hungarian Storm March* (1876) appears to be an original piece for orchestra. It is a rather jolly affair, with tunes of a popular type. "Storm" does not appear to indicate dirty weather. It is all extremely brisk, with a polished swagger (which the orchestra rather misses, being, one feels, a bit hustled and not too comfortable, at times). The concerto has its points of constructive interest, though it is by no means an admirable example, having nothing like the B minor sonata's resource and dexterity, for instance. Apart from that, it is nice to feel that the pianist is enjoying himself: one can figure the flashing smile, the shaken locks, the upthrown hands. The tone, alas, is not what we now expect, and the recording toils after it in vain, to catch the sheen of silk where cotton only is. Whether the band enjoys itself I cannot be sure. The orchestration needs a lot of rehearsal to come off as it should be done. That is always so with Liszt. On the whole, not, I fear, a grand success.

D2054-6. **DOHNANYI** with **London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **L. Collingwood**: **Variations on a Nursery Tune, Op. 25** (Dohnanyi). Min. score, Eulenburg. On sixth side, **London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by the composer: **Second Movement from Rurália Hungarica** (Dohnanyi).

It is well to note the heading: "For the joy of the friends of humour and the vexation of the rest." That pompous, terrific introduction, for instance, is a comical illustration of mountain-and-mouse-ishness, for after it peeps out the tiny nursery tune of "Ah, vous dirai-je, maman." The twelve sections have something for everybody, and much enjoyment for all. Dohnanyi, we remember, is a variation-fan, and rarely writes a work without putting in a set. The F sharp minor suite was issued a year ago, and this set has lain in cold storage for a year, being recorded in February 1931. The composer,

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early and favourably known to us as an exceedingly clever concert pianist, plays the solo part. He first appeared in 1897, when he was twenty. His production of tone is on Continental lines and there is a little hardness. The finest thing about it, apart from the mere dexterity (the part demands high powers in this direction), is the way he works in with the band, subduing his part here and rising gently out of the mass there. In a rehearsal at which I happened to be present, I noted many things about Dohnanyi's helpfulness to the players and conductor, and the neat way in which, after suggesting his idea of the pace, he would dart back to the piano in time for his next entry. One glissando, caught on the run in this way, was as beautiful a bit of timing as I have ever seen in any sport.

Side 1 contains the introduction, in which Dohnanyi enjoys himself in throwing the orchestra about, the tune, and Var. 1. Note the amusing top A flat (when we expect A) in the return of the tune. Var. 1 is just a piano scamper, the strings sketching the tune.

Side 2 gives a taste of the composer's characteristic harmonic twists, the brass having a version of part of the tune. Var. 3 turns to grace (piano mostly, accompanied by strings, with just a breath of wind, once). Var. 4 is for piano and wind—top and bottom alternating. Var. 5 is a musical-box effect. The scoring throughout is delightful. The little bells touch the tune, and the muted strings are divided; soft brass chords support, and the piano and harp do the tinkles. Var. 6 is a double-note study, against wind arpeggi (oboes and bassoons) first, with, later, clarinets and flutes, all with separate parts. The strings are plucked. This ends side 2.

Side 3. Var. 7 is a waltz. Note the introduction ( $\frac{3}{4}$  in. in, on plucked strings) of the two-time tune—just a hint of it. Var. 8 marches off to a soh-doh drum bass. The tune gets a look in, and so do the key-slides (more noticeable in Var. 7) which Dohnanyi uses so delightfully. Var. 9, into which 8 runs, is a weird little goblinesque affair, in which the scoring is again highly enjoyable—fiddles using the wood instead of the hair, a xylophone, etc. The shape of the tune is here, but that is all. Side 4 has eight bars of introduction, and then a capital new idea—a Passacaglia, seven bars of the tune, in the minor, being used as repeated bass for variants—forming a set of variations-within-variations. This movement is worked up, and passes, near the end of the side, into the 11th, a chorale, which is continued on the last side. The orchestra has the hymn-like tune founded on the nursery song, while the piano and harp persist in divagating. A slice of whole-tone scale (so-called) comes,  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. in. The finale begins with a scalic "Are you ready?"—"Aye, aye, sir!" (but your scale is not mine!), and the fugue starts, with the piano gambolling alongside. Note the first figure (reeds), with the repeated note and the big drop. This works with the main fugue subject, which of course is taken from the nursery tune. There are ingenuities of the first order in this short working, after which we press on to a climax, a re-statement of the tune in all its innocence ("Did I cause all that dust-up?"), pause for a comedy moment in the coda, and glissando home up the piano. Great stuff, this Dohnanyi! Not great in the greatest sense, but great just as the advertisement suggests the beverage is (though one may esteem that advertisement a perversion of the truth). The *Rurália* movement is strong home-brewed, turned to a finer vintage by the artist's skill—a first-rate brief adventure in foreign parts. Some of the *Rurálias*, it will be remembered, were done by Kreisler (last *Connoisseur* list). A full set in their orchestral form would be widely enjoyed.

DB1595-6. **MISCHA ELMAN** with **London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **L. Collingwood**: **Concerto in G minor** (Vivaldi, arr. Nachez).

This Vivaldi concerto gives historical distinction to the list, and provides some highly enjoyable music. This is one of Tivadar Nachez', the famous violinist's, arrangements. The first *Allegro* occupies side 1 and part of 2; the slow movement ends on 3, and the finale takes side 4. The violin tone is free and luxuriously ample, sometimes a trifle too free and easy in the rubato, perhaps (the accompanying fiddles jog, at times, a thought behind him). The free-and-easiness suits the generous motion of the melody, which is delightfully swayed 'twixt heaven and earth. In this sort of work the fiddler does not need, I think, to worry too much about classic purity though the music stands up to that conception; but there is a romantic freedom in the breaths it draws (in certain delicate phrase-developments, e.g., which it would take time to go into). The last bit of the first movement (on side 2) is a good example, in little, of this. As I noted in speaking of the other Vivaldi concerto, the composer draws a significant line and upholds a capital bulk of interest, in his slow movements. There is much in it that one can find elsewhere, but in his treatment he is content to say the thing in his own way, at leisurely length, without padding, and it seems just right. The same, or very similar ideas, in other hands would sound commonplace. Vivaldi gets just that touch of meaning—hints, rather than expositions—that keeps one interested and taking his points. He is a good subject for the keen music-lover who likes to know how the wheels go round, for there is nothing very profound in him, yet he rises above the common level. Partly, it is the best type of fiddling-mind working in its ideal medium; partly, just the exceptional man of his time, making more of small things, simply because he is a bigger man than the rest. The recording, on the big side, is as happily judicious about balance as the players evidently were. I can strongly recommend this sample of Vivaldi, to those especially who do not know him. Elman takes care that every phrase shall have its place and point, and does not get in the way.

DB1486-90. **HOROWITZ** with **London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Albert Coates**: **Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30** (Rachmaninoff). On the tenth side **Horowitz**: **Prelude in G minor, Op. 23, No. 5** (Rachmaninoff).

The remarkable Horowitz made an outstanding impression with his first record. It is a pleasure to hear him again. He can probably be still more truly recorded. The music rises from familiar moods in the composer, and neither these nor their expression is striking, except where the actual laying-out is concerned. This holds much of the work's interest. How familiar, for instance, is the rising-yearning material,  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. from the end of side 1, and the charming continuation on side 2. Familiar—and more than a trifle blown-upon, to some; not, doubtless, to all, for there are plenty of people to whom these old expressions still appeal very warmly. Here, indeed, is very much the mixture as before, and enjoyment of it varies rather widely, according as the listener can find these emotions and expressions continually satisfying, or believes that he has worked through them to the need for something bigger, more universal. Certainly Rachmaninoff brings off the old strokes beautifully—better than Tchaikovsky did, in some ways, because there is better proportion, and less of the rather comical violence which took the older composer's fancy at times, and drew out the tartar, foaming at the mouth. There is in the first two movements some capital constructive art, but to many the piano-writing will appeal most. It has excellent body, and always has that nice proportion and adaptation of means-to-end which characterize Rachmaninoff, both as composer and pianist. I gather that the number of those who esteem him more highly in the latter capacity has grown with his recent appearances here. We should

be only too happy to hail a man who is equally great in both capacities, but economical Nature seems to have decided that it shan't come about.

The first movement takes four sides, the second two, and the last three. The *Intermezzo* is a most attractive essay. Its varied presentations of a theme give a good brief survey of several aspects of the composer's style. The finale is less interesting. The transformations of earlier themes attract the analytical ear and eye, but the movement does not go deep, or hang together particularly well. The decoration, one feels, has become more important than the idea, and the idea than the real, solid stuff of experience. The piano has a first-rate time, but there is not much to think or feel about, and a certain amount of padding is evident. A finale standing on its own feet more independently would have been stronger. The old G minor *Prelude* (why repeat this yet again, when there are many other good ones in the sets?) fills side 10. Horowitz plays it curiously gently, but his tonal proportions do not make it seem insignificant.

W. R. A.

DA1186-9. **SERGEI RACHMANINOFF**: **Sonata in B flat minor, Op. 35** (Chopin).

One hardly expected, at this stage of familiarity, any really new interpretation of Chopin's "Funeral Sonata"; nevertheless, Rachmaninoff has given us one in this admirable set of records. His most obvious deviations from the accepted readings are in the Funeral March itself. In the "Celestial Song" he reverses the usual interpretation by playing it at a slower rate than the actual March; he also completely ignores the *piano* return of the March after the Interlude, playing it instead *fortissimo*. The latter innovation is, I think, all for the good; but in the former something is lost by playing the massive Funeral March, with its ponderous foreboding, at too quick a rate. There are other innovations during the course of the work, but they are of a minor character and are more or less justified by the results obtained. As for the playing itself, it is in Rachmaninoff's most masterly manner; the Sonata is evidently a romantic excursion exactly after his own heart. The Finale—that cascade of apparently unintelligible notes which only the final chord at last resolves into intelligibility—is played with a whirlwind keenness. All the same, I reserve my most praise for the first two movements, where the fullest possible value is given to those simple, lyrical passages that come so gratefully after the tumult of the various developments; and I would particularly stress the fine playing—the lovely singing tone—that Rachmaninoff puts into the waltz-time song of the Scherzo. There is a convincing sonority in most of the recording, though at times (as in the interlude of the slow movement) there is a slight blurring. All in all, this is an ideal recording of the Sonata. The movements are given a record apiece, with the exception, of course, of the last movement, which covers one side only—the spare side being filled with the impetuous, posthumous Waltz in E minor. The break in the third movement occurs, most unhappily, in the middle of the interlude.

DA1240-4 and 1593. **ALFRED CORTOT**: **Preludes, Book I** (Debussy).

In considering Debussy's exquisite piano Preludes it matters little whether you agree as to the precise extent to which a composer is allowed to give a literary "meaning" to his music: in any case, considered solely as music, they are complete and sufficient. It may conceivably help you to a better appreciation of the lyrical content of Number I, for instance, to picture as you hear it a slow and stately dance of the priestesses of Delphi: it will not help you much, however, in so far as the enjoyment of the music, *qua* music, is concerned. And it is not the least merit of Cortot's playing here that he is

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at little pains to smother the music with any particular meaning; he is mainly content to let it speak for itself, as it is well able. And yet somehow he is not the ideal pianist for these delicious little fragments. He is not, shall I say, simple enough. Take, for instance, what I have always considered the best piece (and the test piece, too) of the whole collection: the brief *Des pas sur la neige*. Debussy himself has, somewhat enigmatically, directed that the little stumbling phrase that is the key to the whole thing shall be played as if it had "the value in sound of a sad and frozen background": I am not sure what the composer means, but I do feel sure he did not intend the "inhibited" manner which Cortot employs. The performer is at his best, as might be expected, in the more boisterous Preludes such as *Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest*, where his storm reaches grand proportions: or in the humorous Preludes such as *La serenade interrompue* or *Minstrels*. And then what a wonderful "best" it is! On the whole, however, I think there is too hard a line about this playing. It is all very well, in the familiar *La fille aux cheveux de lin*, for the annotator to write: "But see how charming is her wistful smile when M. Cortot coaxes her." I fail to find that smile in the actual playing. The recording is good, though sometimes strangely ungrateful in the quality of the tone.

DA1249. **PADEREWSKI: Danseuses de Delphes and Voiles,** Nos. 1 and 2 from **Preludes, Book I** (Debussy).

Contrasting these two Debussy Preludes with their counterparts in the Cortot set, I am bound, in spite of an almost idolatrous preference for Paderewski's playing, to prefer the Cortot. True—to adopt the romantic mode of critical comparisons—there is a southern richness about Paderewski's playing of the first Prelude that is attractive, and the recording itself has rather more body; but I dislike the excessive *largamento* on the first side and the muffled, clinging bass-octaves on the second ("Sails"). Also, there is at times a strangely "tight" quality in the playing and considerable surface smudging in the recording. On the whole, an unsatisfactory record.

DB1533-4. **ALFRED CORTOT: Sonatine for Piano** (Ravel) and **Jeux d'Eau** (Ravel).

Cortot's Ravel is a good deal better than his Debussy. Is that, I wonder, because Ravel's music is much more a matter of surface pleasantries than Debussy's? Or is it because, being so, it "comes over better" in the recording? However it may be, the outline of this delicate Sonatine has been carefully preserved throughout, the tone is good and quite unsmudged, and there is a most enjoyable briskness about the whole thing. (If anything, the slow movement—the Minuet—is too brisk: the music moves forward a little too inexorably—until the relief of the dramatic close comes at last to ease its inelasticity.) There is some fine rubato playing in the first movement and a clear melodic line: Cortot knows how to give just enough significance—and no more—to that little drooping, pathetic figure which Ravel here seems to love almost too well. But it is in the third movement, which, though it is thematically less interesting, is pianistically excellent, that Cortot gets his best opportunities. A brilliant performance. On the fourth side of this happy work comes the familiar *Jeux d'Eau*, the spraying, springing figures of which are marvellously played, clear and bright and ecstatic. Indeed, I put this particular piece at the top of Cortot's list of recordings; it is a triumphant forecast of the possibilities of piano discs.

DB1535. **ALFRED CORTOT. La Leggerezza—Etude in F minor** (Liszt) and **Etude en forme de Valse** (Saint-Saëns).

If to show what a piano can be made to do were everything—if, in fact, "it were done when 'tis done"—there would be nothing whatever to grumble at in Cortot's recording of the

Saint-Saëns study. With beaded bubbles constantly winking at the brim, it is intoxicating enough so far as mere notes go and as Cortot plays it: it most effectively puts the mind to bed. Now Liszt's studies are just as intoxicating (as witness the Etude on the other side) but they are a stimulant as well: they are, if you prefer it, acrobatics with a difference. Well, you have both Saint-Saëns and Liszt here, and both are perfectly played. There are *dolcissimos* in the Liszt study which, as Cortot plays them, take the breath away; and both pieces are recorded with a quite proper emphasis on the clarity of the notes rather than on the volume. (In the Liszt there is, it is true, a tendency to tinniness in the higher octaves, but that is about the only fault.) Students should learn a great deal from this record.

DB1567-8. **ANDRES SEGOVIA: Folies d'Espagne** (Ponce).

DB1536. **ANDRES SEGOVIA: Prelude, Allemande and Fugue** (Bach).

It would be a pity if Segovia's incomparable genius were too often to be wasted upon music of the level of this four-sided *Folies d'Espagne*. Here, indeed, is linked sweetness long drawn out. Segovia stands alone: he has made the guitar an instrument capable of such beauty and subtlety as we had never guessed: he can perform upon it incredible feats of delicacy and (what is apparently his danger) incredible feats of ingenuity. These variations enable him to show off to perfection the technical possibilities of his instrument, but in their musical and emotional ranges they are terribly dull. Needless to say, Segovia makes the utmost of the opportunities the piece offers: from the simple theme sensitively played to variations of pyrotechnic luxuriance, the whole gamut of guitar-playing is here exploited. And all the time, of course, there is the undercurrent of that indescribable heart-ache quality of which Segovia and his guitar are such masters. Listen, for instance, to some of the dying tones (like cryings heard over evening waters) which he achieves; or to the rich guitar-chords, like some lovelier harpsichord than we have ever known. And Segovia never overdoes his slurring: he has no need for such naïve devices. . . . Nevertheless, I find more pleasure in his Bach *Suite*. I know that, speaking from the purist point of view, such arrangements are a sin against the light. Yet is there so very much that is wrong, for instance, in his playing of the arpeggio *Prelude* or of the appealing *Allemande*? Here is something so near the keyboard of Bach's own day (save for an occasional "scooping" at the close) that I feel he is justified in spite of all. Of course the *Fugue*, which some would say is the ultimate test of the rightness of such transcriptions, loses much: even Segovia is unable to sustain passages as they should be, unable to keep up a convincing "running commentary" on the main subject; unable, in fact, to give proper emphasis to the architecture of the whole. Yet for me, anyway, Segovia wins: I shall sink a good deal of my purist prejudice for the sake of enjoying such miraculous playing.

DB1283. **YEHUDI MENUHIN: Nigun** (Bloch).

The *Nigun* which Menuhin here plays is taken from one of Bloch's most characteristic works, *Baal Shem* (a great Rabbi of the 18th Century), and is a kind of spiritual improvisation, as sung by the cantor in the synagogue. In playing such music it is obvious from Menuhin's zest that like is calling to like: he understands deeply the Hebraic significance of this turbulent work and gives it every possible ounce of dramatic import. The unity of this rich improvisation lies rather in the general colour of it all—the hue of spiritual torment. There is an almost frantic climax, to which Menuhin does full justice. Throughout his tone is bright, at times almost piercingly so; and he makes light of all difficulties.

C. H. W.

# ANALYTICAL NOTES AND FIRST REVIEWS

[The prices refer only to the United Kingdom.]

## BEETHOVEN'S MASS IN D

**Missa Solemnis in D, Op. 123** (Beethoven). Lotte Leonard (soprano), Emmy Land (soprano), E. Schlosshauer-Reynolds (contralto), A. M. Topitz (tenor), Eugen Transky (tenor), Wilhelm Guttman (bass), Hermann Schey (bass), Wilfried Hanke (violin); **The Bruno Kittel Choir and The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.** Conductor: Bruno Kittel. Decca-Polydor CA8069-8079 (eleven 12in. records, 5s. each). Also, on CA8079, **Creation's Hymn** (Beethoven), by **The Basilica Choir**, with orchestra and grand organ.

(Emmy Land is the solo soprano in the *Gloria*, the *Et incarnatus est*, and the *Crucifixus*, Lotte Leonard in the rest. Topitz takes the solo tenor part in the *Kyrie* and *Christe* only, Schey takes the bass in *Et vitam venturi*, the second part of the *Benedictus* and *Qui venit* only.)

The gramophone has been serving us well these last few years. We are entirely dependent for our recorded music upon commercial companies (excepting our N.G.S. chamber music); yet, at the present rate, within a decade there should hardly be any grand-scale classic unrecorded; which is a very fair achievement for organizations which of their nature must always be largely concerned with dividends. Just two and a half years ago H.M.V. gave us the Bach B Minor Mass. Quite two years before that we had Beethoven's choral symphony; by now, we have at least two recordings of that, and complete operas, even of Wagner, are of course becoming almost commonplace. Beethoven's great Mass in D, whether or not the greatest work, is in at least some ways the biggest undertaking of all.

It is a few years over the hundred since this colossal work had its first performance. What will happen to it during the next century? At present it is fairly strongly favoured. Such an eminent, judicious, and penetrating critic as Sir Henry Hadow has, in such a weighty treatise as the *Oxford History*, actually compared it, apparently to its advantage, with Bach and Palestrina. One feels, according to Sir Henry, that even if it has not the beauty of Bach and Palestrina in it we are "face to face with that ultimate Reality of which beauty itself" is but a form of expression. But can we really feel that of all, even nearly all, of it? Parts of it, indeed no small part of it, is at least as wild as any of the choral symphony. When a very long movement starts off practically without restraint, and has obviously to realise at least two or three climaxes in its course, greater still than that opening, what can happen? As Sir Henry says: "We have a vivid picture of him, wild, haggard, dishevelled, oblivious of sleep and food, tearing the music from the very depths of his being, and bending it by sheer force into the appointed shape." It would perhaps be unwise to remind any whole-hogger, hot-headed Beethovenite of the "recollection in tranquillity" part of Wordsworth's definition of poetry.

But of course we must, probably, allow music to be less tranquil than poetry, though never, I think, at the most, to break completely such control. In any case, this Mass is indeed a colossal work, unique, remarkable, often of superb mastery, often of extraordinary complexity; sometimes, for instance in the first part of the *Agnus*, Beethoven soars to great heights. For these reasons, and especially as few people can at present hear this work frequently, we have more than enough cause to welcome such a recording as this.

And it is a very good recording indeed. In the work of recording proper there seems little or no room for criticism.

In one or two places (all, I think, choral) I suspected a slight upsetting of dynamic proportions by "controlling" a crescendo, instead of recording the whole exactly as sung (surely nothing can be too *soft* to come through nowadays?); but even there I should not like to pronounce definitely even after repeated playings. Occasionally I thought that the microphone had favoured the solo quartet a little; but in that respect, too, there is nothing for anyone to worry about—indeed, the antithesis, the tonal contrast, of soloists and chorus is, in general, notable.

The soloists are not well known to us here, but they are all of the first rank, as indeed any soloist must be to come anywhere near this music. They give us much full, strong, and beautiful tone, and in general give expression to their music, if without great subtlety or remarkable variety (for which Beethoven is perhaps partly responsible). It is not much more than once in a lifetime that we hear a perfect solo ensemble in such a work; these singers come within reasonable distance of that ideal. The solo work in the earlier part is not quite so good as later. This Choir has good tone, and rises really superbly to this gigantic, sometimes unhuman and sometimes unvoiced, task and very nearly draws equal with it. Is it possible for any choir, even a Leeds Festival choir, ever to do so? What is more important, in any case, is that a full and faithful interpretation is given us here, with Beethoven's nuances in their places.

The Choir's conductor must, of course, have a very large part of the credit for all that, and for the sound straightforward interpretation of the whole work. Very rarely does he give us a "reading," anything that is not indicated in the score. But the performance is never (excepting perhaps a score or so of bars in the whole work) unduly square, or in any sense dull; it would be difficult to make any Beethoven lacking in point, while one observes fully his directions.

The orchestra has not a showy part, but an orchestra of the front rank is essential, and the Berlin Philharmonic plays its part well, perhaps at times with distinction.

In such a work as this, it is quite impossible not to miss a great deal of the detail without a score. Unfortunately the barest outline of a mere fifty bars would take half an article. But possibly a few more detailed remarks may be of some use.

The *Kyrie* consists mainly of short utterances by the Chorus and at the start by solo tenor, soprano, and contralto in turn. The *Christe* (side 2) is made of simple ejaculations of the word *Christe* and an expressive phrase on the second syllable of *eleison*; it begins with the soloists, and the Chorus joins in later. The second *Kyrie* is a development, or continuation, of the first, rather than a repetition. The *Gloria* explains itself, as well as it could be explained in a few sentences. One of the greatest moments in the whole work is the almost miraculous stroke of the climax of *Glorificamus te* (about half-way through the first side). In *Qui tollis* the solo soprano is rather unsteady and the tenor inclined to scoop. On record CA8072 the letter A should (if meaning "play this side first") be applied to *In gloria Dei Patris*.

In the *Descendit* (the last inch or less of the first side of the *Credo*) we find typical Beethoven orchestral thought applied to voices which, however, cannot (as strings, especially, can) give a low note as loud as a soft. The opening of *Et incarnatus* seems to be sung by the chorus tenors here, instead of the soloist. The end of *Et vitam venturi* (which should be side A, not B, of CA8075) is one of the most memorable passages in the work; first the solo quartet, with a very subdued choral undercurrent,

then the exquisite wood-wind scales at the end. There are many ways of taking this, e.g., the conclusion of the whole Creed, and the ideas of the final resurrection and the life to come.

In the *Sanctus*, the *Pleni sunt coeli* (Chorus) is certainly *Allegro*, but is it *pesante*? The *Benedictus* is the movement, above all, of which only a long and intimate knowledge will enable us to form any sound opinion. It is ethereal purity itself, without one jarring note; but is it, as a whole, worthy of its highest moments? Does it, as a whole, rise above prettiness? These records are well able to help us to decide, though I think we could not judge with full final justice from them. The soloists are very good indeed, but not perfect, and the solo violin's tone does not (as recorded) appeal to me. Sometimes it sounds like a flute or oboe, and not very good ones. The initial phrase (chorus basses) lags, and the chorus entries later sound to English ears a little weak. The orchestral Prelude might surely have just a little expression! Especially the crotchet theme—without knowing it one is hardly aware of it. On CA8077, *Qui venit* should be labelled A.

Probably the greatest part of the whole work, the *Agnus Dei* (at any rate apart from the *Dona nobis*), is the best of these records also. Orchestra, soloists, chorus, all are excellent. Here I simply must pick out the contralto. In particular, her initial entry is unforgettable. She reminds me frequently, both here and elsewhere, of our own Muriel Brunskill, though how the two would compare in power I would not like to say offhand.

It is practically impossible to recommend isolated records out of this set, because no single record is, strictly, independent. The first record, giving the *Kyrie* and *Christe*, is well worth having by itself, still more so if the second record (with the second *Kyrie* and the first part of the *Gloria*) were added. CA8076-8077 give the whole of the *Benedictus* and the opening (the best part) of the *Agnus Dei*. CA8973, with *Et incarnatus* and *Crucifixus*, would be valuable.

The version of *Creation's Hymn* is very effective, and a more suitable makeweight than most.

C. M. CRABTREE.



## ORCHESTRAL

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CA8062-8 (12in., 35s.).—Berlin State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Fried: Ninth Symphony (Beethoven). Scores, Eulenburg and Philharmonia.

CA8083 (12in., 5s.).—Leipzig Gewandhaus Wind Quintet: Divertimento No. 8, in F (Mozart).

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PO5030 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Same Orchestra: Poet and Peasant Overture (Suppé).

CA8089 (12in., 5s.).—Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by Furtwängler: Prelude to Lohengrin (Wagner).

Symphony: first three movements take three, two and three sides respectively; then three records for the choral finale.

The *Ninth*, whichever way we look at it—through either end of the time-telescope, to magnify or minish—is a monumental work; just what it is a monument to, opinions still may differ. You may deplore the choral finale and rejoice in the rest, or, in humanitarian missionary zeal, glorify the *Ode* above all else. You may think that parts of Beethoven don't wear well, or that the slow movement is too long drawn, or that the chorus demands a super-choir, in the strict sense of the term—a choir that is beyond anything earth can produce. Even if you only like it in parts, you can respect it all. There are innumerable analyses of it. I think the best is Tovey's booklet (Paterson, 2s.), and strongly recommend the serious listener to get this, the most satisfying discussion he is likely to find—though it does not meet all difficulties. There are music-type illustrations, and a slight knowledge of terms suffices. Stanford's

article on the speeds, in his book *Interludes* (Murray), is important.

It is notable that the Columbia and H.M.V. centenary performances took eight records each; this takes only seven.

I cannot attempt even an outline analysis in a few paragraphs. It may, however, be useful if I "place" on the record the five ideas which Tovey quotes from the so-called "second subject"—which, in this work, and often in others of large calibre, comprises a group, a little planetary system, rather than a single idea. That makes listening more complex, and increases the responsibility (and also the pleasure) of trying to take in something really big. The opening singing passage of this group comes at just under  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ins. on side 1 (wind); then, at 2 ins., there is the brisk scale-figure; at  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , the full-band sharp-rhythmed *tum, tum-ta-tum*, answered in two bars by the smoother wind; and next, at  $2\frac{3}{4}$ , the smooth-wind and interjectory-strings passage; finally, at  $3\frac{1}{8}$ , the rising fanfare which leads back to the strange, indeterminate opening on two notes. These are members of the body: to appreciate all their work needs time. I cannot feel that the disc quite captures the clear sweetness of the *cantabile*. My fibre makes it woolly. I think steel is wanted for this set. A needle of this sterner sort clarifies and brightens things a lot (but it needs the special box for the best effect). Still, some of the wind tone is not over-bright, and this may be the band's fault. Some may feel that in the most powerful portions we lack volume. I am not quite comfortable about that reverberation period; it seems to mask, rather. Proportion and sound wisdom inform this performance. A concert-room hearing will help one to bring up the scale, which here misses the colossal.

The *Scherzo* seems slow, but it is at about Beethoven's marked time. The even stresses keep out the sprightliest spirit. The drum's solo sounds, oddly, as if it had an extra, preliminary, note. The wood-wind scarcely shows its most individual colour in the *scherzo* proper. It is much better in the trio. (Fibre etiolates the tone here too much. Keep to steel.) The adjustment of pace between the *scherzo* and trio (one bar of the former equals half a bar of the latter) is sound, even though the middle part is not very exciting. I think the matter of pulsation is at fault. This movement should above all be exciting, however mild the pace. The repetition of the *scherzo* is livelier in feeling, to me. Fried is only 61: I wonder if he has lost fire?

It is difficult to understand how the slow movement came to get the pace-mark crotchet 60. Many conductors take it at quaver 60, which seems to me deathly slow. Fried strikes a better mean. It is recorded that Beethoven, having lost the

list he had made of the metronome marks, did this tiresome business again, and, when the first paper turned up, found that his second fixtures differed from the first. So he cursed all metronome marks, saying that those who feel the right time don't need them, and the others would be run away with by the band, anyway. He might have added, as other composers have, that those who need them shouldn't play the music until they don't need them. But there is more in it than that. Some music can be taken in very different ways, and be effective in many. The composer ought to suggest speeds, at least.

This third movement rather lacks the persuasive richness of tone that carries it off. It does, I feel, need a little carrying off. That second tune ( $1\frac{1}{4}$  ins.) seems rather a meandering idea, that does not fit too well with the rest, and nothing much happens to it: not enough to justify its place in the scheme, I feel. It will perhaps be a virtue in this recording, in the ears of some, that it does not lay on the butter too thick, as (some reckon) Beethoven was apt to do in *Adagios*. But the tonal reserve is carried too far for my taste. There is much lovely sustentation in this movement, and one must give oneself over entirely to it, and enjoy especially its later growth in grace and significance.

That *Finale* problem cannot be tackled in fullness here. Beethoven did not at first think of a choral ending. That was a grand notion, but was the poem a first-rate choice? We speak now (perhaps too slightly) of "uplift." Did not the uplift of his age get too strong a hold on Beethoven's imagination—a hold so strong that it blinded him to drawbacks, both of subject and treatment? He had always wanted to set Schiller's *Ode to Joy*, and here was the now-or-never chance; and in the end the voices killed the music—so, many of us feel. But that is a matter for cheerful disputation. There can be no doubt about the grandeur of the finale, as to its orchestral part: nor of the glorious rightness of the idea of reviewing the past before taking the startling new road, as he does in the prelude to this finale. The harmonisation of the tune always strikes me as an ideal example of simple strength. The soloists are Lotte Leonard, Jenny Sonnenberg, Eugen Transky, and Wilhelm Guttman; and the choir is that named after Bruno Kittel. The bass has a certain plummy unsteadiness that offsets his capitably hefty voice and good pace-making. The soprano also is unsteady, so much so that in the first trio (middle of side 3 of this movement) I suspected her of indulging in premature variation of her own. The tenor bosses this trio. The quartet is never balanced ideally. The full choir, though only about as clear as any recorded choir is (in my opinion) likely to be, can be claimed as a reasonable success. The martial touch in this cosmic verse ("Hero-like, to conquest flying") is the excuse for the military band. But I wish Beethoven had done something with the tune. The poet shackles him. No amount of sturdy declamation gets over the fact that the music is sitting down for a magic-lantern interlude. I admire those lusty men: they are a bit coarse, though. There is still fine matter to come, but the voices do not carry us far towards the universal embrace of mankind, and those later top A's for the sopranos trouble the ear. I am not quite happy about intonation (and reverberation) when the *Allegro energico* is starting, about an inch from the end of the last side but one. I wish I could go all the way with so fine a thinker and feeler as Tovey, about the finale; his booklet should certainly be got, for it puts up the best of the case for the choral part. On the whole, this is the best end of Decca-Polydor's achievement in the symphony, which, with certain weaknesses, marks a stage in the development of cheap records, and affords for 30s. some visions of truth which may well transport the hearer out of our little world: and that is surely thirty shillings well spent.

The Mozart *Divertimento*, K213, is for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn. On one side are the *Allegro spiritoso* and *Andante*, on the other a *Minuet* and a *Molto allegro*. Thesecond movement is a beautiful little aria, with a touch in it very much

like that in the second theme of the finale of the G minor symphony—the rising-and-drooping figure just over  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. from the end of the first side. I prefer fibre for this record; the steel makes a lot of difference, bringing out the brightness, but coarsening the tone somewhat. The Minuet is a sedate number, with a refined, maidenly charm, and a bloom upon its tone, as these admirable Leipzig players exhibit it. The finale is a pert little fellow, a light-weight perfectly suited to wind up a *Divertimento*.

Most people, I suppose, will prefer cold steel for the Liszt—and "Stand from under!" This is a clever work, as all Liszt's dealings with these tunes are. There is something for everybody to enjoy. I happen to enjoy the music best when it is a little more melodramatically presented than by Herr Melichar; but nobody ought to quarrel with his bright and tidily ordered performance, which has been caught in seemly balance by the recorders.

*Poet and Peasant*: what can one say about *P. and P.*, at the *n*th time of hearing? Only that I am inclined to regard its re-recording as a blot on anybody's record; but the heart of the great B.P. can stand any amount of *P. and P.*, I know. If there be any among our GRAMOPHONE tribe that lack it, here is a trim, cheap disc, with the solo bits all bibbed and tuckered, not forward youngsters, but nicely behaved children, all in a row for admiration. I suggest fibre for them, not steel.

The Lohengrin *Prelude* may be interpreted in terms of fibre or steel. My fibre would not stand up in the middle of side 2, but steel does not destroy the purity of the fiddle tone in the heights, and so I recommend that. The record shows the beauties of discipline and rehearsal. Has anyone ever heard those ethereal chords without cringing a little, lest some fiddler should be out of tune, or catch a crab? These players come through. That remarkable orchestration at the start (four solo violins, then the other violins divided into four equal groups, and the lower strings as usual) was meant, said Wagner, to give the sense of the soul in infinite space. Gradually the ministering angels, bearing the sacred vessel, take shape from their first vague form. The watcher's soul fills with holy aspiration and ecstatic adoration as the Holy Grail appears in glory, and is left to the care of its chosen guardians, whilst the angelic host vanishes into space. An astonishing prelude to an opera in 1850, and still a joy to all music-lovers.

#### DECCA.

F2745 (10in., 1s. 6d.).—**Hastings Orchestra**, conducted by **Harrison**: *Andante cantabile* from *Op. 11* (Tchaikovsky, arr. Schmid).

This sweet little movement (1871), originally for quartet of muted strings, makes an admirable transcription. It is taken *andante*, not *adagio*, and is all the more engaging for that. Tchaikovsky got its folk-tune from a carpenter. Its gently wayward bar of  $\frac{3}{4}$ , in the  $\frac{2}{4}$  prevailing measure, is a winsome device. Particularly handsomely sways the middle section. This is one of Mr. Harrison's felicities. Hastings is wise, and to be praised. The music, creamily recorded, makes a good addition to one's "Restful" box.

#### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

DB1621-4 (12in., 24s.).—**L.S.O.**, conducted by **Elgar**: *Falstaff* (Elgar). Score, Novello.

The last of the great unrecorded works of our greatest master is safely gathered in. *Laus Deo*! He himself conducts, and that always means our finding the work in a rather different light than that which some conductors cast. Also, H.M.V. has given us, in the album, a reprint of Elgar's own analysis which appeared in the *Musical Times* in September 1913. That reminds us (and other occasional writings reinforce the reminder still more) how good a man with the pen Elgar is. (Do you know his lively preface to Button's book on

notation—Novello?) I wish he could be persuaded to write more, both on ruled and unruled paper. Of *Falstaff* those who can't get to concerts have had, on one disc, two samples—the *Interludes*. These, naturally, are simple mood-pictures. The rest of the work has rightly been called the most complex of tone-pictures: not dizzily complex, but a wonderful combination of artistic commentary and development, and psychological interpretation. Its nearest neighbour in actual complexity is *Don Quixote*, but to my mind *Falstaff* goes deeper than even Strauss' great illumination of Cervantes' tale; and it is free from disfigurement, which the ten-years-older work is not. Elgar tackles the *Falstaff* of the *Henry IV* and *V* plays, not the comic-relief buck-basketeer, and in so doing sets himself an infinitely more difficult task than if he had merely merry-wived it. Even then, there would have been opportunities for comicality in the grand manner. Elgar, Shakespeare and *Falstaff*: are they not well met?—for each is a complex character. The John Bull of ill tradition is, we know, far less representative of the British people than is the Shakespearean Englishman, yet he does limn one view of us; and the Elgar of circumstantial pomps touches a truth too; yet how small a part of the whole truth it is! The comic *Falstaff*, serving his Elizabethan stage end marvellously well, gives place, in the historical plays, to the deeper subject of the tragedy of common experience. In the depiction of his externals Elgar is unsurpassed: the trappings of royalty and the traffic of the town are coloured here like life, for all who can shut eyes, open ears, and use the fancy. But the subtler elements of suggestion, the "mental fight" and the man's development and decay—how much more fascinating is their musical devisement! But there is matter for an article here, and perhaps one may be useful, at a convenient time. I had thought of indicating in this notice where the many themes come on the discs. That, after the words-and-music-type analysis, is the only other chief aid needed: after that, the rest may be such enjoyable discussion of mood and method as you and I may care for. But the records happen to come very late in the month, when, even to make so brief a notice as this, infant sleep must be broken in upon; so perhaps it will be as well for us all to feast for a little on the records, and then maybe we can meet, at least on paper, to see if we can whet minds to a useful end (how one wishes there could be a Readers' Club, with the whole family—or as many as could get there, joining in helping others to enjoy still more keenly each one's favourite bits. Writing one's enthusiasms is such slow work!) There are places in which the score helps much in clarifying detail, bringing out hints of plot and delicate suggestions of character. The admirable qualities of the new St. John's Wood studios are proved in the discs' all-round clarity and sonority, without artificiality or undue restraint. This seems to me a gold standard of recording, and I cannot see that there is ever any need to go off it, as rather a lot of records still do. The first half of side 5 (first *Interlude*) shows a little not-perfectly-tuneful string tone. The latter part of the work in particular repays long study: I know few deeper, more touching illuminations of man's tragedy than the music of *Falstaff's* decadence and denial. It is grand, ripe work, worth our closest, most loving study; and the performance (it seems) ripens with the humanity of the music. To have the complete tone-poem, with the composer's own commentary, is surely one of the peaks of the year's delight, whatever other joys it may raise up. How we wish Elgar would take us into his confidence about the other great works, that have no avowed "programme," yet speak of life and reflection on its marvels and darkneses, to all who diligently search these noble testaments. Meanwhile, here is a glorious argument laid forth, in sound and sense. I suggest an evening or two with the *Henry* plays, and then a week of living with this tone-poem. We cannot fail to come out upon a finer vista of music's possibilities, and of life's philosophy, than that we had when we first gave ourselves over to the cumulative magic of Shakespeare and Elgar.

**COLUMBIA**

LX167 (12in., 6s.).—**Concertgebouw Orchestra**, conducted by **Mengelberg**: **Overture to Coriolanus** (Beethoven).

Collin, ambitious deviser of tragedies, was only one among several people who suffered from Beethoven's not-always-accountable passion for taking up projects and seeking occupations in which it is improbable that he would have been happy. His hope of a regular salary was, like many other hopes, disappointed, and so was that of writing opera after opera. If Collin had lived longer, he might have provided Beethoven with the right libretto, though his scripts, I think, could never have stimulated him rightly for opera. It is doubtful if the Shakespeare drama did, either. He may have been moved by Collin's "uplift" (we see how he was carried away by rhetoric, in the finale of the *Ninth*), but he was big enough to strike deeper, and make the tragedy universal. He emphasized that by making the music starkly direct in form. It is worth noting that though he first entitled the piece *Ouverture zum Trauerspiel Coriolan da Lv. Beethoven*, 1807, he afterwards took out the reference to the play, and simply left it as "Overture for *Coriolanus*." The music is so well known that its themes need not be expounded. Mengelberg's handling of Beethoven's sequences often seems to me heavy. Without knocking them about, a little more might be done to work them up, I think. There is the usual reservation to make about the reverberation time of the hall (strongly shown in the opening figure, with its pauses). Otherwise the record stands high for good sense and sound alike.

**PARLOPHONE.**

E11204 (12in., 4s.).—**State Opera Orchestra**, conducted by **Weissmann**: **Slavonic Dances, Op. 46, Nos. 3 and 8** (Dvorak).

We are gradually getting an attractive collection of the less familiar dances by Dvorak, all of which have their characteristic turns of phrase and their felicities of orchestration. The first of these two has some dainty light touches befitting the village green. The shade of mildly melancholy romance is one of Dvorak's most appealing colour-elements. I prefer fibre for both sides, though apart from the opening shrillness of No. 8, on steel, the metal brings up the sharp image of this lively picture. If one plays the piano duet arrangements of these tunes, as I find many do, this record will be useful in giving hints for counter-melody treatment. No. 8 is a specially delightful combination of the winsome and the exciting. Its coda is a particularly happy touch. The Berliners under Dr. Weissmann poise their music well, and set off its graces to the best advantage.

W. R. A.



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## INSTRUMENTAL

PIANOFORTE.

**IGNAZ FRIEDMAN. Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 (Liszt).** (Col. DX350, 12in., 4s.)

I should not be surprised if, in years to come, this record is looked upon as something of a milestone in the history of pianoforte recording. Never mind the music: I am speaking entirely of piano recording. It is the best thing Columbia have done so far—indeed, it beats, for convincing sonority of tone, *any* piano recording I have come across. Considered, then, as a technical achievement, I have nothing but the highest praise to offer; and I am willing to throw overboard any dislikes I may have of the music (and any objections I might have to the playing) because the *Hungarian Rhapsody* was quite clearly the one piece to have chosen for such a milestone. (Besides, when I consider what we may now expect from recording of *good* piano music I am willing to wait.) The deep octaves of the opening at once startled me into surprise: what *had* happened? and how on earth could this standard be kept up? But it was kept up—or very nearly. Only now and then, as in the more excitable runs, did that amazing clarity yield at all; and some of the higher notes became a little too piercingly bright. As for the climax on the second side, I certainly had not imagined that even the excellence of the recent Columbia piano recordings could so soon arrive at this. Friedman plays the solemn melody rather more slowly than is usual—as if he could himself hear how bold was the recording and was consequently compelled to linger. Throughout, there is a fine gusto in his playing, a sort of vulgarity that attracts at once by reason of its absolute sincerity. How much better, I could not help thinking, is his playing of Liszt than his playing of Chopin. Think what you like of Liszt—and of this melodramatic Rhapsody in particular—but get the record: it will be an eye-opener (or should I say an ear-ful?).

**WALTER KAUFFMANN and WILLIAM GROSS. Artist's Life, and Vienna Blood** (both arranged by Gross and Kauffmann) by Strauss. (Decca-Polydor PO5028, 10in., 2s. 6d.)

And still they come! Vienna has gone to our heads and we have got to wait, with what patience we can, for some other fashion to sweep it out and make room for something else. Meanwhile, the recording of these estimable Viennese tunes and intoxicating rhythms goes on. Of this particular example there is little to say except that the arrangement (by the duettists themselves) is of the solid rather than the decorative kind. I suppose, since this ensures more retention of the essential outline and lilt, such an arrangement is all to the good. Anyway, these pianists play with fine accord. True, the syncopated introduction to *Vienna Blood* is, considering the rest of the piece, a little disturbing; but that is being rather finicky. Here is straightforward, melodious and infectiously rhymical stuff admirably played (for those who like it) and admirably recorded.

VIOLIN.

**VASA PRIHODA. Autumn Song** (Tchaikovsky, arr. Cerné) and **Humoresque** (Dvorak, arr. Wilhelmy). (Decca-Polydor, CA8088, 12in., 5s.)

I wrote last month of Prihoda's playing of two empty little pieces by Drdla and Toselli. Save that the present record brings us more familiar music, there is little to add to what I said then: here is the same sureness and brilliance in the playing and the same counteracting lack of subtlety—not that here the violinist gets much chance for the display of the latter. The Tchaikovsky, with its long and languorous phrases, is played with an enjoyable amplitude and the *Humoresque*—well, it is the *Humoresque* played as well as it deserves. **Charles Cerné's** accompaniments are sympathetic yet bold; and the recording is once again exceptionally clear and convincing.

**TOSSY SPIWAKOWSKY. Baal Schem: Nigun** (Bloch). (Parlophone R1217, 10in., 2s. 6d.)

Spiwakowsky's recording of the favourite number from Bloch's *Three Pictures of Chassidic Life* coincides with the "Connoisseur" issue of the same piece played by Menuhin (see page 15). It is impossible to avoid comparison. Menuhin plays this Hebrew improvisation with such obvious and sympathetic understanding that the lack of it in Spiwakowsky's record (despite all sorts of virtues for which, otherwise, I should be extremely grateful) is bound to detract from one's enjoyment. Moreover, the actual recording is not so good, and the accompaniment (played by an anonymous pianist) is often not quite sure and sometimes even perfunctory. I emphasize this need for a really sympathetic interpretation because the main interest in Bloch's work here is in its spiritual drama, which can nowhere be glossed over without very severe loss. Lacking Menuhin's full-bloodedness, the playing in this record comes too near (except in the compelling recitative passages on the second side, where Spiwakowsky suddenly wakes up and shows what *can* be done) to being almost "pretty." The thing wants more fire.

ORGAN.

**ALFRED SITTARD. Allegro** from the **Concerto in F major** and the **March from Hercules** (Handel). (Decca-Polydor CA8085, 12in., 5s.)

Remembering Herr Sittard's recent recording of the Bach *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* I find this disc distinctly disappointing. The *Allegro* is a poor movement to have selected—on any count—and does not anyway stand up well in isolation from its context; and the *March* becomes little more than a pompous noise. Herr Sittard's playing, in so far as we get a chance to judge it here, is as brave and immaculate as ever; and the recording (particularly in the *Allegro*) is unusually bright and clear; but the organist's rare talents are somewhat wasted here—he has no real opportunities for revealing his particular merits in such uninteresting music.

**G. D. CUNNINGHAM. A.D. 1620** (MacDowell) and **Allegretto** (Wolstenholme). (Col. DB811, 10in., 2s. 6d.)

This is the kind of organ "music" that makes me shudder. I grant at once that the playing is faultless as far as technical accuracies go, and probably does the fullest justice to the notions of the composers concerned. I grant also that the recording (both pieces are pitched in the quieter keys—and that helps) is on a very high level. More I will not grant. MacDowell's *Sea Pieces* are mushy enough in their original version: transcribed for the organ this particular number becomes unbearably so. As for the *Allegretto*—the fatuity of the whole thing is incredible. Roundabout music is healthy in comparison. It gives ample opportunity for the organist to show off the more nauseating stops of the organ and Mr. Cunningham has used those opportunities. I do not doubt the record will sell like hot cakes. But all who care two pins for the true art of the organ should leave it severely alone.

C. HENRY WARREN.



## OPERATIC AND FOREIGN SONGS

**ELISABETH OHMS** (soprano). **Thou monstrous Fiend** from *Fidelio* (Beethoven). In German. Orch. acc. under **Manfred Gurlitt**. Decca-Polydor CA8086, 12in., 5s.

**ALFRED PICCAVER** (tenor). **By silent hearth** and **The Prize Song** from *Die Meistersinger* (Wagner). Decca-Polydor CA8087, 12in., 5s.

**LUDWIG HOFMANN** (bass). **Calf of Gold** and **Mephistopheles' Serenade** from *Faust* (Gounod). In German. Orch. acc. under **Julius Prüwer**. Decca-Polydor DE7004, 10in., 4s.

**ADELE KERN** (soprano). **Love Songs Waltz** and **Tales from the Vienna Woods** (Johann Strauss). In German. Orch. acc. under **Hermann Weigert**. Decca-Polydor LY6021, 12in., 4s.

**HEINRICH SCHLUSNUS** (baritone). **The Drummer Boy** and **Rhine Legend** from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (Mahler). In German. With **The Berlin State Opera Orchestra** under **Hermann Weigert**. Decca-Polydor CA8082, 12in., 5s.

**LILY PONS** (soprano).—**Les Variations de Proch** and **Parysatis** (Saint-Saëns). In French. Orch. acc. under **G. Cloez**. Parlo. RO20187, 10in., 4s.

**EMANUEL LIST** (bass).—**O Isis and Osiris** from Act 2 of the *The Magic Flute* (Mozart) and **The Calf of Gold** from Act 2 of *Faust* (Gounod). In German. Orch. acc. under **Dr. Weissmann**. Parlo. R1215, 10in., 2s. 6d.

**TINO PATTIERA** (tenor).—**Di tu se fedele** from Act 1 of *Ballo in Maschera* (Verdi) and **Brindisi** from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni). In Italian with **Chorus and Orchestra of the State Opera House, Berlin**, under **Dr. Weissmann**. Parlo. R1216, 10in., 2s. 6d.

**JOSEPH SCHMIDT** (tenor).—**La Donna è mobile** from *Rigoletto* (Verdi). In German. And **Lolita** (Buzzi-Peccia). In Italian. Orch. acc. Broadcast Twelve 3191, 1s. 6d.

*Elisabeth Ohms*.—I begin my reviews this month with another batch of Decca-Polydor records. I might even more appropriately express wonder as to how long the new issue is to continue, for the *embarras de choix* resulting therefrom for all but the wealthiest enthusiasts is increasing all the time with this steady output. Having given us an ideal *Ocean, thou mighty monster*, Elisabeth Ohms now adds to the list one that comes within a degree or two of the same perfection in another sort of monster, taking the fiendish adjectival shape that the translator of *Fidelio* has applied to Beethoven's *Abscheulicher*. Fiendishly difficult it assuredly is, that tremendous aria of which Tietjens and Ternina, alas! left behind only memories, not records. The present example is, I think, as fine as any that has been made since the electric days, and, in regard to purity and beauty of tone-quality, clarity of diction and orchestral values, and recording generally, perhaps the finest. The effect of the recitative is so delicately chiselled by voice and instruments that it is touching in the extreme. The only tiny blemish, scarcely audible perhaps to any but the most sensitive ear, may be discovered in the intonation of the final B natural.

*Alfred Piccaver*.—From *Lohengrin* to *Die Meistersinger* is for the *Heldentenor* a natural and easy step. Edward Lloyd of old took it in his stride, and with all my heart I wish that inventive science had been advanced enough to enable him (for the sake of posterity) to record the result as faithfully as the modern microphone has conveyed it here for Mr. Piccaver. Strict regard for truth compels me to admit that I am growing just a little tired of this singer's monotonous timbre and still more monotonous style of delivery. That is where he is different from the other English tenor whose Wagner singing Richter so greatly loved and admired. You cannot always paint in one shade of colour without running the risk to which I refer. A trifle more or less of energy and wakefulness will not achieve all the requisite variety. It is like the minister who preaches sermon after sermon on the same nasal note, as the Puritans used to; sooner or later his efforts produce the inevitable doze and the possible snore. Only heaven forbid that I should predict similar consequences in this case!

*Ludwig Hofmann*.—I had the good fortune to hear this (to me) new baritone-bass on the stage before listening to the Mephistophelean airs here offered; and I prefer his voice considerably in the *Faust*. As stated elsewhere in this number, I did not admire the production or quality of much of the tone that he used for the singing of Wotan in *Das Rheingold*. He sounds much more pleasant and genial, not nearly so jerky or snappy, when dealing with French currency—as a matter of fact, Gounod's own radiant *Calf of Gold*! Again, he is much more acceptable in the latter than in the *Serenade* from the same opera, which he has vulgarised by shouting sardonically the greater part of it and then winding up with a guffaw worthy of a transpontine costermonger.

*Adele Kern*.—The waltzes of Johann Strauss provide agreeable opportunity for the display of this soprano's very pretty and musical voice. She sings sweetly and with great technical precision, though I fancy I have heard records of hers that show more life and *elan*, as well as a more liberal measure of Viennese rhythm and character. She is said to "carry her audiences away." Perhaps that is because they inspire her more than the microphone does. But I would encourage her to try again. She certainly has a lovely E flat in *alt*.

*Heinrich Schlusnus*.—More songs by Gustav Mahler! Well, the more the merrier, so long as they have artists like Rehkemper and Schlusnus to interpret them poetically and light our way into their profoundest meaning. These examples are from the *Lieder des Knaben Wunderhorn*, which Mahler was setting to music so long ago as 1890, a couple of years before his first visit to London, when no one even guessed that he was a composer as well as a Wagnerian conductor. Now few people remember the splendid performances that he secured of *Tristan* and *The Ring* at Drury Lane, whilst French and Italian opera was being given at Covent Garden under the same indefatigable impresario, Sir Augustus Harris. I like immensely both these records—*The Drummer Boy* with its martial rhythm and drum-taps from beginning to end, rather anticipating Ravel's *Bolero*, and the no less striking *Rhine Legend*, based upon a charming slow-waltz theme, replete with original ideas and masterful treatment. In fact, all of it is highly interesting music, intelligently sung and delicately played under Hermann Weigert.

*Lily Pons*.—What are known as "vocal fireworks" are rather gone out of fashion, but in all probability they will always remain acceptable so long as the display is brilliant and artistic, which the examples here presented certainly are. It was only a year or so ago that I first acclaimed this Belgian soprano as a first-rate singer and she continues to give me no reason for altering my opinion. On the contrary, her voice improves as it goes on maturing, while her technique is even surer and more finished than heretofore. She puts fresh animation into the *rococo* Proch variations, and does a wonderful piece of bird imitation in the clever fantasia, *The Nightingale and the Rose*, from the elaborate music which

Saint-Saëns wrote for the drama *Parysatis* on its production in the arena at Béziers in August 1902. The record is worth having for the sake of the latter example alone, embodying as it does the perfection of pure tone and delicately flexible vocalization.

**Emanuel List.**—Here is an interesting contrast: on one side the religious sacerdotal Sarastro; on the other the noisy tribute of Satan to the power wielded by the *Calf of Gold*. For vocal merit there is not much to choose between them; yet I cannot help feeling that the quality of the organ itself, so dignified, sonorous, and solemn, is more completely suited to Mozart's broad melody than to Gounod's outburst of devilish glee as he quaffs his wine from the necromancer's cask. But the point is that each is admirably recorded, and sounds equally well in its way.

**Tino Pattiera.**—Here is an Italian tenor of the old-fashioned *robusto* pattern from whom very few records seem to make their appearance on the English market. The reason is probably that he sings most of the time in his own country and in the class of opera that is popular there. His production is slightly throaty, but not sufficiently so to deprive the voice of its resonance, while its carrying power in a theatre must be considerable, especially the higher notes, which are of splendid timbre and well on the right pitch. His style betokens an artist of distinction, his diction is clear and intelligible, and he has a capital *mezza voce* for use in tender moments. The air from *Un Ballo in Maschera* goes with lots of spirit and the *Brindisi* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* receives abundant rhythmical energy.

**Joseph Schmidt.**—In spite of a faulty disc (apparently due to inefficient packing, not careless handling in this office), I obtained a very definite idea of the quality of this singer's voice and recording. Both are good enough to be considered cheap at eightpence, particularly by our friends of the Italian colony, whom I understand to be pretty accurate judges of the value of a gramophone record. They may, of course, object to *La donna è mobile* being sung in German, but they ought not to, since Mr. Schmidt sings it quite as well as he does *Lolita*, and that, in his "choice Italian," sounds very well indeed. He has a fine voice, and probably most European languages come alike to him.

HERMAN KLEIN.

### The Phonograph

The non-arrival of the April number of *The Phonograph*, and of the May number too, is apparently due to a misfortune of which we have only just heard from an American reader. He says that the Editor, Mr. Axel Johnson, was kidnapped late in March, "robbed, beaten unconscious and thrown from a speeding automobile." This sounds terrible, and our readers will join with us in a message of sympathy to Mr. Johnson, who has done more than anyone in the U.S.A. to rally the gramophone-lovers of his country under the banner of his magazine.

### The Star at Covent Garden

#### LOTTE LEHMANN

RO 20185 { Cradle Song (Weber-Hiemer)  
I do not grieve (Schumann)  
(10-inch Record, 4s.)

"Weber's *Wiegenlied* may be placed among those exquisite things of beauty that are 'a joy for ever.' On no account ought it to be missed." Herman Klein.

Madame Lehmann records only for

# PARLOPHONE



## BAND RECORDS

The **Royal Belgian Guards Band** is, as we know from previous records, a fine combination; but the latest batch of their records issued by the H.M.V. Company shows a curious inequality in recording. The ten-inch record (B4801) containing *The Entry of the Gladiators March* and *En Avant March* is loud and forward in tone in accordance with the modern practice in recording. These marches are played with great élan and the technique is superb.

By contrast the two twelve-inch records are less forward in tone and the volume is less. In spite of this we get the impression of a larger band and, what is more important, we appreciate better the instrumentation of the band and the difference between this, which may be regarded as typical of French military bands even if it is a Belgian band, and an English Guards band. This difference in instrumentation makes the English bands more brilliant but less "mellow"; the difference in use of the saxophone family largely accounts for this, and I personally prefer these two records to their more brilliant companion for this reason. I do not expect everyone to agree with me, but these variations in timbre are so characteristic that their preservation is worth a good deal. No. C2350 contains *Marche de Parade pour Cavalerie*, *Marche de la Garde Consulaire à Marenzo* and *Air des Trompettes, Timbales et Hautlois pour le carrousel de Monseigneur* (surely a gorgeous title!). No. C2351 contains *Sonnerie à Cheval et Marche du 1er. Regiment and Sambre et Meuse March*.

**Sergeant G. Morgan** and **Musician Ware** of the **Coldstream Guards** play the *Bugle Calls of the British Army* on two ten-inch H.M.V. records (Nos. B4111 and 4112). These records should be of great service to the many amateur buglers in the country in that they can, at will, hear the work done perfectly.

The Imperial Company's recording improves apace, and I have heard nothing better from them than *Quand Madelon* and the famous *El Abanico* played by the **Irish Guards Band** (No. 2679). This is a splendid one-and-threepennyworth.

H.M.V. No. B4094 contains a dull selection from *Samum* played by the **Coldstream Guards Band** and *Victory March* played and sung by **Nat Shilkret's Orchestra**, aided and abetted by an organ and a chorus. Similarly *Popular Melodies of the Past—Communityland* played by the **Welsh Guards Band** on Broadcast No. 838 is but a mediocre production.

From Columbia there are three new records. The **National Military Band** under **Clarence Raybould** play *Maids' Morris* and *Jamaica* on DB814 and *Christchurch Bells* and *Brighton Camp* on DB813. The arrangements in each case are those of the late Cecil J. Sharp and the playing is ideal for dancing, for which purposes the records are specifically made.

No. DX351 contains one of those decriptive medleys so beloved of many military band audiences but which always seem to me to be so futile. *Nautical Moments* is the title in this particular case, and we are given just what the title leads us to expect—*Life on the Ocean Wave*, *The Lass that loves a Sailor*, *Lowland Sea*, and so on, finishing up with *The Bay of Biscay* and *Rule Britannia* as a vociferous finale. The recording is first-rate and of the playing it is enough to say that it is of the **Grenadier Guards Band** at its best. Having got this out of their systems let us hope that **Captain Miller** and his men will return to the more interesting selections they are in the habit of giving us.

W. A. C.



## MISCELLANEOUS

### Mimicry

The art of **Elisabeth Pollock** is at present known only to those who have seen her curtain-raisers in the London theatre, and to listeners who have been lucky enough to hear her infrequent broadcasts. Now that she has made a record of some of her more famous imitations, she should become famous to a very wide audience. The record is called *A Theatrical Bazaar* and through the medium of her amazing powers of mimicry we hear Lillian Braithwaite, Gladys Cooper, Edna Best, Fay Compton, Gertrude Lawrence and many others as they sell "woolly lambs," "roses," and all the things that actresses do sell at charity bazaars and which everyone has to pay for and which no one ever wants. It is a really astounding record, not by any means of universal appeal, but I should think quite 90 per cent. of the readers of THE GRAMOPHONE would enjoy it (Col. DB795, 2s. 6d.).

A mimic of a different sort is **Imito**, the Australian, who imitates with uncanny skill the calls of birds, both English and Australian, and can also provide a whole host of "effects," from wood-sawing to a dog-fight (Zono. 6134, 1s. 6d.). A gentleman of undoubted talent if we are to believe the commentator's assurance that all the noises are made entirely with his mouth and without any artificial aid whatever.

### On with the Shows

The musical comedies continue to be a source of inspiration and, I hope, profit to the recording companies; this month it is the "Dubarry" who is in favour. There are the records by **Anny Ahlers** herself of the songs she sings in the play "The Dubarry," *I give my heart* (Parlo. R1205, 2s. 6d.), *Happy little Jeanne, To-day and Beauty* (Parlo. R1206), all sung in English, but with such bad diction that it is not easy to gather even what the songs are about. The voice is probably effective enough on the stage, but its faults are cruelly amplified by the recording microphone. **Olive Groves**, who has the perfect recording voice, sings *Jeanne* and *I give my heart* (Decca F2924, 1s. 6d.), and with **Titterton** the duet *Without your love*, Titterton singing *If I am dreaming* on the reverse (F2925). These are excellent renderings. **Derek Oldham** also sings *If I am dreaming* with *I give my heart* sung by **Winnie Melville** on the other side (H.M.V. B4179, 2s. 6d.); the same coupling appears on Imperial 2705 (1s. 3d.), the artists being **Darroll Richards** and **Natalie Grey**. All these performances are good, and the deciding factor is really the price. **Heddle Nash**, who plays the part of the lover in the play, sings *If I am dreaming* and *The Shepherd's Song* from "Helen" beautifully (Col. DB815, 2s. 6d.), and there is a very good *Selection* with **Rita Georg** and **Marcel Klass** as vocalists on Decca-Polydor PO5032 (2s. 6d.). The songs are sung in Dutch, and the accompanying orchestra is **Ija Livschakoff's**. There is also a fine *Selection* by **His Majesty's Theatre Orchestra** conducted by **Ernest Irving** (Col. DX349, 12in., 4s.), but the record that pleased me most is of *I give my heart*, played entrancingly by **Barnabas von Geczy's Orchestra** (Parlo. R1204, 2s. 6d.); I would gladly pay my half-crown for this.

When I saw "The Cat and the Fiddle" I was wishing all

the time that **George Metaxa** had played the part of the young composer, his voice blends so well with Peggy Wood's and their acting together in "Bitter Sweet" is still a very pleasant memory. Now that he has recorded *Try to forget* and *A new love is old* (H.M.V. B4177, 2s. 6d.) the wish is even stronger.

The **New State Symphony** make great ado about a *Selection* of Offenbach's music for "Helen" called *La Belle Héline* (Decca K656, 12in., 2s. 6d.) and the **London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Eimer Nilson**, with Organ and Chorus have done a beautiful selection of Humperdinck's inspiring music for "The Miracle" (H.M.V. C2429, 12in., 4s.). Great names for the Miscellaneous columns.

The **New State Symphony Orchestra** are also responsible for a *Selection* from Messenger's "Véronique" (Decca K659, 12in., 4s.), but luckily they take their responsibilities lightly as becomes so dainty a lady.

**Jay Wilbur's Concert Orchestra** and vocalists give new life to songs that are familiar to most of us in *Memories of Drury Lane* (Imperial Z124, 12in., 2s.) and **Edith Day** and **Robert Naylor** are welcome in two duets from Drury Lane successes, *One Alone* from "The Desert Song" and *Love, what has given you this magic power?* from "The Land of Smiles" (Parlo. R1200, 2s. 6d.). *More Musical Comedy Memories* come to life under the nimble fingers of **Peggy Cochrane** (Broadcast 3194, 1s. 6d.); a really well played and jolly record.

**Debroy Somers' Band** turn to *The Gay Nineties* for inspiration, and with the help of **Raymond Newell** make a record that many of the older folk will be glad to have (Col. DX352, 12in., 4s.), and **The Pavement Artists** do the same thing in a somewhat different style, but although the interpretation is distinctly different, it is none the less virile and attractive (Regal MR563, 1s. 6d.).

The second record of *John Watt's Songs of the Shows* is issued on Decca K658 (12in., 2s. 6d.) and is as competent and representative as its predecessor. The soloists are **George Baker** and **Olive Groves**.

Two current musical films are "Il est Charmant" and the new Chevalier vehicle "One Hour with You." **Chevalier** himself has recorded *O, that Mitzi* and *What would you do?* (H.M.V. B4173, 2s. 6d.) and introduces himself in his customary fascinating manner on each side of the disc. **The New Mayfair Orchestra** play a *Medley* (H.M.V. B4188) which seems a little thin for two sides of a ten-inch disc.

**Henri Garat's** records from "Il est Charmant" are in French, but his voice has much the same quality as Chevalier's, but is a good deal more musical. To anyone who has seen the film these Decca records (PO5017, 18 and 19, 2s. 6d. each) and the *Selection* of what are very tuneful airs played by **The Paramount Orchestra** (Parlo. R1209, 2s. 6d.) make a pleasant souvenir.

"Goodnight Vienna" is no longer with us in London, but the tunes linger on, and this month there is a *Selection* played by **Ned Fox's Film Fans** (Broadcast 842, 1s.), a *Vocal Gems* on Broadcast 3186 (1s. 6d.), and a solo effort of the theme song by **Roland Oliver** on Regal MR568 (1s. 6d.). I hope there is still plenty of sale for these tunes.

"On with the Show," 1932 edition, is in full swing at Blackpool again, and once more Imperial have signed up the artists who are appearing there. **Jack Payne and his Band** are due up there in August and have given their admirers a foretaste of pleasures in store with their *Selection* (2695, 1s. 3d.) which contains all the current Lawrie Wright hits. **Betty Warren**, a girl with a good voice and a flair for imitations, sings two duets *You'll find out* and *With all my love and kisses* with **Roy Barbour** (2691), and by herself *All for the love of a lady*, backed with *Tell me with a love song* beautifully sung by **Sylvia Cecil**, whose high soprano voice records extremely well (2690). **Trevor Watkins** is another of the stars and he has recorded *Luana* and *Marta* (2696), while **Bob and Alf Pearson** complete the quota with *Lovely little Silhouette* and *Wond'ring* (2698). Five bright records for 6s. 3d. and if you want another *Selection* there is one by **The Midnight Minstrels** on Regal MR569 (1s. 6d.). On with the Show!

## Good Voices

Modern negro spirituals like *River, stay 'way from my door* and *Without a song* are apt to lose their identity when the dance bands and comedians get busy with them. The latest is *Lawd, you made the night too long*, the sense of which entirely escaped me till it was sung properly by **Jack Hodges** with another, *Mammy is gone*, which is new to me, on Sterno 961 (1s. 3d.). This is distinctly a good record though the sentiment of the words rings no more true than in such ballads as *The song of the kettle* and *The Scavenger* upon which **Anthony Somers** wastes his good baritone voice (Sterno 960, 1s. 3d.). Dr. Aiken's setting of *Sigh no more, ladies*, on the other hand, has stood the test of many years and is still often accounted a genuine antique. **Victor Leonard** sings it, with *Take a pair of sparkling eyes*, well enough to make Sterno 969 excellent value at 1s. 3d.; but no more.

Four other tenors are so well known as leaders in their sphere as to raise no doubts as to the success of their efforts. The nonchalant ease of **Alfred Piccaver** in *Trees* and *Song of songs* (Decca M405, 2s. 6d.); the rhythmic suavity of **Richard Tauber** who has **Dr. Weissmann** conducting the orchestral accompaniment in German versions of *Vilja* from "The Merry Widow" and an attractive song *Manon*, reputed to be Willy Engel-Berger's Op. 200 (Parlo. RO20188, 4s.); the sweet urgency of **Derek Oldham's** wooing in Haydn Wood's *I want your heart* and Oakley's *I think of you* (H.M.V. B4167, 2s. 6d.), and the promise—it is still promise rather than certainty—of **Trevor Watkins** in Borganoff's *Gipsy Moon* and the fading *A little love, a little kiss* of Silésu (Col. DB818, 2s. 6d.)—here are four unimportant discs which might be fervently treasured. I trust that Mr. Watkins will have leisure to study his record of *Un peu d'amour* and to notice his perfect diction in the second verse and the injudiciousness of the rest of his performance.

As for diction, **Peter Dawson** is still the model even in two poor but popular affairs like *Just a corner of Heaven to me* and *I lost my heart to a melody* (H.M.V. B4174, 2s. 6d.).

**Richard Watson** does not shine too well in the diction competition, but it would be hard to find a more difficult song from this point of view than *I'm a Roamer* which he sings on Decca K653 (12in., 2s. 6d.). The backing is *The Floral Dance* in which the words, by reason of reiteration probably, are clearer. All honour to the accompanist here, he stays the pace well. This, by the way, is a May issue held over from last month.

The **Male Voice Ensemble** sounds a forbidding name, but when one remembers the singers who are generally recorded as soloists by H.M.V. one is not surprised by the excellence of their singing of those evergreens *The moon hath raised her lamp above* and *Watchman, what of the night?* (H.M.V. B4175, 2s. 6d.). They are in grand form.

**Roy Henderson and Male Quartet** are in solemn mood with a strange medley called *Hymnland*, which will be popular with a certain section of the public (Decca F2952, 1s. 6d.).

## Sing, Brothers

As always there is a lot of duplication of titles of the light songs of the moment, and few of the records can be singled out for special comment, so I have just selected a few which I think are distinguished by reason of the artistry of the singers and can be ordered by you with some degree of confidence if you want the artist or the tune.

Firstly there is the bubbling geniality of **Oscar Denes** in *Ever since I kissed her on the Volga* and *Magic Notes* (H.M.V. B4170, 2s. 6d.), either of which may be vulgar or not, as the words are almost completely obscured by the geyser-like eruptions of this bouncing German, who exudes vitality and joie de vivre in every sound and gesture.

Then there are **Ross and Sargent** in a characteristic treatment of *Old Man Bluebeard*, with the reasons why he chopped off each wife's head, with *Foolish over you* on the reverse (Parlo. R1199, 2s. 6d.) and an absurd frolic called *Oh, Mister Gandhi* in which much fun is made at the expense of the Mahatma's goat and robe and other appurtenances (Parlo. R1213, 2s. 6d.). The backing is *Auf Wiedersehen, my dear*, in which the charming voice of **Joe Sargent** is heard to advantage. These duettists have now joined **Greta Keller** on Decca, and make their bow with *Rain on the roof* and *Who's your little Who-zis?* (F2948, 1s. 6d.) which are not really worthy of them. Miss Keller, on the other hand, has made her best record yet in *Auf Wiedersehen* and *With all my love and kisses* (M404, 2s. 6d.) which was specially brought forward from the Mid-May list so that this review of it is somewhat out of date; but it must certainly not be overlooked by any of her admirers.

**Georges Seversky** is almost the male counterpart of Greta Keller; his soft insinuating style of singing either thrills the listener or infuriates him. If you like it try his new record of a little French song called *Quand tu me dis "Je t'aime,"* and a traditional Russian song which has all the plaintive appeal and rousing fire, in its alternating slow and fast movements, of the Russian Gipsy song. It is called *The long, long road* (Parlo. R1210, 2s. 6d.).

Three American singers who will all have their followers are **Singin' Sam**, who has something of the quality of our old friend Jack Smith, **Sylvia Froos**, a loud-voiced but rhythmical crooner, and **Marion Harris**, who is over here again and appearing in "The Jack-Pot" revue.

Sam sings *Starlight, Was that the human thing to do?* (Broadcast 3188, 1s. 6d.), *Somebody loves you* and *Lawd, you made the night too long* (3195), and I expect we shall hear more of him in the future. **Sylvia Froos** sings that modern fairy-tale song *When we're alone* in which two young people plan to build their house of dreams on the top of a skyscraper, and *Snuggled on your shoulder*, a saga of the dance-hall (H.M.V. B4163, 2s. 6d.).

**Marion Harris** puts on her best baby voice for *Is I in love?* *I is*, an epic of triteness, but made amusing by this singer, who never misses a point anywhere. The backing is *An Ev'ning in Caroline* (Col. DB822, 2s. 6d.).

## A DELIGHTFUL NEW SONG

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**Beans**

The **Kids of Casey Court** have recorded their summer outing to the seaside (Regal MR575, 1s. 6d.) in which they sing cheery songs, and little Mary Hagen, who has suddenly leapt into prominence, sings a solo. After various vicissitudes the children finally are bundled into their charabanc and set off for the sea. The kids of **Paradise Alley**, on the other hand, are taken by the genial organ grinder to Hampstead Heath, probably on Whit Monday, and enjoy the delights of the fair (Broadcast 843, 1s.). Both records are efforts to recapture the essence which made their predecessors successes, and both suffer by comparison, but they are good efforts. It was the apparent effortlessness of their first attempts that made them so attractive.

A different kind of beano is the *Hill-Billy Party* by **Bob Miller's Bull Frog Entertainers** in which the local society is entertained at Jennie's Strawberry Feast which is unfortunately ravaged by Jennie's dog. The American accent is not of the kind to which we are accustomed by the talkies, but as this is number three of the Parlophone Music of All Nations Series, we must not complain (Parlo. R1218, 2s. 6d.).

From Hill-Billies to **Carson Robison** is only a short step, and with his **Pioneers** he has made a record of two of his own songs called *I was born in Old Wyoming* and *Going to the Barn-Dance to-night* (Zono. 6136, 1s. 6d.). But **Carson Robison** also has another talent—that of whistling—and he displays this delightfully in *Tree Top Serenade* and *Nola* (Zono. 6135).

Yodellers are dying off this month, and only two of the most famous have recorded their efforts. **Harry Torrani** yodels the *Mississippi Yodel* and *Mammy's Yodel* (Regal MR564, 1s. 6d.) and **Friedl Lusser** of "White Horse Inn" fame gives *In the beautiful Tyrol* and *Lovely Ziller Valley* (Broadcast 3187, 1s. 6d.). O.K. by me.

**Comedians**

*Ain't it grand to be blooming well dead* continues to flourish as the prize comedy number of the moment; **George Jackley** is most morose of them all (Decca F2926, 1s. 6d.); **The Pearly Kings** (Zono. 6129, 1s. 6d.), **The Barmy Brothers** (Regal MR559, 1s. 6d.), **Billy Seymour and the Boys** (Sterno 949, 1s. 3d.) and **Bobbie Comber** (Broadcast 853, 1s.) all dwell on the subject with suitable verbosity. This must be pretty nearly the end of this distressing subject. The new comedy songs show a tendency towards military and historical inspiration. *Round the Marble Arch* is the story of the exploits of the soldiers off duty cheerily told by **Randolph Sutton** (Imperial 2703, 1s. 3d.; backed with a rather pointless song called *My Hiking Girl*), and **Billy Seymour and the Boys** (Sterno 964, 1s. 3d.) who keep entirely to the military theme with a backing of *The Soldier blew his bugle*, also sung by **Leslie Holmes** (Imperial 2704, 1s. 3d.) who can get more out of songs of this sort than most comedians. He tells the story (a long way after Addison) of *Sir Roger de Coverley*, who was "a bit of a lad" according

to this new version of his wanderings up and down the country. **Leonard Henry** tells the same tale with different inflexions, and on the reverse another story of a peppery *Majah-General Thing-a-me-bob* (Sterno 963, 1s. 3d.). He also appears in the Broadcast list in two sketches which will be familiar to wireless listeners, *In bed with the 'Flu* and *In the Bathroom*, neither of which I found very amusing (Broadcast 3192, 1s. 6d.), but his numerous admirers will probably be entertained by the "effects," splashing water, the explosion of the geyser, etc.

**Sandy Powell** has an enormous following, I believe, and it is a difficult task for any comedian to supply his admirers with two new sketches every month. Yet this is what he does, which may explain why I find so many of his records only mildly amusing.

This month, however, he has excelled himself in *Sandy, the Ballad Singer* and *Sandy's Ghost Story* (Broadcast 844, 1s.). Clean humour of the best type.

There are one or two humorous dialect records; our old friend **Old Sam** turns up again with a story about the Ark and another called *Albert and the Lion* which relates how young Albert was swallowed by the lion at the Blackpool Zoo and the consequent annoyance of his parents (Col. DX353, 12in., 4s.); and then there is **Our Bill** telling us about the *Village Cricket Match*, in which all the most outrageous things happen, told in the soft burring Gloucestershire dialect that is so attractive as well as amusing (Parlo. R1211, 2s. 6d.). **Julian Rose** continues his Jewish chatterings; *Levinsky Te ls how Cohen paid for the tram fares* and *Says I wouldn't go there any more* (Broadcast 847, 1s.). One has to listen very attentively to catch all the words in these rapid patter records, and it isn't always worth the effort. **Abe and Sandy** *On the Train* (Col. DB817, 2s. 6d.) have some funny

gags, but I found myself laughing more often at the absurdities of **Flanagan and Allen's** pronunciation of perfectly ordinary words and the absurd "Oi! Oi!" that follows the worst bloomers (Col. DB816, 2s. 6d.).

**A SELECTED LIST**

(excluding major works)

- Coriolanus Overture, Col. LX167.
- Lohengrin Prelude, Decca CA8089.
- Slavonic Dances, Parlo. E11204.
- Divertimento No. 8, Decca CA8083.
- Andante Cantabile, Decca F2745.
- Friedman, Col. DX350.
- Elisabeth Ohms, Decca CA8086.
- Adele Kern, Decca LY6021.
- Royal Belgian Guards Band, H.M.V. B4801.
- Elisabeth Pollock, Col. DB795.
- Carson Robison, Zono. 6135.
- Kids of Casey Court, Regal MR575.
- Stanley Holloway, Col. DX353.
- Ross and Sargent, Parlo. R1213.
- George Metaxa, H.M.V. B4177.
- Heddle Nash, Col. DB815.

LONDON EDITOR.

**Instrumentalists**

There are three records by **Reginald Dixon** on Sterno this month. *The Wee Macgregor Patrol*, and that unflinching favourite of the organists *The Whistler and his dog* (956, 1s. 3d.), both excellently played, the effects, particularly of drums, of a band in the *Wee Macgregor* being really skilful. The other two are of light popular songs of the moment, *Goodnight Vienna*, *The Whistling Waltz* (955) and *By the Fireside* and *Believe Me* (947), all with vocal choruses, and do not amount to much more than a passing pleasure in their ingenuity. **Quentin Maclean** plays *Just humming along*, an English tune, and the insistent *Rain on the roof* in which the rain is charmingly silvery and comforting (Col. DB821, 2s. 6d.), and on DB823 he gives the two tunes from "One Hour with You," the title song, and *What would you do?* Sympathetic renderings of good tunes. **Reginald Foort** plays two most melancholy numbers which do not fit in with his usual cheery demeanour at all. They are *When the rest of the crowd goes*

home and *Now that you're gone* (Imperial 2702, 1s. 3d.), with vocalist. Cheer up, summer is here, Mr. Foort, and your patrons will quickly succumb to the rival charms of Kingston if you are so gloomy.

**Kevin Buckley** on the organ of the Regent Theatre, Bournemouth, is much more cheery and plays a medley called *Old Folks at Home and Abroad* (H.M.V. B4184, 2s. 6d.) with a real zest for travelling and *Chopsticks*—the tune we can all play on the piano—but not quite like this. The composer is Billy Mayerl!

**Raie da Costa** is always scintillatingly bright, and *Just humming along* and *You, just wonderful you* (H.M.V. B4178, 2s. 6d.) are two tunes in which she has plenty of scope for her talent for dashing up and down the keyboard with startling alacrity. **Billy Mayerl** adopts a more stolid style as becomes *By the fireside* and *Try to remember me* (Col. DB806, 2s. 6d.), but his playing is always well-mannered and agreeable.

The harp does not seem to be quite the right instrument on which to play a medley of popular hits, but **Lorenzi** demonstrates on Broadcast 850 (1s.) that even a harp has its hectic moments. The skill is rather astounding, as also is that of **Harry Mortimer** whose cornet solos of *Warblings at Eve* and *Fatherland* (Zono. 6133, 1s. 6d.) are a lesson in technical brilliance to those interested in this most difficult of instruments. I have run out of suitable adjectives to describe the playing of **Eddie Peabody** who this month assaults Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, and what an assault! The Rhapsody emerges as a kind of tattered nightmarish gnome, while the *Indian love call* from "Rose Marie" explains why Rose Marie was left stranded (Col. DB812, 2s. 6d.).

### Light Orchestras

Habitues of the Monseigneur Restaurant in London will be familiar with the playing of **Montavani and his Tipica Orchestra**, and will know that they represent the best in dinner music as Roy Fox's Band represent the best in dance music. It is therefore pleasant to note that they have made their first record for Sterno, and that it lives up to their standard. The tunes are *Songs my Mother taught me* and Paderewski's famous *Minuet*, Op. 14, No. 1 (Sterno. 965, 1s. 3d.). Congratulations all round.

I wish I could be as enthusiastic about the **Mayflower Orchestra**, but I found their playing of Grieg's *Anitra's Dance* and Tchaikovsky's *Valse des Fleurs* (Sterno 958, 1s. 3d.) pretty poor. Recording manager, please note.

**Sandler** is on top of his form in a charming tune called *Jealousy* which he couples with *Live, Love and Laugh* from "Congress Dances" on Columbia DB808 (2s. 6d.); one of his best records.

**Tom Jones and his Orchestra** make their bow on H.M.V. (B4183, 2s. 6d.) with *Speak to me of love* and *Poem*, played in the style that has made their Sunday evening broadcasts so popular. Two pleasing twelve-inch Deccas are **Victor Ricardo and his Orchestra** playing a waltz medley called *Reminiscences* (K662, 2s. 6d.), an apt title, and **Ray Ventura's Orchestra** in *Fifty Years of Operette* (K657); mostly French, but familiar enough.

I enjoyed a medley called *For the Blue Ribbon* played by **Paul Godwin's Orchestra** (Decca-Polydor PO5011, 2s. 6d.) and also an appropriate revival of *You are my heart's delight* and *Who has implanted this love?* both from "The Land of Smiles" and played by **Orlando and his Orchestra** (Decca F2945, 1s. 6d.).

The **J. H. Squire Celeste Octet** are always reliable and musicianly, and their record, together with *Träumerei* and *Solveig's Song* played tranquilly by the **Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra** (Col. DB810, 2s. 6d.), makes a delightful couple for cool summer evenings in the dusk. The titles are *Phantom Minuet* and Drdla's *Serenade* (Col. DB809).

The **Orchestra Mascotte**, with its ever-present zooming

bassoon, is as attractively continental as usual in *Sphinx Waltz* and *Memories of Herculesbad* (Parlo. R1208, 2s. 6d.); **The Continental Novelty Orchestra** has a really jolly tune called *Puppchen* and that insinuating melody called *Tesoro Mio* (Regal MR565, 1s. 6d.); while **John Johnson and his International Orchestra** play two descriptive pieces, *By the Swiss Mill*, with yodelling, and *Little Italy* (Broadcast 3193, 1s. 6d.), in strict time that carries them along with a swing.

The Hawaiian guitars are comparatively silent this month, and **Roy Smeck's Vita Trio** are alone in the field with *By the Fireside* and *Dream Sweetheart* (Imperial 2701, 1s. 3d.); the titles, but not the music, are out of season. *Mimile's Valse* and *The Happy Whistler* (Parlo. R1202, 2s. 6d.) are attractively played by a **Bijou Accordeon Orchestra** with restraint which is so often lacking in these robust instruments.

In even gentler mood are **Billy Reid and the London Piano-Accordeon Band** in *Auf Wiedersehen (my dear)* and *Where the Blue of the Night* (Regal MR567, 1s. 6d.), two highly popular tunes. *Auf Wiedersehen* is also played by the **International Accordion Band** with the bright song *Back again to happy-go-lucky days* on the reverse (Zono. 6128, 1s. 6d.).

I liked the more natural functions of **Zigano's Novelty Accordeon Band** in *C'est Vous and Tango Serenade* (Sterno 957, 1s. 3d.), and the quiet thrumming of **Troise and the Mandoliers** in *Ay, Ay, Ay* (well sung by an un-named vocalist) and *O Lonely Moon* (Regal MR566, 1s. 6d.); two charming river pieces.

### Curios

A strange record is Columbia DB807 (2s. 6d.). It is called *From one sportsman to another*—that alone is enough to attract attention—but the sportsman is none other than **H.H. The Aga Khan** who proceeds to express his views on the best way to enjoy games, to tell us of his own prowess and to relate his own most exciting experiences. So far so good, but the oration is delivered in such a halting and monotonous voice, with ill-considered pauses while the script is adjusted, that the whole becomes a sort of monstrous joke at which one is ashamed to be caught laughing, yet it is impossible to take the matter seriously. Undoubtedly a collector's piece.

Another collector's piece is the fourth record in the Parlophone "Music of All Nations" Series. This is of a song called *Women are a bad lot*, sung in Spanish by a man named **Jose Oto** with a woman, **Felisa Galé**, with a most raucous voice chiming in at the end with what I imagine is a protest against the sentiments expressed in the first part of the song. On the reverse is an Andalusian folk song called *Juan Simon* sung by a woman, **Angelillo**, with quiet asides in a man's voice, as though he were commenting on the performance to a friend. Make a note of the number if you think you might be interested (Parlo. R1212, 2s. 6d.).

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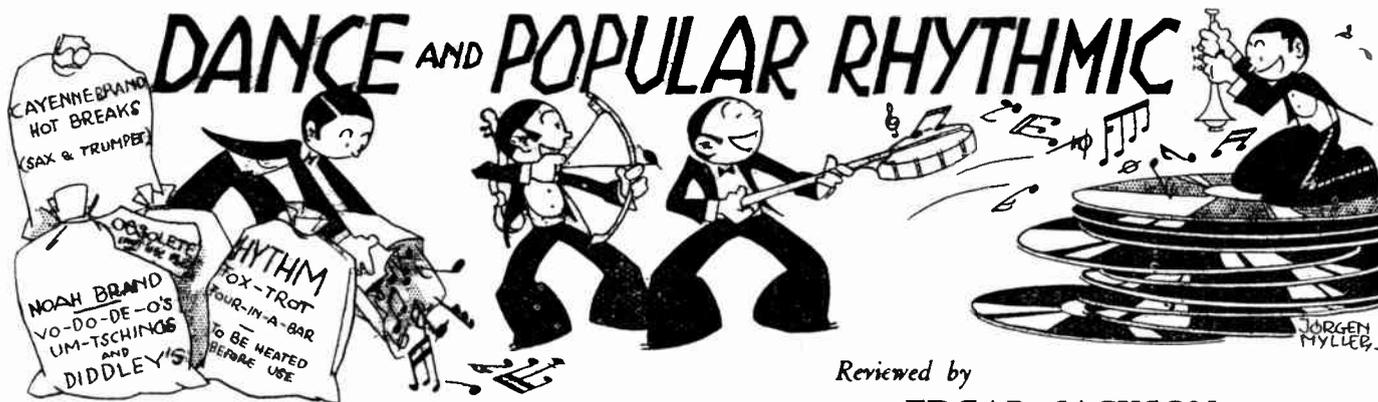
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Reviewed by  
**EDGAR JACKSON**

### Hot Dance Bands

Parlophone launch a Second "New 'Rhythm-Style' Series"—with provocative booklet

IDENTIFIED by a brand new blue and gold label design, which is to be retained exclusively for it, a second edition of Parlophone's "New 'Rhythm-Style' Series" was inaugurated with the issue on May 15th of six new records, followed up by four more which are on sale to-day (June 1st).

There is also a most interesting booklet dealing with the records. It is obtainable free from your dealer, and if you have not already procured a copy, I urge you to do so.

In addition to notes on each of the records and the Artistes responsible, there is a foreword entitled "Here's to Hot Music." This will come as Manna to the starved hyper-aesthetic critics, of whom my puzzled friend, "Feste," and his energetic seconds in the little "Musical Times" are such entertaining specimens, and we can all look forward with glee to some more amusing outbursts of pique that "this awful jazz" should be publicly lauded in such a manner.

Having explained that the commencement of a new series, in preference to the continuation of the original, is to draw attention to an endeavour to give us "something different," the foreword goes on to state "... we would point out that we consider and treat this new development in rhythmic music as a sincere and worth-while branch of the art."

#### The Secret of Success

There is no doubt that here is disclosed the whole secret of Parlophone's ability to produce such excellent hot records as they have given us in their "Rhythm-Style" series. This enlightened concern takes hot music as it should be taken—seriously. It may be but light as entertainment, but, as they say, it has its place in the world of music, and so, having decided to do it all, they go the whole hog and do it properly. They have not only given us the finest artistes, but obviously have at their disposal recording managers who understand the subject and are able to provide the artistes with the right material and produce them at their best.

Nor is that all. "The manner," the book-

let continues, "in which certain august personages in the world of classical music and numerous writers in the lay Press have seen fit to look upon this new music troubles us not: . . . we can all afford to be tolerant towards the decreasing minority who do not see eye to eye with us, even though our sympathies are always with those who, being exponents or enthusiasts of this newer and less conventional music, are the main bearers of the brunt of the usually declamatory outbursts by die-hards who continue to boast that they see nothing in it."

Well, that's carrying the war into the enemies' camp with a vengeance. To extend such a gesture to the hot music progenitors is clever propaganda (though probably none the less sincere for that), but to do so at the expense of the Press, with its powerful means of retaliation, which Parlophone are far too smart not to have foreseen, is sporting to say the least of it, and while it may not merit the Nobel peace prize, certainly deserves the Carnegie award.

#### Fletcher Henderson again

Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 of the new series are reviewed later, which brings us to 5, 6, 9 and 10.

Nos. 5 and 6, on R1196, are *My Gal Sal* and *Business in "F"* played by the *Stokers of Hades* (Amer.). (On top of "'Red' McKenzie and the Celestial Beings" this name is just about as much as even I can swallow—and live.)

Actually the *Stokers* are none other than **Fletcher Henderson and His famous coloured Orchestra** complete. If you are in any doubt compare the personnels as contained in the booklet and as given on page 488 of the April GRAMOPHONE. They are identical. The employment of the alias is probably simply because under his own name Fletcher is an exclusive Columbia artiste, though for all Columbia have done to let us hear his brilliant combination, it might have been exclusive to the moon. They have put out two titles in about four years.

In the nude, *My Gal Sal* is probably nothing much more than just a bright commercial dance tune, but dressed in the

Henderson apparel it becomes an entertainment which is as interesting as it is invigorating. The Henderson ensemble is one of the few that are sufficiently well drilled to be able to abandon themselves to the spirit of rhythm without any suggestion of disorder, and one result is that the performance has a most refreshing spontaneity.

At times, the force of attack is quite amazing. One notices it particularly in the first chorus, in which the brass section is not only compelling, but so well together that only the harmony discloses that it is not a trumpet solo. Equally conspicuous as an example of rhythmic team work is the passage by the saxophone section. There is good work early by trumpet, and much can be said for the two trombone solos, but the part of the record that entertained me most is the trumpet solo near the end. There is rhythm in every phrase that is squeezed out of the instrument, and I have to confess to a distinct partiality for this dynamic style with its busy, but comparatively simple phrases.

#### A Sousaphone Revival

Hitherto I have generally disliked sousaphones, and preferred the string-bass in the dance band, but there is some tuba playing in the accompaniment to this trumpet chorus which is making me change my mind. I have never heard such a sweet tone from the instrument any more than I have heard it used so cleverly. The part is more the sort of thing one would expect to hear from Ellington's string-bass player.

Unfortunately, the record tends to flop at the end—as though the arranger had had to hurry to get it finished, and not even a brilliant lead-in and short solo by the one and only **Hawkins** on tenor saxophone succeed in dispelling this suggestion of anti-climax, which is the one weak thing in the performance.

#### Commercialising hot rhythms

**Archie Bleyers' Business in "F"** can hardly be called an original composition. He has taken the rhythms and phrases which you have all heard in the more recent records by Ellington, the Casa Loma Orchestra and such-like outfits, and arranged them in the form of a hot number. What he has done he has done efficiently, and for the most part effectively, but it hardly shows that orchestrators are necessarily brilliant com-

posers or even creators of ideas with which to treat other people's compositions.

Still, be the composition good or otherwise, the **Stokers'** performance of it is one of the outstanding things of the month. They use **Bleyers'** published orchestration with only minor alterations. By now all dance bands should know how to play its rhythms, but apparently they do not, and it is a real joy to hear the well-nigh perfect style with which the **Stokers** interpret them after listening to the way the same rhythms in other tunes are murdered night after night by our dance bands over the Radio. As regards solo work, the honours go to **Hawkins** again for a fine first chorus and later the wonderful manner in which he performs the phrases he sets the ensemble to echo.

### "Girl Crazy" Tunes released

Nos. 7 and 8 (Parlo. R1207) are **Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra** (Amer.) in respectively *I got Rhythm* and *Lawd, You Made the Night Too Long* (v).

*I got Rhythm* is one of **George Gershwin's** numbers from the film "Girl Crazy." Although only just released here, the picture has been going for some time in America, and, in spite of the fact that **Chappell's** had not released the copyrights, as usual the West End bands got hold of the tunes as soon as they were issued in America and played them freely. If this has not caused it to be still-born—it has had this effect on more than one good number, as **Chappell's** know to their sorrow—*I got Rhythm* will be a hit here as it was in the States.

There are certain to be many records of it. I have already received a (for them) quite good commercial version by **Victor Arden—Phil Ohman and Their Orchestra** (v) (Amer.) (H.M.V. B6174) and the Col. (CB452) by **Fred Rich and His Orchestra** (v) (Amer.) which is only fair. I see it is also in the June Brunswick list by **Red Nichols and His Orchestra**, but this has not yet come to hand. I am told it is excellent.

The Brunswick will be backed with *Sweet and hot*, a good tune from "You Said It," played also by **Nichols**. The H.M.V. and Columbia are both backed with *Embraceable You*, played respectively by the bands responsible for the obverses. A tuneful melody number (also by **Gershwin**—he wrote all the music for this show) *Embraceable You* was featured in the musical comedy production "Girl Crazy," but unlike *I got Rhythm* does not appear in the subsequently made film. I mention this as Columbia say on their label, "Theme Song—Girl Crazy" which may be misleading.

### Louis starts a new war

Whatever the Brunswick record of *I got Rhythm* may prove to be it is doubtful if it will be such fun as the **Armstrong** version.

As you will gather from its title, the song is one of those lively affairs, and **Armstrong** gives it one of those ultra hot novelty treatments for which he is famous—or notorious: it depends on which way you look at it.

He starts off by politely calling the band a lot of cads and suggesting that if they played more and talked less about rhythm it might be better—rather unwarranted as, whatever faults the band may have, at least it has, and always has had, rhythm.

Whenever he isn't playing **Armstrong** keeps up a fire of chatter which includes the

introduction by name of most of the band as they do their solo bits. By the time his next three or four records have been issued we should know the history and origin of the whole outfit.

Although it gets very hectic towards the end—**Armstrong's** trumpet can only be a twisted mass of melted metal by now—as regards performance the record is a good deal better than most of the things we have had lately from this not always indefectible outfit. The ensemble and particularly the saxophone section are cleaner than usual (they need to be to make the crazy stuff in the last movements intelligible) and there is some really good solo playing by **Lester Boone**, the 1st alto, and **Zilmer Randolp**, the 2nd trumpet.

The backing is a new slow melody of the Spiritual type. It is put over with a strength that I would have called fervour were I not suspicious that **Armstrong** is not quite as sincere as the occasion merits. He has played the comedian so long now that it has become a habit with him. I refer, of course, to his singing. His trumpet playing is not only genuine, but as wonderful as ever, as you will hear in the last chorus.

### Dinah gets dizzy

*Dinah* (v) by **Duke Ellington and His Orchestra** (Amer.) (H.M.V. B6175) is a kaleidoscope, and if the designs do not go from the sublime to the ridiculous, the beauty of the earlier passages is certainly not found in the later, which get involved and almost lurid.

I am quite willing to concede that, taken as a whole, this is a brilliant orchestration, even more brilliantly performed, but there are parts of it which are beyond my understanding.

Following the solo vocal refrain I find myself at a passage when the solo voice articulates so badly that I cannot understand a word, to a muddled background of vocal effects and instruments. I can no more make out where we are in the scheme, or what it is all about, than I reconcile the (to me) conflicting harmony, but this may be my fault. I must hear the record a few more times. It is quite likely that the **Duke** has hit on something new and when I fathom it out I shall probably be revelling in it. The next movement is in very quick tempo and I feel that its elaborateness is too much of a good thing for the simple *Dinah*. The fine ending might well have been reached by other means.

On the other hand there are parts of the record—the introduction, the first chorus, and if only for the accompaniment the vocal refrain—which are enthralling, and you should get the record for them alone. They completely outweigh such other parts of the performance as you may agree with me in disliking.

The warm and colourful introduction is not merely a most fitting precursor for what is to follow, but has melody and emotional strength seldom found in these forewords which all too often are merely superfluities. The effectiveness of the first chorus lies in the gorgeous richness which the voicing and finely balanced tone of the ensemble provide. A slight closing of the harmony in the

first eight bars which are taken by the brass, an elaboration of the rhythmic idiom for saxophones in the second eight bars, some sinister effects by the brass near the end and effective new phrases in the place of sustained notes at the ends of the stanzas, otherwise the chorus is original melody, and the most simple minded should have no cause to complain that they cannot tell what the tune is. I think the vocal refrain might have been better sung, but there is character in it and, as I have said, the accompanist is most intriguing.

### What Sam thought of Delilah

*Sam and Delilah* (v), which **Ellington and His Orchestra** play on the reverse, is another of the numbers from "Girl Crazy"—the theatre production, not the film. On the whole it lacks the talent and finesse of **Ellington**, and its chief appeal to me lies in the irreverend dig at "Samson and Delilah" contained in its title—a piece of skittishness, the promise of which is not as wittily followed up in the lyric as it might have been.

### Wa-wa's are in season

**Duke Ellington and His Orchestra** are also in the Brunswick list. This is not their first appearance there, but it is their debut under the new contract which permits them to record for Brunswick under their own name, and for the occasion one naturally anticipates something exceptional.

And one gets it, but not as expected. Compared with the richness, lavishly laid on colour and elaborate Concert weightiness of parts of the H.M.V. *Dinah*, *Rose Room* (v) and particularly *It don't mean a thing* (v) (Brun. 1292) have a drawing-room lightness which lends an air of subtlety to the cleverness, amounting almost to genius, with which **Ellington** has treated these tunes.

*It don't mean a thing* is one of those silly, catchy tunes, the very simplicity of which offers such scope to do something with them. Looking in the junk chest one day, **Ellington** apparently comes across his old friends, the wa-wa mutes. The sight is too much. What a lark, he gurgles, I'll have some fun, and re-equipping the whole brass section with these relics he makes them daub on blobs of wa-wa's in close harmony. All through the record he keeps on doing it, and it has so delighted him that by the time the vocal chorus is reached he has worked out a brand new form of break for the contrapoints. The idea is most captivating and will certainly give a new lease of life to wa-wa mutes.

The record is very light and rhythmical and in addition to a fine trumpet chorus at the start, and later **Johnny Hodges** on his alto, introduces a new coloured girl singer whose unaffected youthfulness is most refreshing.

### Ellington plays piano

*Rose Room* is one of the less known, but none the less tuneful, melodies of the Art Hickman era of about 1922. **Ellington** opens it with a piano introduction and then follows a clarinet movement by **Barney Bigard** which is a veritable Concerto. Departing from his usual procedure **Ellington** next takes a whole chorus as piano solo and one is given an unique opportunity to enjoy the

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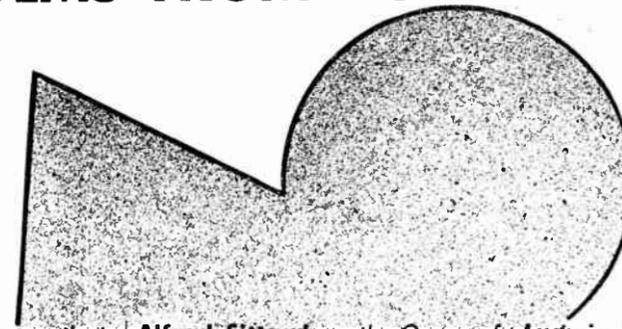
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perfect touch with which he plays his simple but skillfully constructed transcription.

The last chorus is conspicuous for the clever way in which Ellington has reconstructed the rhythmic idiom of the original melody and the perfect style with which the brass section interprets the new phrases.

And still intrigued by the new tone colours he has been able to get with them, Ellington works those wa-wa mutes into this side too.

### Hughes Ballet at the Savoy

Added interest is lent to **Spike Hughes and His Dance Orchestra's** *I've been in the storm so long*, a traditional Negro melody arranged by Hughes with vocal refrain by **Joey Shields**, and *Weary Traveller*, a new Spiritual by Hughes (Decca F2936), owing to the fact that **Pat Hughes** is responsible for all the music in a Negro Ballet, entitled "High Yellow" which is to be produced at the Savoy Theatre on June 6th.

The music includes, in addition to *Weary Traveller*, **Hughes' Sirocco** and *Six bells stampede* (these have already been recorded by his orchestra—Decca F2844), a Rumba and a new work by him entitled "Elegy." On the first night Sir Thomas Beecham and Constant Lambert will conduct; at subsequent performances, Pat, who is responsible for the orchestra, will probably personally direct it.

I have always been a severe critic of Pat Hughes' work, less because I have not admired it, and more because I have hoped to coax him to greater things by endeavouring to point out what in my humble opinion have been its flaws.

One of the best things about Hughes' music is that it has the tunefulness of the Spirituals. Extraordinary as it may seem, much of his work is more characteristic of genuine Negro music than the music provided to-day by many Negroes. Here is the reason. Hughes finds the inspiration for nearly all his melody in the Spirituals, whereas in the development of dance rhythm the Negroes have to some extent lost the simple tunefulness of these, their original music.

### Cab's Carousals

**Cab Calloway and His Orchestra** (Amer.) have revived *Six or seven times* (v) (Brun. 1294). With the exception of Cab's breezy vocalisings, this new version is practically identical with the Parlophone (R542) by the Chocolate Dandies, issued, if I remember, about the beginning of 1930. Both are good records.

The backing to the Brunswick is Cab's orchestra giving a very racial performance of a Blues called *Black Rhythm*. It is too strident for me.

So that you can be one up at the next shop talk, here is the personnel of **Cab Calloway's Orchestra**, complete with their nick names:—**Reuben "Red" Reeves**, **Roger "Dick" Dickerson** and **La Mar "Slop" Wright** (respectively 1st and 2nd and 3rd trumpets); **De Priest "Delo" Wheeler** (trombone), **Arvel "Bunky" Harriss**, **Andrew "Flat" Brown** and **Walter "Foots" Thomas** (saxophones and clarinets); **Benjamin "Bennie" Payne** (piano); **Morris "Fruit" White** (banjo); **Le Roy "Froggy" Maxey** (drums); **James "Old Man" Smith** (bass); and **Cab Calloway** (leader and vocalist).

*Clarinet Marmalade* and *Sweet Sue* on Brunswick 1307, and *My sweetie went away* on 1293, as revived by **Red Nichols and His Five Pennies** (Amer.) need not take up much of your time. They have their little bits of individual cleverness, but there is no development of plot, chiefly because there is no plot to develop, and they cannot even claim the atmosphere of the music of which they are supposed to be representative because the players have no scheme on which to work. All that is left for them to do is to sit down and try to be clever. They succeed but it means nothing.

*Twenty-one years* (v) the backing on 1293, I have segregated from the other three because, while no better of its kind, it is a different sort of thing—a Hill-Billy. The singer is **Johnny Marvin**.

In case anyone is interested here is the personnel of both sides of 1293: **Red Nichols** and **Johnny Davis** (trumpets), **Wilbur Schwitzenberg** (trombone), **Jimmy Dorsey** and **Irving "Babe" Rusin** (saxophones), **Fulton McGrath** (piano), **Arthur Bernstein** (bass) and **Vic Angle** (drums). Such as there is in the way of orchestration is done by **Red Nichols**.

Shall I? Shan't I? Yes? No? No. Well, yes, perhaps I'd better put *Dallas Blues* (v) and *Royal Garden Blues* (v) by **Ted Lewis and His Orchestra** (Amer.) (Col. (B446) and *St. James's Infirmary* (v) and *St. Louis Blues* (v) by **Ray Ventura and His Orchestra** (French) (Decca F2915) among the hot records, but at the best they are only "commercial" hot, and with a suburban idea of the subject at that.

## BEST OF THE MONTH.

### POPULAR CONCERT ARRANGEMENTS.

*By the Fireside and Paradise* by **Jack Hylton and His Orchestra** (12in. Decca K660).

### DANCE BANDS.

*Can't we talk it over?* and *I'm for you a Hundred per cent* by **Roy Fox and His Band** (Decca F2923).

*Paradise* (waltz) by **Ambrose and His Orchestra** (H.M.V. B6178).

*Rain on the Roof* by **Ambrose and His Orchestra** (H.M.V. B6171).

*What would you do?* by **Jack Hylton and His Orchestra** (Decca F2960).

### NOVELTY and COMEDY DANCE BANDS.

*Dick Turpin's Ride to York* by **Ray Noble's New Mayfair Orchestra** (H.M.V. B6169).

*It ain't no fault of mine* by **Roy Fox and His Orchestra** (Decca F2964).

*Sailin' in the Robert E. Lee* by **Ray Noble's New Mayfair Orchestra** (H.M.V. B6176).

### RHYTHMIC INSTRUMENTAL.

*Can't we talk it over?* and *Now that you're gone* by **Carroll Gibbons and His Boy Friends** (Col. DB805).

*Rockin' Chair* (piano solo) by **Garland Wilson** (Parlo. R1194).

*Two Tone Stomp* (guitar duet) by **Ed Lang and Lonnie Johnson** (Parlo. R1195).

*Weather Bird* by **Louis Armstrong** (trumpet) and **Earl Hines** (piano) (Parlo. R1194).

## Vocal

### Those Boswell girls again

This is getting ridiculous. Every time there has been a new **Boswell Sisters** (Amer.) record I have thought this is the limit, they will never do anything better, and I have accordingly exhausted my superlatives, only to find the next one better still.

And now they have got me in the same mess again. Their *Was that the human thing to do?* on the reverse of their great performance of *We've got to put the sun back* (Brun. 1284), is colossal.

Having already said all there is to say about their music I refuse to go into a description of the record. I can only tell you to get it if it is the last one you buy, and listen to those trills in the 5th, 6th, 15th and 16th bars of the movement following the instrumental chorus. The soul with which **Connie Boswell** sings the last passage is—Good Heavens, they have nearly lured me into starting all over again.

The arrangements are the combined works of the **Boswell Sisters**, the **Dorsey Brothers** and **Victor Young**. The perfect accompaniments are by the **Dorsey Brothers' Orchestra**, consisting of **Tommy Dorsey** (trombone), **Bunny Berigan** (trumpet), **Jimmy Dorsey** (clarinet), **Harry Hoffman** (violin), **Dick McDonough** (guitar), **Joe Tarto** (bass), **Stan King** (drums), with **Martha Boswell** at the piano.

**STOP PRESS**—Two new **Boswell Sisters'** records—*Everybody loves my baby* and *Stop the sun, stop the moon, my man has gone*

### HOT DANCE BANDS.

*Business in "F"* and *My Gal Sal* by **The Stokers of Hades** (Parlo. R1196)

*Dinah* by **Duke Ellington and His Orchestra** (H.M.V. B6175).

*I got Rhythm* by **Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra** (R1207).

*I got Rhythm* by "Red" **Nichols and His Orchestra** (Brun. 1300\*).

*It Don't mean a Thing and Rose Room* by **Duke Ellington's Orch.** (Brun. 1292).

*Swanee Rhapsody* and *Blue Tune* by **Duke Ellington's Orch.** (Brun. 1306\*).

### VOCAL

*Dragging My Heart Around and I'm Crazy 'bout my Baby* by **Thomas "Fats" Waller** (Parlo R1197).

*Everybody Loves my Baby* and *Stop the Sun, Stop the Moon* also *Was that the Human Human thing to do?* and *We've got to put that Sun back* by **The Boswell Sisters** (Brun. 1295 and 1284).

*Goodnight, Moon* by **The Pickens Sisters** (H.M.V. B4176).

*How am I doing, Hey, Hey and I heard* by **The Mills Brothers** (Brun. 1283)

*Oh, What Thrill and Just Friends* by **Arthur Jarrett** (Panachord 25188).

\* These records, to be issued on June 10th, arrived too late for detailed review.

(Bruns. 1295—to be released June 10th)—just to hand.

I am saved. Both are great performances, but neither quite reaches their *Was that the human thing to do?* First title all in hot rhythm with wonderful "banjo effect" movement in quick tempo. *Stop the sun* all in Blues tempo. Best described as a Negro lament. Something quite new for the sisters—or anyone else.

### Delightful new female Trio

The **Pickins Sisters** (Amer.)—a new vocal trio introduced to us on H.M.V. B4176 in *Good-night Moon* and *Was that the human thing to do?*—are not rivals to the Boswell Sisters. There is room for many more similar artistes, even if they were exactly the same sort of thing, but they are not, although in their own line they are not so far behind. They are "straighter" than the Boswells, and, if they have not the same fiendish cleverness, they sing their ambitious special arrangements of the songs musically and with exquisite charm. In every sense of the word they are Artistes—and in addition they are something new in singing trios. *Good-night Moon* is the better side by far.

### A friendly Chap

One of the most entertaining cabaret artistes the coloured race has ever produced is not an exaggerated description of **Thomas "Fats" Waller** (Amer.), who sings to his own piano accompaniments on Parlo R1197 (one of their Second "New Rhythm-Style" Series records) *I'm crazy 'bout my baby*, a well-known song of his own composition, and *Draggin' my heart around*.

Many of you may have heard of "Fats" Waller. For years he has run a hot band on Victor and recorded piano solos for the same label, but these are his first recordings as a singer. He has all sorts of entertaining tricks and devices of his own, but the success he will undoubtedly have will probably be due chiefly to his ability to get into his recordings his amicable, chatty personality.

It is difficult from these records to say how much of a pianist he is. What he does is more than sufficient for its purpose, but most of the time he just strolls about the keys playfully. At times you begin to wonder if you ought not to show your superiority by turning up your nose, but it is at these moments that he will cleverly twist a phrase and almost before your sneer is born it has to turn to a smile of approbation.

### The Mills Bros. again

Two new records by the **Mills Brothers** (Amer.)—*How am I doing, Hey, Hey and I Heard* (Bruns. 1283)—I would like to write reams about, but as, of course, you have all heard this unique coloured vocal quartette, it will probably be sufficient if I say that they are as clever and entertaining as anything the Brothers have given us.

### A new rhythm Singer

A typical Negro rhythm singer—and a good one at that—is **Mamie Smith** (Amer.) who makes her bow to this country in the Parlophone Second New Rhythm-Style Series (R1195) in a light, rhythmical song called *Jenny's Ball*. Unfortunately she is none too well supported by the second rate Negro accompanying orchestra. What she needs is a producer like Tommy Rockwell and the Dorsey Brothers' Orchestra.

### In Ballad style

Those who like the rhythmic ballad singers will doubtless enjoy *Snuggled on your shoulder* and *Now that you've gone* by **Bing Crosby** (Amer.) (Bruns. 1285), although I prefer young **Arthur Jarrett** (Amer.) in *Oh! what a thrill* and *Just Friends* (Panachord 25188). Bing is carrying his affected sentimentalism for the gallery too far, particularly when one remembers how he can sing—e.g. his first chorus in the Mills Brothers' *Dinah* (Bruns. 1271)—and I find the more natural, but none the less stylish, way in which Jarrett uses his fine masculine voice much more refreshing. If Decca are wise they will immediately put Jarrett on to Brunswick and go all out to advertise him. Given the right publicity—so far he has had none—with the British public he could easily be a bigger hit than Crosby. I don't think the powers that be have quite realised what a singer Jarrett is.



ROY FOX

whose dance band at "Monseigneur in Piccadilly is considered second to none in the country.

### Instrumental

#### Jazz Chamber Music by Armstrong and Hines

We have had "Jazz" Opera, Symphony, Ballet and Rhapsodies. Now it seems we are to have "Jazz" Chamber Music. That is the only way one can describe *Weather Bird* as played on trumpet and piano by **Louis Armstrong** and **Earl Hines** (Amer.) (Parlo. Second "New Rhythm-style" Series"—R1194). It is true that, while the jazz operas, etc., have for the most part been travesties of the Negro idiom, the chamber music—if *Weather Bird* is a fair sample of it—will be authentic.

The suggestion of high browed intellectuality which always springs to my mind when legitimate Chamber music is mentioned I find in *Weather Bird*, and, although it is a gross exaggeration, it is not exactly unexplanatory to say that in **Hines** we have the Bach of Negro rhythmic music.

*Weather Bird* is to some extent a new conception of rhythmic interpretation on

the piano. One finds new and at times complicated idioms which are none the easier to follow because the fundamental beat, which we have hitherto thought an essential feature in the production of this sort of rhythm, is omitted as being, for concert if not for dancing purposes, too obvious to be necessary. I only hope you will understand the record better than I understand a good deal of Chamber music: it is worth it. I certainly do not think you will find it so dry.

### Be yourself, Boh

On the reverse we are introduced to a new pianist, **Garland Wilson** (Amer.), playing **Hoagy Carmichael's** *Rockin' Chair*.

Wilson's performance is excellent of its kind, but I think he has made a mistake in following too closely the recognised styles of numerous well-known "dance" pianists, in preference to developing his own. I have two records which he made some months ago for his private use. They show that one of his greatest attractions is a flair for very pyrotechnical transcription which his amazing technique enables him to perform with a brilliance at times unbelievable. *Rockin' Chair* has neither of these features. He takes it at slow tempo, and, while the transcription is well conceived and interesting, it is never full enough to require any display of pianistics such as he can give. If he is wise he will immediately make some records more on the style of those private recordings. They will command larger sales, not only because of their breath-taking speed, but because they are something quite different from the usual run of rhythmic piano playing. Why not condense them to 10 inches, Mr. Wilson, and re-record them?

### Ed Lang finds a partner

*Two tone stomp*, a guitar duet by **Ed Lang** and **Lonnie Johnson** (Amer.) (Parlo. Second "New Rhythm-style" Series"—R1195), from the Okeh race list, is an example of plantation Negro rhythm, as distinct from that which the coloured musicians in the big cities have made out of it, though I doubt if one would find such wonderful technique in the banjo strummings from Dixie. The brilliant playing of these two Artistes makes even the old-fashioned idiom entertaining, though I cannot agree with the Parlophone booklet that there is likely to be a return to it. The rhythm of to-day's dance music is nearer to it than it has been for some time, but I think it is merely a turn back along a short part of the road to find a new by-pass along which to proceed.

### Savoy Music

*Can't we talk it over?* (v) and *Now that you're gone* (v) by **Carroll Gibbons and His Boy Friends** (Col. DB805) will appeal mainly to a less sophisticated market. Mostly piano solo by **Carroll Gibbons**, they are the acme of tunefulness and polish, but Carroll has his moments of inspiration. One is the introduction to *Now that you're gone*. Notice the notes on the 3rd beats of the 2nd and 4th bars. They almost sound wrong until one realises, on reaching the 4th beat of the 4th bar, that they correctly match the harmony of the theme which starts there. A clever little piece of construction.

The introduction of vocal refrains is something new for this combination.

## Dance Bands

### Beautiful records of new waltz hit by Hylton and Ambrose

The hit of the moment in America is a new waltz by Nacio Herb Brown called *Paradise*.

It is from Pola Negri's first talkie, but you need not worry about that. The film, which may not be generally released until the autumn, will definitely not be a sensation in this country.

On the other hand, the waltz definitely will. Not only is it fascinatingly tuneful, but so catchy that most people will be able to whistle it after at the most a couple of hearings.

The first records of it to be issued are a 12in. symphonic arrangement by Peter York, which, played by Jack Hylton and His Orchestra, backed with their symphonic performance of Ray Noble's *By the fireside*, is on Decca K660 (v), and a dance version by Ambrose and His Orchestra on H.M.V. B6178 (v).

Both are beautiful records. Peter York's score is one of the best "popular concert" arrangements we have had, and for once the tune is thrown into stronger relief by the treatment it receives, instead of being made just a scaffold for orchestral effects.

#### Piling on the Agony

On the reverse of Ambrose's performance his orchestra plays another waltz, *The voice of the old village choir* (v). You do not need me to tell you what sort of a tune this is: its title does that: but it is quite inadequate to describe the lengths to which they have gone to produce "local colour." Not content with an orchestration in which the "atmosphere" is so thick that you can cut it with a knife, introduced into the performance are church choir, church choir boy, church organ and church bell effects. Probably the church mice, warden and cleaner have their parts too, if one only knew.

Well, if you like the kind of thing the record will enrapture you. It is all done with marked efficiency—the Ambrose touch, you know; but I look upon religion as a subject that is not elevated by the stressing, for commercial purposes, of its sentiment, no matter how sincere and all that the attempt may outwardly appear to be, and I much prefer Ambrose in, for instance, *Rain, on the roof* (v), which, with *Somebody loves you* (v) as the backing, is on H.M.V. B6171.

*Rain on the roof* is both catchy and unusual. By no means its least attractive feature is that it carries out its title in ways pleasantly more subtle than usual. The same may be said of Ambrose's orchestration. It is one of the best he has had lately, and is perhaps excelled only by the way his orchestra plays it.

#### The rest of the Ambrose's

Ambrose's remaining records are *What would you do?* (v) and *One hour with you* (v), two good tunes from the film "One hour with you" (H.M.V. B6173); two most tuneful melodies, *Day by day* (v) and *Auf wiedersehen* (*Until we meet again*) (v), which are on B6170, and, on B6179, *Love, you funny thing* (v) and a new *Changing of the guard* type of comedy-novelty called *Round the Marble Arch* (v), which is produced with appropriate effects. All these are good

samples of Ambrose in his most popular mode.

#### That nonsense about Hylton

There seems to have been some talk lately about Jack Hylton and His Orchestra having gone off. If you think so, you should hear some of their latest records.

Included among the titles are *Auf wiedersehen* (v) and *With all my love and kisses* (v) (Decca F2938); *Just Humming Along* (v) which, backed with the tuneful waltz, *Five minutes to twelve* (v), is on F2949; *One hour with you* (v) and *What would you do?* (v) on F2960; *Rain on the roof* (v) and the waltz *Blue of the night* (v) (F2939); *Snuggled on your shoulder* (v) and *Lovely little silhouette* (v) (F2959); and, on F2958, *I give my heart*, the waltz from "The Dubarry," which, rather inappropriately, is backed with a would-be hot tune *Rhythm like this* (v).

It would seem fairly obvious that it is not the band that has been off, but the recording; but at last Decca seem to have got over most of their troubles in this respect, and the reproduction now is good. Of course, most of the records are in very commercial vein, and will not excite the fans, but the Hylton ensemble is as immaculate as ever, its performances just as melodious and Pat O'Malley's singing delightful.

There is one record however, which shows that the band can be rhythmically stylish when it wants to. No, I don't mean *Rhythm like this*. You can forget that one. Neither tune or performance is outstanding. I refer to *What would you do?* This is well scored in modern idiom that at times is almost hot, and in the last two choruses, particularly, the band puts up a fine show.

The bass player sounds as though he were none other than "Spike" Hughes. Why the hurry in the first chorus, Pat? Otherwise great.

Just a minute, please, while I answer the 'phone.

#### Cause and—

"Hello. No, it's not me. I'm out. All right, I'll fetch myself. (One minute's interval, please.) Hello. Yes, this is my Aunt speaking. What noise do goats make? I don't know; ask . . . Oh, BOATS. Why didn't you say so. Well, something like a . . . an . . . er . . . a . . . I say, won't anything else do? What about a string of sausages, or a mouse trap. No? Pity. Well, it's something like a train, isn't it? Yes, I think so. Perhaps a little more chug-chug, and a little less choo-choo. What? You haven't got anything that goes chug-chug? Never mind. Choo-choo will do. Just as good. Not at all, dear boy: pleasure, I assure you. O.K. Thank uncle for the garden hose. So long."

Of course I ought to have been more careful. Listen to the result:—

#### —effect

*Sailin' on the Robert E. Lee* by Ray Noble and His New Mayfair Orchestra (v) (H.M.V. B6176) would be more appropriately named "Ridin' in Pacific 893" (with apologies to Arthur Honegger, but these telephone

people do mess about with our numbers so, don't they?) but what's a boat or a train among friends. The end justifies the means, and anyway trust Ray not only to do something different, but to do it well. This latest picture of a ride in a boat, I mean a sail on a train, is as exhilarating as the wind (?) that reddens the guard's nose, or should I say the smoke which fills the sails. And it is all done by kindness; that is to say genuine musical instruments. No peas in boxes: no sandpaper in anybody's pants. Just Bill Harty and his drums, clever orchestration and a suitable popular song. Ray, you certainly know how to entertain the public—and me.

#### The Keaton of the records

On the reverse, the same band is not up to standard in their commercial dance version of *With all my love and kisses* (v), but on H.M.V. B6169 they play brightly a 6-8, *Back again to happy-go-lucky days* (v), and *Dick Turpin's ride to York* (v). I seem to smell the hand of Buster Keaton, pardon, Mr. Kester Dodgson, in the merry way in which this infamous travesty of Mr. Turpin's famous escapade is presented. No one knows so well how to make these comedy numbers doubly amusing. He has written some original patter which is really funny because it is such arrant nonsense. Stop me and buy one—this one for preference.

From the Victor list H.M.V. (B6177) have released *Goodnight, moon* (v), well played in American commercial style by Jack Denny and His Orchestra (Amer.) The piano stuff in the last chorus will sell it. On the reverse Victor Arden-Phil Ohman and Their Orchestra (Amer.) in *When we're alone* (v).

#### Rhythmic Roy

Among the best performances of a number of the most popular tunes of the moment are those by Roy Fox and His Orchestra, whose new records include *I'm for you a hundred per cent* (v) and *Can't we talk it over?* (v) (Decca F2923); *When we're alone* (v) and *Somebody loves you* (v) (F2922); *Gettin' sentimental* (v) and *Lovable* (v) (F2963) and *Love, you funny thing* (v) (F2964). While these are designed essentially for public consumption, you will find them interesting and played with that sense of style and rhythm for which the band is justly renowned.

Yet there is something missing in these records, and after some consideration I have come to the conclusion that it must be due to the recording. This may seem strange in view of the satisfactory manner in which Decca are now reproducing Hylton, but it is nevertheless a fact that the Roy Fox records still seem to lack the crystal clarity and stereoscopy which would enable us to hear this fine band at its best.

*They say that Mary had a lamb—  
Its fleece was oh! so white;  
But everywhere that Mary went  
Those fleas would always bite.  
But it ain't no fault of mine.*

The above is one of a number of equally shocking puns contained in the dozen or so nonsense verses of a new comedy fox-trot song called *It ain't no fault of mine* (v) which Roy Fox plays as the backing on Decca F2964. Ocarinas, chopsticks on the piano, and a passage from the anonymous, but famous *Symphony for the Black Notes* all help to make it more amusingly ludicrous.

(Continued next page—middle of col. 1.)

## American News

from

Leo K. Goldstein,

Chicago Correspondent to THE GRAMOPHONE

DEAR READERS, 10th May, 1932.

In my last letter I promised to give the personnel of **Guy Lombardo's Orchestra** when its new Brunswick records were issued in England. I see they have just been released, so here goes to redeem the promise. Here is not only the personnel, but some fan chat thrown in (no extra charge):—

**Guy Lombardo.**—Is 29 years old. His violin cost him 50s. and has only one string. He doesn't play it—much. Listens to other people's opinions and then does as he had intended to do all along. His ambition is to sleep at nights instead of days. Weighs just over 11 stone. Hobby is speed-boating. Believes no two couples dance exactly alike, is invariably well-dressed, and, when he does not forget an appointment, is always late.

**Carmen Lombardo.**—Has composed many song hits, plays first saxophone, and is solo vocalist. A big hit with Radio fans. His hobbies, favourite sports and diversions are backgammon, backgammon and backgammon. Is now engaged in writing an encyclopaedia on these subjects.

**Lebert Lombardo.**—The third of the tribe. Gene Goldkette said to have offered Guy three trumpet players for Lebert. Is 25. Crazy about movies: has invented and built his own home apparatus enhanced by colour and sound, and gives regular shows to his friends. Attends four different movie theatres on a Sunday. Used to sing with the band, but

has now decided that the trumpet needs all his wind.

**Victor Lombardo.**—The Adonis of the group. Is 21, but says he is older. (I don't know. Ask me another.) Plays baritone saxophone. Answers to the nick-name of "Useless." Fidgets with his tie. Has a favourite movie actress, but can't remember her name.

**Fred Kreitzer.**—The pianist, affectionately known as "Enemy," all because during the war someone discovered he had a German ancestor in 1487 (or thereabouts). Is 28. Eats almost anything at any time, but says he likes potatoes best to kid you he's Irish.

**Larry Owen.**—Plays second saxophone and does many of the orchestrations. Is 23 and hails from Cleveland, being the only member of the band not from London (Ontario, not Middx.).

**Derf Higman.**—Real name Fred, but thinks it natty to spell it backwards. Is 23 and the tallest member of the band. Goes down to the Bowery several nights a week and buys meals for about 20 down-and-outs. Says his pet aversion is "Enemy"—you see, they live together with George Gowan.

**Ben Davis.**—Studied to be a tool-maker, now plays bass horn. Is 26. His home resembles a laboratory. May be expected to sprout long whiskers any day now.

**George Gowan.**—Would like to be an aviator, but is the drummer. Makes his

living pitching pennies and his beer money out of the band.

**Jim Dillon.**—Is 28 and a swell trombone player. The once proud, but now ashamed, possessor of a "race track" suit which a five cents auctioneer gagged him into buying. Jim wore it six months before realising he'd been had for a sucker.

**Francis Henry.**—Plays guitar and banjo. Composed the hit "Little Girl," but was let off with a caution.

\* \* \*

And now for the happenings of the moment.

So many new signings of dance bands have recently been effected by our leading recording companies, that my head is quite dizzy with them. As, however, they will probably turn up sooner or later in your supplements you may like to know what to expect; so I had better try and sort them all out. Let us take them according to the concerns for which they are recording:

**Victor (your H.M.V.)** have secured:

**Peter van Steeden and His Orchestra**, the interesting point about which is that Peter is the composer of the song hit, *Home*:

**Rudy Newman and His Orchestra**, who are playing at that haunt of our elite, the Ritz-Carillon Hotel:

**Marty Brett and His Orchestra**, about whom I don't know anything:

**Charles "Buddy" Rogers** (of "movie" fame) and the orchestra he directs at the Hotel Pennsylvania Grill. ("Buddy" does all the vocals in his orchestra's records: **Jeanette Loff**, also of movie fame, is assisting vocalist):

**Gus Hasten and His Orchestra**—another one I don't know anything about:

**Jimmy Grier and His Orchestra** of the Coconut Grove. (Jimmy took this spot over from **Gus Arnheim** and retained most of Arnheim's band—according to press agents' report from Camden, N.J., the style of the band is much the same as when Arnheim had it—the vocals are to be sung by **Donald Novis**, who is featured in the film "Majesty, Her Love"); and as I have previously stated:

**Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra**, whose first Victor records are due to be released sometime next month (June). Louis' recent Orchestra has now made its last records for Columbia and Okeh, and after finishing his tour with it Louis took a two week's vacation during which all sorts of rumours flew about. However, they were given the lie when someone spotted him hale and hearty at the Grand Terrace in this town where his old crony **Earl Hines** leads his band from his box of ivories and wires. Pandemonium broke loose when Louis was discovered, and, of course, he had to do his stuff. One of Hines' trumpet players lent Louis a trumpet, out came the little mouthpiece from his pocket and not until then was quiet regained.

Now Louis is out at Frank Sebastian's New Cotton Club in Los Angeles, with the same orchestra he had when he made *Memories of you, Shine, You're driving me crazy, The Peanut Vendor, I'm in the market for you*, etc. He will use this orchestra again for his new Victor recordings.

Columbia's lists already do, or shortly will contain:

**Art Kassel and His "Kassels in the Air"** (water! water!)—a Historiette of which I have sent with this letter:

**Dan Russo and His Orioles**, who previously recorded for Brunswick:

(Continued from preceding page.)

Among the Columbia's are the four numbers from the film "One Hour with You." *One hour with you* (v) and the waltz, *We will always be sweethearts* (v), are played by the **Savoy Hotel Orpheans** on CB448—how this band wastes itself: like being a Senior Wrangler and spending your days on simple addition—and *What would you do* (v) and *Oh, that Mitzi* (v) are played on CB449 by **The Masqueraders**. *Oh, that Mitzi* is the brightest and far and away the best of the four as regards performance.

### Henry gets caned again

**Henry Hall and the new B.B.C. Dance Orchestra's** new recordings include: *I lost my heart in Heidelberg* (v) and *Leave me alone with my dreams* (v) (Col. CB445); *Nobody else but Elsie* (v) and *The turning of the tide* (v) (CB450) and *You*, and the waltz, *Five minutes to twelve* (v) (CB444). This band has become a most curious mixture. It combines the musical manners of Mayfair with Wigan's ideas of dance music.

### Gems from "The Cat and the Fiddle"

Previously Columbia artistes, **Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians** (v) made their debut early last month under their new exclusive Brunswick contract with 12in. arrangements of *Between the Devil and the deep blue sea* (introducing *Blues in my heart*) (v) and a fox-trot medley of *Gems from "The Cat and the Fiddle"* (v) introducing: *Try to forget, She didn't say yes* and *The night*

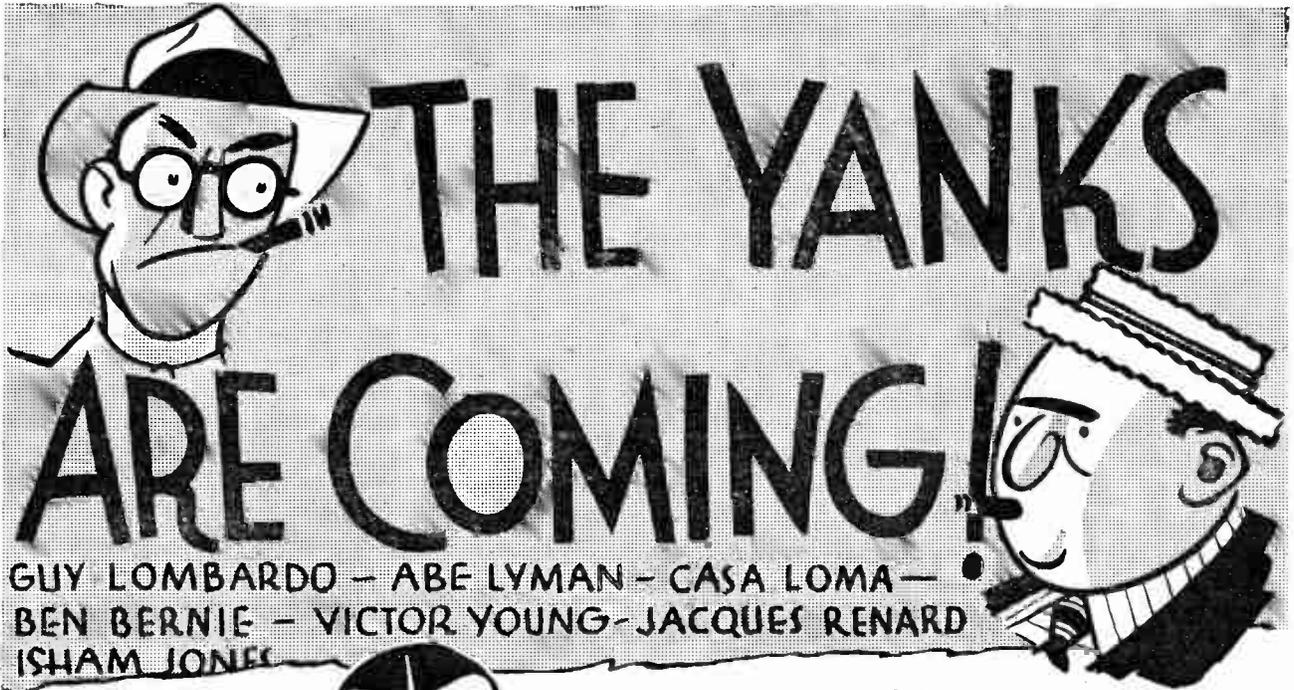
*was made for love* (Bruns. 106). This is one of American society's pet dance orchestras, and it is not difficult to see why. Its discipline and precision are little short of amazing. Apart from that, there does not seem to be anything to rave about, although the arrangements are in a way clever. I do not think the recording has helped it. All resonance is damped out of the studio, the instruments placed as near the mike as possible, and then recorded as fully as they dare. The result is like looking at the band under a magnifying glass. It says much for it that it stands this drastic test.

### Jack Payne

Among the month's Imperials by **Jack Payne and His Orchestra** are *Majah General Thing-a-me-bob* (v) (2698), a comedy number with the usual patter effects, the backing of which is *Somebody loves you*; *Day by day* (v), which with its harp is very "concerty," and a quick number, *The turning of the tide* (v) (2694); *Goodnight Vienna* (v) and the waltz, *Five minutes to twelve* (v) (2700); and, on 2699, *Snuggled on your shoulder* (v) and a comedy fox-trot *Snap your Fingers* (v).

Also on Imperial are *Land of love and laughter* (v) and a 6-8, *The Cough Drop Shop* (v) (2692), and, on 2693, *The little toy soldier* (v) and *Sailin' on the Robert E. Lee* by **Sidney Firman and His Band**. I am afraid this combination cannot be classed among the best. Its rhythm is rooty-tooty, it has little originality, and its records are apt to be boring.

EDGAR JACKSON.



# The fight is on!



They arrived some time ago but now—they're HERE—challenging the supremacy of Jack Hylton, Roy Fox and other leading exponents of jazz.

Perhaps Christopher Stone must be held responsible for putting a spark to the dynamite—has he not, through many broadcasts, propagated the idea that the super-heat of American jazz makes British interpretations seem like damp squibs?

Has not his inflexion when announcing a Guy Lombardo record and then a Roy Fox record suggested that Guy puts it across the Monseigneur—and how! Or is it just our imagination?

One thing is certain—the fight will be a pretty one. Jack and Roy are good for twenty rounds—and more. Guy and Bernie may be relied upon to upset the theory that "Life is just a bowl of cherries."

Life is real, life is earnest, etc., etc. One long struggle. Seconds out!—the Yanks are here!

*—says Jack and Roy*

**LET 'EM ALL COME!**

*See You!*

**ANOTHER  
GREAT  
IMPERIAL  
MIRTH-  
QUAKE!**

**LES LIE  
SARONY**  
Singing  
**'AINT IT GRAND  
TO BE BLOOMING  
WELL DEAD!**  
both sides of IMPERIAL  
2688

**13**  
TEN EACH INCH

**IMPERIAL  
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**GREAT  
SELLERS  
ON  
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**BROADCAST 1** 9 INCH  
HENRI BENITO'S SAN MARINO  
ACCORDION BAND  
833 Congress Dances  
Selection, in two parts

**BROADCAST 16** RED LABEL  
3186 Vocal Gems from  
'Good Night, Vienna,'  
in two parts

**BROADCAST  
THE RECORD FOR EVERY TASTE**

Eddie Duchin and His Orchestra who supply the music for the "Ritzy" crowd at the Central Park Casino, N.Y., and:

Perry Bechtel and His Colonels, who also have been in the Brunswick list.

Brunswick's new one is the Crisco Serenaders, under the direction of Victor Young. Consisting entirely of strings and percussion, they work alternately with the Mills Brothers on the same commercial Radio hour.

\* \* \*

Now for some odd bits of gossip.

After having given the business a rest for a couple of years, Roger Wolf Kahn is in New York organising a fifteen-piece band, the debut of which is expected about June 1st.

\* \* \*

I deeply regret to record the death of Carlton Coon, Co-director with Joe Sanders for 13 years of the well-known Coon-Sanders Dance Orchestra. He died from blood poisoning which developed from an abscess of the jaw.

Joe will carry on the orchestra which he says "will always be known by the name of Coon-Sanders—Coon would like it that way"

\* \* \*

Benny "King" Carter, coloured star saxophone player formerly with Chick Webb, has joined McKinney's Cotton Pickers—evidently to fill up the gap created by the departure of Don Redman. Why do so many people call him Redmond?

\* \* \*

Herman Rose, formerly recording manager to Columbia and one of the few who know how to produce hot rhythm stuff, has been signed by Irving Mills to take charge of all recordings by artists working under Mills' aegis.

\* \* \*

Waring's Pennsylvanians have acquired a new vocalist who is "Knockin' 'em Cold" at the Roxy Theatre in New York. His name is Nelson Keller, and they say he is a w-n-t-e Louis A. His trumpet playing resembles Louis' too. Waring himself is soon to leave the Roxy, but his Pennsylvanians are to remain there with the theatre's 60-piece "jazz" pit orchestra.

\* \* \*

Bing Crosby blew into town on the 22nd of last month. On the 23rd and 24th he went to the Brunswick studios in the Furniture Mart to record with Isham Jones' Orchestra. Lennie Hayton and Eddie Lang, who were tripping with Bing, were put into the record as additional attractions. The titles made are, *Waltzin' in a dream*, *Lazy Day* by Gus Kahn, *Happy go Lucky Me* and a revival of that fine hit *Sweet Georgia Brown*.

I had a chat with Eddie and Len after the session, but most of our conversation isn't fit for publication. Eddie has put on quite a bit of weight, but Len is still as dapper and irresistible as ever.

Jimmy Dorsey and Joe Venuti were supposed to have accompanied Bing, Eddie and Len on their present tour, but the money wasn't big enough. It is a pity as Bing is sadly hampered by pit orchestras even though Hayton conducts. What could Bing not do with that famous Blue Four behind him?

Bing has a new peculiarity—at least I hadn't noticed it previously. He continually taps with his toe when singing. In quicker

tempo he changes from the left to the right foot and vice-versa as each foot gets tired.

Recently he left for Hollywood to make a picture called "Wild Waves." Many well-known radio and recording musicians went with him including Ed. Lang and, I think, Dorsey, Venuti, and Hayton.

\* \* \*

Columbia are the first in the field with a long-playing record—it runs for 6 minutes—adapted for standard machines working at the normal speed of 78 r.p.m. The first two records are medleys from the musical shows "Face the Music" and "Hot-Cha," *One hour with you*, the fourth side being a waltz medley.

\* \* \*

On May 6th, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Whiteman (Margaret Livingstone) left the Orchestra in Chicago and departed for a month's holiday to Hollywood. On June 6th, Paul rejoins

### Best Sellers in America

for the month of April were:—

#### BRUNSWICK.

1. 6285—*Paradise* (waltz), Bing Crosby.
2. 6276—*Shine*, Bing Crosby and the Mills Bros.
3. 6261—*Love, you funny thing*, Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians.
4. 6269—*I Heard*, The Mills Bros.

#### COLUMBIA.

1. 2606—*Home and All of Me*, Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra.
2. 2590—*You can depend on me*, Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra.
3. 2636—*Goodnight, my love*, Art Kassel and His "Kassels in the Air."
4. 2635—*My Woman*, Ted Lewis and His Band.

#### VICTOR.

1. 22904—*Paradise* (waltz), Leo Reisman and His Orchestra.
2. 22968—*There's nothing the matter with me and Say*, George Olsen and His Music.
3. 22969—*Keepin' out of mischief now and I know you're lying*, Coon-Sanders' Orchestra.
4. 22966—*You're the one and Tell me while we're dancing*, Waring's Pennsylvanians.

the Orchestra and opens for the summer season in the Biltmore Hotel, New York.

\* \* \*

Every year about this time in America the Waltz comes back to popular favour. This year the hit is *Paradise*. In fact it looks like being the hit for quite a while to come. During the warmer days, not only in the popular field is the waltz in favour, but also in the classical field, as exemplified by the Columbia company in their release of the complete *Chopin Waltzes* in ten parts played by Robert Lortat, noted French pianist.

The Brunswick Company report that their album of Strauss' *Waltzes* is the biggest seller since Ravel's *Bolero* took the world by storm.

It seems that the moral for summer is, "Waltz your time and troubles away."

I hope you in England will all be able to do so.

Your contributor,  
LEO. L. GOLDSTEIN.

### HISTORIETTES No. 1.

#### Art Kassel

and his "Kassels in the Air"

by

Leo K. Goldstein

Among our better commercial dance orchestras which have yet to receive the push of publicity which they deserve are Art Kassel and His "Kassels in the Air."

The shocking pun contained in the band's name is, I agree, enough to damn it for life, but you may take it from me that its title is quite the worst thing about it.

Art Kassel believes in simple tunefulness. Seldom does he play hot; never does he make a noise in an attempt to create the impression that he is doing so. His music is smooth and sweet, but has an individuality that at once sets it apart from that of any other orchestra.

Kassel was born in Chicago. At an early age he lost both parents, and as a result, found himself as one of hundreds of little scraps of humanity in an orphanage.

But our young friend had grit. He took up the fight early. At the age of eight he secured a clarinet and for six years worked assiduously to master the instrument.

A set back in his musical career was caused by the war, during which he served in France in the 33rd (Illinois's) Division, but that little trouble over, he quickly took up the threads of his earlier activities.

After playing in various organisations, during which he rapidly acquired the ideas of the modern school, he formed in 1928 his own orchestra.

Hard work and enthusiasm soon brought the band a keen, if small following, and eventually it was signed to record for Victor, but Kassel was dissatisfied with the conditions and results, and after making about ten records, he threw in the contract.

But this little contretemps only spurred him on to further efforts. He secured the R.K.O. Circuit and after touring the country obtained Radio contracts which included the Shell Oil, Montgomery-Ward and Co., and Lucky Strike (Cigarettes) Commercial hours, and broadcasts over the N.B.C. and C.B.C. networks. He obtained engagements in a number of good hotels including the Congress and Bismark, and has to his credit a number of compositions.

And now the band has been signed by Columbia and looks like coming into its own.

The combination, which is the same to-day as it was when originally formed, consists of Kassel himself, who, in addition to being Director, vocalist and arranger, plays 1st (alto) saxophone and clarinet, thereby being one of the four-piece reed section, which is completed by Ralph Morris (alto and clarinet), Ding Johnson (alto, clarinet and flute) and Floyd Town (tenor and clarinet). There are only two brass—Jack Davis (trumpet—he doubles also on flute) and Ponzi Crunz (trombone). The rhythm section is made up of Carl Bertram (piano), Cliff Masteler (guitar), John Jacobs (drums), and Bob Hill (bass). There is an additional vocalist in the person of Milton Antler, and harmonised vocal trio is provided by Morris, Johnson and Town.

# HIS MASTER SPEAKS

## The New H.M.V. Language Study Catalogue

**L**ANGUAGE records have always offered even bigger problems than the rest of the catalogue: specialised problems which have perhaps caused some hesitancy in developing this side. The selection of material for recording is very difficult; for it is impossible to cater at once for adult classes, individual students, and the schoolroom. The new H.M.V. catalogue makes some gallant experiments in this direction. The choice of speakers is a tricky business. The recording must be of the highest excellence; for one thing, the ear cannot be asked to restore distorted sounds in an unknown language (even the best records still require the ear to be broken-in a little); for another, educational records must often be used in noise-pervaded rooms with vile acoustics on aged instruments! The very forward recording adopted in the new records on the present list (some are transfers from foreign lists, but these are for advanced students, anyway) comes out well on quite inferior machines. The catalogue contains extensive notes on the method adopted in the records and introductory essays on each language; it should be in the possession of all language teachers and all concerned with adult education (one would particularly commend it to W.R.I.'s, Literary Institutes, W.E.A.'s and the like).

**Key Sound Records.** *French, German, Italian, Spanish.*  
B4148, 4006, 4149, 4150, 2s. 6d. each.

In each case, every characteristic sound of the language is illustrated by several, necessarily disconnected, words. A leaflet gives sound, words, and translation. These records are recommended to all private students whether interested in the longer courses or not; they should assist singers also; and their application to class teaching will be obvious. The German record, for example, gives special attention to glottal stop, umlaut, final consonants, alternative *r*-sounds, etc. The Spanish record forms the commencement of the new Spanish course, and illustrates all the diphthongs and triphthongs. The enunciation is remarkably clear.

**Tales and Dialogues.** *French, B4145-7; German, B4142-4; Italian, B4139-41; Spanish, B4136-8; 2s. 6d. each; leaflet with each record.*

The text of these is nearly identical in all languages; it was written by M. Stéphan and Mile. Vière for the French set; each record contains a travel dialogue on one side (sea passage, customs, and railway travel) and on the other two or three anecdotes. Three voices are heard in the dialogues and each speaks one side of the stories. These short series are therefore well adapted for class use; they are of medium difficulty and give a number of idiomatic phrases; the articulation is rather pedantic in a few of the dialogues, notably the German, which is a trifle wooden; the French, on the other hand, is amusingly natural; or is that only a lesson in national traits?

**French Dictation Records.** B4060-4, 2s. 6d. each.

This series was prepared by M. Pierre Hugon for French students of shorthand; it can be used for this purpose, for dictation work, etc. It has, however, two qualities of more general interest: French spoken slowly but naturally (60 to 120 words per minute) and the introduction of many commercial expressions; one side of each record is a letter or circular. Text leaflets are provided. The records are recommended especially for continuation and adult classes.

### Other French Records.

The French course by M. Stéphan and Prof. Jones is now well known, also the extracts from French literature by the former. The two Guitry albums are naturally included, with five records newly transferred from the French catalogue. Two are by **M. Denis d'Inès**. One of these only has reached me; it contains the dancing lesson scene from Molière, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* with Lulli's music; and it is safe to say that it will feature on a Buried Treasure list some day. If anyone who is not wanting to learn languages has read as far as this, I advise him to hear E595. The other three transferred records are spoken by **Mme. Marquet**, and include selections from Hugo, Rostand, Coppée, Baudelaire, etc.

**Pictorial Talks for Beginners in German.** Anton H. Winter. B4033-8, album 2s. 6d.; picture book 1s. 6d.; grammar 1s.; complete 20s.

The idea of teaching from pictures is not, of course, new; but in the present case the illustrations are from 16th century miniatures illustrating the twelve months of the year. The conversation about the pictures is well selected and very clearly spoken, though Herr Winter's accents in the short sentences of the opening records are rather military. The feature of the books which accompany the series is the system of grammatical references, which cannot be described here; the catalogue gives examples and methods for using the records in class and private study. A very interesting series from the teacher's point of view, and not too extensive (or expensive).

### German Language Course.

Dr. Siepmann's course has been reviewed piecemeal; his more southern accents (? Saxony) contrast interestingly with Herr Winter's Prussian speech; his talks in English about German grammar raise points which cannot be discussed here. The course is very extensive, 24 records at 4s., C2108-11, 20-1, 54-71. Three literary records are brought from the Electrola lists. **Bruno Schönfeld** is a noted actor, and his declamations from Goethe's *Faust* (C2333, 4s.) should attract others than students. **Adele Proeseler** contributes two records of children's stories, which I have not heard.

**Spanish Course.** B4150-61, 2s. 6d. each.

This course is based on Prof. Peers' *Skeleton Spanish Grammar* and is very concise; no English is spoken. Three voices are heard, one a lady's. The arrangement, including practice sentences and paradigms as well as conversation and short narrative, appears excellent for the serious student. As in the other H.M.V. courses, it is not intended for those who wish only to pick up a few travel phrases; for that purpose there are the special phrase records already issued. Five literary Spanish records are to be issued; the examples I have heard are *Cantares* and *Joselita en su Gloria*, spoken by **G. Marin**, B4048, 2s. 6d., and extracts from *Vidas Cruzadas* (Benavente), mainly by *Sr.a. de Artigas*, B4040, 2s. 6d.

T. L. MACDONALD.

## Microphone Favourites

# CEDRIC SHARPE

by C. A. BELL

ONE of the most accomplished of British musicians is the well-known 'cellist Cedric Sharpe, who first achieved fame as a solo artist but who during the last six years has been associated with various chamber music organisations. Born on April 13th, 1891, in London, he showed early signs of musical talent and commenced the study of the 'cello at the age of six, as a private pupil of Tennyson Werge. He worked with this master for seven years, making his first appearance in public at the age of thirteen, when he gave a recital at the Wigmore Hall, London. This early debut was of great importance to the boy's career, for it clearly proved that he possessed talent that would, one day, place him in the very front rank of British artists. Acting upon the advice of his master he made but the one appearance, following which he returned to his studies for a further two years with Werge. At the age of fifteen he was entered at the Royal College of Music as a pupil of W. H. Squire, with whom he worked for a period of five years, making excellent progress and winning in his third year the Rajah Tagon Gold Medal.

Upon leaving the Royal College he commenced his public career by making an appearance at the Wigmore Hall, London. This concert was very well received by both Press and public, for Cedric Sharpe's mature interpretations more than fulfilled the promise of his boyhood, and he immediately took his place, by common consent, in the front rank of British musicians. The next nineteen years were occupied by the young artist in a series of tours through the British Isles, during which he gave recitals and appeared as soloist with the orchestras of the Queen's Hall, Beecham, British Symphony, Goossens, New Symphony and the London Symphony.

In 1924 he founded the well-known Virtuoso String Quartet which is composed of the following players: Marjorie Hayward, 1st violin; Edwin Virgo, 2nd violin; Raymond Jeremy, viola; and Cedric Sharpe, 'cello. This quartet, which has not changed its members since the inauguration, is well known throughout the British Isles, which it has frequently toured, not only in quartets, but in quintets with many noted artists such as Harriet Cohen, William Murdoch, Arnold Bax, Leon Goossens and others. In addition to the Virtuoso String Quartet, Cedric Sharpe is a member of the Chamber Music Players, the Chamber Music Trio, the English Trio, the Harp Ensemble, and the Cedric Sharpe Sextet, which latter organisation he founded in 1930. These are all interesting organisations, but one cannot help wishing that Cedric Sharpe, instead of making up the ensemble of so many different combinations, would devote himself exclusively to solo work; or, following the example of the Flonzaley and Léner Quartets, found a quartet whose members would devote themselves solely to their own organisation.

He has frequently broadcast from all the most important stations in England, not only as a soloist, but also with the Virtuoso Quartet and the Chamber Music Players. His compositions include half a dozen pieces for the 'cello, about

eight arrangements for that instrument, six songs, and several arrangements for quartets.

His 'cellos are a David Techler (dated 1701) and a Buthod (dated 1897), while his bows include a Todd and a Hill. He is a Professor at the Royal Academy of Music.

He recorded for "His Master's Voice" Gramophone Company in 1915, making about sixty solo records, many of which have been cut out of the catalogues when H.M.V. annually reduce the recording list of their artists. The

numbers left, nine double-sided 10in. plum records priced at 2s. 6d. each, include many familiar and popular tunes, such as Beethoven's *Minuet* backed by the *Serenade* of Pierné; Rubinstein's *Melody in F*, with the *Simple aveu* of Thomé; a composition of Sammons, *Little Columbine*, backed by another tuneful little work called *Evensong* (Saint Amory); a *Lullaby* by Cyril Scott, backed by a delightful little Chopin *Waltz*; Tchaikovsky's *Chant sans paroles*, backed by Liszt's *Consolation*; a *Tambourin* by Rameau, with a *Goodbye* by Huyts; *Twilight* by Friml, backed by a Pergolesi *Air*; a *Berceuse in A flat* of Tchaikovsky, and *Après un Rêve* by Faure; and finally Woodworth's *Harlequin and Columbine*, backed by *Chanson Louis XIII* and by a *Pavane* of Couperin. These records are practically all with piano accompaniment, and many of the arrangements are by Cedric Sharpe himself.

Next on the list are two 4s. double-sided 10in. records; the first, the ever familiar *Barcarolle (Tales of Hoffmann)* with a lesser known work of Glazounov, *Chant du Menestrel* (Op. 71), on the other side; the second *La Cinquantaine* (Gabriel-Marie) and the ever beautiful *Ave Maria* of Gounod. One 6s. 12in. double-sided record completes the list of solos with Van Biene's well-known *Broken Melody*, backed by the equally familiar *Largo* of Handel.

Three records, which may appeal to many people, include Cedric Sharpe's collaboration with Marjorie Hayward (violin) and Sir Walford Davies (piano) in trios. These are two 4s. 12in. plum labels, double-sided records. The first, a *Suite of Melodies from Alcina, Alexander's Feast* and *Otho* (Handel); backed by the *Largo in E flat* from Beethoven's *Trio No. 4* (Op. 11). The second a *Presto in E flat* from Beethoven's *Trio No. 1* (Op. 1). The collaboration of three well-known British artists will probably attract many people; but to others these odd movements from trios are particularly unsatisfactory, and one complete trio, by these three artists, would be more welcome than a dozen single movements similar to the two recorded.

Last on the list are the records of the Virtuoso Quartet, and here, indeed, is a feast of good works for the eyes of chamber music enthusiasts. The Virtuoso have a fine list to their credit, five complete quartets: three Beethoven, the Debussy, and the César Franck; all very well recorded, and of particular interest as they are made by a home team.

The César Franck *Quartet in D* (Album Series No. 18) is composed of six double-sided 12in. records. The quartet is a long one, but the recording is good and the Virtuoso have carried it through in fine style. Next on the list is Debussy's



CEDRIC SHARPE

*Quartet in G minor* (Op. 10) (Album Series No. 19). This work occupies three double-sided and one single-sided record, the remaining side of the fourth record containing the *Scherzassai* of Mendelssohn's *Quartet in E flat* (Op. 44, No. 3).

The Beethoven *Quartet in E flat major* (Op. 127) (Album Series No. 35) is on four double-sided and one single-sided record, the final side of the last record being a *Menuet* from Dittersdorf's *Quartet in E*. These are excellent series of records, the *Andante con moto* in particular receiving a most sympathetic interpretation, while the *Finale* is a fine piece of recording. The Beethoven *Quartet in C major* (Op. 59, No. 3) (Album Series No. 36) is another beautiful quartet, and shows

the Virtuoso at its best. This is on four double-sided records, the eighth side containing the *Rondo in C major* from Op. 74, No. 1 of Haydn.

In addition to these complete works there are two 10in. double-sided plum records and four 12in. double-sided plum records by the Quartet, containing various small pieces.

The most interesting of these is a *Theme and Variations* from Haydn's famous "*Emperor*" *Quartet* (Op. 76, No. 3), and an *Introduction and Allegro for Harp*, with Strings and Woodwind accompaniment by Ravel, in which the Virtuoso is supported by Messrs. J. Cockerill, R. Murchie, and C. Draper.



## TURN TABLE TALK

### *A Good Start*

Our tenth volume opens with good omens for music lovers. The H.M.V. Connoisseur's Catalogue, second edition, is probably in the hands of all our readers by this time, and during the next few months we shall devote several pages to reviews of the recent additions to this invaluable treasury. The Polydor additions to the Decca catalogue are less formidable and can be dealt with in the ordinary course of reviews every month. These two companies are certainly providing us with food for thought and prudent extravagance during the summer months.

Just as the news came that the Education Departments of Columbia and H.M.V. were being amalgamated under Mr. W. J. Hands (who took charge of the Columbia Education Department it seems quite a short while ago), we received the H.M.V. records reviewed elsewhere in this number by Mr. T. L. MacDonald. For the preparation of this excellent "Modern Languages" catalogue we have to thank Mr. W. H. Kerridge, who followed Mr. Alec Robertson and Mr. Walter Yeomans as head of the H.M.V. Education Department: and it is clear that the driving force of the Hands-Kerridge combination will be a tremendously valuable power in developing the latent possibilities of musical and linguistic education by means of the gramophone record.

The twelve discs (10 in.) which are used in "Pitman's Rhythmic Records and Keyboard Mastery Course," arranged and compiled by Maxwell Crooks, were made in the Columbia studios, the album and book of 56 pages costing 35s. This is a typical instance of a useful undertaking carried out with complete efficiency in such a way that it must surely be also a sound commercial proposition.

It is worth noting that a Commission is being set up under the auspices of the Institute of Adult Education, the British Association, and the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films to examine and report upon "The Place of the Gramophone in Education."

### *A Wide Range*

The Index to Volume Nine which Mr. Alex. McLachlan has compiled for us and which is nearly ready for distribution—see particulars elsewhere—is an impressive guide to the recording activities of what is regarded as a year of depression; and when one remembers that the titles considered worthy of inclusion in the section of Works and Composers are not those upon which recording directors expect to make profits, it becomes even more impressive. Long live Prestige, the stimulant which produces these riches for our readers, who are after all only an oasis in the desert of the world's record buyers.

Beethoven's *Eroica*, about which Mr. Anderson writes this month in a new series of re-views that has long been demanded

by our readers, might never have been available on records, if it were not for Prestige suitably counterbalanced by such apples of the recording director's eye as Leslie Sarony and George Buck, who can produce on demand such gold-mines as the Casey Court Concert or "Ain't it grand to be blooming well dead?"

### *Tightening the Belt*

The odd thing, however, about this business is that the recording company which concentrates upon popular titles and eschews Prestige does not necessarily succeed in these lean days. Success is far more dependent on distribution than on production; and while the Crystalate Company, which makes Imperial and Eclipse records and controls Broadcast records, is going from strength to strength and has actually beaten the sales of the famous Stein Song by the sales of the "Worm Song" above mentioned, other recording companies with much the same class of output are not doing at all well, and some have been obliged to give up their advertisement pages in THE GRAMOPHONE, surely a desperate sign of distress. As always when it comes to tightening the belt, the fit man will last longest.

However, the moral is apparently that we must make super-human efforts to support the recording companies who still offer us the "good stuff," in the hope that they may never lose heart.

So buy the classic roses  
And dread the leaner times  
When Sarony decomposes  
And Bucks are only dimes.

### *Small Ads.*

Mr. P. G. Hurst's enthusiasm in his conduct of "Collectors' Corner" must have infected a good many others with the idea of disposing of old records or acquiring them in the collecting spirit. But our Exchange and Mart page, which has existed almost from the beginning, is strangely stunted in growth. By now it ought to be one of the principal features of THE GRAMOPHONE.

One of our English readers who inserted an advertisement of surplus records for sale wrote that he was much pleased with the results, but did not expect a reply from so far away as Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies. Why not? THE GRAMOPHONE finds its way to nearly every corner of the world, and so far as one can judge by correspondence, the further away a reader lives the keener he is.

On June 6th, by the way, Mr. Hurst is borrowing for me or lending me a number of the rarest records—mostly operatic—to broadcast for the B.B.C. Fibre needles and an E.M.G. machine are to be used instead of the usual steel and pick-up.

**Choirs**

It is not always easy to judge the size of an orchestra or a choir from a record, but I was surprised when M. Nadejine told me that the Russian Choir in Paris, about which he wrote last month, consists of only nine singers. They sound more like the Don Cossacks Choir in number.

Let me here note that the St. David's Singers, who have recorded for Decca, consist of thirteen voices. I had the privilege of dining with them not long ago and of hearing their really lovely singing. They are amateurs, conducted by Mr. E. Kenneth Thomas, who has infected them one and all with his keenness and musicianship; so that to hear them enjoying themselves in harmony was to share their enjoyment.

**Short Commons**

From the Recorded Music Library, 59, George Street, Baker Street, London, W.1, comes their April catalogue, a milestone in the progress of an enterprise that everybody said was needed but that no one had hitherto succeeded in establishing.

The lunch-hour recitals of Imhof House are another enterprise that has succeeded; less risky perhaps than the other, but by no means a certainty. The programmes are particularly well thought out, and I strongly advise any reader who happens to be within reach of Imhof's to try one.

Some dates to be noted are the Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson recital at the Wigmore Hall on June 4th; the First International Competition for Singing and Violin at Vienna, June 5th to 19th; the Aldershot Tattoo, June 11th and 14th to 18th; and the Eleventh Oxford Summer Course in Music Teaching, August 2nd to 10th, with Major J. T. Bavin directing.

Mrs. J. H. Squire opened the Celeste Octet Hotel at Molash near Canterbury on the Saturday before Whitsun, and the "smartest roadhouse in England's countryside" is rapidly becoming the rendezvous of J. H. Squire's innumerable followers. It is on the Sidcup by-pass, seven miles short of Canterbury.

The two gramophone films that were made for the Gaumont Sound Mirror—one in our London Office, the other a record-wear object lesson with Mr. E. E. Warneford's fascinating micro-photography—have been presented to me by the Gaumont Co. Ltd. for inclusion in our archives; and if any Gramophone Society or reader with the necessary projector (standard size) would like to borrow them for a private showing, I should be glad to lend them.

Joseph Szigeti, after his article about distant gramophiles in our March number, is off again touring Australia and New Zealand this summer and making for America by Java, Japan and Honolulu with music, music all the way.

**Listeners' Corner**

Correspondence has been very heavy this month and once more I have to apologise to many listeners who have written to me at the B.B.C. and have received no answer. When a stamped and addressed envelope has been sent, I think an answer has always been achieved; but there are dozens of other letters which I should at least like to acknowledge, if time and "franks" were available.

The B.B.C. feels as strongly as I do that it is misleading the public whenever I am represented as in any sense a B.B.C. official or the B.B.C.'s gramophone adviser or "expert." I am completely independent and the B.B.C. is not responsible

(nor am I responsible to the B.B.C.) for any of my actions or words except when I am fulfilling a contract to broadcast a programme from its studios.

The move from Savoy Hill to Broadcasting House took place, so far as I am concerned, on April 21st, when I spent a nervous three-quarters of an hour in a strange cabin-like studio, sumptuously equipped with two turntables and electric motors and two different methods of broadcasting records. When I got used to the newer method of fading records in and out and of superimposing the voice, I expect to find a saving of time and a lessening of the mechanical flavour of the record broadcasts.

Hitherto I have stuck to the three-way switch, except when I took part in the excellent "More New Songs for Old" which Gordon McConnel had devised. On that occasion I had nothing to do but speak into a microphone whenever the green lamp flicked, while the ingenious and flawless introduction and "mixing" of gramophone records were being done in another studio by Donald Munro.

The "Bogey Man" controversy which was revived on this occasion was a veritable bogey, haunting us in correspondence for weeks afterwards; but the letters showed that the second version by Harrigan and Braham was far more familiar than that by Meyer Lutz which was used in my Medley record for H.M.V.

The most embarrassing moment for me during the month was when I dropped the pick-up on to a record. I am told that my thoughts were distinctly heard through most loud-speakers.

**The Yanks are Coming**

In spite of the fact that before these lines appear I shall have broadcast another programme of

hot American dance records chosen for me by Edgar Jackson, I must register a disclaimer of the propagandist sentiments attributed to me by one of our advertisers this month. Mr. Jackson would be the first to exonerate me, and to proclaim me a very doubtful ally, if not indeed an *agent provocateur* from the other side.

However, the increasing number of "modern rhythm" records issued—not all of them American recordings—seems to show that there is a growing public demand for them; and though the heat emanating from them is lukewarm when compared with the hot air talked and written about them by controversialists, I think there are a good many people, like myself, who can enjoy the best efforts of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and the others in small doses just as we enjoy a great many other things in this life which we are not prepared to defend with our blood.

So "it is just your imagination," Mr. Advertiser. If I ever betted, I should put my money on my friends "Jack" and "Roy"—but it would be for sentiment's sake, very innocently.

**A Cross-Word Puzzle**

On an advertisement page, lest THE GRAMOPHONE should be mutilated, appears a gramophonic cross-word puzzle which a reader has supplied.

There are no prizes offered and no precedent is created; but if sufficient numbers of readers express their approval of this one, we might try some more.

The March competition (ideal cast for "The Ring") closes on June 15th.

CHRISTOPHER STONE.

**MY GRAMOPHONE**

You speak to me when other friends are silent,  
You sing for me when others have no song.  
And I am all the better for your singing  
When life has lost its light or things go wrong.

Each tune you play is always at my bidding,  
Sad, mad, or glad, as I am in the mood;  
I know each note that from your throat will issue,  
What human being could be half so good?

What if your voice is sometimes hoarse and husky,  
Your frailty only makes me love you more,  
And, for your sake, I shall not deign to follow  
The course suggested by the folk next door.

RUDDICK MILLAR.

## LE GRAND PRIX DU DISQUE

The custom to award annually in France prizes for the best records is but two years old. Nevertheless, it has become a national institution, an event which is waited for with eager curiosity and interest by all music lovers. It was founded last year by the big Parisian literary weekly *Candidé*. The discs chosen by the 1931 jury have proved a remarkable success among the great public. It is estimated that 50,000 "fans" as well in France as abroad have bought "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un Faune" (Debussy), which gained the first place in orchestral section, and that the French singer Lucienne Boyer, whose technique approaches that of Greta Keller, owes her celebrity to the "Grand Prix du Disque."

The jury have now assembled for the second time in a well-known restaurant of Paris, the same where the annual Prix Goncourt is awarded. The judges were Madame Colette, MM. Jacques Copeau, Emile Vuillermoz, Maurice Ravel, Gustave Charpentier, Dominique Sordet, Maurice Yvain, Madame Bréval, M. Jean Périer. Before deciding, the jury was glad to make a general remark about the technical side of recording. They said that since last year the "engraving on wax," as they called it, has made steady and remarkable progress.

The chosen records were:—

### 1. ORCHESTRA. (8,000 francs.)

*Tombeau de Couperin* (Maurice Ravel), by the Conservatoire Orchestra, under the direction of Piero Coppola (Compagnie française du Gramophone).

### 2. INSTRUMENTS. (6,000 francs.)

(a) With orchestra. *Concerto for flute* (Mozart). Soloist, M. Marcel Moyse. Orchestra directed by Piero Coppola (Compagnie française du Gramophone).

(b) Solos (piano). *Sixième Barcarolle* (Fauré). *Marigold* (Billy Mayerl), *Jasmine* (Billy Mayerl), played by Mlle. Carmen Guilbert (Pathé).

(c) *Instrumental ensemble. Scherzo from Quartet in A minor* (Schubert), by four saxophones. MM. Mule, Chaligne, Pomboeuf and Chauvet (Parlophone).

### 3. CHAMBER MUSIC. (4,000 francs.)

*Quartet in G minor* (Debussy), by the Calvet Quartet (Columbia).

### 4. SONG.

No prize awarded.

### 5. LIGHT MUSIC. (4,000 francs.)

(a) Operetta. *Brummell* (Reynaldo Hahn). The four following records: *Couplets de la boîte* (Lucien Baroux), *Etre un dandy* (Louis Arnoult), *Couplets de l'équitation* (Mlle. Jane Morlet), *Les bergers Watteau* (Louis Arnoult and chorus) (Odéon).

(b) Miscellaneous. *Déjà* by Coline (Pathé).

*Lise* (Edouard Mathé), sung by J. Sorbier (Columbia).

### 6. DICTION AND THEATRE.

(a) Diction, 2,000 francs. *Les vignes du Seigneur*, by Victor Boucher (Columbia).

*Topaze: la leçon de morale*, by Lefaur (Pathé).

(b) Theatre, 1,000 francs. *Les Contes de Perrault* (Columbia).

### 7. HONORARY MENTIONS.

(a) Orchestra. *Mignon Overture* (Columbia).

*Donogoo*, by Jacques Ibert (Artiphone).

*Symphony in D minor*, by C. Franck (Polydor).

(b) Instruments. *Prelude of the First Sonata for violin* (Bach), played by Merckel (Columbia).

(c) Song. *Voici des roses (La Damnation de Faust)*, Berlioz, sung by Panzera (Compagnie française du Gramophone).

*La Madaléenne à la Croix (Marie-Madeleine)*, by Massenet, sung by Mme. Martinelli (Polydor).

A curious incident took place when the jury was discussing class No. 6. M. Jacques Copeau, the great playwright, frankly said that, to his opinion, no spoken record deserved to be chosen. He wished his opinion to be publicly known.

LOUIS QUIÉVREUX.

## F. SHARP'S CORNER

### *Sibelius Society*

I am getting letters from all over the world from readers anxious to join the Sibelius Society. It must suffice now to thank them for their support and to assure them that there will be such a society, but before it materialises the Beethoven and Haydn Societies will both have come into being, and no one should fail to join either of these, seeing that the great Schnabel is the pianist in the first case and that the Pro Arte Quartet have made the most perfect records of Haydn's chamber music ever heard. Hurry, before it is too late; don't forget that the membership is limited. The Gramophone Company is launching these two societies and will give you all information about them.

### *Contemporary Music*

This is difficult ground, like trying to walk over Little Vesuvius, and I will try to pick my way carefully. The London Contemporary Music Centre gave a concert at the beginning of May, and opened with a Double Trio for clarinet, bassoon and trumpet, violin, 'cello and bass by Erik Chisholm. This was the youngest work in the programme, dated 1931. I confess to being completely floored by it musically, finding nothing but the sort of excitement one feels at Brooklands. The players were obviously enjoying the fun; there were hairbreadth escapes, and here and there a violent impact. One felt that the ambalances were standing by, and not inactive. The question is, supposing this long work were recorded and I played it over and over again, should I understand it, and if I did, should I be glad that I had?

E. J. Moeran's Sonata for Two Violins (1930) followed, and was not in the least easy to understand, but gave definite pleasure and desire to understand. There was form (as I, in my old-fashioned way, call it) and there was humour. These two are very helpful to modern music.

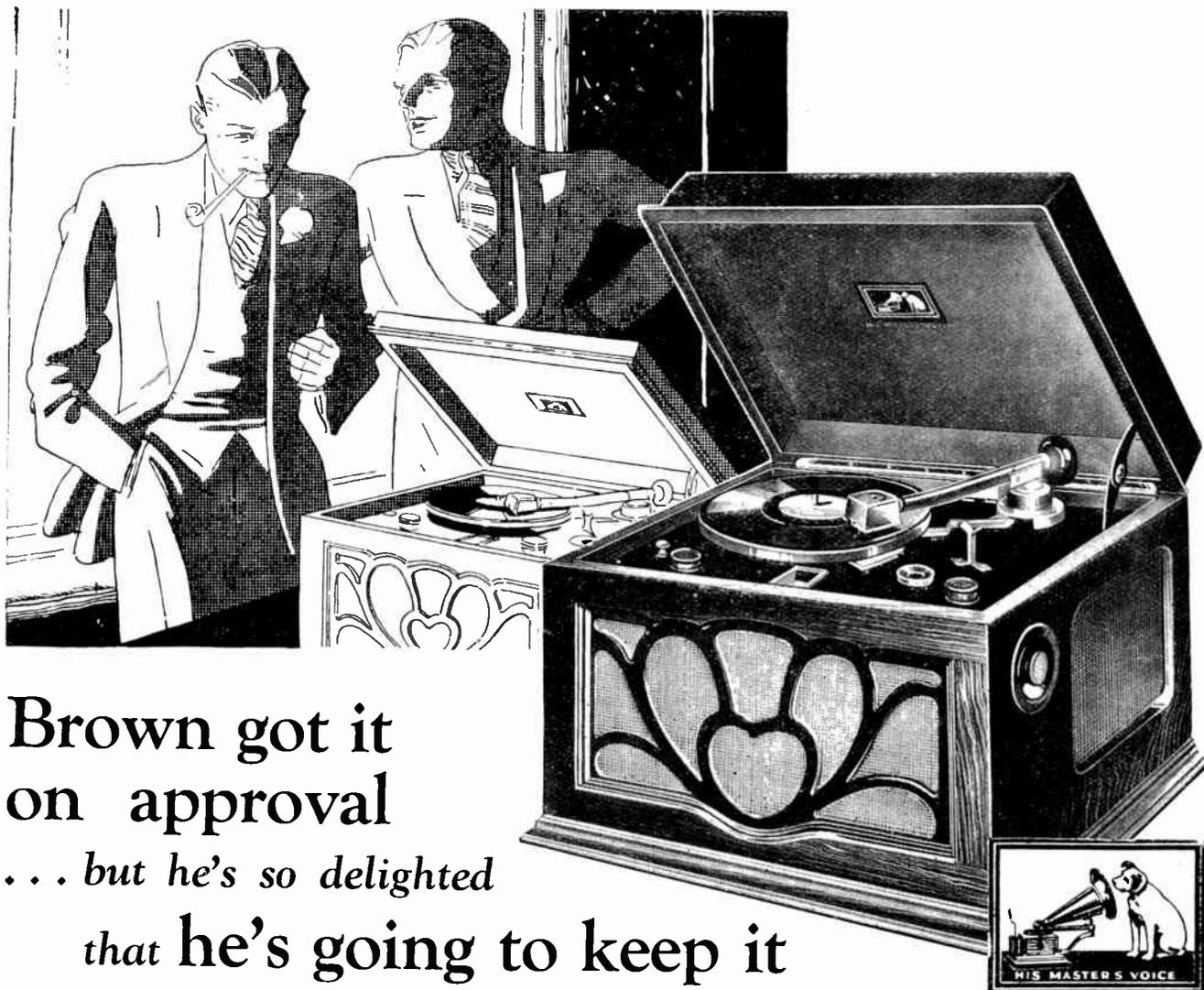
Christian Darnton's Trio in One Movement had grace and character, and he achieved an impressive andante, a rarity among the ultra-moderns.

The concert wound up with Casella's five-year-old Serenata for clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, violin and 'cello. Then the sparks began to fly! There were six movements, short—as perfect as perfect short stories—*Marcia*, *Menuetto*, *Notturmo* (a lovely slow movement), *Gavotta*, *Cavatina*, and finally a vigorous *Tarantella*. How witty this intensely sophisticated master is! He is Harlequin, with his flashes of impudence which is never crude, and wit which is never obvious.

André Mangeot led the eight artists who finely interpreted these provocative works. All who are interested in the trend of modern music should join this music centre, and hear the very latest under ideal conditions.

### *Marguerite D'Alvarez*

If you should have a chance of going to a recital by this artist do not go for an hour and then come away, because you will not have heard her. Like some delicate instruments, she does not "warm up" until half-way through the concert, but by then her spell is cast and the audience is under an enchantment. At the end the platform is a garden of flowers, from the little bunches of her humbler admirers to the gorgeous yellow arums and orchids that suit her personality so well, while she sings encore after encore, each one she announces bringing an "Ooh!" of delight from some section of the audience, till the lights go out. What does she sing? Almost everything, but she is most at home in Debussy and Spanish songs. She has recorded a good many of the latter, but for some reason these are only to be had from Spain (H.M.V.). The best record of hers to be found in the English H.M.V. catalogue is Hagemann's *Do not go, my love*, with *Homing* on the other side.



**Brown got it  
on approval  
... but he's so delighted  
that he's going to keep it**

Yesterday Brown called in at the local "His Master's Voice" dealer. He wanted to hear one of the latest all-electric "2 in 1" instruments—radio set and electrically reproducing gramophone combined in one cabinet.

He heard several. But one instrument, "His Master's Voice" seemed to him outstanding. It had such wonderful tonal quality, was so true to life. "Why not try it at home," the dealer said. "I'll instal it without bother, and you need not keep it unless you are completely satisfied."

The 29 Guinea Table Radio-Gramophone (Model 501) (as shown). A.C. or D.C. 3 valves. Band-pass tuning. Extremely selective. Moving coil loudspeaker. £3 os. 11d. down and twelve payments of £2 9s. 1d.

Well, to cut a long story short, Brown is so delighted that he is going to keep it. He gets all the broadcast programmes that he wants, and his favourite records played on this instrument, reveal qualities that he never knew existed. And it is so easy to operate—just a turn of a switch for either radio or records. No winding necessary. No batteries. And it costs, as the dealer assured him, no more to run than an electric lamp...

Why not do as Brown did—see your "His Master's Voice" dealer?

The 48 Guinea Cabinet Model (Model 521). A.C. or D.C. 4 valves. £5 os. 10d. down and twelve payments of £4 1s. 3d. Model 522 similar to 521, but with Automatic Record-Changing for 8 records—price 55 guineas.

# His Master's Voice

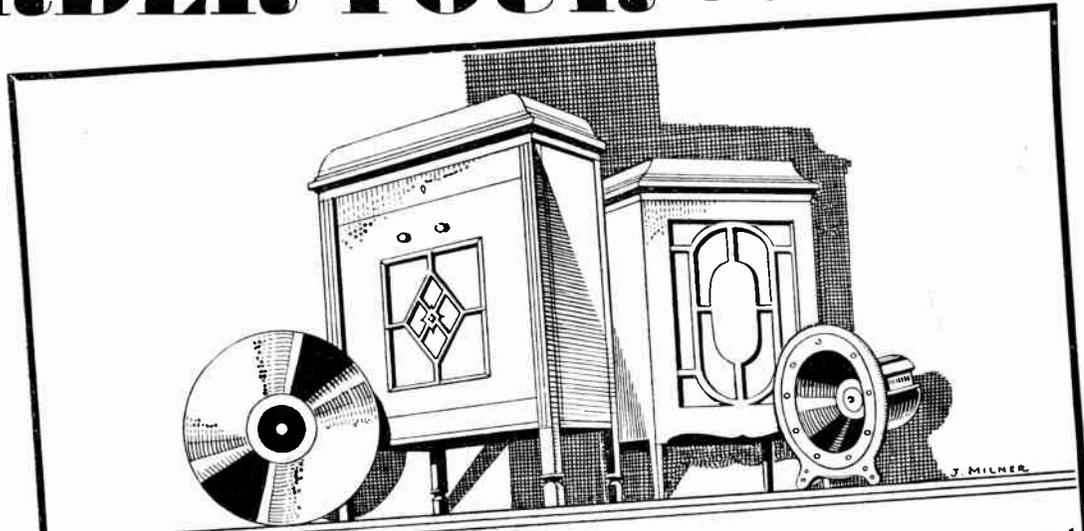
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CHRISTOPHER STONE



ONE SHILLING

# TECHNICAL TALK

by P. WILSON

## Whine

In the article by Owen and Bryson, which appeared last December and January, discussion was invited on one or two points and particularly in reference to "piano whine." I deliberately refrained at the time from adding any comments of my own, because I wanted to see what the experiences of others had been. From a practical point of view, however, such discussion as there was produced nothing that one could call particularly helpful, so I no longer refrain from making a few random shots.

That the cause of "piano whine" does not reside in the recording amplifier is, I think, sufficiently clear. The fact noted by Owen and Bryson that it is not present with broadcast music appears to settle that point. We may also rule out all the suggestions relating to "swingers," unsteady motors and the like which several correspondents had the temerity to make. Such possible causes as these are so obvious that Messrs. Owen and Bryson, who dealt so comprehensively with the whole subject, could clearly be expected not to overlook them. In any case, the defect which they discussed exists in more or less degree on many records, accurately centred and played on gramophone motors which are above suspicion. Similarly, we may rule out the possibility that the recording motor varied in speed during the recording; a modern gravity motor simply does not do it. Examining the whole chain of apparatus in this way we are ultimately limited to one or both of two components: the electromagnetic recorder and the gramophone pick-up. Owen and Bryson rule out the latter on the ground that the defect actually exists in the recording, and no pick-up either manufactures a whine if it does not exist in the recording or suppresses it if it does. At least, that is how I interpret their remarks, and it is here that I begin to join issue. For according to my observation, it is possible to play certain piano records (e.g., the Columbia Gieseking records) without perceiving any whine when one type of pick-up is used and yet to obtain a very distinct whine when another pick-up is used. Is the whine produced by the pick-up in this latter case or ought one rather to conclude that the pick-up in the former case suppressed a whine which was inherent in the record?

At first sight it appears difficult, if not impossible, to make a definite and sure choice between the two alternatives. A further observation I made, however, gives what I believe to be the clue to the whole business; and as at the same time it suggests certain lines of experiment for improvement in recording and reproducing generally, it seems to me to be worthy of more detailed examination than I have yet been able to give it. The observation was simply this: the extent of the whine depends to a very large extent on the nature of the mechanical damping used in the pick-up.

## Mechanical Damping

Now there is a good deal of confusion in people's minds about the function of the damping in a pick-up. Various peculiar phrases are used in this connection. Thus we hear that certain pick-ups are "heavily damped," while others are "lightly damped." In some the damping is "too tight" or "too stiff," while in other cases it is "too slack" or "too free." If you think about the matter carefully, however, you will appreciate that two quite distinct notions are being mixed up. In ordinary mechanical parlance when we speak of damping a mechanism we mean applying something of the nature of a *resistance* to motion—viscosity, friction and such-like.

The essential function of the damping is to absorb mechanical energy and those readers who are familiar with the mathematical

equations of motion will recollect that the resistance element is always to be found in the velocity term and never in the potential energy term. But when people talk about the damping in a pick-up they do not as a rule refer to anything of this kind. Perhaps it would be safe to say that as a rule they do not understand what particular function they are talking about: the word damping is merely a high-falutin' way of referring to the little bits of rubber that are disposed here and there. An examination of the design of the pick-up, however, almost always reveals that the principal effect of the rubber is to provide a restoring force to bring the armature back to its central position when it has been displaced and is tending to fall further away under the attraction of the magnetic poles. It is clear that as a rule the idea of resistance damping by absorption of mechanical energy is purely a secondary matter. But it is really of fundamental importance, and one can assert with confidence that were it not for the fact that the rubber used for damping a pick-up happens to possess appreciable energy-absorbing properties, pick-up reproduction would be much more unsatisfactory than it is. I will go further and assert strongly that very few pick-ups have sufficient resistance damping while many of them have too much spring damping.

Spring damping has no function of energy absorption. In fact a spring simply stores energy and gives it back again in different phase. It is here that we come up against the second main difference between the two types: resistance damping has no effect on phase, whereas both spring damping and mass loading have. Moreover, the latter are resonant to particular frequencies, while the former is aperiodic. A certain amount of spring damping, whether of a mechanical or preferably of a magnetic type, is required in every pick-up if only to counterbalance the negative spring of the magnetic field. But this need not be very large provided resistance damping is present in the right place. It is significant that when the proper balance has been obtained needle buzz practically disappears, which is an indication that the reaction on the needle point is resistive, and not reactive and therefore out of phase with the pressure of the groove on the needle. With one exception to be noticed later, I find that it is precisely in these conditions that piano whine diminishes to negligible proportions. I deduce, therefore, that whine is caused by phase differences. Why this should be I do not quite understand, unless the fact that the pianoforte spectrum is non-harmonic in its composition has something to do with the matter. But if so, it is curious, at least, that electrical phase differences seem to have no bearing on the question; only mechanical phases seem to be important. The only parallel case that I know of is that of surface noise: mechanical resonances are responsible for a large proportion of the scratch we hear; electrical or magnetic resonances have much less effect. The reason is, of course, that mechanical resonances are reflected back to the needle point and affect the tracking of the needle in the groove. So perhaps something of the same kind is happening in connection with pianoforte whine.

But whether the effect is actually caused through the medium of a resonance or by some more complex means (e.g. decrement) it seems safe to say that mechanical phase is ultimately responsible. In that case, however, it does not necessarily follow, with present-day recording, that a pick-up with adequate resistance damping and the minimum of spring damping will give the least whine. For there is spring damping as well as resistance in the electromagnetic recorder and one might expect that the best results will be obtained when the phase shift is the same in the pick-up as it was in the particular recorder that made the record under consideration. This is

rather a tall order, but it seems to explain another observation I made with the Fay Home Recording apparatus. I watched the recording of a pianoforte recital as it was broadcast from Brookman's Park, and then heard it played back with the same pick-up (not a specially good one) as had been used for the recording. To my surprise there was no whine. In fact, the reproduction was amazingly good. The fact that the mechanical phases were approximately the same in recording and reproducing seems to add confirmation to my argument. I say approximately because the difference of needle angle in

the two cases no doubt has some bearing on the result. This question, however, I must leave for elucidation later, as well as another which is probably even more important: the amplitude of cut of the groove. One would expect the whine to be increased for large amplitudes and for small needle angles. On this count as well as others I have previously discussed, it would be an advantage to have the needle more nearly vertical, and I note that with their latest pick-ups H.M.V. recommend not less than 70° in place of the 60° that used to be the rule with sound-boxes.



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Being Extracts from Technical Correspondence*

**IMPORTANT NOTICE.**—All correspondence that requires an answer must be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, and also the coupon which will be found on the Exchange and Mart page of THE GRAMOPHONE every month. In future the coupon will only be valid up to and including the date printed on it. Overseas readers excepted.

### *Grid Stoppers in U.S.A.*

219 Q.—I notice in Mr. P. Wilson's articles on radio-gramophones that he always includes 100,000 ohm resistances in the grid leads to the push-pull "tubes" in the last audio stage and sometimes in the grid lead of the first audio stage. This practice is virtually unknown in this country and I should like to know the advantages gained by their inclusion.

A.—In Great Britain our valves have a higher mutual conductance than most American valves. Here we have the story of the motor car over again. Our manufacturers, no doubt owing to royalty considerations, have tried to develop efficient receivers using as few valves as possible. The high mutual conductance renders the valves liable to a certain parasitic oscillation due to stray coupling between grid and plate. In push-pull circuits in particular this self-oscillation is very liable to occur. Here we have had it in a receiver using "245" valves. Grid stoppers damp out this tendency to self-oscillation. When the mutual conductance of the valves was not more than 2 we used values of 100,000 ohms. With higher mutual conductances of the order of 3 or 4, it is not desirable to exceed 25,000 ohms, while with the PM 24 D, which has a mutual conductance of 6 or thereabouts, a value of 5,000 ohms is recommended. In order to compensate for the reduction, however, it is desirable to use an anode stopper of about 100 ohms next to the plate of the valve—as was done in the Super-heterodyne described in the December issue.

When a grid stopper is used in the first audio frequency stage its main purpose is as a choke to H.F. signals from the detector, thereby enabling a smaller by-pass condenser to be used and thus reducing the load on the tuned circuit preceding the detector.

### *Pick-up and Scratch Filter*

220 Q.—May a scratch filter be used with a B.T.H. Senior pick-up when using Burmese Colour needles without sacrificing high notes?

A.—The only scratch filter we recommend with this combination of needle and pick-up is the careful choice of potentiometer volume control value. With steel needles a value of 15,000 ohms is all right but with B.C.N.s this can be increased to as much as 50,000 ohms. Reducing the value will reduce surface noise.

### *Horn Joints*

221 Q.—(a) Could you advise me as to the easiest way to join the edges of a metal exponential horn square in section. Can it be done without a great knowledge of metal work?

(b) What is the lightest gauge metal that can be safely used without giving serious resonances.

A.—(a) If the horn you intend making is of the folded type you may experience some difficulty in joining the sides; it would perhaps be cheaper and more expedient to let your local tinsmith do it. If, however, the horn is a straight one probably the best method is to clean and "tin" all the edges, make some thin angle strips, "tin" these and sweat the angles on to the joints, afterwards cleaning the insides of the joints and running solder into the corners.

(b) The best metal to use is terne-plate. This is sheet iron one side of which is lead coated. It can be obtained from most ironmongers, a sheet 6 ft. by 3 ft., 22 gauge, costs about 6s. We do not advise a smaller gauge than this.

### *Moving Coil Speakers*

222 Q.—(a) Will you please enlighten me as to the reason why alternating current moving coil speakers are more expensive than the direct current models?

(b) Also what takes place when the signal leaves the loud-speaker terminals on the set for the loud-speaker itself in the case of an A.C. speaker and a D.C. speaker?

A.—(a) The reason why A.C. speakers cost more than the D.C. type is because a mains transformer, a valve or metal rectifier and an electrolytic condenser have to be incorporated in the equipment to transform the mains voltage down to the required voltage and to convert the A.C. into D.C. to create the necessary magnetic field.

(b) The energy from the receiver is transferred to the speech coil of an A.C. speaker in exactly the same way as with a D.C. speaker. The only difference between the two types of speakers is, as explained above, the conversion from A.C. to D.C. for the energising of the field coil.

### *Minimising Horn Resonances*

223 Q.—After trying all kinds of subterfuges and all types of sound-boxes in an effort to reduce a very annoying resonance in my gramophone I have given up experimenting in disgust. Can you, perchance, outline a method which would prove efficacious?

A.—It seems fairly obvious that the troublesome resonance is in the horn itself. Try wrapping the horn with insulation tape. This will lower the resonant note of the horn and probably clean up the bass a little. If this does not have the required effect stuff cotton-wool or some such absorbent material between the sides of the horn and the sides of the cabinet. The combination of these two suggestions should damp the horn sufficiently to eliminate the resonance.

# TRADE WINDS AND IDLE ZEPHYRS

## *Marconiphone*

Those of you who are contemplating the purchase of a portable receiver should make a special note of the fact that the Marconiphone portable, Model 66, has recently been reduced from 15 to 13 guineas. Anything which increases the purchasing power of one's income is welcome news indeed these days.

## *Pamela*

It is not an uncommon thing for any Baby, especially of the feminine gender, to assert its superiority in any household. We were not surprised, therefore, to learn that Baby Pamphonic, or Pamela, as Mr. P. Wilson affectionally christened her last month, has laid an objection to her classification as an infant. "An infant indeed, with a voice like mine!" was one of her comments. This revolt culminated in an extraordinary meeting of her forbears and godparents (Messrs. Keith Prowse) and the matter was thrashed out. The result was that Baby is now the Standard Pamphonic Reproducer.

## *Ferranti*

The three Ferranti permanent magnet moving coil speakers reviewed elsewhere in this issue are the subject of a new leaflet, W.b 550, just issued. This and list W.b 534, which deals with the Ferranti 3-valve A.C. Mains Console Receivers, will besent gratis to any reader who cares to apply for them. The address is: Ferranti Ltd., Hollinwood, Lanes.

## *Apollo Portables*

The prices of the two new portables (Types 16G and 6G) just produced by the Apollo Gramophone Co. Ltd., 4-5, Bunhill Row, E.C.1, have been fixed at the amazingly low figures of £2 12s. 6d. and £2 5s. 0d. respectively. The former, by virtue of its larger acoustic system, gives a slightly broader tone than the 6G, but it can be fairly said that both have pleasant voices if not the range of the larger Apollo cabinet gramophones. A feature of the 6G is that the winding handle is located and fixed in the mouth of the horn. The advantage of this is obvious while its disadvantages are nil. The fittings and casework of the 16G are obtainable in a variety of finishes and colours; for example, in one model, which incidentally costs £2 15s. 0d., the case is covered in brown leatherette, and the metal chassis, tone-arm, and sound-box are plated an attractive bronze colour. A brochure concerning these and other Apollo portables and electric playing desks will be sent free to anyone interested.

## *Removing the Scratch*

During their research work on "Hill and Dale" disc recording, Western Electric conceived a method whereby the extraneous surface noise incidental to the reproduction of this type of record is practically eliminated. They have filed a British patent covering a process and the necessary apparatus for removing these noises. The process, briefly, consists in the burnishing or smoothing out of the irregularities in the grooves after the record is made; a burnishing tool is so adapted in the stylus position as to snugly engage the record groove. The tool and its mounting possess a sufficiently low mechanical impedance to avoid deforming the original form of the groove. This burnishing instrument may be composed of a light-weight element—for example, fibrous material—and must be resiliently mounted so that the effective needle point mass is kept within the prescribed limits of operating pressure. Although primarily designed for vertical recording, it is not confined thereto, but is equally well adapted to the lateral process.

## *Do you know*

That the winner of the competition announced under the above heading last month was:

Mr. J. L. Carden, "Hazeldene," 100, Wood Vale, Forest Hill, S.E.23?

That the title he submitted was "Gramophones, Acoustic and Radio"?

That one other reader, Mr. T. Whiteford Hughes, 91, Beaconsfield Street, Princes Park, Liverpool, was a very close second with "Gramophones, Acoustic and Electric"?

That we shall send Mr. Hughes a free copy of the book autographed by the Editor and London Editor?

That the price of the book has now been definitely fixed at 1s.?

That in all probability it will be published the third week in June?

## *Record Storage*

A step further has been made towards solving the problem of record storage by the production of a portable Rondo cabinet to hold 80 records. This new model embodies all the old original features common to the other Rondo models—the neat indexing and swivelling systems, etc.—while the external dimensions are very little greater. The price of the new model is 30s.

## *Fibre Grinding*

In the February 1932 issue, page 400, we published a note and illustration of the Universal Fibre Grinder. This, we are given to understand, has since been modified so that the fibre needles can be tilted to any angle in relation to the grinding disc. Now any desired taper of point can be obtained.

## *High Power and Rectifier Valves*

In addition to the ordinary range of Mazda Valves the Edison Swan Electric Co. Ltd. (Ediswan) have now produced a complete range of Power or Oscillator valves, Hot Cathode Mercury Vapour rectifiers, and Hot Cathode Gas Discharge rectifiers and baretter valves. A particularly interesting specimen is the Mazda B.T.1. This is a 3-electrode valve with mercury vapour filling and can be used for a variety of purposes. For example, it will act as a relay, or in inverter circuits it will act as a generator of low frequency A.C. from a D.C. supply. The E.S.75 H is another interesting valve of the Power type for use in the output stage of large P.A. amplifiers. Here are its characteristics: Filament Volts, 10; Filament Amps, 3.25; Maximum Anode Dissipation, 75 watts; Maximum Anode Voltage, 1,200; Amplification Factor, 12; Anode A.C. Resistance, 2,000 ohms, approximately.

## *The Vox A.C. Radio-Gramophone*

For some time now we have been considering making modifications to the Vox A.C. radio-gramophone, details of which, readers will remember, were published in the November and December 1930 issues of THE GRAMOPHONE. The principal modifications will be with the aerial and H.F. circuits in which we propose to use Varley Square Peak canned coils in order to increase the efficiency and the selectivity. Many North Country readers who have made up this circuit have difficulty in separating the two Moorside Edge transmitters. The Varley coils will, we hope, solve that little problem. Minor modifications will also be made to the L.F. side of the equipment, our principal aim being to bring the circuit up to date at as small an expense as possible, and as early as possible. But we cannot, at the moment, specify any particular date.

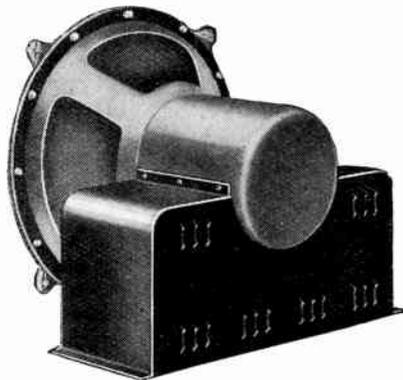
## TECHNICAL REPORTS

### *The Baker's Selhurst 1932 Super-Power A.C. Speaker. Price £9*

As most readers know, our standard by which all other energised speakers have been compared has hitherto been the old original Electrogram, reviewed in September 1928. And even to-day for sheer delicacy of tone it is not surpassed. Granted, the modern electro-magnet speaker is much more sensitive, and there are one or two that go little higher in the treble and perhaps lower in the bass, but few give the same sort of liquid quality. Even the modified model produced late in 1930 did not achieve precisely this effect.

But alas, neither of these speakers can now be obtained, the firm having gone out of business, and although we shall still retain the old model as our criterion as regards delicacy, we have come to the decision to adopt some modern commercial speaker so that at least our readers will be in a position to obtain one, if desired, and those who do so will thus be better able to interpret our remarks in future reviews.

We announced in April 1930 that still another energised speaker had been added to our list of standards; this was the Baker 1930 S.P.A. type, and right good service has it given. Hundreds of times during the intervening period between then and now has it been called upon to accept the full energy from a three-stage amplifier giving 10 watts undistorted output and not once has it let us down. Nor has it altered its excellent characteristics: the quality, the definition, and the efficiency are as good to-day as they were when we first heard it. But now even this old stager has been displaced in favour of the 1932 model. It is this, the speaker under review, that we have decided to place upon our commercial standard pedestal, or baffle—whichever is preferred.



This 1932 speaker retains all the qualities of the earlier model, but in many respects it is most assuredly superior. For instance, both the high note response and the bass register are stronger and cleaner, and the definition of orchestral items (especially in the bass) as well as the articulation of speech and vocal numbers are really excellent; easily the best of any speaker we have yet tested, irrespective of type or

price and including our standard Electrogram. It does not quite come up to our old standard on the score of delicacy, but even on this count it is very near the mark.

In external appearance it is very much neater and more compact than our 1930 model. For the latter the mains equipment—transformer, metal rectifier and electrolytic condenser—were supplied separately, whereas in the present model the corresponding components are mounted in the speaker base. It is noteworthy that they create very little hum. Perhaps this is due to the fact that a high voltage field is now used; smoothing is easier with a high voltage and a small current than it is with a low voltage and high current.

The old concertina type centring device has also been abolished and the speech coil is now centred by a three-point

suspended ring which is mounted on the coil former behind the cone and allows of a nice flexible movement.

And now it only remains for us to congratulate the makers on their excellent product. It has our most hearty recommendation.

### *The Ferranti Moving Coil Speaker, Model M.1. Price £7 10s.*

This is a permanent magnet type of speaker, and, as can only be expected, the ratio between input and output is not so large as with a good electro-magnet type speaker. On the other hand, comparing it with speakers of its own type, we should say that the overall efficiency is definitely high, certainly higher than for most others that have passed through our hands. In other respects too—its ability to handle large inputs without

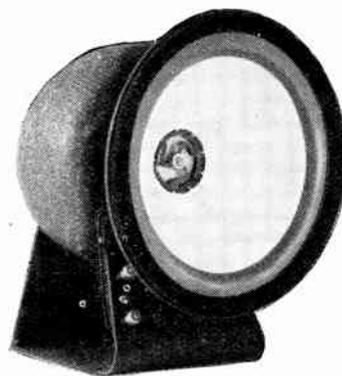
being distressed or to operate at small volume without appreciable depreciation in quality—it is decidedly an aristocrat amongst permanent magnet moving coil speakers; it treats 3 watts undistorted input with absolute nochalance.

The quality of reproduction is definitely good, though not so wholly satisfying as that of our energised models. Our general verdict is one of approval, but we should note one criticism relating to a sort of fruity flavour of the strings and

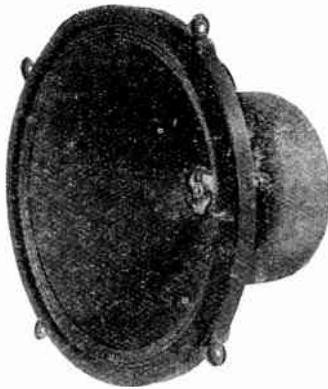
wood-wind. It is not in any way objectionable and would probably not be noticed at all unless one had the facilities for making side-by-side tests with a number of other speakers. Apart from this little idiosyncrasy the general tone, the definition and the response to both high and low notes secure high marks. Speech is especially good. These characteristics and the relatively high efficiency may perhaps be accounted for by the use of a circular magnet of unusually generous dimensions, having a small gap and high flux density, a low impedance speech coil (about 20 ohms) and the free movement of the diaphragm. This is six inches in diameter and is suspended by a pliant leatherette surround, and a three-legged front centring spider. The whole assembly is mounted on a pressed steel base.

### *The Ferranti M.C. Speaker, Model M.2. Price £5*

This is another low impedance (20 ohms) permanent magnet type of speaker. A circular magnet of smaller diameter than that of the M.1 is used as the energising medium. The cone, on the other hand, is about eight inches diameter at the periphery, and is constructed of some form of treated linen, a vivid red in colour. The orthodox form of edge loading is not employed in this model, the edge of the cone itself being turned over and concentrically corrugated to form the surround which is damped by a thick felt ring fastened to the aluminium cradle. The same form of front centring device is used as in the M.1, but the resulting movement of the diaphragm is not by any means so flexible. On the face of it therefore we should expect that this form of edge loading would tend to have an adverse effect on both high and low notes. Curiously enough, however, such is not the case. There is a slight attenuation of bass as



compared with the M.1, but the smaller magnet and consequently the smaller flux density may be responsible for this and for the slight relative loss in efficiency. More curious still, we preferred the quality of the strings and wood-wind as reproduced by the M.2; the little fruitiness mentioned in connection with the M.1 was absent and there was perhaps a little more fluidity about the upper register as a whole. Against this, the tone had not quite the depth and breadth of the M.1; speech again was very good, there being little over-accentuation of the explosive consonants and sibilants.



On the whole, weighing performance against the price of the M.1 and the M.2, we have a preference for the latter.

**The Ferranti M.C. Speaker, Model M.3. Price £2 15s.**

This, again, is a low impedance permanent magnet speaker in which the same type (and colour) of diaphragm and the methods of suspending and centring are adopted as in the M.2. A point we forgot to mention in connection with the latter is that the diaphragm is pressed into shape in one piece, thus eliminating a possible resonance which very often is prominent in some speakers where the cone is cut out and jointed. The only constructional difference is that the magnet of the M.3 is smaller in diameter and the centre pole is about half the diameter of those on the other speakers.

Taking everything into consideration—the price and the smaller energising system—the M.3 puts up an astoundingly good performance. The definition of orchestral items and the articulation of speech and vocal items are clear and distinct, while the actual quality of the middle and higher registers lags little behind that given by the M.2. On the other hand, the really deep bass notes are weaker and some low 'cello notes lack timbre and have a sort of deadness or woodenness about them that was not apparent in the other models. As one can only expect, the power-handling capacity is lower, but contrary to expectations the efficiency, that is the ratio between the strength of input to output, is about the same as with the M.2.



Finally, if we were asked to cast a preferential vote in favour of any one of these Ferranti speakers we should unhesitatingly plump for the M.2 as being the best all-round proposition. It has the advantage of being cheaper than M.1 and the general quality is, in our opinion, slightly better (the question of efficiency is a minor detail), and from every viewpoint, except price, it is to be preferred to the M.3.

**Amplifier No. 3**

This is the name we have chosen for a local station A.C. receiver and gramophone amplifier which we hope to describe next month. It will have an undistorted output of approximately 2½ watts and the whole of the constructional details, including the circuit diagram and the lay-out and wiring diagrams, will be published in the July number, so that the whole assembly can be completed without delay.

**BOOK REVIEWS**

**MAKE YOUR OWN WIRELESS SET.** By F. J. Camm. (George Newnes, 6d.)

This handbook entitled *Make Your Own Wireless Set* is obviously intended for the radio beginner and contains circuit diagrams and constructional details of sixteen simple receivers, including "A Long Distance Four-Valver," a variety of two and three valve sets and "A Simple Crystal Set," all for battery operation. The total cost of the components for the most ambitious of the receivers described does not exceed £5 while the least expensive set costs 10s. to make.

There is nothing that is really intriguing about any of the circuits employed but neither is there anything about any one of them that one could take exception to, unless it be that the advantages of a choke-capacity coupling to the speaker should have been explained and incorporated in, at least, one of the more powerful circuits. We were pleased to see, however, that the potential reader is not "led down the garden" by the incorporation of pick-up connections in any of the circuits. Good record reproduction is impossible from any amplifier which is not capable of giving a minimum of 1,000 milliwatts undistorted output.

**TALKING PICTURES.** By Bernard Brown, B.Sc. (Eng.). Second Edition (Pitman, 12s. 6d. nett).

Much of the success of a book of this character and on such a subject depends to a large extent on the author's ability to present the innumerable technicalities in a light and interesting form, and here, in *Talking Pictures*, Mr. Brown succeeds in no uncertain manner. Practically every phase of the practical and technical sides, including the acoustical problems of both studio and theatre, are discussed without relapsing into technical jargon. Especially interesting to gramophone adherents are the chapters on film recording by the variable width and variable density methods and the possible return to the Hill and Dale method of disc recording as developed by the Bell Telephone Laboratories. Whether Hill and Dale records will eventually oust the more modern sound-on-film method of projection is a debatable point, but there are certain indications that it is quite possible. The notes on Home Talkies, and in particular those which rely solely on the production of sound by aluminium records, are too optimistic; the resistance and variations of resistance of aluminium to cutting are much greater than that of the wax used in commercial recording, where many times the power and amplification are available. To produce a sufficiently faithful aluminium record in a home recorder, where the power available is many times less and the resistance to cutting is very much greater, is a problem still awaiting solution.

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# TEMPERAMENT IN THE RECORDING STUDIO

by C. L. RICKETTS

**T**EMPERAMENT, artistic or otherwise, is one of the chief bugbears with which a Recording Manager has to contend.

A great deal has been said (and, I suggest, a great deal of rubbish) about artistic temperament, but chiefly it can be divided into two classes, the one of conceit, the other of nervousness. Very rarely does one come across the pure temperament caused by extreme artistic sensitiveness. Unfortunately, the Recording Studio seems to bring forth tendencies to temperament more than any other surroundings, and its effect is not so much that the result is bad, but that there is an indefinable something lacking from the performance which makes all the difference between an average rendering and a superb one.

The necessity of repetition, a necessity which does not occur elsewhere than in the Studio, tends to exaggerate any leaning towards "temperament," particularly if it is of the nervous quality. It is frequently the case that the first run through of a number prior to recording is far and away the best performance of all. Unfortunately, the technique of recording, even to the present day, is such that tests and playbacks are still necessary.

It is my definite opinion that playbacks are partly to blame for the nervous condition. When an artist hears his own performance played back to him he is over-critical and over-sensitive, and is inclined to kid himself that faults lie where none are apparent. This immediately puts a restraint upon his performance, with the result that the finished record is not quite of the standard it should be. Of course, experience helps in a great degree to abate this condition, but some artists never entirely rid themselves of a kind of "mike-horror." Only recently I had an experience of making tests of about half a dozen artists, one of whom was a Radio Star of already established reputation, and some five years' broadcasting experience. The others were of average ability, but in no way comparable with the Radio Star, and yet it is a fact that five tests were good, and the most important one bad. Purely due to an inexplicable funk. It is with circumstances such as these that the Studio Manager has to battle, and is at great difficulty to convince Sales Departments that the good artist with the bad test will in the end prove the better commercial proposition.

As the most predominant emotion is of the nervous category, I shall perhaps rather enlarge upon this. Of course, there is still the Artist who keeps an accompanying Orchestra waiting for an hour, consuming the Recording Company's money and fraying the tempers of all concerned, on the pretext of a headache or a sleepless night, but happily these troublesome folk are now seldom encountered.

A peculiar instance of a nervousness beyond understanding was illustrated by a well-known Cinema Organist with years of experience; indeed, he is now playing at one of the Premier London Houses. This Artist was a tremendous success with the public, and a good musician, but as soon as he was called upon to make records he seemed to lose control of his feet, and the pedal notes ceased to be played in the right key or the correct tempo. Despite perseverance, the fault could not be overcome, and reluctantly the Artist in question had to give up recording.

I once had the experience of making a test by a Film Star who has attained considerable prominence and who was possessed of an extraordinarily good voice. She arrived at the Studio, however, in a very highly strung condition, and the only remark we could get from her was that she was "so nervous that she felt sick"—and she looked it! Many attempts were made, each breaking down, until when finally a record was obtained her nerves had so gone to pieces that it was impossible even to consider it.

It is my experience that Violinists figure very prominently amongst those affected by temperament. Huberman when recording could hear a typist operating six storeys away, and

unless absolutely perfect silence was obtained he quite definitely could not perform. I heard recently of his giving a concert in Amsterdam, during the course of which he was put completely off his stroke by an aeroplane passing high over the hall. Another Violinist of international reputation, whilst capable normally of the finest playing and interpretation, is so unreliable purely from a nervous standpoint that his sessions are viewed with the utmost misgiving and apprehension. It is a fact that this Artist is particularly susceptible to sea-sickness! Whether this has anything to do with the subject I cannot say, but the very sight of a Channel steamer upsets him for a week.

I once had the privilege of seeing Kubelik record. Here is an entirely different proposition. For complete self-command and control he is unique. There was never the slightest suggestion of nervousness. Each playing, however many times repetition was necessary, was as perfect as the last, and I have seldom met anyone who was such a glutton for work. One little idiosyncrasy he did have—he insisted on standing on a rubber mat.

An Artist who knows exactly what he wants—and gets it—is Ravel. He may come in for a great deal of criticism as a conductor, but I have never, in the Studio, seen anyone exercise such perfect control over a band of musicians. Slight, almost fragile, as he appears in private life, in the Studio he becomes a power, a dominant personality.

For sheer confidence, I know no one to equal Sophie Tucker. Besides knowing exactly what she wants, she seems to have second-sight in the matter of what the mike wants. Hers is such a difficult voice to record, that were it not for the tremendous assistance which she gives the Recording Engineer, it is doubtful whether a single good record could ever have been made.

Jack Hulbert, when recording, is just as Jack Hulbert always will be. Light-hearted, gay, and treating the thing as great fun, but fun which must bring good results. He is a conscientious hard worker and a treat to work with.

Perhaps the greatest example of genuine artistic temperament is Al Jolson. This Artist, despite the fact that he has sunk temporarily into obscurity, will remain a milestone in everybody's memory by reason of his superb performance in "The Singing Fool." It is a fact that when the number "Sonny Boy" from this film was being recorded, Jolson completely broke down in the Studio and wept like a child, and the secret of his success lies surely in the fact that he is one of the very few (very, very few) who really live their parts. Maybe this was partly the cause of his sudden effacement. The public did not realise that above all Jolson is sincere.

C. L. R.

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# THE GRAMOPHONE IN INDIA

by J. EDGAR WALKER

IT is hard for anyone in England to realise what it is to be entirely without music. Here we have the wireless, that can be turned on very much in the same manner as the kitchen tap, and if we do not like the cold water we can go over to the hot. If by any chance the evening's radio fails to provide anything of interest, there is usually a concert or recital somewhere, a first-class orchestra, a famed ensemble, or a singer of renown. Perhaps our tastes lie along a lighter plane, in which case the theatre or cinema will do its best, or we may even be able to get what we want for the price of a cup of coffee in a restaurant.

We are used to all these things. They have become quite ordinary, and we take them for granted. Imagine then, for a brief moment, that you are transported to some spot in India remote from any of the bigger towns. You are the only white man for miles and miles, and your "hotel" for the night is a rather unprepossessing whitewashed "dak bungalow." Your day's work is done, and, lighting a smoky oil lamp, you prepare to spend an evening in an atmosphere that is sweltering. Your "boy" or the bungalow "butler" is preparing "dinner" from the inevitable chicken and tinned foods; meanwhile your book drags, and the only newspaper is about a week old and has been read to shreds. Then you can begin to understand what a boon a gramophone and a few records can be.

Thus it is no uncommon sight in India to see a business man or official, starting off for a tour into the "mofussil" or up-country districts, with several coolies submerged beneath his bags and baggage—a bulging valise, boxes of this and that, a typewriter perhaps—and last but not least a portable gramophone. But this is not the only way in which the gramophone is so much welcomed by the European in India, for the country is altogether a barren one for the musician. Until recently, it is true, there were wireless stations in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, but their brief programmes were made up almost entirely of vernacular vocal efforts, Bengali and Tamil songs and the like—for European ears gurglings too horrible for words. A few enthusiasts brave the crackling persistency of atmospherics to listen, at unearthly hours, to distant stations, but such enthusiasts are few and far between. In the brief "cold weather," orchestras spring up in the main cities, composed of all the local club bands, jazz bands, and amateur musicians; but the fare they provide can be only limited, for a few, and at the best moderately executed. For the rest, one must depend on the dusky bands of the clubs to provide their inadequate imitations of Jack Payne, Hylton, and their satellites.

Thus in India the gramophone has come into its own with a vengeance. Go into a Madras "bungalow," and you are almost sure to find a gramophone somewhere—whether it be a "portable" resting on a carved Madura table on the verandah or a cabinet model more sedately inside the house. Your experience will be not much different in the flats of Bombay and the large European houses of Calcutta. Again, if you take a holiday in one of the hill-stations—Ootacamund in the Nilgiris, Kodaikanal in the Palni Hills, any of them from Mercara to Mussoorie—you will be sure to find a gramophone doing its best to provide something moderately up to date for the dance floor.

But it is not only the European who benefits from the gramophone. There are many Indian enthusiasts, and their numbers are growing rapidly. The Gramophone Company (H.M.V.) have had a factory in Calcutta for some time, where vernacular records are made, as well as reprints of records from England,

and more recently the Columbia Graphophone Company have begun to manufacture native records. The Indian taste, naturally enough, is on very different lines from our own. In the case of gramophones themselves, for instance, the old type with the projecting horn still appeals to the average Indian far more than the more modern cabinet model. Probably its rather ostentatious proclamation of the fact that it really *is* a gramophone impresses both purchasers and their friends more than does the simple, less ornate cabinet. Their records are confined mainly to their own songs, largely religious, and sung alone or to the accompaniment of native instruments. To such music the Indian will listen placidly for hours, although the average European finds in such stuff only something that makes Schonberg seem half-hearted, and puts Stravinsky completely in the shade. This does not, of course, condemn the records for the purpose for which they are intended.

Naturally, as with most things in the tropics, there are some disadvantages confronting the record-collector. The worst of them is undoubtedly that of being unable to store records in any very satisfactory manner. When the ordinary records are left to themselves in an atmosphere which may be ranging daily between 85 and 110 degrees in the shade, they undergo the most extraordinary contortions. I can remember my first attempt to keep about a dozen records in one of those upright carrier boxes intended for double the number, and it was not long before I found them all reclining in a graceful curve against the side of the box. Even in the record albums in which most concertos and symphonies are supplied, records will not keep flat. The only satisfactory method is to keep records in a pile on a flat surface—but that is of course an inconvenient method of keeping a "library." Whichever method one adopts, it is always necessary to have a periodical flattening by the horizontal method. I had rather a shock recently, when, on unpacking my records after the usual sweltering journey through the Red Sea, I found them all warped and twisted in a most astounding manner. Taking twenty or thirty of them I stored them in a nice little column, sheets of paper between, in the old Indian style, and waited patiently; but in England the temperature is a little different, and they refused to straighten out. Eventually it became necessary to take each record, warm it before a fire until it became pliable and then sandwich it between a drawing board and a weighty volume from an encyclopedia—when it resumed its normal flatness. The records seem none the worse for their adventure, but it was a long and tiresome business.

Against such a disadvantage there are some definite advantages. Not least of these is that of the good acoustical properties of most European rooms in India. They are always large, high, and untrammelled with heavy curtains, glass windows and carpets. The floors are usually of stone, and heavy pictures on the walls are incongruous, and therefore the exception rather than the rule. With such conditions it is possible to hear music at its best. It is this, probably more than anything else, which makes one invest more and more in the best records—to shift one's gaze from "plum labels" to "red labels." I know more than one man whose musical education has started in India, as a result of acquaintance with a gramophone. One begins perhaps with a mild liking for the romantic side of Chopin, the brilliance of Liszt, and a fondness for the sentimentalities of many lesser lights. But after the strain of a number of repetitions one wants something "meatier," something better, and a respectable library begins to be built up. One begins to look for something else in Chopin, and passes perhaps from Strauss of the Johann variety to that of Richard, till one takes an unholy joy in unraveling Ravel,

listening to Debussy, César Franck, Delius and many another on a basis of the older schools which can never be known too well. That does not, of course, happen to everyone—some will remain with Maurice Chevalier for ever—but at least the gramophone has made many begin to appreciate, instead of waiting to be entertained.

Another advantage that India offers is the ease with which one can listen to a series of records. No turning apparatus is needed here, for the "bearer" can always be instructed how to follow up No. 1 with No. 2 and so on, whilst the "audience" takes its ease coolly beneath an electric fan. True, it does not

do to leave anything to chance, otherwise one may suddenly find No. 4 being pushed in ahead of No. 3, or Kreisler, after finishing the cadenza of the Brahms D major concerto, may go wandering off into a Schumann Romance before proceeding with the main business. But that is just a matter of careful instruction in the first instance, with a little repetition from time to time. It makes one a lazy gramophonist perhaps, but it adds to the ease of listening, whether one is hearing a Tchaikovsky symphony or Gracie Fields is enlivening a short drink before going in to dinner. In India the gramophone is just such a versatile entertainer.



## OVER-FAMILIARITY

by STANLEY A. BAYLISS

THE gramophone, it is now almost universally admitted, has bestowed many a boon on the music lover. It has enabled him to hear masterworks more frequently than he was wont, and especially so in the case of those who cannot read scores or play an instrument. Not only has he been able to study modern works previous to public performance (Stravinsky's *Symphonie de Psalms* is a notable instance), but he has been introduced to many eminent singers and players long before they have visited these shores. This has proved a fruitful advertisement to the artists concerned, and has given the ordinary man a higher standard of excellence whereby he can judge the merits of those performers already known to him. This raising of the standard of criticism has stimulated the zeal of many musical organizations which a few years back had begun to atrophy. The improvement in the London Symphony and B.B.C. Orchestras furnishes an example of this.

One drawback, however, to the wide use of the gramophone is, I think, overlooked. This is, that it increases the danger of over-familiarity, thus creating a loathing for certain standard but, nevertheless, great works. Many people, on account of the cost of a recording of a symphony, and not caring to purchase portions here and there, but preferring to save until they can buy the complete work, often, in the periods between the acquirement of these luxuries, play their present records to so great an extent that they tire of them, and a time comes when they no longer wish to hear them. That this is possible I can vouch for from my own experience. I have played over my records of the Elgar Violin and 'Cello Concertos so many times that I prefer to recall them mentally than hear a performance, because I find that I am anticipating what is coming next, and the works seem to be losing their momentum. There is a constant drag between the sounds heard and my recollection of the work as a whole. This cannot be due solely to the possibility that Elgar does not bear repetition, for I find it the case with Beethoven also.

Not long ago the programmes given by our leading orchestras were criticized adversely because they contained too many standard works; there was too much playing for safety. Of late, however, those programmes have brought to light lesser known compositions. I am wondering, therefore, whether this has been brought about not so much because the orchestras wish primarily to perform something different to what may be obtained on the black discs, but because the public has through the gramophone become temporarily over-familiar with certain favourites and has a worthy desire to hear other things.

Reviewers of records are, of course, in no such danger.

They receive parcels of new issues regularly, and before they have finished with one batch, another comes in. They are, therefore, apt to be a little out of touch with the average record buyer. (*En passant*, another feature of the gramophone world is the complaint of the record-making companies that works they are asked to record do not receive the anticipated support from the public. Reviewers somewhat too eagerly urge the recording of a work they think ought to be brought to public notice, forgetting that, under present economic conditions, the great majority of people are not in a financial position to buy more than half a dozen big works a year.)

One antidote for over-familiarity can be found in the acquirement of records of the same work by different orchestras and under different conductors; for there can be no question that a great defect of the gramophone record is that every performance of it is inevitably the same: nuances and other individualities of the performer all re-occur at precisely the same point. In theory, it is ideal to suggest this remedy, but in practice it is impossible. There is the financial reason already stated, and with the growth of amalgamations and combines, the gramophone companies will arrange that duplications (which the reviewers often complain of) shall not arise.

The real remedy, of course, is a revolution in the method of recording. When complete symphonies can be obtained for the same price as a complete text of a poetical masterpiece, then the ordinary music-lover will be able to build up quickly a library large enough to prevent his playing individual recordings over and over again.

With all due thanks to the gramophone companies for what they have done, I think this question of price is still an important one, and will continue to be. The multitudinous series of cheap reprints of classical and modern literary works enables everyone to build up a large library. The reader can then so space out his re-readings of important books that there is no danger of familiarity leading to contempt. It is the slowness of building up a library of records of symphonic and chamber music that renders the danger of over-familiarity possible.

To suggest that variety should be obtained by purchasing smaller works is like proposing a man should buy the essays of Lamb and Addison in pamphlet form rather than in a collected edition. And to suggest that the ordinary man should be content with the at present cheaper recordings is tantamount to saying he should be content with lower standards of excellence, and will subject him once more to the contemptible gibes of the school of Gissing.

## COLLECTORS' CORNER

[Collectors are cordially invited to send enquiries; but those requiring replies by post are asked to enclose a stamped envelope.]

I wish to express my deepest apologies to all those who have applied for the I.R.C.C. record by **Farrar**, and have been disappointed. Through causes beyond our control, the British branch of the scheme has failed to function. Post-mortems will not help, but I should like to assure all concerned that the hitch was unforeseeable, and was not in any way due to derelictions on the part either of promoter or British representative. I have, however, an announcement to make which I think and hope will more than compensate the disappointed ones, and at the same time interest a great many more. This is no less than a re-issue of some or all of the original Fonotipia records of the great **Victor Maurel**. The difficulties which faced us in the case of the **Farrar** record are not present in this case, since I have obtained the sympathetic and cordial co-operation of The Parlophone Co., who, it will be remembered, were responsible for the **Lilli Lehmann** re-issue, and are genuinely anxious to do all in their power to make this plan a success.

The frequency with which **Maurel's** name has occurred in Collectors' Corner during the last months is evidence of the great interest with which he is rightly regarded by both old and young readers. **Maurel** occupied a commanding position in the operatic world, and it may be asserted without fear of dispute that he was, among baritones, what **Jean de Reszke** was among tenors—the supreme artist. In either case, perhaps, more marvellous voices could be found—we might instance **Caruso** and **Battistini**, but, as interpretative artists, the best opinion will almost certainly incline to the former.

It is common knowledge that **Maurel** created the rôle of "Jago" (1887), and of "Falstaff" (1893) in Milan and afterwards in New York, but he did not, as is often stated, introduce the latter opera to London—a baritone named **Pessina** had that honour. It is less well known, probably, that he also created "Tonio" in *Il Pagliacci* (1892)—a rôle which **Ancona** subsequently made his own. Of the photographs which I have been able to find, I am bound to select the clearest, much though I prefer a "private life" study, which is among those which the encyclopædic M.H. (Thirsk) has sent me to choose from.

The *New York Musical Courier* of November 1923, in an obituary notice, relates that in 1881 Verdi was so impressed by **Maurel's** "Simone Boccanegra" that after the great death scene he came to the back of the stage to express his feelings to his superb interpreter. "Simone Boccanegra" was still in the great armchair, under the spell of the scene he had just so marvellously enacted. The other artists, even the hardened old choristers of the Scala, were in tears. The master, always austere and of very few words, grasped **Maurel** by the shoulder, and said, "I shall write you a rôle." The next day all Milan was talking of the important news—Verdi was to set Shakespeare's "Othello" to music.

His record of *Quand'ero paggio* in "Falstaff" is, as I have mentioned previously, a *tour de force*, and gramophonists of every description, whether collectors or not, high-brow or low, would be well advised to get a copy while they can. The first issue will be of this aria, coupled with Tosti's *Ninon*, a song

of which he was particularly fond, and which he sang with real charm and grace.

**Maurel** had already recorded for The Gramophone Co., in 1903, the titles including *L'Heure Exquise*; attempts to persuade the company to make special pressings of these have been unsuccessful.

One point which I should like to make clear beyond doubt is that these records were made in 1904, and are therefore not equal to present-day recordings. Original copies which I have heard are, in my opinion, very good, and I know of no reason why the reprints should not be equally so; but as I understand that there were some who were disappointed that the **Lehmann** re-issues were inferior to the best electrical recording, I think it best to mention the point.

The price of the record, assuming that a paltry minimum of 50 orders is reached, will be 7s. per copy, post free.

Other available matrices of this great artist are: *Era la notte*, *Otello*; *Serenata*, *Don Giovanni*; *A Marechiaro* (Tosti); *Mandolinata* (Paladilhe); *Rondel de l'Adieu* (De Lara); and *Au temps du Grand Roi* (Tosti).

The time required for pressing will be about four weeks from the closing of the lists, and subscribers are asked to send cash with order, before June 14th, but *Empire* readers will not be forgotten. I am hoping that the Editor will be able to broadcast the "Falstaff" on June 6th, which would relieve me of a lot of responsibility!

I have a further surprise which I am keeping till next month—an artist of almost equal interest, but whose records I have never heard. For those who like guessing, I will give the clue that this artist sang in the Gala performance on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

H.L.A., whom readers will remember as an expert on pianoforte records, writes that the earliest recorded pianist he has been able to trace is **Hans von Bulow**, whose widow has been able to assure him that her husband visited Edison in 1889-90, and recorded a Chopin Mazurka—"with pitiful results." Six further titles by **Grieg** are, thanks to H.L.A., added to the Collectors' "Who's Who"; also five by **Raoul Pugno**. I agree that it is a pity that the French H.M.V. Co. had not thought it worth while to retain some examples of the two last-named pianists, for their historical value.

**D'Indy**, **D'Albert**, **Schwarwenka** and **Friedheim** are the subjects of further information, which is at the disposal of collectors interested in piano recording.

H.L.A. asks whether **Mme. Eibenschutz**, who was associated with **Joachim** at the London "Pops," recorded for H.M.V. I think not. Nor, I think, did **Leonard Borwick**.

The piano records of those days, and for some long time afterwards, had little, if any, musical value, and it is not surprising that they have dropped out of the lists; although their dry bones could probably be made to rattle to some purpose by modern reproduction.

The following contribution to the discussion on record collecting is of interest; especially since it comes from an Australian reader:

I note that you ask whether re-issued old records would have as much interest to collectors as original copies. It seems to me that the question would resolve itself into this:



VICTOR MAUREL

Is it: (1) the *old original record*, or (2) the *artist and the music* for which the record is prized? If (1), then the collector would look upon a rare old record in much the same way as on a rare old book, painting or piece of china—the artist and music being to some extent a minor consideration. To me personally, the artist and the music are of supreme importance whether the record is an old original or a re-issue (modern re-pressing). The success of the re-issue of the Lilli Lehmann records would seem to confirm me here, as the subscribers to that issue, presumably a fairly large and representative section of gramophone enthusiasts, evidently take this view. It must be remembered too that old original discs would almost certainly be second-hand, probably somewhat worn, possibly damaged, and made under now old and imperfect processes—whereas re-issues would have all the modern advantages and improvements of materials, silent surface, etc.

If space permits in your Corner I would like to know if you can tell me if any of the following artists ever made any records: Etelka Gerster, Giulia Ravogli, Milka Ternina, Lasalle, Blanche Marchesi, Antonia Dolores (daughter of the great Trebelli), Italo Campanini, Antoinette Sterling, Sybil Sanderson, Sofia Scalchi, Del Puente, Marianne Brandt, David Bispham and Antonio Galassi. I am uncertain as to the dates of some of these singers, but as far as I can ascertain at present the careers of most of them overlapped at least a few years of what might be called the “early gramophone era”—say 1900–1907.

Yours faithfully,  
“RONDO,”

With regard to “Rondo’s” proposition as to the question at issue, I would prefer to say that “(1)” is “the old original record and the artist.” Just as in the case of books, china, etc., the article in question must have been excellent in itself before it could have subsequent value as an antique, so must a record have artistic merit of an unusual kind, which presupposes an artist of renown. It is not pretended that a book, piece of china, or a record is valuable merely because it is old, or even rare, unless it also fulfils certain other artistic or technical requirements. It is a fallacy to suggest that the collector of records looks upon the artist as in any way a minor consideration—he is the very essence of the matter. Also, I contend that it is impossible to ignore the date and rarity of the actual pressing—why should we differ from other collectors in this respect? Take **Santley’s** records—there are the present-day pressings, issued in the No. 2 list; the black labels with dog and without dog—the latter with sunk and with flush label; and finally, the original red label of 1903, one of which I have been fortunate enough to obtain—and I can hardly imagine myself exchanging it for any one of the others. Collectors of mezzotints and etchings will know very well what I mean.

Of the list of distinguished singers mentioned in “Rondo’s” last paragraph, **Bispham** made a number of successful records for H.M.V. in 1902 (red label) and 1903 (black label); also later for the Columbia group. I am assured that **Lasalle**, despite my previous assertion to the contrary, also recorded—possibly for Pathé. Of the remainder, I think that only **Ternina** (perhaps the greatest singing genius of our age) and **Blanche Marchesi** were in full possession of their powers in the “early gramophone era,” though **Scalchi** and **Ravogli** were still singing. There was little enough in those times to tempt retired veterans into the recording studio; though, as Mr. Gaisberg reminded us last month, the great tenor **Giannini** recorded in 1897—a date which must have been very much towards the end of his career.

I have lately received from Mr. Ulysses J. Walsh, an expert collector in U.S.A., a copy of one of **Giannini’s** records made in this period—a somewhat weird performance; he sings *Ah, che le morte in the Miserere*—a band supplying the choral and soprano portions! **Giannini** was the tenor at **Melba’s** London debut in the rôle of *Aida* in 1893.

Much interest has been shown from time to time in the old “Berliner” records, which, as everyone knows, were the first and original disc records. They were taken over by the Gramophone Co. on its formation, and were issued by them side by side with their own products for the first two or three years of its existence. I have had enquiries for specimens of these curiosities, and if this meets the eyes of any who are anxious to get copies, I can spare a few at cost price in batches of three or more. They are of popular contemporary band selections, banjo solos, and mildly comic songs. Naturally, I am keeping those I like best, which include a couple by **Connie Ediss** from “The Runaway Girl” and “The Messenger Boy”; *Mamie May* by **Lil Hawthorne**, and *What ho, she bumps* by **Chas. Foster**. “The Circus Girl,” “Shop Girl,” “Artist’s Model,” “Belle of New York,” “Geisha,” and “Dorothy” are all represented. These were part of an outfit which included an original model gramophone of 1898, complete in fitted case, which I recently acquired, and which I have joyfully added to my own “Collector’s Corner.”

Thanks to the enterprise and enthusiasm of Mr. Fujita, whose interest in matters gramophonic is well known, the question of printing the so-called “Collectors’ Who’s Who,” to which I referred on page 361 of the January number, is now faintly visible. As far as I can at present calculate, the cost would be hardly less than 5s. per copy—this exorbitant figure being due to the relatively small number which I should expect to sell. As I said before, the catalogue embraces those records which I consider to be of collectors’ interest up to 1907, and includes nearly nine hundred titles, with their catalogue numbers.

#### Replies to Correspondents.

K.B. (Addlestone). I prefer **Melba’s** London recording of *Mattinata* of 1904 to the U.S.A. version of 1907. In fact, I prefer all her 1904 and 1905 recordings. When reproduced on modern apparatus I find them a lot more natural and personal than the aloof and muffled effect of the American records. The “spoken words” at the end of *Mattinata* are not distinguishable.

H.M.B. jr. (Chicago, U.S.A.). The following French H.M.V. records by **Mary Garden** were made, I believe, in 1904: 33447, *Air de Melisande*; 33449, *Ariette No. 1*; 33450, *Ariette No. 3*, and 33451, *Ariette No. 4*. All were composed and accompanied by **Debussy**. I have never seen any of these, nor heard of any.

J.M. (Los Angeles). Thanks for most interesting letter.

May I apologise to C.W.B. (Stockholm), whose letter has been mislaid? **Melba’s** 053112, *Mad Scene*, “Lucia,” is identical with Mr. Rothermel’s No. 48. C.W.B. was misled by the fact that Mr. R. used the Victor number.

A.J.F. (Ipswich). 032023, *Le Cor*, by **Plançon**, was recorded in 1905. As yours has a pink label, its date would be between 1906 and 1909, if without “Dog.” The combination of “Dog” trade mark and “Monarch Record” was peculiar to the year 1909, I think; after that came the “His Master’s Voice” heading. **Tetrazzini’s** *Voi che sapete*, 053145, was one of her first batch—1907.

I believe that **Caruso** made some cylinder records, which were afterwards reproduced on Pathé discs. You will find replies to your other enquiries above.

“Rinaldo” (Leeds). None of **Melba’s** records with **Bemberg’s** accompaniments has survived. I consider *Chant Hindu* to be the loveliest record Melba ever made. You should read “Melba” by Percy Colson: this bears the hall-mark of having been written by a contemporary who really knew his subject, her friends, and her times, and, moreover, never offends against elementary principles of loyalty and good taste—which cannot be said for all the Melba literature.

P. G. HURST.

# AMERICANA

IN the face of the current economic situation, RCA-Victor's audacious essays in large-scale recordings savor of the fabulous. Either a record sales renaissance is already at hand or it is to be brought into being by these amazing ventures. Certainly there is more excitement in phonographic circles, and less doleful complaints, than there has been for the last year.

Victor has announced formally the admirable policy of issuing all its new large works on both long-playing and ordinary discs, and—commendably—there will be no dubbing from one type of disc to the other; each will be individually recorded. Two works are already out: a Scriabin album containing the *Poem of Ecstasy* and *Prometheus* (each taking two twelve-inch discs), and Carpenter's Washington bicentennial *Song of Faith* (two ten-inch records). I had confidently prophesied that the *Song of Faith* had little likelihood of appearing on discs, but this spring is an age of phonographic miracles. I must say, however, that apart from such historical interest as is attached to the work (the first musical composition, I believe, to be commissioned by the United States Government), its presence on records adds nothing really significant to the recorded repertory. The performance by the Chicago A Cappella Choir and Victor Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Nobel Cain, does all that can be done with the music, and Carpenter himself recites the pious excerpts from Washington's writings incorporated in the close of the work. It is all very idealistic and lofty; also very dull. Mr. Carpenter's fame—and it is not inconsiderable—still rests on his naïve and charming *Perambulator* suite, *Krazy Kat* and *Skyscraper* ballets. A good recording of any of these would be worth a dozen *Songs of Faith*.

The Scriabin works are another matter. The *Poem of Ecstasy* and *Prometheus* (plus the still unrecorded *Divine Poem*) occupy a solid enough place in both the current orchestra repertory and musical history to justify their being recorded. Indeed, their phonographic appearance has been called for constantly during the last three years. Dr. Stokowski and the Philadelphians, aided by a Curtis Institute of Music chorus and pianist (Miss Sylvan Levin) in *Prometheus*, give brilliant enough performances, but the peculiar and on first hearing overpowering concert hall effectiveness of *Prometheus* is akin to that of the *Boléro* and evaporates similarly in its transference to discs. Scriabin's tone poems are music to be outgrown, in my estimation. They are too nervously excited, too melodramatically planned, to give lasting musical satisfaction. Yet I cannot easily forget their profound and searing impact on first hearings. For all their sensationalism, pseudo-mysticism, and uncomfortable jitteriness, they have a very individual place in the musical repertory. The present recording is adequate for all but the gargantuan climaxes, and only Koussevitzky—the prime Scriabin exponent—could secure a greater degree of tonal inflation.

I was in error last month in attributing the new—and first—recording of *Don Quixote* to Stokowski. The conductor is Sir Thomas Beecham, the orchestra the New York Philharmonic-Symphony. The records themselves have not yet reached me, but having heard Sir Thomas' concert performance a few weeks ago I run no risk in strongly commending the discs to every collector. The fantastic variations on a knightly theme have never shared the popularity of *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Don Juan*, or *Tod und Verklärung*, but they rank with *Till* as the supreme expression of humour in music. Beside the rich and tender sentiment, the unflinching gusto, and touching pathos of Strauss in his great days, the neuroticism of Scriabin and the sanctimonious patriotism of Carpenter fade into insignificance.

## In Prospect

Three more major works are announced for early release: the Fourth Symphony of Sibelius announced last month (to be followed, it is rumoured, by the same composer's Third and Fifth), the mammoth *Gurrelieder* of Schönberg, and the complete *St. Matthew Passion* of Bach. The *Gurrelieder*, product of Schönberg's earlier and lusher years, is in the romantic Wagnerian vein of the *Verklärte Nacht*. The assembling of over five hundred performers modestly demanded by the score was an opportunity not to be passed over. Victor recorded it on seven long-playing records at one Philadelphia concert, and again on fourteen ordinary discs at another. Stokowski is, of course, the conductor. The *St. Matthew Passion*, recorded in its entirety for the first time, is sung by the St. Bartholomew Choir of New York City; soloists, orchestra, and conductor as yet unannounced. In addition to all this, Stokowski will also be heard in a suite assembled from *Tristan* (prelude, excerpts from the second act, and love death), and Whiteman's orchestra has recorded two essays of symphonic jazz, Ferdy Grofé's *Grand Cañon* suite and Dana Suesse's *Jazz Nocturne*.

The only other domestic recording of particular interest is the perennial *Toccata and Fugue* in D minor, played by Winifred Christie on the Bechstein-Moor double keyboard piano (Victor). The only new Victor long-playing disc is given over to a selection of "Sacred Music for Funeral Parlors," organ solos of familiar hymns played by Charles O'Connell. The first releases in the new series of Columbia long-playing records (85 cents, playable on ordinary phonographs) combine Ben Selvin, Kate Smith, the Three Nitecaps and Jack Miller in medleys from *Face the Music* and *Hot-Cha*; Eddy Duchin, Lee Morse, Dick Robertson, and the Rondoliers in medleys from *One Hour With You* and *Paradise*. These discs, offering a wide variety of artists and music on ten-inch discs that play a full five minutes to a side, have caught on extremely well. Columbia also brings out two unusual records designed for "Bible Belt" consumption, but of considerable piquant appeal to the sophisticated: hymns sung by Gypsy Smith, and song-sermons by Aimée Semple McPherson Hutton and her husband. Both evangelists, but particularly the latter, have enjoyed tremendous publicity and vogue in the States, and Aimée's record gives an excellent idea of the sensational methods she employs in "saving souls" and incidentally crashing newspaper front pages.

## Miscellany

A major Haydn item—*Seven Last Words*—has arrived here, via The Gramophone Shop, from Japan. Charles Lantrup conducts the Tokio Academy of Music orchestra and chorus, and the work is recorded completely on 9 twelve-inch discs. Kaufmann and Ryskind's book for *Of Thee I Sing* has been awarded the Pulitzer drama award, the first time this prize has been given to a musical comedy. An unusual example of apt choice on the part of a Pulitzer jury. Despite the slump in record sales and the frequent occurrence of discouraged dealers selling out complete stocks at half-price or less, the leading American dealers seem to be bravely pulling out of the slough of despond. Even here in Boston, never a leading phonographic centre, a daily newspaper has established a weekly record-review column, edited with a light but far-ranging touch by "Bruno" (Richardson Brown), and a leading dealer, Briggs & Briggs of Cambridge, has established a house organ that is likely to be developed into a significant musical journal.

R. D. DARRELL.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### *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.]

### AN UNOFFICIAL CHILDREN'S HOUR—AND OTHER STUNTS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Up and down the country thousands of pairs of headphones are lying derelict in junk boxes and cupboards. I recently resurrected mine under circumstances which may be of interest to Gramophiles with Radio sets.

My small son contracted measles! You know how it is with this beastly trouble: drawn blinds, no papers, no books, segregation, no contact with the outside world. After the first stages of the illness had subsided the poor mite lay in his darkened room completely bored and unhappy. In this extremity his mother appealed to me to "do something." As a result we instituted what came to be known as the "Unofficial Children's Hour." From the retirement to which they had been relegated since we had a valve set, I got out two old pairs of 'phones, unscrewed the earpieces, brightened up the magnets with fine glass-paper and gave them a general clean up, then linked them together with a long flex, lapping the joints lightly to prevent earthing. A little experiment soon showed which was the better "transmitting" pair—the others were taken into the small boy's room, and we started our "home" broadcasting. We found that we got the best results by drawing the earpieces together and speaking into both. Signals were increased by inserting a small flash-lamp battery at one of the joins. Gramophone records (transmitted by placing both earpieces as close to the "trumpet" as possible), fairy stories, and, of course, cheerful personal messages, formed our "programmes."

Successful as our efforts were, our small invalid soon complained that the 'phones hurt his ears, so we devised something more elaborate. A spare speaker was run up to his room by flex. Then with a loop of fine insulated wire I connected one terminal of a pair of 'phones with the grid pin of the detector valve, and the other terminal to earth. Using the 'phones as a mike we got full loud-speaker strength—and the gratitude of our small patient. Of course, a loud-speaker may be used instead of a pair of 'phones as a microphone.

Both these gadgets have since been used in other ways. The 'phones stunt, for instance, was employed in a case of adult illness. Using one earpiece as a receiver and speaking into the other, one has quite an effective house 'phone—"call-up" by tapping the earpieces with a pencil. Many an unnecessary journey upstairs was saved by this means.

As to the other gadget as a source of amusement, its uses are legion. At a children's party we hid small presents around the room and a mysterious voice from the ether told each little guest by name where to look. We brought off a gorgeous leg-pull on a friend who is a keen angler by "broadcasting" this "cod" S.O.S. :—

Missing from his home on Sunday last—A.B. When he left home was dressed in painful plus fours, a navy-blue chin, two creels and a rod bag. Known to have gone in the direction of Pangbourne. When last seen was chewing ground-bait in a Thames backwater. Will anyone who can give information as to his future movements please communicate with Mrs. A.B., but warily, as she is sensitive on the subject.

Anyone with a sense of humour can think of a dozen methods of getting some fun out of a wireless set by this means.

Yours faithfully,  
London, W.3. GRAMOPHILIP.

### FROM JAZZ TO RHYTHM.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—In his reply to Mr. Basil Maine's criticism, Mr. Fred Elizalde does not clear up the point of what he and his school mean by "rhythm." Do they really mean tempo, as Mr. Maine suspects, and as the record in question and most writings by dance music fans would seem to suggest? A definite statement would clear the air.

This is far from being the only technical term which is used in two entirely different senses by the exponents of modern dance music and "straight" musicians, as, for instance, *voicing*, which to us ordinary people is an organ-builder's job, with the organist rarely even consulted, but meaning something quite different to Mr. Edgar Jackson, judging by his usage in a review at the bottom of p. 486, centre (or should it be center?) column, April issue.

Some differences might be expected, as this dance music is largely an American art, and in other realms than music the same word may have quite different meanings on the two sides of the Atlantic. In the case of the motor-car, what we call the bonnet is known as the hood over there, whilst our hood is an American shade. Apart from Americanisms, though, there are many new expressions which have been coined, and it would be of great assistance to us outside the inner circle (but always willing to learn) if people who use technical terms at all freely would give a short glossary instead of assuming that we know all about it. Words which by long usage have come to be associated with something definite should be left alone, or at least given their orthodox meaning.

Yours faithfully,  
Plympton. L. J. Voss.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—The musical writings of Mr. Kaikhosru Sorabji may be, as Mr. Gray-Fisk suggests, trenchant (I can remember a letter of his to your admirable paper which was so "trenchant" that half of it had to be omitted!); but may I, at the risk of a severe snubbing, enquire in my ignorance how far they are authoritative? Mr. Sorabji has, as he never tires of telling us, received a musical education, and he has a command of the English language that leads him sometimes perilously near to the ludicrous. He has also an implicit faith in the importance of his own opinions: but has he really any knowledge of the Jazz which he so "trenchantly" attacks?

Where is his *constructive* criticism? I can tell you if I like that Bach's fugues are musical nonsense; but I should be severely ridiculed unless I could bring a mass of convincing evidence in support of my statement, and impartial observers might be unkind enough to think that I had said it either for notoriety or out of a perverted motive of jealousy. In the same way Mr. Sorabji and Mr. Lala Raphael, who vent their spleen on the harmless trade of providing dance-music for the million—which is, when all is said and done, as noble an industry as that of the comic-strip artist or the slapstick comedian.

I hold no brief for jazz; I find it tiresome and depressing, and not seldom actively embarrassing; but in all fairness I must say that I like it as well as "Le Jardin Parfumé," which is all the above, plus the insufferable pretentiousness that characterizes all its composer's effusions.

Yours faithfully,  
London, N.W.6. B. A. YOUNG.  
[Several other letters expressing similar views have been received.—ED.]

## COMPETITIONS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—You may remember that in the 1928 Christmas number of THE GRAMOPHONE you published a letter from a correspondent, Dr. Somervell, in which, to put it briefly, he suggested the holding of a competition as to the big works that then most urgently needed recording. In an editorial note at the end of the letter you said that competitions on these lines had not, in your experience, proved a great success. You, nevertheless, acceded to his request. Well, sir, I think you will have to admit that that competition was eminently satisfactory. It was interesting and, at the same time, extremely practical. (Can the latter remark be applied to recent operatic competitions?) You will notice that nearly 40 per cent. of the works submitted by correspondents have since been recorded.

In view of the fact that THE GRAMOPHONE is, to-day, a very much more influential and representative journal than it was even three years ago, may I suggest that another similar competition be started as soon as possible? Such a competition would give the recording companies a very fair idea as to what the public really wanted. It might also be of some assistance with regard to the formation of future societies on lines similar to those of the Hugo Wolf and Beethoven Sonata Societies.

Let me should agree to this suggestion, I submit the following six works:—

1. Handel. *Solomon*.
2. Bax. *Symphony No. 3*.
3. Delius. *Mass of Life*.
4. Bach. *Sleepers, Wake* (Church Cantata No. 140).
5. Brahms. *Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 5*.
6. Vaughan Williams. *Pastoral Symphony*.

Yours faithfully,

Monkstown, Co. Dublin.

J. R. QUIRKE.

## HAYDN.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Several of the musical magazines, *à propos* of the Haydn centenary, printed lists of records available, but not one, to my knowledge, mentioned two which are of outstanding merit. I refer to the record of the *Insanae et vanae curae* performed by the Choir of the Temple Church, London (H.M.V. No. C2053), and that of Lotte Leonard singing the aria *Nun beut die Flur* from *Die Schöpfung* (The Creation) on Parlophone No. 9414 (imported). It is surprising that both of these records should have been generally overlooked.

Yours faithfully,

New York.

HENRY S. GERSTLÉ.

## BATTISTINI.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Following upon the death of Battistini in 1928, I read such eulogistic obituaries about him in the local English and foreign Press that I was induced through curiosity and a love of "bel canto" to invest in two of the many discs made by him for The Gramophone Company. They were DB216, *Ebbrezza, delirio (Gioconda)* and *O, sommo Carlo (Ernani)*, and DB199, *Pieta rispetto, amore (Macbeth)* and *Lotta dei bardi (Tannhäuser)*. Frankly, and in the direct face of what I had heard and read of "his superb expression, his glowing, dramatic fire, his delightful play of light and shade in an exquisitely-tinted melodic line," to quote one conservative sheet, I was bitterly disappointed as far as my two samples of the Art of "La Gloria d'Italia" (*vide* H.M.V. catalogue) were concerned. Admittedly, the fault may have been and still may be in me, for I have not had the slightest inclination to invest in any more since then, but I claim to have some judgment and discrimination where fine singing is concerned—as witness a fairly respectable collection of numbers, among others, by such masters of the song as Caruso, Chaliapin, De Gogorza, De Lucia, Fleta, Ruffo, Schipa, Smirnoff and Formichi. At the first audition I

was unimpressed, but, thought I, "You must be mistaken in the face of what has been said of this great singer by the leading musical and critical authorities. Appreciation will grow with familiarity—as it did with Ijungberg in the *Death of Salome!*" In a word, I became a musical snob. Well, "I have paid!" as the Second Mrs. Tanqueray might have said.

I have since played these records numerous times, but I must confess that they consistently continue to leave me as cold as Mimi's tiny hand. I admire the intelligence of the phrasing; the breathing, in several instances, is phenomenal, but to my straining ear, the quality of tone seems in places to be positively raucous, the pitch uncertain, and the timbre sufficiently unmelodious to make one wonder the more at the superlatives contained in those aforementioned obituaries.

I realise, of course, that even under the best of electrical recording conditions, and not acoustic, as in these instances, a disc can only be considered as a *reproduction* of the original—advertising claims to the contrary!—yet, until recently, the catalogue carried so many of Battistini's recordings that it could only point to one thing: that he was a good "seller" and, in logical consequence, that he was widely known and liked for his vocal prowess. Have I, then, been so unfortunate as to unluckily select two of his, let us say, "least meritorious" recordings out of a score or so of other gems?

Will someone more discerning and, perhaps, discriminating than I please enlighten me! Is the fault in me, the recording, or the artist who died on the eve of the celebration of his golden wedding to the operatic stage? I think I can anticipate the answer, but I would like to hear the reasons and also of those discs where the baritone really did justice to himself.

Yours faithfully,

Coogee, Sydney,  
New South Wales.

NORMAN THOMPSON.

## "ATONAL."

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—In his letter on "Atonal" Mr. Latham raised two distinct questions—the legitimacy of: (1) "atonal" as adjective to "atonality"; and of (2) "atonality" as such. Permit me to make comment—in reverse order.

1. "Atonality," says Mr. Latham, "is a sterile denial from which nothing constructive can possibly come . . . no artist can produce great music by deciding what he is *not* going to do." I suggest that Mr. Latham is overstating his case. It is doubtful if even the greatest offenders have ever written "atonal" music for the *sole* purpose of demonstrating that music can be written in no key at all—with the same deliberate purpose, I mean, with which Bach wrote his "Well-tempered Clavier" to prove that music could be written in many keys. If they did so write, their slogan being "Down with Tonality," they should be called "anti-tonalists"—not merely "atonalists." "Atonality" is incidental, so to speak, to the music concerned, which embodies other aspects—contrapuntal, harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, etc. It is, according to the "New Dictionary of Music and Musicians," "a new style of composing without conscious reference to any scale or tonic." Moreover, Egon Wellesz in his study of "Arnold Schönberg" has the following reference to atonality—(I quote from my translation of the book published by Dent)—"what most people regard as the chief factor in Schönberg's work, namely, the lack of concords and of a definite key, is really only of secondary importance." Hence it is not a case of—atonality *et praeterea nihil*. There are other elements in music, even when it is "atonal."

I suggest further that Mr. Latham stresses unduly the negative implication in "atonality." An "atonalist," being a man who owes no allegiance to a fixed or established key, may be compared to a "non-Anglican," who owes no allegiance to the Established Church of England, and is, presumably, a "non-churchgoer." To say of such a man that he spent all his time in not going to church would be literally true, yet a gross

misrepresentation of the scope of his general activities. Mr. Latham may hold that "atonal" music cannot be Music, and it is undoubtedly true that for many men a "non-alcoholic" drink is no drink at all. But there is a positive element in a teetotal beverage as well as in "atonal" music, though both may be positively unpleasant to the taste of persons who have been nurtured on a more traditional brew.

2. To deal adequately with Mr. Latham's first question—the word "atonal"—would involve us in a long and arid discussion on philology.

(a) All nouns ending in -ality have as their corresponding adjective the form in -al, from which form, indeed, the abstract suffix -ality is derived. In many cases -al docs duty as adjective both to the concrete noun from which it is derived and to the abstract noun (-ality) derived from it: e.g., brute, brutal, brutality; origin, original, originality, etc.

(b) In considering the derivation of words we must take into account variations and developments in *meaning* as well as in *form*. Hence, though "tonal" is, in form, equally the adjective of "tone" and "tonality," it is not in *meaning* the adjective of "tonality." (In German it can have that meaning.) Conversely, "fatal" is, in meaning, the adjective of "fatality" and not of "fate," whose correct adjective is "fateful," i.e., "big with happy or unhappy fate."

(c) In many cases there is only the abstract noun in -ality to which the form -al can apply: e.g., moral, morality; total, totality, etc.

(d) So much for *simple* words in -al, -ality. In the case of *compounds* (i.e., prefix and root) -al must be the correct adjective to the noun in -ality, especially where, as is generally the case, there is no concrete compound noun to which the adjective in -al could apply; e.g., the biological terms asexual, bi-sexual; also congenial, convivial, etc. Such words have no concrete nouns—i.e., asex, congene, convive, etc.—therefore, the -al form must belong to, and refer to qualities connoted by the abstract nouns in -ality. By analogy, therefore, "atonal" must be the correct adjective of "atonality"—unless Mr. Latham denies it the right of existence at all—since there is no concrete form "atone" to which it can be related, as in the case of the simple words "tone," "tonal."

(e) Even to suggest a possible monstrosity like "atonalitous" would be to make a false analogy. Calamitous, necessitous come from calamit-y, necessit-y, the nominal ending being -y, not -ality. To nouns in -ality there can be no other adjectival ending but -al.

(f) Finally, since it was the German-speaking composers who started this "atonal" business, so it was they who coined the necessary words—from the Greek. In literary, scientific and philosophical language, loan-words from the Greek invariably become "Europeanised" and are current coin, in all languages, among the circles that use them. Now in German, the triad "Atonalität (atonality), atonal, Atonalist" forms what philologists call a "semantic unit," semantics being the science or art of associating the right *meaning* with a given word or word-group. French, I believe, and other languages have taken over these words from the German, together with the meaning that unites them. If we must have our own special phraseology in place of terms universally current elsewhere, well, we must! So I offer a suggestion. Let "atonic" be the adjective (in meaning) to "atonality," which means "without keynote, i.e., tonic." Since "tonality" implies a "tonic" (note), "atonic" could, without ambiguity, imply the absence of one—unless there is danger of its being pronounced in such a way as to cause yet another confusion. To say aloud "much of Schönberg's music is atonic" might convey to the unwary the idea that it was a "pick-me-up"; but the danger is not great.

If Mr Latham will accept "atonic" to mean that which "atonality" signifies, then, since its parentage may be under

suspicion, let the infant word be made legitimate for the English family of speech by some form of public baptism. I suggest, sir, that you, as editor of THE GRAMOPHONE, be asked to perform the ceremony and give the little word your blessing!

London, W.2.

Yours faithfully,  
W. H. KERRIDGE.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I was struck by Mr. Peter Latham's letter in the current number of THE GRAMOPHONE, as I had lately read what seems to me a good solution of his problem in terminology. In Mr. George Dyson's interesting book *The New Music* appears the following passage:

"The word *atonality* has recently been used to describe, presumably, developments which I prefer to define as modal, neomodul, or chromatic, respectively. My difficulty is that I cannot find a logical definition of atonality. If tonality means, as it surely does for most of us, the classical key-system, does atonality mean mere absence of this? Does it, therefore, include the old modes as well as the new, or the one, or the other, or neither? Does it cover the whole-tone scale? If it includes all this it is useless for purposes of exact description. If its range is narrower than this, then what is taken from it becomes attached, logically, to tonality. I see no escape from this ambiguity, which is the worst fault a technical term can have. Chromaticism, on the other hand, is a well-known and consistent historical tendency towards scalar expansion. The various stages in its progress are represented by the fixed scales to which music has from time to time attached itself. The end towards which all expansions logically converge is pure chromaticism as defined in the text." (Footnote on page 93.)

Mr. Dyson's thinking is as precise as his writing is clear. One wishes that the same could be said of all musical criticism.

Dublin.

Yours faithfully,  
FLORENCE LYNCH.

#### "BURIED TREASURE."

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Alex. McLachlan's recommendations from the French Decca List may possibly cause a little confusion. The Mozart *Piano Concerto* is not yet in the English list, but the others are. *The Good-humoured Ladies* has the same serial numbers, K521-2, and the Beethoven *Serenade, Op. 25*, is numbered K582-3.

I referred to the latter in my article in the February GRAMOPHONE, also to the three Segovia discs, of which I see Mr. McLachlan mentions one. Whilst this is perfectly charming, my own preference goes to Turina's *Fandanguillo* and Tarrega's *Tremolo Study* (H.M.V. D1305), two marvellous examples of Segovia's artistry. It may be of interest to state that there are two other Segovia discs not yet in the English list\*. These are Torroba's *Fandanguillo* and *Preludio* (E526, Swiss H.M.V.) and Bach's *Preludio e Allemanda* and *Fuga* (A.W.42, Italian H.M.V.). Both are ten-inch. The third Segovia disc in the English list contains Bach's *Courante* and the *Allegretto* from Torroba's *Sonatina in A major* (E475).

I have not heard the Italian and Swiss records, but if they are of the same vintage as the three English discs (which are amongst my most cherished records) they should be published here. The extraordinary delicacy and fascination of Segovia's playing has been magnificently recorded, and no matter how many times these records are played their charm is inexhaustible.

London, S.W.17.

Yours faithfully,  
J. C. W. CHAPMAN.

\* But see p. 15.—Ed.

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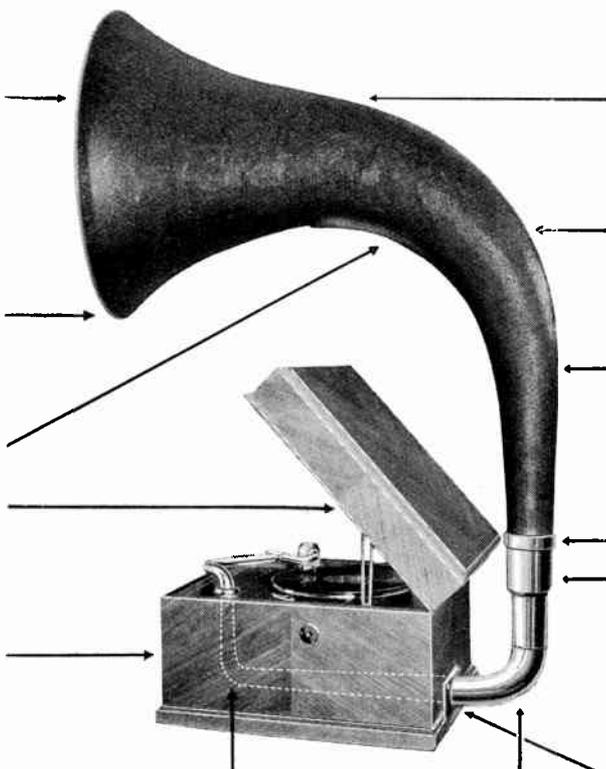
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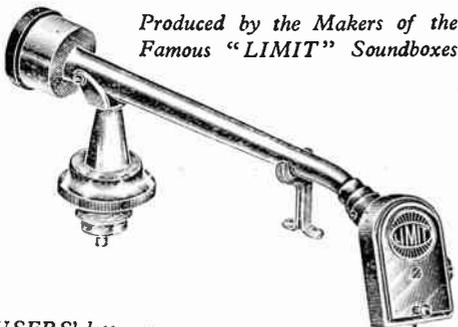
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★ 950 { \*Who's your little Who-zis? (Fox-Trot) *Hirsch-Goering-Bernie*  
\*Tell Tales (Fox-Trot) *O'Flynn-Robinson-Vardi*  
\*In Old Seville (When Night is Falling) (Tango) *Rosen-Ege*
- ★ 951 { \*Marce (Quick-step) *Ferri-Stevier*
- RAY STARITA AND HIS AMBASSADORS**  
★ 952 { \*Auf Wiederseh'n (My Dear) (Slow Fox-Trot) *Hoffman-Nelson-Goodhart-Ager*  
\*Kiss by Kiss (I'm Falling in Love with You) (Fox-Trot) *Rose-Meskill-Klages*
- NAT STAR AND HIS ORCHESTRA**  
★ 953 { \*Was that the Human thing to do? (Fox-Trot) *Young-Fain*  
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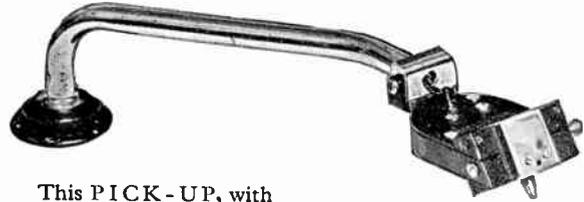
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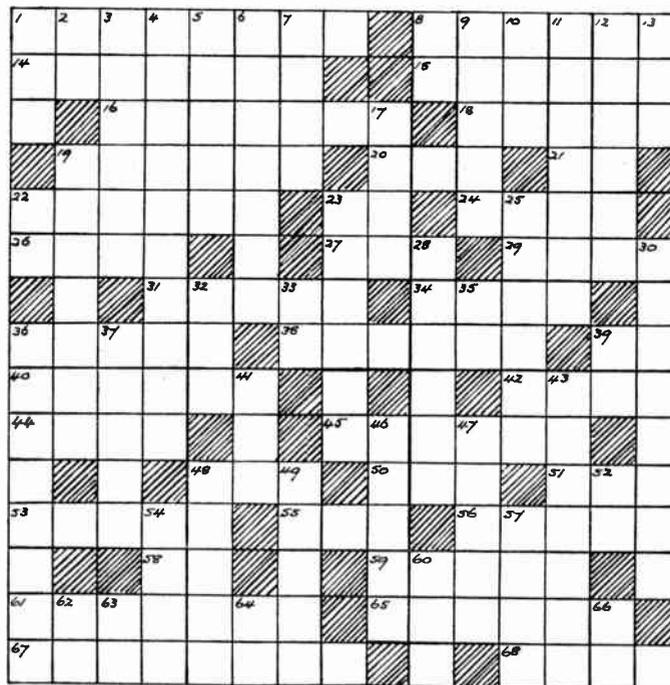
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