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*edited by*  
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## EDITORIAL

### Parsifal

After many years of writing I have learnt most of the provocative statements of opinion, and one of the most provocative of all is to say anything derogatory about *Parsifal*. So I was not surprised when our esteemed Madrid correspondent, Señor Nueda y Santiago, wrote to rebuke my slighting allusion to it. To Señor Nueda *Parsifal* is not only "the most beautiful, superb and astonishing masterpiece of music ever written, but the most beautiful, superb and amazing masterpiece ever produced in any art." Now, Señor Nueda has written an extremely interesting book on the æsthetics of music, *De Musica*, with most of which I should agree, and he on his side cordially approves of my choice of music for that imaginary desert island. Equally we should agree absolutely with one another in our admiration of the *Ring*, and yet *Parsifal* affects us both quite differently. Señor Nueda does not mind whether *Parsifal* be "Christian, heathen, Buddhist, or theosophist." In the dedication to Richard Wagner with which he prefaces his book he writes: "My mother taught me to pray and to believe. In materialism I learnt to doubt. You restore my faith, because when I enjoy your divine music I am aware of my soul and I believe in it."

My trouble with *Parsifal* is that I am incapable of accepting Wagner's sincerity of belief. He takes a great Christian legend and theatricalises it. It is not a dogmatic necessity for a Christian to believe in the Holy Grail, but if a Christian believes in the dogma which inspired the legend he finds it impossible to forgive the distortion of it in Wagner's treatment. Nietzsche's attack upon *Parsifal* gave *Parsifal* a kind of religious kudos, but an orthodox Christian ought to agree with much of what Nietzsche said about it. It is impossible to imagine Nietzsche's attacking the music of Palestrina any more effectively than a clothes-moth could attack a granite monolith. Nevertheless, although I shall never myself derive any emotional, intellectual, or even purely musical pleasure from *Parsifal*, the very reasons for which I condemn it compel me to recognise the right of its admirers to claim a magic for its influence.

Señor Nueda has many other interesting observations to make in a letter he has written to me, not the

least interesting of which is his appreciation as a Spaniard of Strauss's *Don Quixote*. "No one has ever been able to translate into musical language the nobility and fairness of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* as well as Richard Strauss. All other music written round *Don Quixote* is poor and vulgar, and Falla's *Retablo de Maese Pedro* is an absolute caricature. The *Don Quixote* of Strauss is so human and so beautiful and so worthy of Cervantes' knight-errant that every time I listen to it—with ear and soul (in Beecham's superb performance on that Columbia recording)—I regret the shortness of the score and wish that Strauss had transcribed into music the whole immortal book and composed fifty variations instead of ten."

*Don Quixote* may belong to the whole world, but that does not exempt us from listening with particular respect to the testimony of one of his fellow-countrymen. Strauss is still suffering from the reaction against excessive laudation and it is probably too early to estimate his final place in music. It may well be higher than contemporary opinion as a whole supposes.

### The Choral Symphony

The new H.M.V. album of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in D minor played by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski with American singers and chorus is on the whole the best version of this great work we have had so far for the gramophone. It is far from being an ideal version, but it has one great advantage, which is that it improves as it goes along, the interpretation of the first movement being the least satisfactory. The second movement seems to lack some of the glorious *élan* which it ought to have, but the *adagio cantabile* of the third movement is good, after which there is a set-back during that strange and dramatic piece of musical dialogue which leads up to the final tune. The choral finale, however, is admirable.

This great symphony had a most protracted gestation. As early as 1793, when Beethoven was twenty-two, Schiller's sister, Charlotte, was being told in a letter of a young man from Bonn who was intending to set Schiller's *Ode to Joy* to music. In 1812 there is a note among the sketches for the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies in the composer's notebook about a symphony in D minor. The beginning of the theme

of the second movement appears in the notebook of 1815, but it was not until 1822 that he began to sketch out the Ninth Symphony, without any idea then apparently of a choral finale for this, although in 1818 he had been contemplating an almost entirely choral symphony. In the note about this he puts down as an idea that the violins in the last movement should be ten times as many as usual! There is no doubt that had Beethoven lived like Verdi for eighty years in full possession of his faculties he would have set Berlioz and Wagner and Strauss a hard task in the way of competitive noise. It was in 1822 that the London Philharmonic Society offered fifty pounds to Beethoven for a new symphony, and this offer seems to have kept him at work on the Ninth. Fifty pounds in 1822 would have been the equivalent, I suppose, of about two hundred pounds to-day. Beethoven accepted the offer, and the money was sent him in December 1822. Beethoven, however, never revealed to his friends that he had received this money. He finished the Ninth during 1823, and in March of the following year offered it with the Mass in D to a Viennese publisher for six hundred guilders, although apparently Schott had already been offered these works and paid an instalment on them. In August 1824 he was writing to Probst, the Viennese publisher, as follows:

"As to the symphony, which is the biggest I have written, and for which I have already had foreign offers, there is still the possibility of your obtaining it. You must, however, make your mind up quickly, for I have already received part of the fee for it, but could balance that with other works. Although God is very good to me (for I, in turn, help where and when I can) and I am never short of a publisher, nevertheless I like things to go smoothly. If I could give the other person in question something else, I should not worry about it and could relinquish the symphony to you, but it must not appear before July of next year. Taking into account the time for printing and correcting, the interval is not so great. Meanwhile, keep this as a secret and do not mention it to others."

Finally, in February 1825, he gave the symphony to Schott, and it was published in 1826 with a dedication to Frederick William III of Prussia, though he recognised the fifty pounds of the London Philharmonic Society with an autograph to say that the symphony was written for the Society. The Ninth was first performed at Vienna in May 1824, and it was first performed in London in March 1825.

In the excellent analytical note to the H.M.V. album from which I have taken the story of these negotiations, "W. L." points out that they bring us "face to face with one of the aspects of Beethoven's character that was for years concealed or glossed over by Beethoven's biographers—his lack of absolute integrity in dealing with publishers." I admit that superficially the business of the Ninth

Symphony does suggest a bit of double-dealing, and if Beethoven had been selling soap or sugar instead of a symphony I suppose his business methods would be questionable; but, when we examine the transaction a little closer, there is really nothing to be charged against Beethoven. The London Philharmonic Society offered him fifty pounds to write a symphony, but there is no evidence that they expected the full publishing rights, and we may take it that they were satisfied with the written assurance from Beethoven that the symphony had been written for them. That Beethoven should write to an Austrian publisher and talk about foreign offers in order to bring him up to the scratch was surely legitimate! There are very few composers or authors at the present day who have not used American publishers as a means to extract a little more money from their English publishers. And in the end Beethoven accepted the offer from Schott, from whom he had received an instalment. Probst had set his heart on the Ninth Symphony and the *Missa Solemnis*; he could have paid up for it and clinched the bargain. Beethoven recognised that he owed Schott money and was prepared to fulfil his side of the obligation by giving him other works. There is nothing beyond his paying for them to show that Schott was particularly anxious for the Ninth Symphony and the Mass.

Authors in old days were often imposed upon by publishers, and in the whole history of transactions between them there is probably still a heavy debit against publishers. The layman may not be convinced by my defence of Beethoven, but nobody who has attempted a *magnum opus* can feel anything but sympathy with him. The real trouble was that when he began to think about the money for the Ninth Symphony he had not yet realised what an immense work it was going to be. If the London Philharmonic Society's offer had come along when he was in the middle of the Eighth Symphony he might easily have considered himself well paid for it with fifty pounds. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the Society would have been anything but perfectly satisfied with a symphony like the Eighth. The problem of size has always been a knotty one with artists. Whistler's row with Mr. Anthony Eden's father was over size. Sir William Eden commissioned a small portrait, but Whistler, carried away by his subject, painted a large one, and expected the Baronet to fork out accordingly. Both were in the wrong and both were in the right. The layman may think, too, that these are rather sordid preliminaries to a stupendous work of art like the Choral Symphony, but the sooner the layman realises that it is only the dilettante amateur who can afford to rise superior to such sordid preliminaries the better for the future of art. Probably, indeed certainly, there has never been in the history of the world a period when so many gifted and ungifted amateurs were writing not for a living but for a hobby, and this dilettantism is reflected everywhere in the

artistic output of the time. Beethoven may have been the greatest composer who has yet been born, but from the beginning to the end of his life he was a hardworking professional musician. Apropos of that, by the way, I was listening in the other night on my H.M.V. set to that excellent nightly programme from Stuttgart which is one of the joys of my life and heard a delicious series of those Scots songs which Beethoven set for an enterprising Scots publisher. Why does not one of our native singers give us some of these songs over the wireless? And if they were a success we might get some of them for the gramophone. One of the best records in my original collection was *Faithful Johnnie* sung by—was it Maartje Offers?

I have written so much at various times about the Choral Symphony that I am not now going to discuss the work itself at length. One new impression, however, did register upon my fancy on playing through this latest version, and that was the extraordinary similarity in the emotion of the final ode to some of the more genial expressions of our contemporary Bolshevism. The artistic controllers of the Russian proletariat have missed a great opportunity by not arranging for massed choirs to sing this ode at moments of Communistic expansiveness. The final effect of it is really as fatuous as the mechanised emotion of human brotherhood in the terms of Lenin. Romain Rolland, who may perhaps be accounted the leading sentimentalist of modern Europe, writes of the finale of the Ninth Symphony: "When the storm has reached its climax, the darkness is torn asunder, night is driven from the skies, and the serenity of day is restored by an act of will-power. What conquest . . . can equal the glory of that superhuman effort, the most brilliant victory ever achieved by the human soul? A poor, unhappy, solitary being—suffering incarnate in man—to whom the world had refused happiness, now creates joy himself that he may endow the world with it. He forges out of his own sufferings, as he has expressed it in those lofty words which résumé his whole life and are the watch-words of every heroic soul—'Through pain to gladness.'"

I suppose it is possible to feel like this after listening to the final ode, but the real finale of the Ninth Symphony is the *Missa Solemnis*. These two great works are inseparable. Nobody can appreciate either without the other.

### At Last!

I find it difficult to express the gratitude I am feeling at this moment to the Decca Company, Sir Henry Wood and the Queen's Hall Orchestra for this Fifth Symphony of Beethoven recorded on four 12-inch discs at HALF-A-CROWN apiece. Broadcast Records once made a most laudable effort to publish some of the great musical classics cheaply, but with the best will in the world it was impossible to say more

of them than that they were wonderful for the price. It was impossible to tell our readers that they were losing nothing by being content with those Broadcast versions of the classics that they had hitherto been unable to afford. No such inhibition weighs down a recommendation of this Decca Fifth Symphony, and I have no hesitation in affirming that with its publication Sir Henry Wood has set the seal on the great work he began on behalf of British music with the first Promenade Concert at Queen's Hall some forty years ago. This Fifth Symphony is authentic Queen's Hall at its best. The recording is majestic and at the same time crystal clear. There is never a moment when one fails to see Sir Henry Wood for the trees. You can almost smell the pipe-smoke of forty years ago, and no doubt contemporary youth will smell with equal assurance the smoke of to-day's gaspers. There must still be very many readers of THE GRAMOPHONE who do not yet possess a recorded version of the Fifth Symphony. They can now obtain one for TEN SHILLINGS which in all essentials is as good as any other—for sixpence less than they were paying a short while ago for the records of three greasy queasy crooners.

Besides the Fifth Symphony Sir Henry Wood and Decca have given us a fine rousing *Ride of the Valkyries* for half-a-crown, and for another half-crown Sir Henry's orchestrations of Dvorak's *Humoreske* and Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in C minor*, the popularity of which I need not stress. It is cheering to read that we are to get Bach, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Sibelius, and Wagner in this wonderful series, which will be an enduring souvenir of the Proms., and all that the Proms. have meant to so many thousands, young and old, when (incredible and distasteful thought!) Sir Henry Wood himself has laid down his baton for the last time. Merely to express our appreciation of his great services to music and our affection for the man who has given so much to our artistic life it would be a gesture to lose no time in buying these records. There is no need, however, to bother about courtesy, recognition, or gratitude. They are good records. It is worth noting that I played through the whole Fifth Symphony without being called upon to clip my fibre needle. These records will be an addition to the library of the most fastidious. Readers always know when I am trying to be kind and when I am genuinely enthusiastic. I regard this alliance between Decca and Sir Henry Wood as a matter of national importance.

### Miscellaneous

Mr. Montagu Nathan writes to rebuke me for alluding to Szigeti as a violinist who became famous after the war and points out that his first appearance in England as a boy followed after a brief interval that of Mischa Elman in 1905. I suppose I was thinking in terms of the gramophone, and that must be my excuse.

His letter continues :

" You also refer to Vieuxtemps' Fourth Concerto as material which is valuable for the purpose of getting into people's heads the sound of a well-played violin. Having been taught this work about twenty-five years ago by Eugene Ysaye (who was a pupil of Vieuxtemps) I may claim sufficient acquaintance with it to declare my opinion that, with all due respect to its composer, it is quite easy to get the sound of a well-played violin into people's heads without resorting to such negligible examples as that particular composition."

The point I was trying to drive home was that the English as a nation tend to dislike the sound of the violin. You can even observe this in the neglect of it by English dance bands. The favourite instruments of the English are the organ and the cornet, just as the really popular instrument in Scotland and in most Latin countries is the accordion, and in Central Europe the violin, though both in Scotland and in Ireland, and, I daresay, in Wales, the sound of the violin gives much greater pleasure than in England. Therefore, in recommending a superb piece of fiddling like this performance of Heifetz in the Vieuxtemps Concerto, I was thinking less of the musical value of the work than of its obvious popular appeal, and I venture to argue that any composition which can lend itself to such superb fiddling cannot be dismissed as entirely negligible.

Mr. Nathan's letter concludes :

" I am the proud owner of a superb Tom, and I therefore deeply resent your comparison of the love-song of this aristocat with the nauseous utterance of such a creature as the common crooner."

Well, here I must admit I am in agreement with my correspondent, and I apologise to felinity.

### The Mozart Society and Others

The first album of the Mozart Society, which consists of the ensemble numbers from *Le Nozze di Figaro*, is a brilliant success, and if the solos which I presume will make up the second volume maintain this high level we shall have for the gramophone a representative performance of this enchanting opera. The orchestra and chorus are that of the Glyndebourne Mozart Opera Festival of 1934. The conductor is Fritz Busch, the producer is Karl Ebert, and the cast with three exceptions is made up from British singers. Nobody will suspect me of the smallest prejudice in favour of British singers in opera and to say that I was agreeably surprised by their performance is to put it very mildly. Of course they are not singing in English, and that has helped them considerably. The famous finale of the second act, which is surely the finest finale in the whole of opera, is carried through with a verve and a sparkle beyond praise. The hope I ventured to express that a literal English translation would accompany the Italian libretto was granted, and it has been neatly done by F#. We have been waiting for years for these ensembles and if everybody

who has written to THE GRAMOPHONE to plead for a complete recording of a Mozart opera makes haste to obtain this first volume the next volume brought out under the auspices of His Master's Voice should be a best seller. I have already had occasion to compliment Mr. Walter Legge several times on his excellent forewords and notes to albums, and in this brochure he is at the top of his form. His next enterprise is to launch under the auspices of Columbia the English Music Society. The project is to give a comprehensive collection of English music from Byrd to Bax, from Wilbye to William Walton. The first volume will be devoted to Purcell and will include the four-part Fantasias, the Golden Sonata, and various unpublished catches. In pre-electric days William Primrose made an exquisite recording of the Golden Sonata, and although he has now deserted the violin for the viola he is to pick up his violin again in order to make this new recording of the Golden Sonata. This is good news. Arnold Bax is to have the second volume, which will include the Viola Sonata, the Nonett, and *if* the support given to Volume One and the guarantee of support for Volume Three justify it, *The Garden of Fand* or even Symphony Number Three will be added. That *if*, however, is a pretty big if, for it will be impossible for the English Music Society to undertake big orchestral works without at least a thousand subscribers.

To be frank, news of support from our readers for the Anthologie Sonore has not been so encouraging as to tempt me into supposing that it will be an easy task to obtain a thousand members for the English Music Society. Yet, I cannot bring myself to believe that there are not a thousand people in this country able and willing to support their own music. The recording companies have been dauntless in the way they have sponsored these societies, which have been much criticised chiefly from a conviction in the public mind that no big trading concern does anything unless a huge profit is attached to it. I am speaking without any special information, but I will hazard a guess that very little money has been made out of all the albums issued to subscribers of the various societies. The *Schöne Müllerin* and the Fourth Volume of the Hugo Wolf Society still have room for subscribers, and unless there is a better response to these *lieder* albums there seems little chance of getting Schumann and Brahms albums, both of which are badly wanted, but, alas, apparently not by enough people.

### Some Recent Records

Nothing could be better than the light-blue Columbia record of the Léner Quartet playing the Andante Cantabile from Tchaikovsky's Quartet in D major. Interpretation, execution, and recording are perfect. Delightful, too, is *Rossiniana* played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Beecham on two light-blue Columbia discs. The arrangement of these pieces



is by Respighi, who is a past-master at arrangements of Rossini. The recording is of the quality of all the other Beecham-Columbia recordings. And you know what that means.

I do not remember a previous recording of Dvorak's Quartet in A flat major, and the performance by the Prague String Quartet on three H.M.V. red discs of this lovely work is most welcome. I agree with A. R. that the Fourth movement is something of an anti-climax after those wonderful and uplifting melodies in the first three movements, but there are very few quartets in which the final movement does not let one down a little. I think the most conspicuous example of this is the Fourth movement of Beethoven's Harp Quartet.

One vocal record stood out last month and that was the red H.M.V. disc of Lily Pons singing *Una voce poco fa*, which is a really brilliant piece of coloratura

singing, although, as H. F. V. L. points out, it is not a perfect interpretation of the dramatic aspect of the aria, and it should be remembered that Rossini was always dramatic. Never mind, we do not often get such coloratura nowadays.

On a Parlophone-Odeon ten-inch disc we had the same soprano in the *Bell Song* from *Lakme*, and a delicious affair Lily Pons has made of it.

From Decca-Polydor we had a most welcome recording of Mozart's Quartet in E flat played by the Prisca Quartet on four ten-inch discs, which means ten shillings for an exquisite piece of chamber music, and another bargain at seven and six is Beethoven's Sonata in E flat with Franz Von Vecsey on the violin and Guido Agosti on the piano. I hope that these Decca-Polydor bargains in chamber music will become a constant feature of succeeding months.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.

## KEYS AND MOODS

### A QUESTION ANSWERED

by PERCY A. SCHOLÉS

MR. COMPTON MACKENZIE, in the May issue of THE GRAMOPHONE, "tossed a suggestion" to me. I caught it, and have ever since been seeking time to do something with it. He was discussing Schubert's C major Symphony, and said:

"I wish that some musical critic far better equipped than myself would give us a study of the moods induced by the various keys, the significance, for instance, of G minor to Mozart, of C minor to Beethoven, and of C major to Schubert, with hundreds of other useful observations that might be made by a critic who knew how to temper his imagination with academic knowledge and experience. What, for instance, inspires a composer to choose a key for one of his great works? I believe Mr. Percy Scholes might have something to tell us about this matter, and I toss the suggestion to him over the seas and mountains that lie between the Hebrides and Helvetia. I was on the verge of trying to fancy that the explanation of why Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony and this C major of Schubert's did not appeal to me as they should was the key in which they were both written when I remembered Mozart's glorious Quintet in C major and Schubert's equally glorious Quintet in that key. So that explanation is ruled out."

The crux of that passage is the question, "*What inspires a composer to choose a key for one of his great works?*" It is a question to which nobody can authoritatively reply except the composers themselves, and if they did reply I believe they would reply in all sorts of different ways, some of them very matter-of-fact and others extremely fanciful.

I, who am no composer, incline strongly to the matter-of-fact. The old modes of the plainsong and early church music, in which no doubt Mr. Mackenzie was brought up, differ one from another, but every modern major key resembles in all its details all the other major keys and every modern minor key resembles all the other minor keys, so that to me the question of which major or minor key is chosen for (say) a new symphony is merely a commonplace matter of pitch.

I believe that practically every symphony that has ever been written originates with its first main theme (the first "subject" of the first "movement")—that the composer gets this first of all (has it flash into his head as themes must have flashed into the head of Mozart and Schubert, or elaborates it laboriously, as Beethoven often did) and that the key for it is settled by the pitch that seems to the composer to suit it best, high pitches tending to greater brilliancy and low to greater intensity. And the key for this initial theme being settled becomes that of the first movement and the last one and is so accepted as that of the symphony.

Admittedly, then, key is, with me, a secondary matter, and in support of my position I would remind the reader that he probably hears few of the classics in the key in which the composer intended them. For until very recently pitch was a very variable, fluctuating thing and differed in the same period in different places and in different places at the same period. No doubt our organists often feel that the keys of many of Bach's Fugues are exactly suited to their mood and cannot imagine a particular fugue in any other key, yet Bach himself heard his organ works about two semitones higher (if a particular organ happened to be tuned to what was called "Cornett Ton," i.e., the pitch of those important orchestral instruments, the old wooden cornetts) or three semitones higher (if it was tuned to what was called "Chorton," i.e., choir pitch).

And Beethoven's C minor Symphony, as I reckon things out, is now heard in what he would probably call the key of C sharp minor. There must be many cases of compositions that we hear to-day at a pitch different from what the composer had in mind, and, if the difference is as much as a semitone, "at a different pitch" is (to my thinking) the same as "in a different key."

I say "to my thinking" because there are people who find an esoteric significance in key which I personally have never found. They would maintain that E flat major is always a "rich" key and E major a "brilliant" one, and if

you pointed out that E flat on one piano is the same as E on another would stick to it that, in some obscure way, all E flats have something in common and all E's something in common.

Now for that view there is just this to be said. There are a few exceptional people who can recognise a key *on a piano* whatever the pitch of the piano. I mean that, for instance, a man whose own piano is at a certain pitch will, if he hears a piece played on a piano of which the pitch is higher or lower, give correctly the name of the key *as it is on the new piano*, i.e., as it is in the printed music. For instance, he hears something in E on the other man's piano and recognises the key as E, although E on that piano is the equivalent of E flat on his own piano—or, it may be, F.

Similarly there are a few exceptional people who, whatever the pitch to which a violin is tuned, can correctly name the key in which it is played, i.e., the key in which the performer is playing it on that particular violin. apart from any question of high or low pitch.

The explanation of this curious phenomenon is supposed to be this: To very keen-eared individuals (perhaps not strong in the sense of "absolute pitch" but abnormally acute of hearing nevertheless) the keys come to possess individualities according (on the piano) to the presence of the greater or smaller number of short (black) keys and on the violin according to the more or fewer occurrences of open strings.

Consider for a moment the very great difference of leverage in a black key and a white one, due both to the difference in length and the difference in height. This creates a sort of quality which none of us can distinctly trace to its origin but which exists nevertheless and can, apparently, be recognised subconsciously. And on the violin a much more distinct difference of quality probably results from the presence or absence of open notes. A piece in key G major has four open notes incessantly occurring, giving it a quality that is lacking in a piece in G flat which has not a single open note (so long as the piece remains in its main key, of course).

This fact that keys are sometimes recognised by exceptional individuals on particular instruments is mentioned here in fairness to those who maintain that every key possesses a sort of "personality," but it has no real bearing on the subject, since it only affects those instruments.

And now I mention a puzzle. How comes about the general idea that sharp keys are bright and flat keys sombre? Most people would say that F sharp on the piano is one of the brightest keys and yet if you asked them on another occasion (when they had forgotten what they had said and were unsuspecting of what you were "getting at") they would call G flat "solemn." Yet F sharp and G flat, on a keyboard instrument, are identical! (on *any* instrument, for that matter, but I do not want to go into that, for it would start a controversy on the misunderstood subject of "equal temperament").

Clearly there is a lot of bunkum thought and talked about keys! We see this clearly when we approach the subject of "key-colour," by which I mean the strong association a good many people think to exist between particular keys and particular colours. These associations certainly do not possess the absolute force that is often imagined. They are accidental and subjective. Beethoven on one occasion spoke of B minor as black. Look through his entire output (I leave this task to you as probably possessed of more leisure than I) and make a list of all his movements in B minor. Then note the variety of the emotions they express. Not all "black" emotions!

We possess a complete list of all the key-colour associations of Rimsky-Korsakov and of Scriabin. They agree somewhat at a few points but we get glaring discrepancies for the most part—R.-K., C major, "White"; S., "Red." R.-K., A major, "Rosy, clear"; S., "Green." R.-K., B major, "Sombre, dark blue shot with steel"; S., "Bluish-white." And so on.

How far imagination rules in this general subject of key effects was seen at a debate upon it organised by that active journal *Musical Opinion* in 1886. One section of the audience maintained its power aurally to identify any key and the other section denied it this power.

A well-known piano piece was played in its proper key of G and then in A flat (presumably with an interval for forgetfulness in between), the two keys being announced and the piano, I gather, being in sight of the audience.

Those members of the audience who maintained the theory of distinct qualities attaching to particular keys (as such) maintained that this transposition had totally altered the feeling of the piece.

It was then revealed to them that the two performances were identical in pitch, for the piano possessed a transposing device which had surreptitiously been brought into action, so that the two performances, although seen to be *played* in different keys, had been *heard* in the same key.

Of course, the factor already mentioned of the greater or lesser presence or prominence of short keys may have come in here, as we can now see, and the experiment would have been more conclusive if carried further—perhaps by performances on other instruments, and certainly by performers on two pianos tuned a semitone apart (and with their keyboards hidden from the audience) so as to eliminate the factor just mentioned. However, the pitch-identifiers were looked on by their opponents as completely routed (as in effect they were, I think) and the meeting, I gather, broke up in recriminations and disorder.

The best test of all on this occasion would perhaps have been one with an organ, where the question of short and long keys does not enter, since leverage or pressure does not affect the dynamics. Perhaps the Editors of THE GRAMOPHONE may some day feel inclined to take up the question afresh and carry out some carefully devised tests (previously agreed to by all parties) in some building possessing an organ. Or something might be done by specially prepared gramophone records. The result of such tests would be, I am sure, to demonstrate that key is less important a factor than is usually supposed.

And that brings me back to my opening assertion. The composer's choice of a key for a particular composition has always, I maintain, been a matter (a) of convenience or suitability as to *pitch*, or (b) of pure fancy.

The Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE was clearly brought somewhere near this opinion when he reflected. He was beginning to think that the key of C major (*as such*) did not appeal to him, and then remembered that not only were there compositions in that key for which he did not care but also other compositions for which he cared enormously. Evidently, then, key, in itself, does not "induce mood" as he had supposed.

Why, even the difference of mood induced by major and minor is less than we generally think! Most people have the idea that minor compositions express sadness and solemnity, but there are plenty of jolly ones—the character of the themes and the treatment of them, the nature of the rhythms, etc., being more vital factors than the major-ity or minor-ity of the key. Is Handel's *Dead March* in the minor or the major?

Tempo and Rhythm *do* define mood; Key does not. You can easily play "God save the King," note for note, in so different a rhythm that not one musician in twenty will recognise it. Ribald organists have been known to play before the service (and without arousing protest from the officiating clergy and indeed very acceptably) some popular comic song—in slow tempo or in changed rhythm. But nobody ever disguised "Yes, we have no bananas" by playing it in another *key*!

Have I written a lot of heresy? Well, other people have done that before me and some of them have lived to see their heresy accepted as orthodoxy.

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# THE BOSWELL SISTERS

by W. S. MEADMORE

**T**HERE are three of them, Connie, Martha and Vet. Connie has black hair, brown eyes almost as dark as her hair, and an olive complexion. So has Martha. And Vet—but she is taller and quieter than the other two.

The sisters were born in New Orleans, Louisiana. Their mother is French, their father, of English and Irish descent, was born in the States; a business man with a liking for music. As very small girls, Connie, Martha and Vet learnt the piano, violin and 'cello, playing trios at school concerts and singing, as encores, vocal numbers composed by themselves.

Mr. E. T. King, then recording manager for the Victor Talking Machine Company, heard them. He invited them to his hotel, and they made their first records; released in the South, they sold so well that the sisters were asked to go to the recording studio at Camden, New Jersey, to make further records. But their father considered that they were too young to travel alone and would not let them.

They had also been broadcasting from the W.S.M.B. station, mainly playing light classical music arranged for the piano, violin and 'cello. A saxophone and banjo were added and "hot" music crept into their repertoire.

Meanwhile, the sisters were thrilled by an offer from the manager of the local Orpheum theatre—a variety hall—to take the place of an artiste who had been recalled to New York to the deathbed of her mother. He offered them three hundred dollars for a week's engagement; if he had offered them nothing they would still have accepted.

As an outcome of this, two months later, a Mr. Sanger, the proprietor of a circuit of theatres, offered them an engagement. Not only did the school authorities give permission for the girls to undertake this tour, but the teachers also helped with coaching and ideas.

When, in 1929, the three sisters finally left school, they decided to take up the show business seriously. Until then it hadn't been much more than a lark, now it was to be their careers. Their mother encouraged them, wanting them to have a chance of doing what they liked doing. Her opinion was that the girls "might as well have a fling and get good and disgusted." But the father discouraged them; he didn't like "hot" music or the show business. The sisters had studied classical music so long that he wanted them to go on. Eventually they went to Chicago on five hundred dollars which he gave them "for a vacation." They were to return in two months. Actually, it was sixteen months before they did.

In the South and as local talent, the sisters had been something of a sensation; in Chicago they got "cold feet." They couldn't manage to get their numbers over; their agents thought that more experience was needed. All the same they managed to save five hundred dollars to return to their father, proof of their serious intent.

Chicago not being responsive to their talents, the scene was changed to California. Here "things got tough." In New Orleans, engagements had come to them. California was different; it was no good sitting at home for the telephone bell to ring, because it didn't. Jobs had to be sought for. And the sisters didn't know how it was done or where to go.

Martha was regarded as the practical and business-headed sister. Connie and Vet would sit and stare at her. Connie would say, "Can't you go out and get some work for us?"

They lived in a fourth-rate apartment house, where their bed was stood on end in the daytime and the legs became hat-pegs.

Money began to give out. They could have written home for more, but would not, being afraid that their father would appear and take them away.

The sisters met a friend from their home town. He expressed surprise at their dingy surroundings; they explained that Connie was writing a book, they were living there for the sake of atmosphere. He invited them to a "swell" dinner at the Ambassadors and said he would call for them in his car. The last reserve of money was broken into; clothes were bought for the occasion; they each had new evening dresses; Martha and Vet had wraps, but there was no money left for a wrap for Connie.

Coming home that night in her thin dress, Connie sat in the car and shivered. The temperature was nearly freezing.

It was Vet's birthday. Always on their birthdays the sisters had had an enormous cake with candles and a party. Now they had only forty cents in the world. Martha produced a can of spinach and Connie bought a twenty-five cent cake and a few candles. That night they almost resolved to give in and go home, although Connie said: "No, let's stick it." There was a knock on the door; their friend from New Orleans came in. "Do something for me," he asked them. "I've got some friends I'd like to hear you. Will you come to K.F.W.B. (Warner Brothers' radio station at Hollywood) and give a programme? The money is nothing, but then you don't want work; you can use the thirty dollars as pin-money."

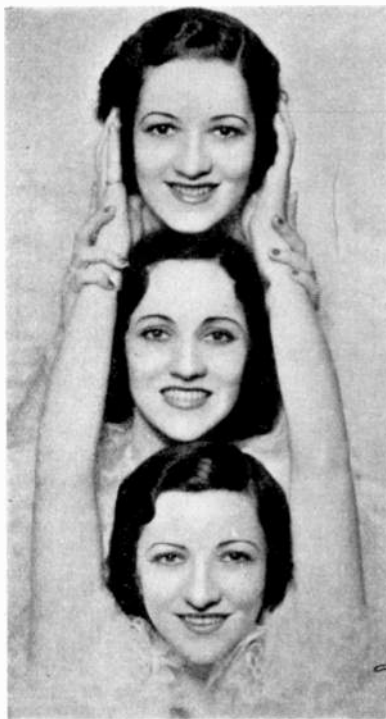
They went "to oblige their friend" and were a success. The friend handed them a cheque. "You can cash it to-morrow," he remarked casually.

"Can you cash it for us now?" said Connie.

Two days later their telephone bell rang. Connie answered. It was the manager at K.F.W.B. speaking. He said he understood they were on vacation. Connie said they were. "Could you do a few programmes for us?" the voice continued. "Say three a week. You know our budget is only thirty dollars a night, but I think I could manage forty for you. What do you think?" "I'll ask my sisters," said Connie.

They broadcast from this station for a year, also making records and doubling in pictures; in those days they were not of sufficient importance to be seen on the screen. That was the beginning. As the year went by, more and more work came their way. They began to specialise in "hot" music. Only when success was assured did they pay a visit home.

After dinner their father asked for some music. The violin and 'cello were produced, Vet sat at the piano. They played Schubert's *Serenade* and Saint-Saëns's *La Cygne*, their father's favourite pieces. But they had almost forgotten the notes!



The Boswell Sisters

# TURN TABLE TALK

## Italian Opera

Our notes under this heading last month have drawn the following :

*To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.*

*Re "Turn Table Talk," July issue.*

"Franca Somigli, whose name was mentioned here the other week by Alfred Einstein in his account of the Florence Festival, is an American singer whose real name is Marian Clarke. She recently sang as Marguerite at the Rome Opera."

The above extract from the *Daily Telegraph* is humbly presented to the gentleman who so admires the artist in question as "the best of the new generation of Italian sopranos."

By the way, I wonder if Toscanini ever did express the opinion of Franci attributed to him by your reader, and whether the great man really considers him a better Hans Sachs than Schorr, Böckelmann, or any of the front-rank German bass-baritones? I beg leave to be sceptical. Our dear Herman Klein certainly did not think so.

London, N.8.

H. C. N. EARLE.

P.S.—May I heartily endorse Mr. Mackenzie's remarks on the nonsensical letters in *World Radio* on tenors and other singers.—H. C. N. E.

## Our reader's reply—

If Mr. Earle will take another look at the paragraph in question, he will see that I am quite aware of the fact that Franca Somigli is of American origin. As, however, her reputation rests solely on her achievements during her career in Italy, where she has won her way in five years to the leading theatres, I do not think it was a misnomer to describe her as one of the best of the new generation of Italian sopranos—I am sure she wouldn't mind.

Toscanini's well-known regard for Benvenuto Franci is amply borne out by the fact that he so often relied on him for the leading baritone rôles at La Scala. The great man's opinion of Franci as Sachs was not the issue: it was my humble self who found his characterisation a revelation. I should like to explain that I do not really consider Hans Sachs a bore; but I know that "F?" does, and wanted her to realise that Franci makes the character really live!

By way of cross-examination to Mr. Earle's catechism, may I ask how he knows what Herman Klein thought of Franci as Hans Sachs, since he can never have heard him in the rôle?

## Psychophony

"Look into the eyes! The more closely you look into the eyes the more you will feel in harmony with the universe."

These were the startling words we heard emanating from an H.M.V. High Fidelity loudspeaker at the Grotrian Hall, Wigmore Street, on Tuesday, July 9th.

On a screen at the back of the platform huge images of a pair of deep-set, intensive human eyes were projected. On the platform were members of a distinguished audience calmly obeying the suggestion of the voice from the speaker.

The occasion was the first demonstration in this country of Psychophony, which is a method of hetero-suggestion by means of gramophone records.

Present-day conditions affect the nerves and minds of millions of people. Their trouble can mostly be overcome by acting on the subconscious mind. This can be done either by auto-suggestion (exercised by the person himself) or by hetero-suggestion (exercised by another person). But many people are not capable of influencing their own minds; the very nature of their complaint prevents it. On the other hand,

there are not enough trained suggestionists to treat all those who require treatment.

Doctor C. de Radwan's Psychophonic method gets over this difficulty. He has evolved a technique of acting upon the subconscious minds of people by means of gramophone records aided only by a large photograph of a pair of human eyes.

The person treated neither loses consciousness nor self-control. It is simply hetero-suggestion in which the gramophone and record replaces the suggestioner so that the treatment can be taken at home by anyone.

The effectiveness of Dr. de Radwan's method was conclusively proved at the Grotrian Hall lecture.

For example, it was suggested, by means of a record, to one member of the audience that he was running hard up a steep incline. Not only was there a visible effect on the subject, who began panting and seemed very fatigued, but his pulse beat, originally taken by a doctor in the audience, had risen from 114 to 180. Later he was restored to normal (pulse 108) again by recorded suggestion.

We must make it quite clear that the records used were only made to demonstrate the effectiveness of Dr. de Radwan's Psychophonic method.

Normally, the patient or subject is given three records, one to be listened to immediately after rising, one to be heard after the day's business is over, and one which induces sleep. Then a further record is "prescribed" and made according to the particular trouble of the subject.

Dr. C. de Radwan is a Polish scientist. He studied medicine at the University of Munich and worked for two years in Professor Kraepelin's Clinic for Psychiatry. He then continued his psychological studies and research at the University of Vienna, where the degree of Doctor of Philosophy was conferred upon him in 1914. In Vienna he worked under the famous psychologist Professor Adolph Stohr, who had perfected the methods of auto-suggestion even before Coué and Beaudoin. In this work Professor Stohr was assisted by Dr. de Radwan and Professor Winkler.

## Recordings Wanted

The recently discovered Mozart Rondo in A (K.386) for piano and orchestra, by Eileen Joyce and orchestra. The first performance of this work was broadcast by Miss Joyce on July 6th. Pizzetti's *Songs of the High Season* for piano and orchestra, also by Eileen Joyce, who introduced it to England last year. Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* for chorus and orchestra with the composer conducting. Also his first and fourth piano concertos, played by himself with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and, indeed, why not a Rachmaninoff Society?

## Anything Goes

Honours go chiefly to the men in this Cochran musical comedy at the Palace Theatre. Sydney Howard, who hasn't, and never could have, enough to do, Peter Haddon as the idiotic English nobleman of whom the American stage never tires, and Jack Whiting, the good-looking, irrepressible hero of an infinite variety.

Cole Porter is at the top of his form in *You're the Top* and *I get a kick out of you: All through the Night* is a lovely tune. *Blow, Gabriel, Blow* is the best produced number—fine hot-gospelling by Jeanne Aubert with a chorus of excellently drilled angels—but *The Gypsy in me* seems to have strayed into the show by mistake, and wouldn't be missed if it strayed out again. There's some very good singing by four male quartets, the Harmonists, Admirals, and Charles Cochran's Quartette.

The book is by P. G. Wodehouse and Guy Bolton, so there is plenty of good fooling.

(Continued on page 102)

# ANIMADVERSIONS

on the entertaining of guests ; with some observations on comic records

by N. O. M. CAMERON

I KNOW plenty of people who have a gramophone somewhere in their possession. It stands in some corner ; if a cabinet model, one of its feet or castors is off. It may be propped up, or it may lurch drunkenly on three legs. Beneath the lid loose needles lie around and under the turntable, and the last-used needle always remains in the sound-box, often resting point down on the surface of the turntable or even on a record.

The records are in a dusty pile, some half clad in torn envelopes, the remainder in total nakedness. The owner has never, of course, heard of THE GRAMOPHONE.

One's protests against using a needle more than once are ignored as mere fussiness, and I need hardly say no one has ever heard of fibres or of any other needles than steel. "What needles do we use? What do you mean? Is there more than one kind?"

The records seem to be bought solely for the sake of the artist: "Do listen to this one of Popsky's, he does play so beautifully. What is it? How do you mean, what is it?—Oh, er—um—er" (they cannot tell you without looking at the label).

As my taste is entirely for the thing played or sung, not for the artist, I make myself very disagreeable with my haughty, supercilious air in this matter.

Very wrong of me, of course.

Musically I am completely illiterate and cannot play any instrument whatever, and the superiority of M. Popsky's wonderful technique is utterly lost on me. My taste was founded on Gilbert and Sullivan, later reinforced by the enthusiastic practice of folk-dancing.

Then there was a great period, the last few years of acoustic recording, when symphonies and chamber music were issued in profusion, THE GRAMOPHONE had come into being to advise one, and at the same time I was living in lodgings with some spare pocket-money to spend on records. My acquaintance with classical music did not only thrive on records ; in many instances it began with them.

So far this article, intended to help hosts to entertain guests, has been describing the feelings of a guest distressed by his hosts, and has almost digressed into a musical autobiography.

Except to people one knows thoroughly, it is best not to play the gramophone at all. There is the tiresome visitor who says "Do play something on your wonderful gramophone," but cannot or will not make a choice, in spite of one's exquisitely scientific catalogue. This type, too, generally chatters all the time a record is being played. The usual social technique for speeding the guest should be employed. At any rate we can quickly dismiss such people from our thoughts.

There are, of course, one's really musical friends, who are intelligent, appreciative, and a pleasure to receive. Unfortunately circumstances make it difficult for them to visit my house, and there are many records that have been in my collection for years yet have been heard by no ears but mine.

The occasions when records are especially useful are odd times when there are guests staying in the house, or for the hour or so after a luncheon party, and the like, always provided the guests' tastes are well known. Even mildly serious music is seldom much use, and it is for times such as these that

I keep and from time to time increase my stock of comic records, which, by the way, I never play when alone : a good rule, I think.

This class seems to have developed enormously in recent years, entirely, it must be, thanks to electrical recording, which permits, among other things, a natural tone of voice, even a whisper. Harry Tate was one of the few successes of old days, in fact the only name I can remember, and that for the simple reason that I still have two of his pre-electric records in commission, *Motoring* and *Selling a Car* (Col.), both of them a source of pleasure yet. But the performers have to shout. Clapham and Dwyer could never have succeeded in such conditions. By the way, I find it almost an axiom that a second record of the same comedian is mere waste. But Clapham and Dwyer are an exception : I have *Arguments* (Parlo.) and *A Day's Broadcasting* (Col.). These two records are so different, however, as almost to prove my rule.

In general, too, a ten-incher is enough, both in length and price, while the turn-over is liable to be a nuisance, though occasionally itself utilised as a joke, e.g., Clapham and Dwyer : "We are now going over to the other side," after using the first six words several times in the accepted B.B.C. manner. Having said this, I find I have quite a large number of successful records suffering from either or both of these drawbacks. *Our Village Concert* (H.M.V.), for instance, is one of my most successful purchases. I once gave it as a present and token of gratitude to a hostess (not the owner of a three-legged cabinet model, but, presumably for financial reasons, merely of a portable). She and family were obviously delighted, but once, when they played it to a caller, the latter sat through it with an expressionless face and then said grimly she must be going.

To another hostess (this lady is somewhat deaf, and when she puts on a record, always lowers the sound-box prematurely, remaining blissfully unaware of the awful noise ensuing before the motor is properly under way) I gave a copy of an especial favourite of mine, Angela Baddeley's *Topsy Reducing* (H.M.V.). She wrote most gratefully, saying how much she enjoyed *Kate in the Call Box* ; that side I do not enjoy and never play, excellently spoken as it is.

*The Safe* (H.M.V.) I rarely put on. Its very merits are against it. One must be very sure of one's audience before making their flesh creep, and few can stand the tension sufficiently well to refrain from talking when one turns it over, which ruins the effect.

Edgar Wallace's only record, so far as I know, *The Man in the Ditch* (Col., 10-in.), is somehow not as well recorded as it ought to be, and its popularity is in proportion. However, I like it and it is useful.

My other twelve-inchers are all of the type that could hardly be compressed into less. In fact, two items are on four sides each, the Regal records of the *Old Time Music Hall* and the *Old Time Minstrel Show*, which need no testimonial from me. The latter used not to be so popular as the former until last year, when I had three generations of cousins staying with me, and the third were always clamouring for the minstrel show. To this it is well worth while adding the *Minstrel Show of 1931* (H.M.V.), in which Alexander and Mose are somehow far more successful than in their duologues.

Of course *Harry Lauder's Medley* (H.M.V.) is "a' richt!"

Opening the ten-inch case, here is Billy Bennett, the end of whose *No power on earth* (Regal) always provokes a roar—of course I do not play it, or certain others, to my aunts. But the other side is poor.

*She was poor but she was honest*, sung by Al. Tiers on Dominion C306, has made people helpless with mirth, but recently someone said to me, "My dear fellow, that's sung seriously." In any case it does not seem to be the correct version, lacking the traditional "it's the rich wot gets the pleasure," etc. *It's an Old Spanish Custom* (Albert Whelan, Imperial) would be excellent but for lack of climax—due to bowdlerising? Mabel Constanduros & Co. showing us how *Mrs. Buggins Makes the Christmas Pudding* and *Prepares for a Party* so delighted me when I heard it at a friend's house that I immediately rushed off and bought this Broadcast record, but it has flopped here; a pity. *A Party at Gert and Daisy's* (Parlo.) by Elsie and Doris Waters, which I bought on the Editor's recommendation, at first disappointed me but has gradually become a warm favourite. "Our Bill" (Frederick Grisewood) is a delight to me, but others fail to appreciate him. *Eton Boys* by North and South (Parlo.) always amuses old boys of other public schools, and the ladies too, and the Roosters' sketches, a *Route March* and *Lights Out* (Regal), go down well with old soldiers. Others that go down well in a congenial atmosphere are *Barnacle Bill* (Parlo.), by Pete Wiggin, any of Frank Crumit's records, e.g., *A Gay Caballero*, *The Song of the Prune*, and *Down in de Cane Brake* (all H.M.V.), and the type of students' song in

which Stuart Robertson specialises (also H.M.V.). For really low company I was advised by a high personage to get Douglas Byng's *Hot-handed Hetty, the Vamp of the Jetty* (Regal-Zono.): a great success with the unblushing.

The selection of this sort of record is undoubtedly not only difficult but "chancy." There must be many good things one just does not happen to hear of. Now, by the way, is my chance to let loose a grouse, namely, the difficulty, often insuperable, of hearing (and I am not going to buy without) what I might call records of the lesser breeds. They are within the law, but too frequently without the dealer's stock.

When last in London my purchases included *Dirty Work at the Crossroads*, though this is a "pure" Zonophone, that is, made some years ago before the amalgamation with Regal, and so well liked is it that I wish I had got it on publication. I have long considered a wireless set worth while for the sake of A. J. Alan, even if one listened to no one and nothing else, so of course I bought both his Regal-Zonophone records, though fearing they were not for the general, but to my surprise and pleasure they have proved extremely popular. And with mention of John Tilley's *Company Promoter* (Col.) as one of the funniest I have ever heard I will bring this meandering drivel to an overdue conclusion. Please do not, anyone, write to tell me of Scotch or Irish comedians: I am not amused by them.

P.S.—In some inexplicable manner, I have omitted one of the most consistent favourites of my whole collection, Gillie Potter's *Visit to Southend* (Col.). However, he's there if I want him.

## SCHOOL GRAMOPHONE NOTES

by W. W. JOHNSON

(Continued from page 52, July)

THIS is the fourth and final article on the subject of orchestral study in the classroom. Having discussed the matter at some length, it is to be hoped that readers will not imagine that teaching children how to "spot" instruments is one of the great ideals in musical appreciation. Actually the concert-goer does no such thing in the concert-hall: he may hear and recognise (say) an oboe solo, but he doesn't say to himself, "Ah! that was a bit played by the oboe!" If he is an intelligent listener, he merely revels in the orchestral colours moving before him, and such an instrument as the oboe may not even enter his mind, though in all probability, if asked afterwards, he would no doubt recall a piquant passage that attracted his attention, and come to the conclusion that it must have been played by the oboe.

It will be seen, therefore, that the work of the teacher is not to teach orchestral instruments, but orchestral colours, just as in drawing-lessons we teach spectral colours (usually by means of a "Colour Wheel"). And in each case we have to get down to fundamentals in separate colours, before we can hope to appreciate them *in toto* in a masterpiece.

In art lessons we proceed to colours in combination—harmonies, contrast, clashings—and we must do the same in studying the orchestra. This means that there must be plenty of practice in listening to instrumental groupings of all kinds, and there seems to be no possible way of doing such work in the classroom save by gramophone records. Begin with solos in the first place, therefore, but do not do as many teachers have done, i.e., stop there: continue with copious examples of ensemble work.

It will be remembered that in previous articles some useful records of string and wood-wind tone have been suggested. Here are a number of examples of brass and percussion instruments on records that are known by experience to be useful, and which in each case are faithfully recorded (in most cases recorded within the last year or two):

*French Horn. The Nocturne* from Mendelssohn's *Mid-*

*summer Night's Dream* music (H.M.V. DA1318), with Aubrey Brain playing the horn solo, cannot be bettered.

*Trombone.* Some excellent trombone work appears on Decca LY6050, the Prelude to Act 3 of *Lohengrin*.

*Trumpet.* Though not a recent record, the trumpet solo is very well defined in Purcell's *Trumpet Voluntary* (Col. L1986).

*Tuba.* There appears to be no recorded tuba solo, although there are one or two snatches of tuba tune at the opening of Holst's *Uranus* from *The Planets* (H.M.V. D1384).

Owing to its blatancy, brass tone is easily recognised, except in muted passages. Children find it difficult to distinguish between the bassoon and the horn (in its quieter moments), so that plenty of examples of these two instruments are necessary. The brass band should not be overlooked, but pupils should be reminded that there is a larger variety of instruments here than in the brass group of the orchestra. There are so many suitable records that details are unnecessary.

The large percussion group, which rarely (if ever) appears in its entirety—even at a concert of contemporary music—may be found severally on the following records:

*Timpani.* The opening bars of Haydn's "*Drum Roll*" *Symphony* (Col. DB833 in Vol. 3 of the Columbia History of Music).

*Side Drum.* The opening bars of *Fra Diavolo Overture* by Auber (Col. DX154).

*Bass Drum and Tambourine.* The "Salvation Army" episode in Elgar's *Cockaigne Overture* (H.M.V. DB1935).

*Gong.* Dvorak's *Symphony From the New World* (H.M.V. D1896).

*Tam-tam. Russia* by Balakirev (Col. DB1237, Vol. 4 of the Columbia History of Music).

*Glockenspiel. Ballet Egyptien*, by Luigini (Decca PO5065).

*Tubular Bells.* Tchaikovsky's 1812 *Overture* (H.M.V. DB1664).

*Celesta.* Tchaikovsky's *Casse-Noisette Suite* (Decca CA8182).



# THE MASTERPIECES OF THE BALLET

by BASIL HOGARTH  
2. BALAKIREV'S TAMARA

TO the musician, the most significant event in this year's season of Russian ballet at Covent Garden is the revival (long overdue) of Balakirev's fascinating symphonic poem, *Tamara*. For very little of Balakirev's music is known at all outside of Russia. Apart from the remarkable Oriental Fantasy, *Islamey* (which has been recorded very recently by Cyril Smith), the symphonic poem *Russia* (done by Sir Hamilton Harty on Columbia) and an occasional performance of the *Symphony*, Balakirev is merely a name to most music-lovers.

His output was not large, but it is sufficiently important to make the student of Russian music wonder at its undeserved neglect. For, even more than Glinka, Balakirev is the "onlie true begetter" of the Russian school. It was he who shepherded his faithful disciples, Cui, Borodine, Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgski into the fold of Nationalism. It was he who insisted on the paramount importance of an accomplished technique and sought to teach his younger charges the mysteries of composition.

It is surely one of history's perverse ironies that the man who, more than anyone else, awoke the Russian musical consciousness has himself been destined to be overlooked.

The facts of his life are easily related. Born at Nijni-Novgorod on January 3rd, 1837 (by Russian reckoning, December 21st, 1936), he was destined for a musical career. Yet he was practically self-taught: he had, it is true, a few lessons on the pianoforte from a pupil of John Field, and he spent some time with Count Oulibishev, a fine amateur musician and critic, author of a well-known biography of Mozart. It was in the Count's well-stocked library that Balakirev first made his acquaintance with the scores of the classical masterpieces. And it was by conducting his private orchestra that Balakirev first acquired that practical acquaintance with orchestral writing that stands him in such great stead in *Tamara*, the *Symphony*, and the tone-poem *Russia*.

After a brief course at the University of Kazan, Balakirev obtained a personal introduction to Glinka, who had just suffered galling reverses in connection with the production in Moscow of his opera *Ruslan*. Glinka was greatly impressed with the genius of his young visitor, and he encouraged him to specialise in composition.

In 1861 Balakirev joined the celebrated "group of five," the circle of Russian nationalists whose aim it was to translate into terms of music those elements of Russian life and temperament that are distinctly national, as opposed to the internationalism and the pseudo-classicism of composers like Rubinstein and Tchaikovsky who regarded the German school as the model of excellence in music.

Curiously, as the circle of composers grew in importance, Balakirev himself gradually lost touch with his own disciples. He withdrew from all active musical life, and, in fact, the last twenty years of his life were passed hidden in comparative obscurity. He lived what was to all purposes the life of a hermit, almost unapproachable, caring nothing for social contacts and only emerging from his enforced obscurity to appear as solo pianist at an all-too-rare charity concert. For a time he completely disappeared from the scene: some say he subsisted on a meagre clerkship in the railway, others have it that he retired from all active work in order to plunge into the mysteries of the occult. Whatever the cause, it is certain that he lost touch with his former friends and allies, and when he died in St. Petersburg on May 28th, 1910, he was almost completely forgotten. Even the date of his death seems wrapped in uncertainty. Calvocoressi gives it as May 29th, Riemann as 28th, and Mrs. Newmarch as 30th.

"*Tamara*," remarks Calvocoressi in a penetrating study, "his masterpiece, and indeed one of the masterpieces of the Russian school, is replete with deepest passion, and the orchestral score may be recommended to all students as a unique model. The significance of its music resides in its character of spaciousness, remoteness and mystery, in its sombre grandeur and deep undercurrents of passion into which bitterness and disenchantment gradually creep."

The work, first tentatively sketched in 1868, was the outcome of the composer's fondness for the Caucasus, whose rugged scenery appealed to him and inspired him with the impulse to set to music Lermontov's epic of the Caucasian people, *Tamara*. Many holidays amid the desolate landscape had given him the opportunity of noting the folk-songs of the region, as well as meeting at first-hand the racial types of the Caucasus, with their curiously primitive habits and rituals. To get "local colour" he once stayed for some weeks in a monastery of fire-worshippers, joining in their pagan rituals. "If you have the chance," he once counselled his protégé, Rimsky-Korsakov, "to hear the music of any savage tribes, please write their songs down and pay careful attention to the rhythm of the drums—in fact, to everything connected with their music and rituals."

Both *Islamey* and *Tamara* bear witness to Balakirev's close study of Caucasian folk-lore. Two of the leading motives in *Tamara* are Caucasian folk-tunes. After reading the "Caucasian Poems" of the Russian Byron, Michael Lermontov (who, it is interesting to notice, was of Scottish descent, his family name being originally Lermont), he decided to set the *Tamara* poem to music. It was improvised, mostly at the piano, and for several years Balakirev carried it in his head, occasionally playing to his friends extracts from it on the pianoforte.

It took him several years to complete the score, and, in fact, it is very likely that had it not been for the constant importunities of Glinka's sister, the symphonic poem would never have been completed, and the world would have been deprived of both a remarkable piece of music and an even more remarkable ballet. Never has a poem been so finely mirrored in the tone-art: the score is at once a vivid evocation of the desolate Caucasian regions, a subtle piece of psychological analysis, and a gorgeous riot of instrumental *timbres*.

First you hear, mysteriously suggested on the lower muted strings, the ominous murmur of a turbulent river. In a castle at the remote peak of a towering mountain sits the cruel and remorseless Queen Tamara. To while away the monotony of life in the castle, the Queen's retainers are chanting their weird songs.

Suddenly a roll of drums intercepts the brooding melodies: a stranger begs shelter. A banquet is spread before him, and when he pulls off his cloak and scarf, he is revealed as a handsome youth. The Queen, intrigued by the charms of the visitor, orders the native dancers to entertain the guest. The revelry begins, working up to a climax of frenzied passion. The night passes in an orgy of dancing and love-making.

The dawn filters through a grating in the wall, and with it the Queen's interest in her strange guest wanes.

The roar of the river is heard once again, and the mood of the music changes from one of pagan exuberance to extreme horror. As the youth is sleeping on the regal couch, the Queen plunges a dagger into him: the raging waters below the castle carry the corpse to oblivion.

The deed accomplished, the cruel monstress returns to her chamber, the music evokes again the mood of the opening,

the icy peaks, the unbearable loneliness of the remote Caucasian peaks. Once more are heard the strains of immemorial folk-songs; once more the fatal drum-taps announce another stranger; once again begins the orgy—and so on, *ad infinitum*. So ends this "devil's rosary of debauch and death."

On its completion, Balakirev dedicated the score to Liszt, whose admiration for *Islamey* had no bounds. It was first performed at St. Petersburg in 1882; it soon found its way into the repertoire of the celebrated conductor Lamoureux, who performed it in London on the occasion of his visit to Queen's Hall in 1896. The symphonic poem did not meet with the approval of the critics, one representative of the tribe rising to the heights of prophecy when he declared "though not without merit, it is a work that will never be heard again." Alas for the prophetic powers of criticism!

In 1912, Diaghilev produced the score as a ballet, the *décor* by Bakst, and the choreography by Fokine. Karsavina created the rôle of the Queen. In London the ballet was

first produced at Covent Garden, under the baton of Mr. (as he was then) Thomas Beecham, Wednesday, June 12th. As a result of the ballet performances, *Tamara* soon found its way into the concert programmes. Mr. Geoffrey Toye included it in his concert at Queen's Hall in March 1914, with the Queen's Hall Orchestra. It was upon that occasion that the following amusing programme note appeared: "On consulting Grove's Dictionary (the last edition), to ascertain the exact date of its composition, the present writer found that between the distinguished names of George Baker, Mus. Doc., who was taught by his aunt, and Luigi Balbi, who apparently was not, there is no mention of Balakirev."

Even Grove, however, has since had to make room for the Russian composer, and the splendid article on him in the current edition testifies to his importance in the history of Russian music. It only remains to be noted that there is a very fine recording of *Tamara* on H.M.V. (Connoisseur Catalogue DB4801-2), done by the Orchestra of Paris Conservatoire under the direction of M. Piero Coppola.

### The Contemporary Musician's Gramophone

## POULENC'S AUBADE (1929) CONCERTO CHORÉOGRAPHIQUE FOR PIANO AND 18 INSTRUMENTS by TERPANDER

(Continued from page 58, July)

BORN in Paris, in 1899, the early part of Poulenc's life was not devoted to music but to a classical education, in accordance with the wishes of his parents. He came into prominence in 1917 with *Rhapsodie Nègre*, which was followed in 1918 by the famous *Mouvements Perpetuels*, and two sonatas, one for pianoforte duet, and the other for two clarinets. These works were the fruits of the piano lessons he was taking from Ricardo Viñes. Academic contact with the world of music was not made until 1922, when he studied composition with Kocchlin. Like Satie, who influenced him considerably, he achieved fame as an amateur. The inevitable artistic liaison with Diaghilev resulted in that delicious ballet, *Les Biches*. Poulenc's later works include many songs, many pianoforte pieces, some chamber music (including the Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Pianoforte), a Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra, a Concerto for Two Pianofortes and Orchestra, a Cantata (*Bal Masqué*), and this Aubade. According to Grove "he shows a predilection for wind instruments like so many modern composers, and takes an active part in their endeavour to enrich the repertory of chamber music for various wind combinations."

We in England know Poulenc principally as an exponent of "Parisian folk-song," invented, I believe, by Auric, as part of the "back to simplicity" campaign of *Les Six*. *Les Six* is now a scattered movement, inviting derision, but at the time it served its purpose, and it has had a more marked effect on the music of our day than is generally realised. In Poulenc's music the café-concert type of popular melody becomes as much an integral thing as the tune of *Greensleeves* in Vaughan Williams' *Sir John in Love*. If Poulenc can be said to incline towards any composer of the past it is Mozart, and, with reservations, Scarlatti. So primed, let us approach the Aubade.

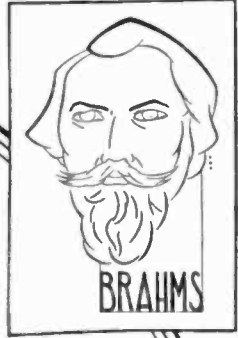
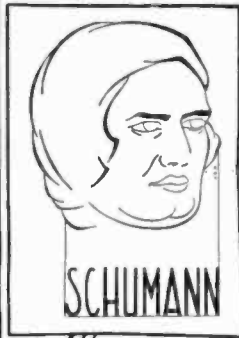
Of the choreography, stage action and story of the Aubade I have been able to learn very little. The score is in suite form, and I have gleaned from the meagre printed directions that the central figure of the ballet is the mythical Diana, and that the various episodes grouped around her are reflected in the movements of the suite. An unusual feature is that these movements are often connected up or preceded by *ritornelli*, to which Poulenc gives the name *Récitatif*. A special dramatic significance probably attaches to these *Récitatifs* in performance. We who know nothing of such subtleties had better listen to the Aubade as pure music, which means

disregarding the well-intentioned efforts of those who spend their days in trying to prove that there is no such thing. Poulenc's eighteen instruments are as follows: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, one trumpet, tympani, two violas, two cellos, two basses.

A comparison with *Petroushka* is interesting. The germ of *Petroushka*, if you will recollect, was a one-movement pianoforte concerto or concert piece which is enshrined for posterity in the second tableau of the ballet (*Petroushka's Cell*). The pure pianism of this self-contained composition is matched partly by the Russian Dance which precedes it, and not at all by the orchestral fair scenes which, together with the choreography and action, were added afterwards. Although Stravinsky brought the whole of his unique craftsmanship to bear on the dovetailing of these elements, and so produced a superficially satisfying piece of work, I always seem to see the original ill-fated pianoforte concerto struggling for ascendancy against the overwhelming odds of the composer's later conception. Nor do I believe that the fusion of the two from an intrinsically musical point of view was ever made complete, although choreographically *Petroushka* may be termed perfect. Poulenc's Aubade is a much more successful experiment in related form; for here we have a concerto which does not attempt to incorporate itself in a ballet, but a concerto which is a ballet—a concerto choréographique.

The score, in its stylised simplicity, is apt to make one feel that one is being imposed upon (not a bad sort of feeling sometimes—it depends who's doing the imposing!); it is with suspicion that one surveys these conventional basses and naïve dynamic markings. But the result is an almost meticulous charm. The opening *toccata* is a noble piece of work, of classical proportions, and the final *adagio* a successful *perpetuum mobile*—long drawn-out and making a virtue of monotony—by one who is a master of that form. In between come movements informed with the *buffa* spirit referred to in the July section of this article. And just before the end the street urchin placates us with an *andante* which does not say nay to a certain violin sonata of Mozart. The work is not one that imperatively demands an analysis, for which reason I am thankful, as space forbids it! Readers will no doubt recognise innumerable harmonic *clichés*, and will acclaim the ingenuity and wit of Poulenc in turning them to new account.

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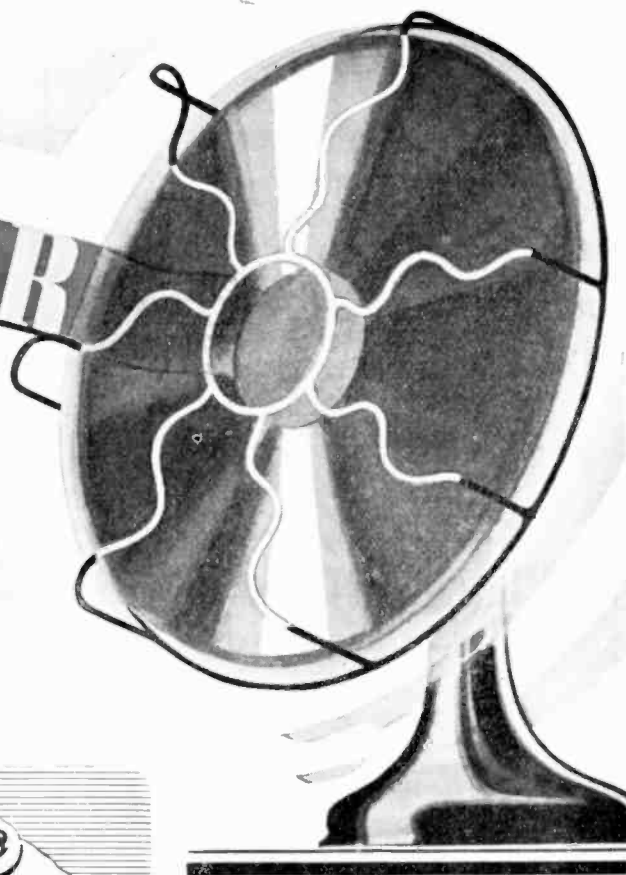
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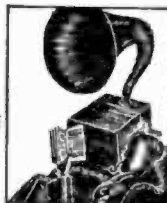
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## ROUND AND ABOUT WITH W. R. A.

**A** MOTTO for this page might well be H. G. Wells's remark about that excellent characteristic of the present day: "The note of interrogation which is born in the nature of every human being has been released." No note could sound more pleasingly in my ear. I take up, if only to throw out for discussion, one or two questions raised by esteemed correspondents. (By the way, some of those who like opportunities for first-hand discussion may care to know that my Morley College lectures, *Discovering Music*, begin again on September 26th, at 8 p.m. Fee for 24 evenings, 7s. 6d. Particulars from the College, 61, Westminster Bridge Road, S.E.) One of my delights is to get both serious thought and fun. Correspondents have among them so much knowledge of out-of-the-way things. (At the moment I am hoping that someone can enlighten me about rare Wilkie Collinses and le Fanus and Stocktons, and other mild bibliomaniaceries of mine.) Mr. M. Hepper, of Cairo, who delights me with some song verses as copied out by an Egyptian clerk innocent of any English—bits of them approach Jabberwockian heights—pills his sugar by asking "Why have people often good taste in music and bad taste in the other arts?" I suppose it is because we are all inclined to canalise our interests: and these, as "tastes," get mixed up with taste. Perhaps few of us have enough taste to go round the arts? (Does it work the other way?—that is, do people with bad taste in music commonly have good taste in, say, literature or painting?) Music is such an immense and absorbing affair. Maybe musicians are apt to ignore, unthinkingly, the sister arts. It is a rather curious problem, come to think of it: the whole world of "taste" is. Some useful simplifying would be done if, instead of speaking of our "tastes," we used "likes and dislikes": then "taste" in the singular would stand out as judgment, discernment, critical faculty, or, as one dictionary well styles it, "intellectual relish." It is well to remind ourselves of G. K. C.'s "All good taste is [i.e., includes] gusto."

### How We Grow

Mr. A. J. Blackburn, who won my Gaffe prize, quoted Fielding on taste in the choice of books: "The first thing a child is fond of in a book is a picture, the second is a story, and the third a jest. Here, then, is the true *pons asinorum* which very few readers ever get over." Though perhaps Fielding was a rather stern realist he hit nails straight (curious, by the way, how Dickens profited so well from both his realism and his romance—and C. D., bless the grand soul, had a dangerous streak of unrealism in him: I hope Roundabouts are at least moderate Dickensians?). Hence, in writing an "appreciation" book, an American friend and I began with *Till*: picture, story and jest, as far as music can provide them. The trick of seeing pictures and stories in music that hasn't any may obviously be a drawback. It is simply a form of adult day-dreaming, and may be a useful outlet, though "bad for the coo"—that is, the composer. Developing in taste on our pilgrimage, we outgrow much of our idle dreaming, just as many of us soon outgrow the music of the composers who never outgrew it. Fielding's definition of taste is good: "A nice harmony between the imagination and the judgment. . . . Neither of these will alone bestow it." Mr. Blackburn, also quoting Galsworthy's remark that "men are radically divided by possession or not of that extra sensitiveness to proportion, form, colour, sound which we call the sense of beauty," well added "I think . . . it is a more radical division than between class and class, or creed and creed." How happy are gramophiles, whose recorded riches (what matter whether their discs be few or many, so they be well chosen?) allow them to develop, by the delight of discovery, that "extra sensitiveness."

### Accursed Words

And then, of course, the critic's job is, as Mr. Fox-Strangways has happily put it, to help by being "rather a provoker of ideas than an arbiter of taste." Not, mark you, a provoker of *people*, an aggerawater: nothing so destroys my possible interest in anyone as to hear him called "provocative" in the usual sense, which I venture to call a canting sense. I should hate to have the word so used of me. Another word I dislike is "uncompromising" (of composers). Imagine old J. S. B. stopping to wonder if he were being sufficiently "uncompromising" when he put in a few of his prize chromatics, or Beethoven, when he took his "new path" in the Third, caring two hoots either! The only way, I find, in which the modern composers who are so described are uncompromising, is in being merciless bores. Another phrase which harms music is "the greatest," whether it is used of works or people. We do not want to set works of art, or artists, in a class-list. I love real enthusiasm, but exaggeration (much of it in advertising) can easily soil beauty. Beauty and boasting go ill together. Beauty lives only in quietness. Another word of Mr. Fox-Strangways' is worth remembering: "But loveliness is rare, because its price, concentration, is high."

### Fascination in Liszt

Mr. Richard Abbott wonders "if you really have to be a *musician* in order to play Liszt well. The work is often so clever that you only have to play the notes to impress." And what skill is needed to play them really well! This brings up the old point, a canon of elementary criticism, about never judging a work by any performance of it. I myself find Liszt increasingly interesting, both as musician and as man (in the latter sense, largely owing to Mr. Newman's recent book on him). I enjoy trying to play him, and would not willingly miss hearing any good record of his music, especially of the piano things, such as the *Years of Pilgrimage*. The *Connoisseur* list is worth noting, with a special star for *Weinen, klagen*, and (a lovely bit of rich romanticism) the Petrarch *Sonnet 104* (Barer). We need more romance to-day, and Liszt is well worth trying. The fun lies not so much in liking or disliking, as in trying to understand him and his age. To get into the mind of the past is often difficult, but profitable. I prophesy a romantic revival, after science has been sufficiently celebrated. It was so a century and more ago, and will be again. These "protests" on both sides, romantic and anti-romantic, have a cyclical motion. Swings and roundabouts!

### Romantic and Classical

There is a lot of interest in the discussion of these elements in art, and much clear value to the appreciator. Goethe, as Dannreuther tells us in the *Oxford History of Music*, Vol. VI (which is entitled *The Romantic Period*), claimed to have been the first to use the elusive term "Romantic" in contrast to "Classical." Elusive it certainly is, and a lot of loose thinking has gone on since it was invented. The danger lies in marking off one period as romantic and another as classical; I am sure a good many people have done that, arriving at the absurd notion that "romantic" music is interesting and "classical" dull. Goethe uses what seems a better word when he says, speaking of his ideas as compared with Schiller's: "My maxims were in favour of the objective method of treatment. But Schiller preferred his own subjective method. . . . He showed that I was romantically inclined in spite of my desire to be otherwise, and that my *Iphigenia*, because of the preponderance of sentiment, was by no means so antique in feeling as I thought." The distinction between

objectivity and subjectivity seems the most useful broad one to make, I think. It is helpful, too, to remember the "Movement" aspect of romanticism—its militant self-consciousness. Upton Sinclair has a useful reminder: "There are two factors in the process of growth which we call life: the expanding impulse and the consolidating impulse. In the literary world these impulses have come to be known, somewhat absurdly, as Romanticism and Classicism. Both activities are necessary, both must be present in every artist, and either without the other is futile." They may, and often do, intermingle in music. Much "classical" music is permeated with romantic feeling, perhaps most notable when it verges on the tragic. It is his balance of romantic and classical feeling that makes Brahms's music so satisfying. Such a passage as that near the end of the second movement of the Fourth (Eulenburg, p. 72), where the strings alone give out the theme, seems to me to sum up all the ripe, kindly, grave beauties of German romance.

### Eyes and No Ears

A useful reminder came from Sir Henry Wood, when he was paying a tribute to the late Fanny Davies, of whom he said that she was of the band of concert players "who do more than appears" (in opposition to those "whose appearances are more than their deeds"). "To appreciate her art," Sir Henry went on, "an audience had to use its ears rather than its eyes. Ears count for less in the concert-room than is generally admitted, and eyes for more." That is where the gramophile is, in a measure, put into a position of responsibility: he is left without the aid (or better, freed from the tyranny) of the eye. Yet there are times when one enjoys seeing an orchestra at work: the physical side responds to the magnificent show of skill and energy. Swings and roundabouts again.

### Does it Wear?

An Irish reader asks if I think the Bloch Quintet wears well. He finds it doesn't. Much attracted at first, he came to feel the lack of reserve in it—the Eastern outlook, and the "despair," as he thinks, the "fatalism"—enervating. The music leaves him spiritually unsatisfied, and for him "the spiritual thought has the last word in music." He contrasts Bloch, here, with Brahms, whom he finds bracing, and suggests that a Russian (and also, naturally, those of Bloch's race) would feel closer kinship with this work than we can. His thoughtful impressions illustrate again the difficulty of getting into touch with the music as the composer felt it: or, if we can do that, of getting out of it as much as he put into it: of liking to live with it. Music, happily, has many mansions: that is perhaps its finest attribute as an educative and re-creative force. There is room for us all, and no need for misfits. Above all, as I urge all my lecture audiences, let no one have any sense of inferiority or shame if he finds, after cheerful trial, that he cannot get the wavelength of any particular composer. He has no need to worry, so long as he does not confuse his attractions and repulsions, likes and dislikes, with criticism. Music is meant to be all boon and no bane.

### Conductors' Rights—Composers' Wrongs

I remember an old music-hall tag of the suffragette days: "What, my friends, are women's rights? *Men's wrongs!*" Lately, discussing with a psychologist the small proportion of women among gramophiles, I wondered whether men's rights, gramophonically considered, are in any degree women's wrongs. . . .? We have not had any reports of recent years from our friends who used to give us those charming glimpses of domestic interiors. Is the radio situation reproducing the same cycle as the disc's revolution? Are there many women radio fans, apart from the celebrity side? In the "Conductor v. Composer" competition, we have another potential

battlefield. The essays seemed very mild and judicious. I was rather surprised not to find more advocacy of "the right to maul"—or mould, as the conductors concerned would probably call it. (I should like to see a Peer Gynt Button Moulder at work on them!) There are depths in this question, which I am glad Mr. Mackenzie incited readers to explore. It is true that the score does not tell the musician all, but if he knows the composer as a whole, life and work, he need not go far astray. One funny matter is that when so many conductors have altered a work, and one comes along and does just as the composer says, he is apt to be declared wrong. Toscanini, for instance, took the Trio of the *Scherzo* in Beethoven's Seventh at very nearly the exact speed that Beethoven marked: and it sounded, to many, too fast, because nearly all conductors have drawled it. I would not, myself, mind it a bit slower than Toscanini took it. But who can say (if you deny the plenary inspiration of the composer) what is the "right" pace? Yet, as in so many "Who can say . . .?" matters, there is a worse danger than jumping to a conclusion: it is that of refusing to bother, and just declaring the thing six of one and half a dozen of the other, as too many people do when any controversy arises. Debate about the bases of artistry can do us nothing but good, if we go at it with the single intention of doing richer honour to the composer by penetrating ever more deeply to the heart of his thought.

## TURN TABLE TALK (continued)

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### Kathleen Long

Decca announces the good news that Kathleen Long, our N.G.S. favourite, and the Boyd Neel orchestra, conducted by Boyd Neel, have recorded two Mozart Concertos, K.414 (in A) and K.449 (in E flat). One of these will be issued on September 1st. Each concerto comprises three double-sided 12-inch records; Blue Label, at 2s. 6d. a record.



# ANALYTICAL NOTES AND FIRST REVIEWS

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



## ORCHESTRAL

### HIS MASTER'S VOICE

\***Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Ormandy**:  
**Suite, Hary Janos (Kodaly)**. H.M.V. DB2456-8 (12in., 18s.).

I have left out the diacritical marks: when you begin with these things you never know where you are going to end. "Kodaly" appears to be pronounced "Ko-die-y." He has given us some of the liveliest of the newer Hungarian music, less bleak than Bartok's, and in spite of being a folk-song collector, he is not usually dull, as so many of the composers are who worry these ditties and make a cult of folkiness. We have had a good deal too much folk-song unloaded on us in the past twenty years, much of it indifferent stuff—small dealings in trivial ideas; and most of the composers who have affected it have made little enough of it. A small dose of folkiness is enough at a time, and even the oddities of some of the nations' songs quickly pall. If a man has the stuff of composition in him, he doesn't need to tag on to other people's tunes, but will invent his own, and not be bound by primitivism in handling them.

The figure of the lead- and tale-swinging old soldier Hary appears to have been built upon the poet Garay about a century ago, from a real old sweat of the Napoleonic wars whom he had met and pumped—beer into, presumably, and tales out of. A member of the P.B.I. became, according to such fables, a smart hussar of the Brigadier Gerard type, with a good dash of Baron Munchausen. Among the peasantry of his native village even the most tremendous lies, introducing dragons and gigantic animals, went down. There appears to be also something of that "national aspirations" tincture that spoils so many good stories in the world to-day. Kodaly made a comic opera out of the idea in 1926, and the suite is a selection from that, first heard here at a Prom. a few years ago. It begins with the *Fairy Tale* (side 1). On side 2 are the adventure of the *Viennese Musical Clock* and the first part of a *Song*, which ends on side 3. Side 4 has the *Battle and Defeat of Napoleon*; and the last record contains an *Intermezzo* and the *Entrance of the Emperor and his Court*. We open with a sneeze, that proves, to the peasant mind, the truth of what is said. Solemnity and mystery surround the telling of the tale. The music is not of much account—mostly swoops and swirls and general working up, quite old-fashioned in idiom. The Famous Clock plays martial music while figures of soldiers march around it. This is decorated with plenty of piquancies, piano and celesta taking a hand. There is the right peasant simple-mindedness in all this. The *Song*, scored for strings and the lighter wind, has a plaintive, somewhat broken tune, which takes us on to a higher artistic plane. We feel here something of exotic influence.

Side 4 tells of a sort of Bill Adams adventure: Hary and his men defeating the French army, cornering the Emperor, and compelling him to sue for peace. The fun is perhaps somewhat heavy-handed. There is some excellently recorded fat brass tone. The pompous windiness of the tale, with a

little imagination, is well conveyed. The *Intermezzo* is the best known of the pieces, and makes a good march-like piece, the sort of thing that our Sir Henry does best, with the needed spice of humour. It is a little sober here, though the sentimental horn solo in the middle appears to be given out with a wink. The main theme returns: a good one to nod the head to, and to roar as a refrain.

The finale provides a real rowdy row, with a little harsher harmony, which one can imagine coming off extremely well with a stage picture. This opera might take on here as well as *Schwanda* did, with its first-rate daftness. I see it was produced very cheaply in 1929 by a company of peasants, the entire scenery costing but fifty pengo, and one gipsy musician being the orchestra. I doubt whether Covent Garden could manage quite so thriftily, unless Society could be got to rave over the "quaintness" of it; but the music, though it has little to detain us in its present form, and relies chiefly for its effect on its orchestration and excellent recording, sounds as if it has the proper spice of the stage; while the story surely gives ample opportunities for the sort of farcical fun that *Schwanda* was full of.

W. R. A.

**Light Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **The Composer**:  
**Mannin Veen (Dear Isle of Man) (Haydn Wood)**. H.M.V. C2759 (12in. 4s.).

This is a recent work of the composer, and has been frequently broadcast. It is pleasantly laid out for orchestra, and is played through without a break. There is a slow introduction followed by a lively dance tune, and the suite alternates these two themes effectively. I do not know whether any actual folk-tunes are used, but there is a gentle nostalgia over the work which is a useful addition to the repertory of good light orchestral music. The composer is well served by an exceedingly competent orchestra.

R. W.

### PARLOPHONE

**Milan Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Guarnieri**: **Overture to The Secret of Susanna (Wolf-Ferrari) and Gagliarda (Galilei, arr. Respighi)**. Parlophone E11281 (12in., 4s.).

Wolf-Ferrari's opera (1909) is another which we should like to hear oftener. I am not sure if it has ever been heard in our tongue. The humour of its music is of the daintiest, even if the plot is trivial; but it is so pleasant to forget the grandeurs of heavy opera for a while; and we English have always had a turn for comedy. I doubt, indeed, if the great majority of us will ever care for anything else on the musical stage. Wolf-Ferrari happened to have the wit and ability, too, to combine the Mozartian deft graces with an easy flow of later harmony and fancy, without ever sounding pedantic or affected. Very few people have been able so to make the best of both worlds. It is interesting to hear how far he goes Mozart-wards, still keeping his head in the air of a century and more later. The Milan players are heartily welcome, after some absence. Their finely pointed playing records well. Galilei (father of the famous astronomer) was one of those Italian innovators who, just before the end of the sixteenth century, were seeking to re-create dramatic music after what they thought was the Greek manner. Under their experimenting hands was born opera. This dance, one of those Court measures which formed the early suite, was a companion of the pavan, the latter being stately and the galliard livelier. These lusty strings give an effect of rich, ceremonious gaiety that is pleasantly refreshing in its clear-cut shape and strong, simple harmonies. The Milan players, who record so brightly, seem to concentrate on tit-bits that are better than mere trifles. I shall hope for more of them.

## DECCA

**Queen's Hall Orchestra**, conducted by **Wood: Variations on a Haydn Theme** (Brahms). Score: Eulenburg. Decca K763-4 (12in., 5s.).

Some general remarks upon the new Decca recordings will be found on page 60 of the July issue. We are being offered, happily, a mixture of important dishes and sweetmeats. The theme is called a "Hymn of St. Anthony," and occurs in one of Haydn's divertimenti for wind. Brahms wrote his variations in 1874. The orchestration excludes trombones (as so often in Brahms), and includes the double-bassoon (replacing a bass tuba, earlier planned). Sir Henry's interpretation is very well known. I like much of his Brahms and have heard him do a symphony as well as any man alive. It is worth while to note the rhythm of the tune—two five-bar groups (repeated), then two fours, then two more fours which are really fives, telescoped, and three dying-away bars. The repeated note, to finish, is made a binding element in the variations.

The orchestra sounds a trifle woolly and not in the finest timbre, at the start. It brightens later. In Variation 1, note the two-to-a-beat of the upper strings, against the three of the lower (soon reversed). The wind keeps on the figure of the repeated note with which the theme ended. Variation 2 uses the theme's opening three notes, in the minor. Again Brahms brings in his favourite two-against-three (upper strings against lower, bar 4). It is pretty to mark that the violins' first sounds in this variation (the descending arpeggio) are the opposite-way version of their opening of Variation 1—down instead of up.

Side 2.—I am glad the conductor does not hurry this, as some do. The more slightly orchestrated variations sound a little pinched, to me. Very fine wood-wind is needed to do full justice to Brahms' wind writing. At the start of No. 3, he has, for instance, the two oboes and two bassoons, accompanied by the soft strings. In this variation Brahms gives us double measure, varying the repetition of the first ten bars by letting the wind curl sweetly round the string tune. This bit then makes longer curls (in the second half) and so carries on to the end—an example of the composer's beautiful development of decorative material. Variation 4: Again a minor treatment, with two melodies (oboe and horn, one, and viola, the other) which are reversed, as in the first variation. The mild melancholy of this is nicely brought out in the recording. Variation 5 is a skipping miniature, based on the four notes of the first bar of the theme (D-F, D, D), turned upside down and sent off, with a skelp, to amuse themselves. Note the merry introduction, in a movement having two beats each divided into three bits, of three beats divided into halves (bar 15 and later). Our end-of-theme repeated notes are also in evidence, diminished in length (the additional two notes to the four of the theme). Wood always makes this variation fealty.

Side 3.—Well-bound tone, in this Variation 6, where the same upside-down position of the opening bar is used, but in a different rhythm. Note, in the second half (bar 12 of the printed score—actually, 22 of the sound, because the first ten are repeated), the downward arpeggio, which in Variation 7 is the formative shape (hear bar 1 of Variation 7). The band makes this No. 7 rise and fall charmingly. Even in this free variation the bassoons (and the basses, at the end) remind us of the repeated-note motif. The next variation (8) finds the strings muting, pussyfoot-wise. Here Brahms is weaving richly. The theme is again hinted at in the start—three notes of it, reversed (here, B flat, A, B flat). It is shaped in another, longer, rhythm at bar 10, where you will be able to get it in the bottom part, by listening closely. The true freedom of counterpoint is finely exhibited here. Counterpoint always puts fresh life into music.

Last side.—The finale is, we remember, on a ground bass, which is not the theme itself, but a shortened form of it,

again in that five-bar shape which impressed itself at the beginning of the work. Grand is the easy dignity of the building up—again highly contrapuntal. I always wish for the absent trombones at the end; we might have spared the triangle! The strength of the flow in the music is remarkable. The records need steel needles: I do not think you will be satisfied with fibre; and even so, do not expect the fullest tone. There is a certain subdued effect here which is not altogether desirable. I hope, however, that many will enjoy, as I do, the moods of the music, under Sir Henry's moulding.

**Queen's Hall Orchestra**, conducted by **Wood: Song of the Rhine Daughters** (Wagner, orch. Wood) and **Præludium** (Järnefelt). Decca K765-6 (12in., 5s.).

**The Same: Handel in the Strand** (Grainger, orch. Wood) and **Mock Morris** (Grainger). Decca K767 (12in., 2s. 6d.).

**The Same: Toccata and Fugue in D minor** (Bach-Klenovsky) Decca K768 (12in., 2s. 6d.).

**The Same: Valse Triste** (Sibelius). Decca F5582 (10in., 1s. 6d.).

There is much fuller tone in the Wagner arrangement, which is natural enough. The lovely, sad-sweet music draws the mind to the tragedy so soon to come, of which the Rhine maidens warn Siegfried. This song always reminds me of one of the most amusing of critical ineptitudes: a certain anti-Wagnerian praised the music because it was "Mendelssohnian"! The string intonation is not quite all one could wish, in the song itself. For the rest, the size and splendour of the music are well suggested. There is not much in the Järnefelt piece except a jogging good-humour, with a sentimental sandwich-filling. This Finn does not seem to have brought forth much of lasting power, but it is nice to have achieved something that can be asked for in the shops as "Prelude," and be found by the assistant at (I hope) the second shot: or is there another candidate for runner-up to the "Prelude"? The greatest of Finns is naturally represented in this cheap series by the *Valse Triste*, of which the orchestra gives the familiar deft performance, compounding a wan yet warm-toned slinkiness with a tincture of ghoulishness. This comes off very attractively.

The affair "Klenovsky" need not be exhumed. Naturally, we listen to the arrangement of Bach's great work without caring who did it. (The hand, as we now know, is Sir Henry's.) The score, which I have not seen, is issued by the Oxford Press. As an old organist, I am interested to hear what is done with the masterpiece. With all goodwill, I must say it has taken on a fairground effect. Those jingle-bell touches at 1½ in. and later mar the dignity, which is so great a beauty of the work. I feel, too, that the strings are rather labouring at it. That which on the organ goes through with a homogeneity and breadth of sway peculiar to diapason tone is apt to sound disjunct and sawed-at in the orchestra. Perhaps the feeling can only be fully appreciated by one who has been accustomed to pore (and paw) over the work affectionately. The band is not at its best, and the limitations of the type of recording here used are marked. No, with every desire to commend J. S. B. to the multitude, and fully understanding Sir Henry's wish to do honour to him, I am afraid this won't do. It badly misses the mark.

But if in orchestrating Bach on his own ground Sir Henry fails, in touching up his opposite number Handel, in the Strand, he is A1. Here the fancy instruments are all in the fun, and Grainger's jape, thus orchestrally extra-illustrated (grangerised, we might say), goes with a swagger, inciting the hearer to follow Sir Henry's example and shake a loose leg. The very doggedness of the playing in *Mock Morris* (but what harm has Morris done us?—is the title a pedestrian's invention?) seems to represent the spirit of British enterprise. It also represents very well, in performance and recording, the type of value-for-money, without too great insistence on subtlety, which we shall soon be cheering, as Prom-tide comes round again.

**COLUMBIA**

**London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Harty:**  
**Overture to a Picaresque Comedy (Bax).** Columbia  
 LX394 (12in., 6s.).

Well, well, I had almost given up hoping for more Bax! One doesn't like to be constantly importuning, and beseeching is hard work; but maybe our prayers have prevailed again. It was certainly rather a scandal that when Elgar and Delius had been so well recorded, Bax should have been left, as to about three-fifths of the discs, to the N.G.S., which gallantly produced several records years ago. Perhaps we shall now have a series. I greatly hope so. Murdoch's showed faith by printing miniature scores of several of the orchestral works (this one is not yet done), and we ought to have at least a symphony or two, with *The Garden of Fand*, pretty soon. I have often been disappointed, when commending Bax to the notice of foreign friends who do not know him, to have to say that he is so little recorded. Four orchestral sides is all that the big companies have up to now given him (H.M.V.—*Tintagel* and *Mediterranean*). *Mater ora filium* is now, I believe, withdrawn. This Overture, then, is most welcome, not least because it is easy, cheerful going. I am not sure if it was Harty who first performed it, but I have that impression—in 1931. It was first heard in London on February 21st, 1932, and produced one of the most chaotic criticisms that even a certain odd critic has ever written (no names, no pack-drill). It is not the best Bax, or the biggest: a light relief from symphonic stretches, probably; and it is curiously unlike him, on the whole. Picaresque tales, of rogues and vagabonds, came in, about the mid-sixteenth century, in Spain, when folk had had too much of high-flown "chivalry." It was the beginning of the gangster rage, which has cropped up at intervals ever since, and now has run wild. You will see, on the screen, some funny attempts to combine it with chivalry. How wild it has run I was rather startled to find when at a children's matinée I heard a robber cheered, and his pursuers booed, on principle. The culmination of the picaresque in music was Strauss's *Don Juan*. Bax doesn't philosophise or sermonise heavily, and he only gives one sentimental touch to the rogue (about an inch from the end of side 1, and continuing on side 2); this is a capitally effective bit of contrast, about which we can make our own mood-story, for the "comedy" of the title has no name. But the music is not all braggadocio: there is bound to be thought, as well as feeling, in anything Bax writes. It may be that in devising his chief theme he had Strauss in mind, for its shape makes one think of the gaudier flights of Richard. With players and recording standing up well to the implications of the theme and the hefty orchestration, the record is a frolic—we need not put it much higher, perhaps—that will serve as a cocktail for the Baxian banquet that I hope the recorders will serve before long.

W. R. A.



**INSTRUMENTAL**

**Mark Hambourg (piano): Hungarian Rhapsodies Nos. 5 and 7**  
 (Liszt). H.M.V. C2758 (one 12in., 4s.).

Liszt's Seventh Hungarian Rhapsody finds Mr. Hambourg in fine pugilistic form, even though the hitting is a bit wide of the mark sometimes! The pianist does nothing to conceal the empty noisiness of the music.

The Fifth Rhapsody, being better music, draws a far more musical performance, and one well suited to the rhapsodical character of the piece, from the artist, but his tone is too hard, generally, to give any pleasure to those who are sensitive in this respect.

**\*José Iturbi (piano): Goyescas No. 4 (Granados) and Sevillana No. 3 (from suite Espagnole) (Albeniz).** H.M.V. DB2154 (one 12in., 6s.).

I do not know how many records Mr. Iturbi has made for Spanish H.M.V., but he plays as one not well accustomed to recording or, at least, uncaring of the idiosyncrasies of the microphone. There is, to my mind, a great charm in the impression he conveys, whether consciously or not, that he is playing entirely for his own enjoyment.

Like Granados, whose fourth *Goyescas* he plays with such delightful intimacy, Iturbi's technique is only used as means to an end, to expressing all the fine shades in music which he interprets with such delicacy and understanding.

The title of the Granados piece is "The lover and the nightingale," the bird answering the long outpouring of the lover's romantic soul in the last few bars of the music. Albeniz's *Sevillana* is given with such dash and spirit as to set the toes twinkling, and I especially liked the beautiful moulding of the long recitative which forms the middle section of the piece. An altogether attractive recording.

**Carpi Trio: Autumn Song (October) (Tchaikovsky) and Venetian Gondola Song (Mendelssohn).** Parlophone R2091 (one 10in., 2s. 6d.).

This month's Carpi Trio record is no less charming than its predecessors, and the transcriptions of the two pianoforte pieces chosen are unusually happy and effective.

Tchaikovsky's *October* is imbued with the composer's characteristic vein of sensuous melancholy, here well suited to the particular season, and the charm of the piece resides largely in the interplay between violin and 'cello—the piano only occasionally coming into the foreground—of one yearning phrase. The *Venetian Gondola Song*, one of the "Songs without Words," is a typically romantic evocation of the approach and passing of a gondola carrying singers with mandolines. Things may have been different when Mendelssohn visited Venice, but to-day the "singing-boats" with their eternal *O Sole Mio* are only to be tolerated in the far distance!

The playing and recording are as excellent as ever.

**SELECTED LIST**

Milan Symphony Orchestra	Parlophone E11281
London Philharmonic Orchestra	Columbia LX394
Carpi Trio	Parlophone R2091
Alexander Brailowsky	Decca-Polydor CA8204
Elly Ney Pianoforte Trio	Decca-Polydor LY6109-12
Felicie Huni-Mihacsek	Decca-Polydor CA8202
Ria Ginster	H.M.V. DB2482
Lily Pons	H.M.V. DB2502
Aldershot Searchlight Tattoo	H.M.V. C2768
Serge Krish Septet	Regal-Zonophone MR1753
Royal Naval Singers	Columbia DX699
Ken Harvey	H.M.V. B8351
Primo Scala	Rex 8535
Flotsam and Jetsam	Columbia DB1566
Duke Ellington and his Orchestra	Brunswick 02038

**Alexander Brailowsky** (piano): **Pastorale-Capriccio** (Scarlatti-Tansig) and **Perpetuum Mobile** (Weber). Decca-Polydor CA8204 (one 12in., 4s.).

It was, I must confess, with somewhat languid interest that I put this record on my gramophone after having glanced at the label. One cannot blame an artist for choosing to record music that will be sure to attract in these days, but such a choice is not likely to heighten the pulse of the reviewer!

After a few bars, however, I sat up and took notice. The first side is a model of how Scarlatti should be played. Cleanly, tone well to scale, with shapely phrasing, not too fast. It is playing that gives the maximum of pleasure and always puts the music first. Weber was too good a composer to make of his "perpetual motion" a mere exercise in finger dexterity, as witness the tune in the bass that makes its appearance about half-way through to divert our attention from the right-hand gymnastics. Mr. Brailowsky gives a brilliant and, again, entirely musicianly performance of the little piece. The recording is excellent.

A. R.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

**Barrère Ensemble of Wood-winds: Three Pieces for Flute, Clarinet and Bassoon—Allegro Scherzando—Lento—Allegro** (Walter Piston). New Music Quarterly Recordings. Vol. II, No. 6.

No leaflet has arrived to enlighten me as to the age and achievements of Walter Piston, whose three pieces for flute, clarinet and bassoon are now issued as one of the recordings of music by contemporary American composers sponsored by the New Music Quarterly Recordings organisation.

The composer, who has shown great ingenuity in the use of a crippling medium, thoroughly understands the genius of the instruments he has chosen, and if his thematic material is undistinguished where it is not derivative he makes interesting use of it in a manner which, if rightly modern, is by no means extreme.

A little figure which falls on the ear as "ta-ta-ta" (W. R. A. will forgive me if I ought to have written *tafé*, but I do not understand the intricacies of that system of phonetics) is used as the basis of the first movement, gently humorous in feeling, and appears again in the elfin-like third movement, which, odd as it may seem, certainly owes something to Mendelssohn!

The composer is not afraid of being expressive, witness the long flute solo in the final movement, and his slow movement built on a four-note chromatic phrase, while faintly reminiscent of the mood of Debussy's *de pas sur la neige* (Preludes, Book 1), has an organic life of its own.

I have nothing but praise for the playing and recording of a really interesting piece of writing and once more commend this sporting enterprise to modern-minded readers.

\***Albert Sammons** (violin) and **William Murdoch** (piano): **Sonata in E minor, Op. 82** (Elgar). Columbia LX379-81 (three 12in., 18s.).

There seems to be a general opinion that Elgar is not at his best in his chamber music and that he writes with no real understanding of the piano. One critic says that the chamber music works measured as *they must be* (italics mine) with the composer's own best work are a little disappointing.

But why must such works be measured against those of big scale? Surely it is better to assess them on their own ground realising that, as Mr. Maine well says, that "the conditions of the sonata and quartet call forth a wholly different aspect of his (Elgar's) creative spirit" without any resultant cramping of his style, for he did not attempt to express symphonic ideas through the chamber music medium.

The Elgarian trochaic rhythm appears before the music has gone very far, also the Elgarian tenderness and nobility. I must confess to finding the episode consisting of widely spread arpeggios for the violin a little dull and quite lacking in the "poetic serenity which may well have been induced by the woodland environment of the cottage where the work was written." The end of the movement, too, is conventional and manufactured.

No qualifications need be made in regard to the slow movement, which is both original in layout and beautiful.

This Romance is worked out with two well-contrasted ideas, one sad and deeply expressive, the other whimsical and wayward. It is indeed a pity that the passionate climax to which the music is rising is broken off by the necessity of turning over the record. The opening theme of the final movement, with an attractive waviness in it, is of a peaceful nature, a feeling which is maintained throughout most of the movement, though towards the end of this side a deeper emotion disturbs the music and the development is occasionally vigorous. Albert Sammons' tone is as unfailingly beautiful as his technique is superb, but it is, I feel, a thought too sweet for a perfect interpretation of the music, which demands a more masculine impulse at times. Though Elgar's writing for the piano is certainly not adventurous (which makes the pianist's part in this sonata very suitable for the average amateur). William Murdoch remains rather too much in the background and the balance is therefore uneven. Nevertheless this recording is certainly one to give great pleasure.

**Elly Ney Pianoforte Trio: "Dumky" Trio in E minor, Op. 90** (Dvorak) and **Trio in G major (Köchel No. 564)** (Mozart). (Allegretto only.) Decca-Polydor LY6109-12 (four 12in., 3s. each).

In using the "Dumka" Dvorak added a new form to chamber music, but not one likely to be fruitful in the hands of non-Bohemian composers. A footnote to the score of the Trio explains the term as a Little Russian word occurring frequently in popular literature, and generally indicating a passionately emotional nature. The Trio is made up of a series of "Dumky" or elegiac laments, each of the five movements, except the fourth, beginning in slow tempo but being followed by a rapid section. Thus the first movement contains two such "Dumky"—*Lento Maestoso* with an Allegro in immediate contrast: then *poco adagio* followed by *vivace*.

The only way to listen to such episodic music is to follow the suggestion of the footnote and regard it as a series of tonal descriptions of the Slav (or the Bohemian) character which passes so easily from one mood to the other. Or the work may be taken as a series of beautiful tunes, national in flavour, which are passed in review before us.

The third and fourth movements are complete on one side (LY6111) and give an excellent idea of the whole. Such music requires no analysis and I refer the reader to my remarks on Dvorak himself in the July number of this paper (page 62), which give the clue to his peculiar genius. The performance is variable. For the purpose of good balance the violin is undoubtedly too thin in tone and matters are not helped by the 'cello being placed too near the microphone—or so it sounds. Miss Ney's own playing is splendid throughout but nowhere better than in the short solo passage for the piano near the beginning of the second movement. She reveals herself as a first-rate recording artist. Her companions are true musicians and give full value to the alternating moods of the melodies—now Dumka—now Furiant. The artless Mozart movement, beautifully played, is like an ice after mulligatawny soup! But both these are delicious. The recording is good.

A. R.



## OPERATIC AND FOREIGN SONGS

**FELICIE HÜNI-MIHACSEK** (soprano) with orchestra under **Joh. Heidenreich**.—*O verzeih', Geliebter* from *Così fan tutte* (Mozart); sung in German. Decca-Polydor CA8202 (12in., 4s.).

*Così fan tutte* was composed to an Italian text by da Ponte. I wonder how many German versions exist. I have two of *O verzeih', verzeih', Geliebter* (O forgive, forgive me, dearest), which is one of Fiordiligi's solos; this record supplies a third. Like the other vocal items I noticed some months ago, this one is in serious vein, and so gives no hint of the lightheartedness of the opera as a whole.

Among Mozart artists Mme. Hüni-Mihacsek must surely stand in the front rank. Her magnificent singing of this aria is clear evidence. It is an exacting piece of music; the voice ranges over rather more than two octaves and rises to B natural; but its formidable difficulties simply do not exist for her. I can only offer one criticism, and even that may be no more than an expression of my own taste; other things being equal, I should prefer a lighter soprano.

If you are a genuine Mozart lover make a point of hearing this record. Technically, it is one of the finest smooth-playing Decca-Polydors I have handled.

**LILY PONS** (soprano) with orchestra under **John Barbirolli**.—**Lo, here the gentle lark** (Bishop), sung in English, with flute obbligato by **Gordon Walker**; and **Ah! je le sais** (Ah, I know it) from **The Magic Flute** (Mozart); sung in French. H.M.V. DB2502 (12in., 6s.).

Here is a contrast, if you like—and even if you don't like, which may very well be the case. It is almost as if the singer is inviting us to listen first to the frilly type of stuff she is usually expected to be singing and then to hear what she can really do when she uses her brains as well as her technique.

*Lo, here the gentle lark* is, as might be anticipated, a wonderful display of vocal technique associated with rather quaint English, a pyrotechnic display worthy of a Brock's benefit night.

*Pamina's aria* is sung in French. There is a version that begins with *Ah! l'ingrate, par son silence*, but the present one runs thus:

C'en est fait! Le rêve cesse; ton amour s'est envolé. Je croyais à ta tendresse et mon cœur est désolé. Vois mes larmes! Leur langage est sans force contre toi. Ton silence en vain m'outrage; je te garde encore ma foi.

Why, then, is the record labelled *Ah! je le sais*? Is it merely because the Italian version is its precise equivalent, *Ah, lo so*, and the original German, *Ach, ich fühl's*, very similar?

I would praise the singing of this aria wholeheartedly but for one little thing; in the final phrase the ornamentation has been modified to slip in a top note. I am obliged to mention it, if only to safeguard myself. There is nothing flamboyant about it; it is very neatly done. Further, it is not so inartistic and unsuitable as might be imagined. The

French version, as will be seen from the above, has not the deep gloom and sadness of the German and Italian texts, which end with thoughts of death. This particular example of Mozart *à la française*, then, is rather different from the Mozart pure and undefiled, but it is very enjoyable.

Mr. Barbirolli's share in the production of these recordings calls for favourable comment. The recording is superb.

\***RIA GINSTER** (soprano) with pianoforte accompaniment by **Gerald Moore**.—(a) *Schöne Fremde*, (b) *In der Fremde*, (c) *Geisternähe*, (d) *Meine Rose* (Robert Schumann); sung in German. H.M.V. DB2482 (12in., 6s.).

These are settings of four short poems, of which (a) and (b) are by Joseph von Eichendorff, (c) is by Friedrich Halm and (d) by Nikolaus Lenau; (b) has also been set to music by Brahms.

Lovers of the German *Lied* are probably already aware that Ria Ginster is a distinguished *Lieder* singer, and the recordings suggest that she would be a still finer artist if she had a fuller command of tonal colour. Gerald Moore is no mere accompanist but a genuine collaborator.

These are not among the most popular of Schumann's songs. Their brevity is probably an explanation for (a), (b) and (c), but they are charming miniatures (one side of the record holds all three) and I find them more attractive than the song inspired by the poet of pessimism, Lenau. Yet the sweetness and sadness of *Meine Rose* may make it the first choice of others. You simply must know the words to appreciate the songs, but I (and H.M.V., I am sure) would understand and excuse anyone who bought the record for the sheer joy of listening to the lovely singing and took a chance of ever knowing what it was all about. Since connoisseurs are sure to hear and judge the record for themselves it only remains to mention that the recording is splendid.

\***GEORGES THILL** (tenor) with orchestra under **Eugène Bigot**.—*Inutiles regrets*, followed by *En un dernier naufrage*, from **The Trojans at Carthage** (Hector Berlioz); sung in French. Columbia LX395 (12in., 6s.).

*Les Troyens à Carthage* forms Part II of Berlioz' great work *Les Troyens* (the Trojans), Part I being *La prise de Troie* (the capture of Troy). The work in its entirety was first produced at Karlsruhe in 1890; Part II had failed at Paris in 1863. It has not often been performed. I remember with sorrow that it was revived at Paris in 1921, for I spent a holiday there and was a week too late to hear Berlioz' masterpiece; otherwise I should be better informed regarding this record. Some idea of the opera can be gleaned from the article *Les Troyens en Ecosse* by my enthusiastic colleague Mr. Wimbush (*THE GRAMOPHONE*, May 1935).

During the ten years that have passed since I heard M. Thill as Nicias, to the Thais of Marise Beaujon and Athanaël of M. Journet, he has forged ahead and is now perhaps the finest of French operatic tenors. His top notes are a trifle pinched, but otherwise his singing is excellent and his style irreproachable. The greater part of the long excerpt here recorded is in the form of musical declamation, and M. Thill delivers it vigorously and, I imagine, very successfully. There is restrained pathos in the concluding passage; so far as I am able to follow it, the scene seems to be that in which Encas awakes from his infatuation for Dido, decides that duty must come before love, and resolves to leave Carthage for Italy.

The orchestra figures prominently in the recording, but for all that I am doubtful if M. Thill's voice would so readily soar above it in the opera house. Still, if this be a minor fault, it is preferable to having had the voice submerged beneath the orchestral waves. The recording is fine, but distinctly heavy; I had no luck with fibres.

The Columbia Co. is to be congratulated on breaking new ground by issuing such an interesting record.

**CHARLES KULLMAN** (tenor) with orchestra.—**Lenski's aria: Wohin seid ihr entschwinden** (Distant echo of my youth) from *Eugen Onegin* (Tchaikovsky); and **Vladimir's aria: Tageslicht langsam erlischt** (Daylight slowly fades) from *Prince Igor* (Borodin). Sung in German. Columbia LX396 (12in., 6s.).

Thanks to the enterprise of the Wells-Vic. management some of us have been able to make the acquaintance of *Eugen Onegin*, which I should describe as an unsatisfactory opera containing a good deal of attractive music. The gramophone has never reaped a rich harvest from it; a few records of the dance music, several of Lenski's aria and one more of Lenski's solos make up the total, I think. The old recordings of *Lenski's aria*, by Caruso, Martinelli, Smirnov and Sobinoff, were in French, Italian and Russian; now for a change it is presented in German. It is sung while Lenski is at the duelling-ground, awaiting Onegin.

The sadness of the foregoing aria in marked contrast to the burning passion of young Vladimir Igorievich's song, sung as he, a captive of the Polovtsy, stands beside the tent of his beloved, the daughter of his captor.

I believe Mr. Kullman is an American who sings a good deal in Europe. His German is not impeccable but it is very good. The same applies to his singing. Here and there the voice wavers just a little, occasionally it is forced, but on the whole the singing is definitely clean, expressive and stylish. Among electrical recordings these are unhackneyed airs, and so the record, which I commend, may prove a welcome change to opera lovers. It is well recorded and plays easily with a fibre.

**RICHARD TAUBER** (tenor), with orchestra. **Good-night, oh my love!** (*Gute Nacht, du mein herziges Kind*) (Franz Abt) and **Thine my thoughts are, Margarita** (*Dein gedenk' ich, Margaretha*) (Erik Meyer Helmund); sung in German. Parlophone-Odeon RO20281 (10in., 4s.).

There has been a very welcome improvement in the purely technical quality of Tauber's records; this one, like several others recently issued, is very well recorded and finished. There are also welcome signs that the singer, in his light, popular songs, is shedding most of the mannerisms that formerly irritated a good many of his listeners. These two songs, for instance, which are tuneful love ballads of the light and popular variety, receive quite simple and straightforward treatment and are not a bit the worse for it. The sugar-sweet refrain of *Dein gedenk' ich, Margaretha*, should make a tremendous hit. Although its origin can be vouched for and it is not hoary with age, *Gute Nacht, du mein herziges Kind* is looked upon as a folk song in Germany.

A slip is enclosed with the record, giving the German words and English singing versions of the songs. A grateful public will doubtless hope to find this excellent plan put into operation more frequently.

**ELISABETH SCHUMANN** (soprano) with pianoforte accompaniment by **George Reeves**.—**Pastorale** and **My lovely Celia**, both arranged by **Lane Wilson**. Sung in English. H.M.V. DA1416 (10in., 4s.).

Mme. Schumann's records usually come my way and I suppose this record of two English songs has found me through someone's force of habit. Since it is the only record by this artist that strikes me as a failure I wish it had taken the right path into other hands than mine.

It may be only a personal criticism, but to me the idea of Elisabeth Schumann dying for love of Celia is simply ridiculous; Max or Fritz or Karl I could believe in, but Celia, no, never. How is it that sopranos so often sing unsuitable songs and

get away with it? Must we always throw reason to the winds when listening to the ladies? I can hear little more in these songs than Mme. Schumann exercising her voice in the singing of English. The words are indistinct, particularly in the *Pastorale*; the singer did much better in the *Nightingale Song*. The voice, of course, is lovely, and so is the recording; but we expect more than that. Blind, devoted worshippers may like the record; others, I fancy, will join me in a sigh of regret.

**FLORICA CRISTOFORIANU** (mezzo-soprano) with orchestra.—**Bohemian song—All' udir del sistro il suon** from *Carmen* (Georges Bizet) and **Non conosci il bel suol?—Knowest thou the land?** from *Mignon* (Ambroise Thomas); sung in Italian. Parlophone R2089 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

This new aspirant for gramophone honours has a deep mezzo-soprano voice of good quality, and, thank goodness, it doesn't boom or wobble. As an artist she seems to lack either experience or imagination and succeeds in one aria only to fail in the other. The successful one is the *Carmen* excerpt. My own preference is for all three verses, the excitement being worked up by gradually accelerating the speed; there are only two verses here and no significant speeding up, but the general effect is quite good all the same. The *Mignon* excerpt, the familiar and ever-lovely *Connais-tu le pays?*, is another story. It might quite easily be ascribed to Mignon's romantic aunt, assuming that the poor girl had such a relative. The voice is much too full and heavy, the style much too dramatic and emotional. After all, Mignon was little more than a child. It would be well for the singer to study the artistic value of restraint by listening to the beautiful rendering Geraldine Farrar has bequeathed to us, and then try again.

**MARTA EGGERTH** (soprano) with orchestra.—**Una voce poco fa** from *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini-Sterbini) and **Occhi puri che incantate** from *Norma* (Bellini-Romani); both featured in the film "The Divine Spark." Sung in Italian. Parlophone R2090 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

The statements in this heading, culled from the record labels, are not all accurate; we will come to that later.

The popular film star's idea of Rossini's aria is presumably that speed is more important than style; wherefore, in an arrangement that omits the orchestral introductions to both *Una voce* and *Io sono docile* she romps her way through the air on one side of a ten-inch record with a little room to spare. Needless to say the result of all this is not very artistic, and it is a little surprising that Parlophone, with good recordings of *Una voce* by Conchita Supervia and Margarita Salvi to their credit, should sponsor such a production.

I neither know nor care who wrote the words of *Occhi puri che incantate*. They are not in *Norma*, and it is a cruel libel on the distinguished dead to attribute this song to Bellini and Romani. What has happened is this. The glorious melody of Norma's solo *Casta Diva* and the melody of the chorus that is sung *sotto voce* between its verses have been used as the musical basis of a song with Italian words devoted to the eternal theme of love. A "tuppence-coloured" effect is produced by the use of an orchestra consisting mainly of mandolines or other tinkling instruments. And this in 1935, when Bellini's centenary is being celebrated! I can write no more; printable words fail me.

H. F. V. L.

#### Schubert's Die Schöne Müllerin

The review of these records will be published in the September issue.



## BAND RECORDS

The usual batch of records of the **Aldershot Searchlight Tattoo** have evidently been made in 1935, as in previous years, and very good and very interesting are the first two (H.M.V. C2768 and C2769) available. The mysteries and difficulties of outside recording have not yet been completely mastered, but each year has shown an improvement on the previous one and this year's records are better than ever.

Of the two first records, I like best No. C2768, and particularly the side containing *Here's a health unto His Majesty, The King's Champion March, Over my shoulder, Sing as we go, Knights of the King*, and other jolly tunes. Both records are very good, however, and are acceptable souvenirs of an extraordinarily fine and successful event.

There is an unusual record from the **Coldstream Guards Band** this month (H.M.V. C2754). On one side is Godfrey's *The Soloists' Delight*, which is based on some well-known old national tunes bedecked with new ornaments, and although, as a rule, I dislike these elaborations and decorations, I confess to quite a liking for this. Every department of the band has its chance, and one and all take full advantage of the chance when it comes their way. On the reverse side is an arrangement of Massenet's *Marche Heroique de Szabady*, which is quite unfamiliar to me and which is a curious composition. At one time it seems as if there is going to be nothing but an expression of the spirit of pageantry, but this is interrupted by a fragment in Liszt's rhapsodical vein, again by a Wagnerian episode, and yet again by a pseudo-Eastern element. As a result we have a good deal to interest and entertain us, but it is not a thing I should want to hear very often.

Both band and recording engineers are on their very best behaviour.

The **Goldman Band** give us two of Sousa's best marches—*High School Cadets* and *Washington Post*—on Panachord No. 25746. Both playing and recording are ordinarily good but not especially so. I wish that some first-class band, preferably the Grenadier Guards, would give us a really good record of the *High School Cadets March*. It is one of my favourites and I have never yet heard what I consider to be an outstandingly good record of it.

The only brass band record of the month is one of the Regal-Zonophone series (No. MR1752) made by the **Massed Bands of the Leicester Brass Band Festival 1935**, and, as is the case in all records made in the De Montfort Hall, the recording is good. On one side is Cope's *The Premier March* and on the reverse *San Marino March* by Hawkins. Both are good and are played with any amount of brio. W. A. C.

## IRISH SUPPLEMENT

Regal-Zonophone issue a number of Irish records this month, and I have again been through them with an Irishman. First in the list is **John McGettigan** singing the traditional *Norah* on both sides of MR1740. Mr. McGettigan loomed rather large in the last bunch of Irish records, and I had a kind letter from a reader in South Africa saying that the land that gave us McCormack and Plunket Greene must not be judged by McGettigan's raucous voice. I quite agree, and in case my correspondent sees these lines, I should like to say that I was privileged to be present at the recent dinner to Mr. Plunket Greene when a representative body of musical opinion vied in praising this great artist. McGettigan appears to have no voice at all.

*My Irish Molly O* is given a bright performance by **The Flanagan Brothers** on MR1741, backed by the hornpipe *McGonagle Taste* played on accordion and banjo by the same pair. **Mattie Hawkins** (a man—there are no women in this lot) is pleasant in *The Daughter of Daniel O'Connell (Erin's Green Shore)*, but **Frank Quinn** is harsh in *The Green Hills of Erin*, a song in the music-hall manner. These are on MR1745. I do not know what a skillara hat is, but **John Sheridan** sings about one on MR1744, backed by *Come back, Paddy Reilly, to Bally James Duff*. **John Griffin** has *The Irish Clock Maker* and *Meself and Martin Tracy* on MR1743. The latter is a drinking song, and both contain choruses of doggerel. *Stuttering Lovers* is sung by **Seamus O'Doherty** on MR1742, backed by a sentimental song called *I'll be with you when the roses bloom again*, which might be any modern ballad.

**Sam Carson** provides the most amusing record with *Old Bog Hole* and *Donnelly's Hotel* on MR1746. The same singer is heard in three records of hymns, a strange inclusion in an Irish list. Here they are: *I need thee every hour* and *When the roll is called up yonder* on MR1747, both revivalist hymns of the most banal order; *The Lord is My Shepherd* and *Hold Thou my hand* on MR1748, the best of the three; *There's a Friend for little children* (Stainer's tune) and *Tell mother I'll be there* on MR1749. R. W.

## SONGS

*Old Man Noah* is in the news just now, with John Gielgud impersonating him at the New Theatre and Hugh Walpole claiming him as his oldest friend in the *Daily Mail*, so Sanderson's song comes appropriately from **Peter Dawson**, and if you enjoy a good hearty *Hey down derry* and *Rum tum tay*, drink to *The Good Old Days* with him on the reverse of H.M.V. B8334.

**Harold Williams** sings Boulton and German's jolly *Glorious Devon*, which rhymes with Heaven and seven, and Lohr's *Chorus, Gentlemen*, ably abetted in both cases by a Male Choir. (Col. DB1564.)

*Lullaby River* is a Denis Freeman—Mark Lubbock song charmingly sung by **John Hendrik**. On the reverse is *Forgive and Forget*, which I recommend as a graceful getaway for a gay Lothario in a tangle. Here are some extracts:

"Forgive and forget I made you cry . . .  
Forget that we met and pass me by,  
For I'll never be worthy of your wonderful love. . . .  
Forget and regret that I turned your head . . .  
I'm proud to know you love me . . .  
Why should I keep you tied to me and bring shame on  
your head . . . etc."

Hear Hendrik sing this! His sincerity would deceive the most hard-boiled damsel. (Parlo. R2092.)

**Walter Glynn**'s strolling vagabond in *Goodnight*, on the contrary, makes no bones from the start about the fleeting nature of things.

"I'm bound for the hills and the fairies beyond,  
So goodnight, pretty maiden, goodnight!  
I'll dream of the angels (or you'll do instead) . . .  
Your eyes in my heart I shall carry away."

This gentleman avoids entanglements and goes his way with a light heart, leaving, presumably, no tears behind him. On the other side of this record (H.M.V. B8335) is Bartlett's *A Dream*, a sentimental ballad, admirably sung too.

There are two recordings of *Shine through my Dreams* from "Glamorous Night," **Robert Naylor's** (Rex 8538) and **Frank Titterton's** (Decca F5598). The latter is certainly worth the extra 6d. He is delightfully accompanied by **Fred Hartley** in this and in *For Love Alone*. Robert Naylor is rather harshly accompanied by an orchestra. *Glamorous Night* is on the reverse.

Another Decca record to note is **Richard Hayward's** *The Ulster Farmer's Boy* and *The Banks of Drumreagh*, both arranged by the singer and accompanied by Fred Hartley, this time with his famous quintet. F#.

## PRICES

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Lest any reader should think I have gone mad, I ought to mention that this review was carried out under considerable mechanical difficulties. My own gramophone collapsed early in the proceedings, and living in the wastes of Middlesex (not, alas, near Hayes!), I was compelled to fall back on the kindness of friends with portables. Actually, four machines were used, and I should like particularly to thank Messrs. Felton of Harrow, who so kindly came to the rescue at the eleventh hour.

Contrary to expectations, the holiday month has shown no falling off in my department, and of the many records released, there are some of quite exceptional interest. The month's sensation is the return to the gramophone of Flotsam and Jetsam, but I have no illusions as to the acceptance of that claim. More of that in a minute: meanwhile to business.

In the orchestral section we begin with the first record from the Windmill Theatre, which carried Mrs. Henderson into the hearts of the variety profession and which stands to-day as a symbol of both caution and triumph after the debacle of non-stop variety.

I should say that the staying power of this little theatre is due largely to the fact that by running a house company they are spared the expense of importing top-liners. Then, of course, the audience can thrill to the chorines in a way that is quite impossible elsewhere. However, since this article is for THE GRAMOPHONE and not for *The Era* next door, it need only be said that *Revuedeille Memories* by the **London Theatre Orchestra** on Columbia DX700, although somewhat jazzy, is a bright record that should delight all who know London's *moulin*.

Those who enjoyed the broadcast of the Editor's pastiche *The Music of Men's Lives* (and who could help doing so?) should hear a *Medley of James Tate's Songs* played by the **New Mayfair Orchestra** on H.M.V. C2765. This is well recorded, and it is good stuff into the bargain. The songs include *A Paradise for two*, *A Bachelor Gay* and *A Broken Doll*, and the vocalists are **Stuart Robertson** and **Alice Moxon**. The **London Palladium Orchestra** under **Richard Crean** have followed up their splendid march record with an equally good medley of waltzes, *The Charm of the Valse*, on H.M.V. C2760. Here they all are, played with the right abandon. Do not be alarmed at the title *Stories of the Vienna Forest*, which turns out to be our old friend *Tales of the Vienna Woods*! A contingent of the **La Scala Orchestra of Milan** under **Dino Olivieri** have invaded my basket with a fantasia called *In Memory of Franz Schubert* on H.M.V. B8340. Here we have *Ungeduld*, and a slice of the Unfinished, while the second side is almost entirely taken up with the lovely *Ave Maria*. Why, you may well ask, is it necessary to go to Milan for a hotel-potch of this kind? Have we not advanced from the stage when the man in the street is impressed by a foreign band playing popular music? Apparently not.

### At the Ball

Last month Marius Winter provided an excellent record of the music played at the Jubilee Ball at the Guildhall. Here,

on Panachord 25766. The **Grosvenor Orchestra** play precisely the same *Ballroom Memories*, so that if you have not already obtained your copy, you may now have same for a shilling. Recommended. *The Turkish Patrol* by Michaelis is one of those tunes which are always turning up in medleys and which invariably defy identification. Here it is in full, played by **The Elite Novelty Orchestra** on Panachord 25758, backed by Paul Lineke's *Siamese Patrol*. The bassoonist seems to enjoy himself. However familiar a tune may be, you may be sure that the **Orchestre Raymonde** will play it as it has never been played before. You all know Poldini's *Poupée Valsante*, and most of you know Ewing's *Dancing Clock*. By this time you will probably also know the **Orchestre Raymonde**, who play these *morceaux* on Columbia DB1563. This record is at least different, but it is quite impossible for me to advise you. The other night, following their regular broadcast, **Leslie Jeffries** and his **Orchestra**, playing at the Grand Hotel, Eastbourne, did a little recording. The result, a selection from "Glamorous Night," is now to hand. Behind it all is the genteel murmur of the lounge, and the final flourish is greeted with polite applause, for which there is no extra charge. (Parlophone R2094.)

### A Real Nap

Congratulations to **Serge Krish** for producing a delightful record which should please everybody. With his *Septet* he gives us the ever popular *Nola*. Unfortunately, the nimble pianist is not mentioned. Readers will remember that Raie da Costa (for whose memory I beg a thought this month, the anniversary of her death) recorded this as a piano duet with Ray Noble. Further, Mr. Krish backs this with a quite astounding performance of the piece called *The Canary*. This is a *tour de force* for the violinist, who gives an incredible imitation of the bird. (Regal-Zonophone MR1753.) Another unusual record is H.M.V. B8336, on which a **String Ensemble** play *Mother Machree*, decked out with some harping, and *The Last Rose of Summer*, composed by Thomas Moore, and which Flotow incorporated into his opera *Martha*, recently revived by the Chanticleer Company at the Webber-Douglas Theatre. From the **Orchestra Mascotte** we have the *My Darling* waltz from Strauss' *Gypsy Baron* and another waltz called *Blue Eyes* by one Mackeben. The surprise this time is a sarrusophone. (Parlophone R2095.) A pleasant good-night record comes from **Mantovani and his Tipica Orchestra** in the tango *I love you*, *Gypsy* and the fox-trot *Good-night, Marie* on Regal-Zonophone MR1770. **Troise and His Mandoliers** have made what is probably their best record to date, containing Toselli's *Serenade No. 1* and Brahms' *Hungarian Dance No. 5*. The name of Brahms reads strangely in "Miscellaneous"! (Rex 8542.) Nobody knows better than **Sol Hoopii** how to create the necessary languor for the Hawaiian stuff, and his many admirers should be well content with *Flower Lei* and *Kamehameha* on Brunswick RL253 (1s. 6d.).

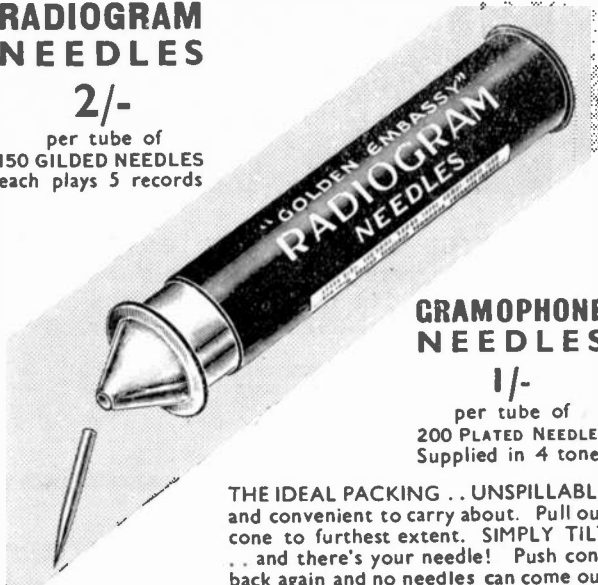


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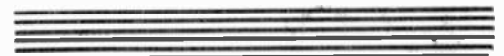
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The forthcoming championship festival of accordion bands would seem to seal the absolute conquest of this medium. The whole atmosphere is so foreign to this country that it is an astounding and, I think, humiliating thought that there are as many accordion records released as those by normal bands, but be it noted that they appear exclusively on the cheaper labels. Remembering the fickleness of popular entertainment, it is, of course, more than likely that the whole structure will collapse any minute. Meanwhile, here are enough samples to last you till September. From **Rinaldo**, who ran away with the honours last month, we have *Honolulu Bay*, *A little golden locket*, *Lullaby of Broadway*, *You're the Top*, *In a little gypsy tea-room* and *When I grow too old to dream* on Panachord 25753, 25760 and 25773. From **Scott Wood**, *Jump on the Wagon*, *Honolulu Bay*, *The Oregon Trail*, *The Good Green Acres of Home*, *Marina Waltz* and *In a little gypsy tea-room* on Regal-Zonophone MR1758, 1759 and 1760. The middle record is of interest since the vocals are by **Arnold Matters** of the Vic-Wells Opera Company, and one of the few British artists to appear in the Grand Season at Covent Garden. He sang the Herald in "Lohengrin." The gypsy tea-room number is exactly like *The Isle of Capri*. From **Billy Reid**, *Billy Reid Rambles No. 3* on Panachord 25764, *Billy Reid Popular Medley No. 1 and No. 2* on Decca F5585 and F5593. Billy Reid is the nearest approach to the jazz idiom. From **The Accordeon Wizards**, *A Bunch of Hits, Parts 3 and 4*. Note, Part 3 is identical in every particular to the first side of Billy Reid's second medley. There is a difference of sixpence in the price, but, of course, I would never suggest that it was the same band. From **Bobby Brown**, last heard of on Winner, *On with the Show*, a selection on Panachord 25767. Lastly, from **Primo Scala**, *Life is a Song*, *A little golden locket* (a most irritating tune), *There's a lovely lake in London* and *He wooed her and wooed her and wooed her* on Rex 8534 and 8535. This last record is my own choice. The lake number is written in the old-fashioned waltz idiom and has a superb chorus, while the love story is one of those endless narrative songs which can last for any required length of time and of which we have recently had a spate.

## Blackbirds

The tragedy at which I hinted recently has apparently come to pass, for this is the first month within living memory that this review appears without mention of Layton and Johnstone. The sleuth-hounds of Shoe Lane told you the whole story some weeks ago, and it only remains for me to shed a silent tear on behalf of the fans. To the last they were billed as "American duettists," and whatever we thought of them, the solid fact remains that they stuck to their original guns. But **Turner Layton** remains, although he sounds lonely in *My Treasure* and Sanderson's *As I sit here* on Columbia DB1565. Both these are extremely well done. **Leslie Hutchinson's** record of *The Leech and Why was I born?* provides a good example of that echo which has been interesting correspondents. (Parlophone R2093.) **The Hill Billies** have made a good choice with *Rag-time cowboy Joe*, which can be recommended to those who dislike the ordinary hill-billy. Of the backing, the least said the better. (Regal-Zonophone MR1756.) **Marc Williams** in *Willie the Weeper* sings of a dope dream, which turned out pleasanter than that described by Berlioz, coupled with *Sioux Indians*, which sounds genuine. (Panachord 25757.) **The Texas Drifter** has *The Wayward Son* and *Reckless Tex*, in which he gives you his funny noises. (Panachord 25768.) Film fans will be glad to have a record from "POPEYE," Paramount's reply to Mickey Mouse. Here is the spinach-eating dare-devil in *Popeye the Sailor Man* and *Blow the man down*. His voice cuts deep into the surface, so don't play it too often if you value it. (Rex 8536.)

## From the Theatre

Records by "original artists" usually turn out to be bad records, although interesting to those who want a permanent souvenir of some show. Columbia, who have always made a speciality of this sort of thing, sends two records from "Anything Goes," now playing at The Palace, London. Whenever I am faced with the latest sample of Mayfair *gaminerie*, I become terribly envious of Mr. St. John Ervine, but I am hardly the man and this is definitely not the place to attack Mr. Cochran or to despatch a brickbat to the Biarritz home of Mr. Cole Porter. I am here to review records, and so far as I can gather these two samples are the goods. You will be amused at **Jeanne Aubert's** French accent in *You're the Top*, which covers an entire 12-inch side, of which you can hear about half. Still, if you have run out of lines, this should teach you a few more. It's good fun shoving in a few when writing to one's sweetheart. Try a couplet every tenth page, but I suggest avoiding the one about the Roxy usher! On the other side of this record is *Anything Goes* and *I get a kick out of you*. The other record contains *All through the night*, *Blow, Gabriel, Blow* (which provides a text for a long sermon which I haven't time to write), *In a Ship's Cell* and *Be like the Bluebird*. Apart from Mlle. Aubert, the artists taking part are **Jack Whiting**, **Sydney Howard**, **The Four Admirals**, **The Four Harmonists**, a chorus and the Palace Theatre Orchestra under **Francis Collinson**. (Columbia DX697-8.) It is difficult to imagine what the industry would do if Blackpool suddenly disappeared from our midst. For some extraordinary reason it is about the only place left on the earth where the sheet-music trade is flourishing, and where the concert party can keep cheerful. Here, for instance, are **The Arcadian Follies** presented by **Ernest Binns** in the third and fourth parts of *A Blackpool Selection*, with dialogue saturated in seaweed. (Decca F5611.)

## Naval Occasions

Topical for the Naval Review at Spithead comes a record from Portsmouth called *Royal Naval Singers*. This contains *Jolly Roger* (when, please, are we to have authentic recordings from Walter Leigh's comic opera of this name?), *Sailors' Chorus*, and on the back some sea shanties, during the course of which you will learn the correct pronunciation of Rio. The singing is unaccompanied and is conducted by **C. T. Lee, R.N.** I have nothing but praise for this really excellent record of choral singing. (Columbia DX699.) **Aileen Stanley** has a special claim to consideration since she was invariably billed as "the gramophone girl." *Rags* is about a dog, while *Don't you ever fall in love* tells of a romance of nature, which is not quite the same thing as a natural romance. Miss Stanley needs no puff from me at this stage. (H.M.V. B8352.) I can only describe **Arthur Tracy** as a kind of masculine Belle Baker and let it go at that. *Soon, it's easy to remember*, *Call me darling*, *Martha* (yes, again), *Ninon* (this is the least offensive) and *My heart is an open book* on Decca F5605, F5608 and F5607. Last month we had an excellent record from **Browning and Starr** (I nearly wrote "and Mummery"). These two come from the Cotton Club in New York, but over here got stuck in the Edgware Road, where they topped the bill at the Metropolitan. I liked their performance of *Fare thee well*, *Annabelle* (Regal-Zonophone MR1773) until I heard **Al and Bob Harvey** (not to be confused with Bob and Alf Pearson) on Decca F5604. This is superb: every word clear and full of surprises. It is a bright number and cleverly written. The backing of the Browning and Starr record is *I get a kick out of you*, while the Harveys have *The Oregon Trail*. This last record is strongly recommended.

## Pianists and Others

**Renara** succeeds in making an interesting record out of some exceedingly dull music taken from the film "Sweet Adeline" on H.M.V. B8339. Last month Mr. Meadmore introduced us

to **Patricia Rossborough**, who here records a selection from "Anything Goes." This is the best thing she has done for some time. It is not easy to play *You're the Top* on the piano, but her treatment of *All through the night* shows real invention, and provides an excellent reply to the rhythm fans and the worshippers of musically illiterate niggers. (Sorry, under the new B.B.C. regulations I must say "negroes"! (Parlophone R2096.) **Len Green** has now definitely left Charlie Kunz alone, and is, I hope, finding his own public. I can recommend *Melodies of the Month, Nos. 2 and 3*, on Panachord 25762 and 25775, although the kitchen department is a little over-voiciferous in places. **Charlie Kunz** is brighter on one side and incredibly dull on the other in his new medley (No. R6) on Rex 8539.

The **Three Virtuosos**, who are nothing of the sort, play *Three Jolly Fellows*, which is very mechanical, and *Little Silhouette*, which is infinitely better, on Parlophone F200 (1s. 6d.). There is a violin record from **Albert Sandler**, who, with the help of **J. Byfield** (piano) and **R. Kilbey** ('cello), plays Rubinstein's *Toreador et Andalouse* and Delibes' *Pizzicato* from the ballet *Sylvia* on Columbia DB1567. I am surprised at a musician of Mr. Sandler's standing pulling the latter about in such an extraordinary manner. It is some time since we had a record from **Sydney Gustard**, who broadcasts every Saturday morning from The Gaumont Palace Cinema, Chester. This month he gives full measure in two medleys, one of Hermann Löhr and the other of Eric Coates, on H.M.V. C2764. The former is the better side, as Mr. Coates' essentially orchestral music is not suited to the organ. The rest of the organ repertory is in the hands of the miraculous **Reginald Dixon**, who provides the following records: *Dixon Hits* on Rex 8540 and 8541, the difference being that on the latter record there are no vocal refrains—an interesting concession; would that the dance bands would take the hint—*Teddy Bears' Picnic* and *The Whistler and his Dog* on Regal-Zonophone MR1750; selections from *The Gold Diggers of 1935* and *Sweet Adeline* on Regal-Zonophone MR1751. My last instrumental record is by **Ken Harvey**, the banjoist who provides an absolute *tour de force* on H.M.V. B8351. On one side is *The world is waiting for the sunrise*, while on the other is *A Musical Journey from New York to California*. This latter includes *Bye-Bye Blues* and *St. Louis Blues*, but is chiefly remarkable for an amazing train imitation that should make Reginald Gardiner's hair stand on end.

### Who'll Raise a Cheer?

I have only four records in the comic department, but one is so important that we can overlook these small ratios. Readers know that I have a whole hive of bees in my bonnet, but I hope they also know that when a critic loses his enthusiasm, he is less than the dust. I say this, because I believe I have stood very nearly alone in my championship of Mr. Flotsam and Mr. Jetsam, who this month return to the gramophone after a long absence. I have always admired any performer who takes the trouble to write his own stuff, and when we have a real wit on the job, I insist that such a one should be pushed hard. As to Flotsam and Jetsam, there has been a great deal of trouble which need not concern us here. The fact I want to emphasise is that they and Gillie Potter believe that, though a fool is born every minute, there do actually exist people with a shred of intelligence, who can appreciate a gentle wit that is neither bawdy nor silly. Gilbert and Carroll are gone, but Belloc and Chesterton are with us, yet a generation is growing up that knows not *The Cautionary Tales*. In an age when both solitude and reverence are taboo,

when our recreation must be physical and never mental (which is the real reason for the popularity of jazz), and when the crooner reigns over all, the original entertainer has to fight hard. All honour to men like Norman Long who by some miracle have kept going. Could Corney Grain have achieved as much? But this, alas, is not the article on popular entertainment which is waiting to be written and which will probably wait even longer for a publisher. It is an immense subject. Meanwhile will you hear **Flotsam and Jetsam** in *The Melodrama of the Mice and King Canute*? They are by no means at their best, but even here there are some delicious lines. Who will ever forget *Maud Marie*, and those magnificent burlesques of former years? Flotsam (B. B. Hilliam) is a Canadian and began life as a reporter; hence his phenomenal nose for news; he writes the words and music, and is a pianist of the first rank, and I say that on the authority of Mark Hambourg. Jetsam (Malcolm McEachern) is an Australian, toured with Melba and has made many superb solo records, notably of two Handel arias. (Columbia DB1566.)

In addition to the Irish supplement, reviewed elsewhere, there is another record by **Jimmy O'Dea**, **Richard Hayward** and **Harry O'Donovan** on Decca F5579. This is called *Flying*, and should appeal to those who like Irish humour. A second record comes from **Norman Evans**, who took London by storm and then departed as he came. This time he is heard in a sketch by J. Jefferson Farjeon called *Joe Ramsbottom opens a barber's shop*, but he is better in letting us hear Mr. Ramsbottom sell pills in the street. This second side is notable for a superb cough, which is used as a kind of theme song, and makes us wish for some records by that master orator Bonar Thompson. Mr. Thompson has been broadcasting recently, and I suggest him in all seriousness to the recording impresarios. (H.M.V. B8337.) **Sandy Powell** has been in London, both at the Holborn Empire and on the air, so there may be a public for *Sandy and family at Blackpool* on Rex 8200. May you have good holidays, and return equal to facing the new season on September 1st. All the best.

ROGER WIMBUSH.



Patricia Rossborough

### Denis Gonet

The fourteen-year-old full-fledged tenor, whose records of operatic arias have made such a sensation, has signed a three-year contract with a famous firm of Dutch agents to broadcast at Hilversum and sing at sixty concerts on the Continent, all of which will be broadcast. His fee is phenomenal, but so is his voice, and his future is interesting to speculate upon. Congratulations to Regal-Zonophone Co. on a real winner.

### A Record Breaker

A portly lady walked into a recording studio.  
 "Can I make a record here?"  
 "Certainly, Madam."  
 "Do you charge anything?"  
 "Well, yes, we're obliged to do that. Would it be a singing record?"  
 "I think so. I can do most things, but would prefer to sing. How much?"  
 "Seven shillings for a ten-inch and ten shillings for a twelve-inch."  
 "Oh, I'll take the twelve-inch certainly, as my voice is much too powerful for a small record."

# DANCE RECORDS

## BEST OF THE MONTH

The prize this month goes to **Pat Hyde and her Swing Music**. This is presumably a recording band made up of musicians usually associated with well-known radio and gramophone dance bands and who have been got together to provide a really good band to suit Pat Hyde's undoubtedly modern style of singing. Ever since her first records were issued and Edgar Jackson proclaimed her to one and all as a real discovery, she has shown that she is far and away the best stylist we have in this country among the "crooners."

The titles chosen for this new venture are *I'm goin' Shoppin' with you* and *Shadows in the Moonlight* (another *Two Cigarettes in the Dark*) (Parlophone F203) and both of them justify the "swing" claimed by the "music." I think you will agree that this is a most pleasant record and one that you will like to keep handy in your library.

My other claimant to your notice this month is a record in the same style played and sung by **Brian Lawrance and his Lansdowne House Quartet** on Decca F5592. The titles are *I'll take the South* and *Jump on the Wagon*, and the Band

is the one that plays at the new and very exclusive Club at Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square.

Brian Lawrance, because he has such a good and versatile voice, is mostly heard as a crooner in the usual rubbish played by our commercial bands. But to anyone who has ever been interested in him it has always been obvious that he is much better in those little "hot" style numbers where he can forget about the soulful quality of his voice and concentrate on his own native sense of swing. Now that he has a band of his own I hope we shall get a regular supply of these unspectacular but very accomplished and polished productions.

It may seem narrow-minded and prejudiced to pick out two records so nearly verging on Mr. Jackson's preserves, but I maintain that these two records are the only two that make a bid for the somewhat dubious immortality of their class. There are other excellent records this month, mostly from the bands that you expect to make brilliant records, but none of them are sufficiently striking to make me feel sure that I shall find pleasure in hearing them more than a dozen times.

Anyhow, the brief particulars of them below may guide you to something that will give the lie to my own beliefs.

### Ambrose and his Orchestra.

*Fare thee well, Annabelle* and *The Good Green Acres of Home* (Decca F5590). *Fare thee well, Annabelle* is the best tune of the month, and though I hesitated before deciding that this version is better than Rudy Vallee's, the decision having been arrived at, I stick to it. The band does not seem to be noticeably missing the presence of Sam Browne, and here Donald Stewart (or is it Jack Cooper?) and Elsie Carlisle do a splendid job of work with *Fare thee well*, but I think the entire Royal Choral Society must have been hired for *The Good Green Acres* (it sounds remarkably like "achers" some of the time). This tune is another in the *Roll along, covered Wagon* tradition, and so is *The Oregon Trail*, and evidently they are very popular. Ambrose brings his genius to bear on the treatment of this epic and, apart from the sumptuousness of the chorus, simplicity is the effective keynote.

### Jack Hylton and his Orchestra.

*Chasing Shadows* and *Kiss me Goodnight* (H.M.V. BD197). *Chasing Shadows* is another certain hit and Hylton's band play it really beautifully, making full use of the somewhat unusual harmonies that make the number noteworthy. It is slow and sweet, but it has enough rhythm to get it to its appointed end before you begin to get bored with it. *Kiss me Goodnight* may easily also prove very popular, but it leaves me cold except that again the band is in very good form. Sam Browne, surprisingly, is the vocalist.

### Ray Noble and his Orchestra.

*Paris in the Spring* and *Bon Jour, Mam'selle* (H.M.V. BD192). Although this American band of Ray Noble's has been subjected to some severe criticism recently, it is still impregnated with the personality and touch of its leader, and these two numbers are played with quiet refinement, and if they are not exciting they are at least extremely pleasant to listen to.

### Roy Fox and his Band.

*Jump on the Wagon* and *The Oregon Trail* (Decca F5600). *Jump on the Wagon* is another *Louisiana Hayride* and Roy Fox has made it into a quaint little picture of country life with plenty of fun and frolic. The same touch that made *Oh! Monah* such a success is at work here again. *The Oregon Trail* swings along with enthusiasm at least to make it less tedious.

*We were so Young* and *Don't ever leave Me* (Decca F5601). Both from the film "Sweet Adeline" and both imbued with the sweetly sentimental atmosphere of Irene Dunne and her beau in 1890 costumes. Suitable for summer evenings in the moonlight.

*I'm Nuts on a Girl in Brazil* and *Call me Sweetheart* (Decca F5602). As you may guess the first title is a comedy number, and the second not quite so funny. Both are made the most of in a rather obvious way.

### Jay Wilbur and his Orchestra.

*I'll take the South* and *You're a Heavenly Thing* (Rex 9533). Here is a really grand record of *I'll take the South*; everything is bright and lively from the moment the red light shows. Jay Wilbur should take a bow for this.

### Rudy Vallee and his Connecticut Yankees.

*Fare thee well, Annabelle* and *Sweet Music* (H.M.V. BD185). Also a tip-top version of the amusing story of Annabelle and her rather mean boy friend. There is plenty of hearty singing and the whole thing is bright and light-hearted.

### Bob Crosby and his Orchestra.

*Dixieland Band* and *In a little Gypsy Tea-room* (Brunswick 02041). Since the split in the Dorsey Brothers' Orchestra and the subsequent slight deterioration of the band, one has been a little depressed, but here comes young Bob Crosby with a band of his own which has all the qualities of the Dorsey outfit and all is merry and bright again. The *Dixieland Band* side is really grand stuff, and as you must be resigned to the fact that *In a little Gypsy Tea-room* is a hit, here it is as well as you could want it—if you want it. Anyway you will have to have it, since you can't get the *Dixieland Band* without it.

### Carroll Gibbons and the Savoy Hotel Orpheans.

*We were so Young* and *Why was I Born?* (Columbia FB1080). Exactly the right music for this polished, sophisticated and capable band. They can get sentimental without being sloppy, and Anne Lenner's voice conjures up a most attractive picture of that boy and girl who were in love in the spring. *Why was I Born?* is a question Brian Lawrance may well ask when he has to be so melancholy. It is against nature.

**Lew Stone and his Band.**

*The Leech* and *Call me Sweetheart* (Regal-Zono. MR1769). *The Leech* may not sound a very attractive inspiration for a love song until you remember that his peculiar attribute is that he sticks! See? Trust this band to make a beautiful record of a slow and quite distinctive number like this. Worth anybody's shilling.

**Billy Cotton and His Band.**

*He wooed her and wooed her and wooed her* and *Smooth Sailing* (Regal-Zono. MR1766). Surely Billy Cotton must have had his tongue in his cheek when he coupled these two numbers together. The poor persistent gentleman in the wooing song had very far from smooth sailing. This comedy number is great fun and the band seem to thoroughly enjoy every minute of it. There is practically no other band recording that can do so well in these broad comedy numbers as Billy Cotton's.

**Harry Roy and his Orchestra.**

*Call me Sweetheart* and *Jump on the Wagon* (Parlophone F191). The main attraction of this record is bound to be the fact that Miss Elisabeth Brooke sings the vocal chorus of *Call me Sweetheart*, aided and abetted by Harry Roy, but there is very little other reason for hearing the record; the backing is irresponsible and bright, but not so good as other recordings of the same number.

**Scott Wood's Melodians.**

*Me and the Old Folks at Home* and *The little Golden Locket* (Parlophone F196). Many of you may remember the

lovely bass voice of Patrick Colbert in earlier Parlophone records and as many of you may be surprised and perhaps a little horrified to see his name on the label of this record as the vocalist. Don't be alarmed; he has not taken to crooning, but sings both songs as straightforward ballads and makes them sound an agreeable change. In fact I am sure you will find the whole record entirely agreeable. At least it has one new idea.

**Eddie Carroll and his Music.**

*We were so Young* and *Don't ever Leave me* (Parlophone F195). Definitely the best recording of *Don't ever Leave me*, which I found a ridiculously haunting tune, although it is so simple and has practically only one phrase.

**Eddie Duchin and his Orchestra.**

*Ev'ry little Moment* and

**Leo Reisman and his Orchestra.**

*Why was I Born?*

*Ev'ry little Moment* is a new tune by Fields and McHugh and in the little world of music-publishing that probably means a hit, so see what you think of it played by an American band that is good as the next one. The Reisman offering is competent but no more.

**Gerry Moore.**

*I'll never say "Never again" again* and *I still want you* (Parlophone F197). And I'll never say Gerry Moore is dull again. Strict dance tempo doesn't cramp his style this time and here is a piano record that will please you whether you dance or not.

## CROONERS

The first record to which I must draw your attention is one that arrived too late for review last month, but as it has a perfect galaxy of talent to entertain you if you have missed it here is a chance to remedy the defect. It is of *You're the Top* (oh, I know you've heard that sung by every broadcasting band vocalist and variety artist until you're sick to death of the whole business), but this is different, for here the various lyrics are sung by **Bob Crosby, Kay Webber, Johnny Davis, Pee Wee Hunt, Bob Howard** and **The Tune Twisters**—not all together, but each in turn taking one chorus and then a grand finale at the end. It is an amusing idea excellently carried out and makes the number even more interesting than ever, and it is well worth the half-crown of the Decca Red Label series (M462).

The same idea appears this month on M464 in *'Way back Home* with **Ella Logan** and **Cleo Brown** in and Kay Webber and Pee Wee Hunt out, but *'Way back Home* is not nearly such a good number and I found myself so exasperated with the unending rhymes that the novelty was rather spoilt.

It is fortunate that **Connie Boswell's** record of *Chasing Shadows* and *Seein' is Believin'* (Brunswick 02032) is available while she and her sisters are basking in the sun of the tremendous reception they have received over here. Needless to say, it is an exquisite record with Connie in perfect voice and in sympathy with her material.

**Greta Keller** is another visitor from America who leaves two records for us to remember her by. While she was here on a very brief visit she went to the Decca studios and made four titles, *Call me Sweetheart*, *In a little Gypsy Tea-room*, *Chasing Shadows* and *Let me sing you to sleep with a Love Song* (Decca F5595 and 5587). They are all sung with that deep, seductive voice that is so unique and which, for all its feeling, is never anything but correctly restrained. These

trivial songs take on a new interest when sung by artists like these two such different, yet similar, singers.

**Donald Stewart**, now singing frequently with Ambrose's band, makes his solo debut with *All through the Night* and *Haunting Me* (Decca F5589). He has a good voice and knows how to use it, and he will be an acquisition to whatever band he sings with.

**Elsie Carlisle**, comedienne, is a personality that amuses me and entertains me far more than Elsie Carlisle, sob-sister, so that when I saw she had recorded *He wooed her and wooed her* and *wooded her* (Decca F5586) I knew that there would be at least one record this month that would satisfy me. And she has not disappointed her ardent admirer; she is in fine form, and this incredible story of a somewhat prolonged romance is just the sort of saucy fun she revels in. *Mama, I long for a Sweetheart* is a beautiful tango, but seems rather pointless in any other setting.

**Max Bacon**, also a stalwart of Ambrose's Band, has made a record of two of his characteristic bits of foolery. The first title is *Beigels*—apparently a kind of Jewish bread—and the second is a new version of Algernon Wifflesnoop John called *Gershwin Lockshon-Soup Jack* (Decca F5588). You must hear both to believe how funny they are.

**Phyllis Robins** sings two very different lullabies on Rex 8537. They are *Rehearsing a Lullaby* and *Lullaby of Broadway*. Sufficient to say that she does what is required of her in the way her admirers expect. But if I were permitted to address her in American slang I should advise her to lay off the sob stuff.

**Les Allen** also records for your pleasure this month *Lullaby of Broadway* coupled with *The words are in my heart* (Columbia DB1569) and *San Felipe* and *If your Father only knew* (DB1568). It's all right about my father, Mr. Allen, but does yours know?  
M. E. C.





### Decca's New "Contemporary Rhythm Society"

THE latest product of the fertile mind of Alex Kraut, until recently Recording Manager for Regal, and now acting in a similar capacity for Decca, is "The Contemporary Rhythm Society."

Under the auspices of Decca this Society has, Mr. Kraut writes me, been formed "to foster a world-wide development of rhythmic composition, particularly commissioned for recording and orchestrated to suit the personnel (? instrumentation) of to-day's rhythm orchestra. To this end it is proposed to invite the leading composers of the world to submit compositions in this field of music. It is suggested that not only composers already famous for 'Swing' music should be asked to co-operate, but that the 'modern classical school' should also be represented in this scheme."

Ambrose and his Orchestra will record the works chosen. For the first issue it is proposed to release an album of seven double-sided 12-inch records at the price of 30s. to all who shall previously have registered with the Decca Record Co. Ltd., 1-3 Brixton Road, London, S.W.9, as members of the Society.

Such a project is certain to arouse considerable interest, for, properly handled, this Society can be the greatest influence for the good. But . . .

#### The charm of jazz

Ever since Gershwin misdescribed his *Rhapsody in Blue* as a jazz symphony, far too much has been written in the name of rhythm which, even when it has been able to lay claims to musical merit, has so missed the real spirit of jazz that it has given the public an entirely wrong conception of its characteristics, aims and delights.

Such a Society as Mr. Kraut has inaugurated is sure to inspire composers of all classes of musical thought to "try their hand at the game," and unless the sifting of the wheat from the chaff is in the hands of those who really appreciate the subject, it is by no means beyond the bounds of possibility that we may get a whole lot more of these synthetic works which are nothing more than travesties of the real thing.

In connection with the Society an "International Committee" is being formed. I have accepted an invitation to join it, but

I am bound to confess that I did so more in the hope than the belief that use will be made of such assistance as I might be able to give. Even assuming that the International character of this Committee does not make it unwieldy and ineffective, and that it consists of those who feel the true spirit of the music, will it have any control, or is it to be just a matter of names to be used for propaganda? One's fears are not allayed by Mr. Kraut's remark that the Committee may perhaps be asked to give counsel on any artistic matters that may arise.

Elsewhere in his letter Mr. Kraut says that "'rhythm music' has long passed the *Tiger Rag* and *St. Louis Blues* stage. . . ." What is the significance behind this highly controversial remark? I confess it frightens me.

That *St. Louis Blues* and so many more of the genuine blues and other jazz compositions have had to suffer maltreatment at the hands of ambitious but misguided musicians and arrangers, does not alter the fact that Handy's *St. Louis* remains, not only one of the most delightful, but one of the most characteristic items of jazz, and I feel I am not the only one who may see behind Mr. Kraut's words the suggestion that the Society is already labouring under the misapprehension that jazz has become, or must for its salvation become, a matter of ostentatious composition and extravagant orchestration, whereas the truth is that one of its greatest charms has always been, and always will be, its inherent ingenuousness, an ingenuousness that remains obvious as the contour of its true form, no matter how that form may be dressed (or overdressed) in the frills, fripperies and furbelows which may happen to be the temporary fashion of the moment.

#### Tempo is essential

It must be remembered that jazz is basically Negro folk music: the music which had its origin in the plantations. Endeavours of some of the Harlem Negroes, provoked by Tin-Pan-Alley and the insidious examples set by white American "commercial" dance bands, to smarten it for white folks' consumption have added little if anything to its sincerity or appeal, and any attempts to go further and garb it in the sophisticated

attire of the white races will have to be undertaken in a much more sympathetic way than they have been so far if they are not to destroy completely its character and charm.

One of the things the white composer will have to learn if he wants to write music within the true scope of the word rhythmic, is the meaning of a little thing called swing. Probably because their musical education has been acquired from classics which employ rubato as one of their more important devices, the attempts to date of European and the white American composers have shown that they are not finding it easy to write music even in strict tempo, and strict tempo is only the first of many steps towards swing.

#### Rhythm—as we understand it

Perhaps there are some who think that swing, or even strict tempo, is unessential to "contemporary rhythmic" music. If so, let me say right away that they are merely hoodwinking themselves. Of course music that does not swing may nevertheless be rhythmical in some meanings of the word, but they are hardly the meanings which will spring to mind when one sees "contemporary" in front of the word rhythm. Such music is best described as what it is—light modern concert music. Too much misunderstanding, to the detriment of both "straight" and "rhythmic" music, has already arisen from attempts to exploit it as a glorified jazz. What is wanted is an organisation enlightened enough to develop "jazz" within its proper limits.

However, the last thing I wish to do is to damp at its outset a scheme which can do so much good. I merely offer this word of I hope not untimely warning: If this Society is to achieve its presumed object of being a notable factor in the evolution of contemporary rhythm, it will have to be controlled by those who understand the fundamental nature of the music, and the limits which that nature prescribes as well as the possibilities it opens up. Flashy compositions may, for a time, intrigue a section of the public, but for its success the Society will have to rely not on the sales sheets of its first few issues, but on the name it can build up and maintain amongst the true and understanding lovers of music in Negro swing idiom, for that is what all who will be interested will understand to be implied by the words Contemporary Rhythm.

E. J.

## Instrumental

## Brilliant guitar duets by Albert Harris and Ivor Mairants

## Cleo Brown whacks the ivories again

Albert Harris and Ivor Mairants (Guitar Duets)

*Dedication* (Harris)  
*Spring Fever* (Mairants)  
(Brunswick 02034—2s. 6d.).

In case there is anyone who does not know Albert Harris and Ivor Mairants, I had better introduce them.

They are two of the cleverest, if not the two cleverest, guitarists in this country. Albert Harris is now free-lancing in London, but for many months he was one of the leading lights in Lew Stone's band, where he took his place when Al Bowlly left to go to America. Ivor Mairants is with Roy Fox. He is one of the original members of the band which Fox formed when Lew Stone took over the direction of the combination with which Roy opened the Monseigneur restaurant.

Although it is generally merely a pose which causes us so often to decry the home product in favour of the foreign, it is a fact that American artists have invariably led the way in rhythmic music. They have been responsible not only for most of the ideas, but have generally been the best at putting them into practice.

After the death of Ed Lang (to whom Harris has dedicated his composition) Karl Cress and Dick McDonough soon became recognised as America's foremost guitarists, and duets recorded by them on Brunswick\* created considerable interest in rhythmic music circles on both sides of the Atlantic.

These two compositions by Harris and Mairants follow too closely on the lines indicated in works by Kress and McDonough for anyone to be able to say that the English boys have originated a new style of rhythmic music for guitars; but that they are not on the losing side in playing the Americans at their own game can, I think, be said without much fear of contradiction. Their compositions are delightful and compare with the best by Kress and McDonough; they show at least an equal insight into the subject as a whole and are played with at least equal instrumental technique.

Harris and Mairants have given us a record that will not only interest guitarists, but which will appeal to all, whether their taste is for "dance" or "straight" music. I hope Brunswick will give us more of their work; they are artists in every sense of the word.

\* \* \*

Cleo Brown (Am. N.)—Piano Solos  
*Boogie Woogie* (Smith)  
*Pelican Stomp* (Brown)  
(Brunswick 02037—2s. 6d.).

The guitar, string bass and drums who assisted her in her two previous records being conspicuous by their absence, this month the little coloured lady is left to carry the show all alone.

And believe me she can.

In *Pelican Stomp* she doesn't even try to eke out the time by singing. It's all piano and that's all it needs to be. When Cleo sits down those wires know they're for it. But they don't care. Both Cleo's

hands (particularly the left one) know their stuff, and the ivories sound as though they enjoyed being whacked by her. So do I. She makes a swell noise.

Boogie Woogie goes from conventional swing to—well, I don't quite know what. It is an unusual sort of tune played in a quite unusual way. All through Miss Brown keeps up a fire of instructions. When she does this, you've got, so she says, to hold it; when she does that, you've got to Boogie Woogie. What it all means I don't quite know. And it doesn't seem to matter. Words don't as a rule mean much in this sort of music, and this record appears to be no exception. What does matter is the piano playing. It's a curious sort of rhythm—not fox-trot, not blues, not rumba, but a sort of mixture of all three. Rather intriguing in its way.

## Vocal

## The Boswell Sisters at the top of their form

## John Mills discovers how to do a string bass

The Boswell Sisters (Am.)

*Every little moment* (Fields and McHugh)  
*Way back home* (Lewis and Waring)  
(Brunswick 02033—2s. 6d.).

The return of Mrs. Boswell's three daughters to the London Palladium last month was a grand "come-back" for the girls after their unfortunate first appearance there two years ago, when the mumps brought down Connie and the curtain after the sisters had appeared for only three days.

Their records, of course, made their success a foregone conclusion, and the two new ones this month will help to sustain that success—particularly *Every little moment*.

I would say that, judging from this side, the sisters have, if possible, improved their technique. Taking it in jig tempo, they really swing the last chorus, but there are heaps of things to delight you, including little bits sung solo by the seductive Connie, before that is reached. The whole construction of the record is so entertaining in its neat, easy way. And very little way behind is *Way back home*.

The accompanying orchestra—surely I cannot have mistaken the strains of the one and only Venuti?—is the best the girls have had since the days when Messrs. T. & J. Dorsey & Co. almost succeeded in stealing the cake. It, too, knows how to swing—note the codas in both titles.

\* \* \*

The Mills Brothers (Am. N.)

*Don't be afraid to tell your mother* (Tomlin, Poe and Grier)  
*Sweet Lucy Brown* (Rence Bros.)  
(Brunswick 02035—2s. 6d.).

*Sweet Lucy Brown* makes me take back that remark I once made that when you have heard the Mills Brothers once you have heard them for ever. And it is due chiefly to that amazing fellow, John Mills.

Hitherto his imitation of a bass has sounded

Herman Chitison (N.) (Piano Solos)

*You'll be my Lover* (Chitison)  
*Trees* (Rasbach)  
(Brunswick 02022—2s. 6d.).

For *You'll be my Lover* Herman Chitison seems to have got as near to the Hines style as anyone who is not Hines well could. He plays with the same close-cropped, cross-cut idiom, sustains notes by means of the tremolo in the way that Hines does, and there is a strong Hines flavour in many of his phrases. And yet he lacks something that Hines has. Perhaps it is the same incisiveness; perhaps it is something less definable; anyway, whatever it is one seems to miss it.

Still, because anyone isn't Hines does not necessarily mean that he can't be a good artist, and on this side alone Chitison shows himself to be among the best of the swing pianists.

*Trees* is another matter. In spite of the fact that it has the conventional burst of "in tempo" towards the end, it is a "concert" record. It is good piano playing of its kind, but every time I hear the sort of thing I always feel that it can be summed up in one word—Why?

to me most like the tone of a soft, sweet sousaphone, but he has now gone one better and turned it into a string bass. It is really uncanny. So astonishingly realistic is the imitation that one even recognises the soft twang of the string behind the actual tone of the note. The effect is most easily discernible in the vamp which follows the introduction, but there is no need to tax one's listening powers uncomfortably to trace it all through the record.

And hardly less real than Brother John's bass are the imitations of other musical instruments. The introduction, for instance, almost defeats its own end by being so like an actual orchestra that it is almost, if not quite, impossible to realise that it is by human voices.

And as though these things were not enough to put the record over, it may be added that in all other respects it is one of the Mills' best. A good tune, it is well arranged and the whole thing is put over with that immaculate polish for which our four friends have long been renowned.

For the other title John Mills goes back to his sousaphone effect (this gives you a good opportunity to realise how ingenious and how much better his string bass imitation is) and all round the record is perhaps not quite in such good style. Nevertheless it has its attractions.

\* \* \*

The Four Aces

*Rain* (Hill and de Rose)  
*Rhythm is our business* (Lunceford and others)  
(Decca F5597—1s. 6d.).

If the Four Aces had originated their vocal orchestra business they would have created a sensation, but unfortunately for them the Mills Brothers were first in the field. Still they are clever and put up a good show. They are a rapidly improving group. I like the way they treat *Rain*.

\* *Stage Fright* and *Danzon* (Brunswick 01808).

## Bands and Orchestras

*Rex Stewart's debut with Ellington*

*Wingy Mannone modernises "Dixieland" style : Bob Howard swings two amusing nonsense songs with "Ted" Wilson : Whiteman and the Mound City Blue Blowers on H.M.V. : Parlophone reintroduce old friends*

IN the height of summer, when all but music critics and a handful of life's other unfortunates are turning their attention to the seaside, telling the tale in the moonlight, sun bathing and umbrellas, August is usually a month when the companies carress their best recordings and lovingly murmur "We'll save you till the autumn, sweetheart."

But for some unexplained reason this particular August has refused to conform to precedent. I don't think I can remember a month when we have had a grander output of swing music, and I only hope the call of outdoor pastimes will not be the cause of all these good things being missed.

Following the usual procedure of taking the companies in alphabetical order, we come first to:

## BRUNSWICK

## Duke Ellington and His Orchestra (Am. N.)

*In a sentimental mood* (Ellington)

*Showboat Shuffle* (Ellington)

(Brunswick 02038—2s. 6d.).

*Admiration* (Tizol)

*Merry-go-round* (Ellington)

(Brunswick 02030—2s. 6d.).

Of the four sides, *Showboat Shuffle* is the one that has intrigued me the most. In fact, it has got right inside me. I have little doubt that it will live as one of Ellington's masterpieces.

The whole thing is built round rhythmic figures scored for the section of three trombones. The gruff voices of these trombones playing their chukka-cha-chas are heard almost all through the record, as a sort of axis around which everything else revolves. The scoring is Ellington in his most colourful and dynamic mood, and the interpretation is the sort of thing one could get only from Ellington's orchestra. What other clarinet plays like Bigard, what other saxophone section is there like Ellington's, and who else could play drums in just the way that Sonny Greer plays them here?

The performance is also conspicuous for the trumpet playing of Rex Stewart, who has taken the place of "Posy" Jenkins, who is seriously ill. American critics have not been too kind to Stewart. They say he does not fit in the combination and that his playing is showily insincere. All I can say is that I cannot see it. I like everything he does in this captivating record.

*In a sentimental mood* is in more languorous vein, another of those delightful slow pieces by Ellington. Everybody rhapsodises seductively. Otto Hardwicke starts off poetically on his alto and later one hears Barney Bigard on tenor, Rex Stewart again, and Lawrence Brown. There are some lovely harmonies in the orchestral support to these individual outpourings, and although in places the construction does not seem quite as facile as Ellington's generally are, one can still say that the arrangement is that of a master.

There is no need for me to say much about *Merry-go-round* as it is little, if any, different from the Columbia version by Ellington issued some time ago; and the less said about *Admiration* the better. A forced,

insincere sort of tune, it has quite failed to evoke any of that sympathy and understanding so necessary to enable a susceptible instrument like Ellington's ensemble to give of its best.

\* \* \*

## New Orleans Rhythm Kings

*San Antonio Shout* (Shand and Arodin)

*The Jazz Me Blues* (Delaney)

(Brunswick 02040—2s. 6d.).

They say there's nothing new under the sun, and in a way the remark certainly seems to apply to the above. Here we have what is basically nothing more than a modernised version of Dixieland style, and the fact that the records are among the month's most exhilarating examples of swing music is due no more to the brilliance of these New Orleans Rhythm Kings than to the fact that, for all its early crudities, in Dixieland style lay at least the germ of all that we recognise to-day as swing.

The outfit is a contingent of Wingy Mannone's band now playing at, I believe, the President Hotel in New York. Wingy I think you all know as one of the outstanding trumpet players of the moment. If not, you will as soon as you hear these titles. But the star turn in the performances is, to my mind, Ray Baduc the drummer. The way he feeds those boys with rhythm is just a shame.

About *San Antonio Shout* there seems to be a little mystery. The label states it to be by Shand and Arodin, who are both members of Mannone's orchestra, the latter being the clarinetist (and how!); but, in fact, it seems to be no more nor less than a tune called *There'll come a time* by Mannone and Miff Mole. You will not have to go far to check this up because, by a curious coincidence, Parlophone have this month reissued Trumbauer's record of *There'll come a time*. It is reviewed later in this section.

\* \* \*

## Bob Howard and His Orchestra (Am.)

*A Porter's love song to a Chambermaid*

(Johnson and Razaf) (v by Bob Howard)

*Corrine Corrina* (McCoy and Chairman)

(v by Bob Howard)

(Brunswick 02042—2s. 6d.).

Here are two of the most amusing and catchy nonsense songs to be found in the whole repertoire of jazz.

*Corrine Corrina* you will probably know from the Brunswick Red Nicholls version, but I think this is the first record to be issued here of the greaser's ode to the lady of the bedchamber. I'm surprised it has only just reached us, as it is quite a classic with the coloured folk, and is to be found in all the American "Race" record lists.

Bob Howard puts over both the titles well. All sorts of swell people seem to be in his "pick-up" recording outfit. There is a trumpet who gets off with the best, an elegant rhythm section, and the pianist is obviously none other than the Theodore ("Ted") Wilson. This disc is an absolute orgy for Wilson followers. He has a chorus in both sides, and I guarantee you haven't heard finer swing piano playing. Bob Howard sings in both titles in a way that

doesn't spoil either of them and keeps up the party spirit in *Corrine Corrina* with just the right amount and kind of Ohs, Ahs and Yeahs.

This is another disc you certainly should not miss.

## H.M.V.

## Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra (Am.)

*The Bouncing Ball* (Trumbauer)

*Mound City Blue Blowers* (Am.)

*Never had a reason to believe in you* (McKenzie and Dillings) (v by Red McKenzie)

(H.M.V. BD187—1s. 6d.).

It has made me feel just a little sort of uncomfortable to find Paul Whiteman's *Bouncing Ball* put out by H.M.V. as a hot rhythm record. The composition doesn't quite fit the description.

However, I think I know the reason.

So many new "popular" tunes are published each month that there is little room for anything much else in "light" music section of the supplements. A place is reserved for just one hot record a month, and the only way of getting novelties, such as this Whiteman, issued at all is to purloin the hot record vacancy for them.

H.M.V. have dozens of Victor recordings which are in this, what one might describe as no man's land, category. That is to say, that while they cannot really be classed as hot music, they are nevertheless in a class far removed from the ordinary commercial dance tune.

As things are going now most of them will never see the light of day in this country because the hot fans start to kick, and rightly so, if their one genuine "hot" coupling a month is interfered with.

It is all a great pity because many of these Victor—shall we call them border-line cases?—are far too good to be left rotting on the shelves, and I sincerely hope that H.M.V. will do something about getting them on sale.

But to tell you about *Bouncing Ball*.

Well, it is a grand record. Trumbauer has provided us with another composition, which, for musical merit, compares with his delightful *Plantation Moods* which, played by an orchestra directed by Trumbauer, H.M.V. issued a couple of months ago on BD158. The Whiteman ensemble—and the performance is all section or ensemble work: there are no solos—is superb. I suppose that from a purely "legitimate" aspect there is not a light orchestra in existence that can beat Whiteman's for perfection of tone, balance, and, in fact, all-round musicianship.

Although you would not believe it from their ordinary "dance" records, they can swing a bit too.

The Mound City Blue Blowers record was made at the same session as *Tailspin Blues* (H.M.V. B6252). The personnel was, I believe, Teagarden (trombone), Krupa (drums), Eddie Condon (banjo), Jack Bland (guitar) and Red McKenzie.

The elegant Teagarden has a whole chorus to himself, and it is none the worse for not being swamped out by a big rhythm section behind it. I have never enjoyed Teagarden more. Red McKenzie, one of the few singers I really like, is responsible for the vocal refrain as well as his "blue" blowing. Some people think the latter merely a stunt. Perhaps it is as far as its tone colour goes, but when you consider the phrases, and the

style with which they are interpreted, you realise its worth. Red McKenzie is an artist.

And what a rhythm section Condon, Bland and Krupa make! What a swing!!

### PARLOPHONE

**Frankie Trumbauer and His Orchestra** (Am.)  
*Mississippi Mud* (Barris) (v by **B. Crosby, H. Barris and A. Rinka**)

*There'll come a time* (Mannone and Mole)  
(Parlophone R2097—2s. 6d.).

Well, well, well! Fancy meeting you again!

To discover these two old favourites—it must have been 1927 or 1928 when they were first released, and the original pressings have for some time been withdrawn from the catalogue—is like suddenly coming face to face with an old friend arisen from the dead.

After the first hearty handshake one looks him over.

Yes, he has aged a little, but that is all.

One is a little surprised. Somehow one feels he ought not to look so conventional. One is perhaps a little shocked, too, not so much on finding that one's friend has changed so little while he has been asleep, but on having to realise that one has after all oneself changed so little while living through the period of his repose.

But perhaps I ought to have said that the finding of this record is like meeting once again many old friends. *Mississippi Mud* brings back to us **Whiteman's (Original) Rhythm Boys**, the first and still one of the best vocal groups, who did such delightful things as *What price lyrics?* (H.M.V. B2779, withdrawn from the catalogue) and *Louise* (Columbia 5457). You may remember that they consisted of **Harry Barris, Al Rinka and Bing Crosby**.

Then there are also **Ed. Lang, Miff Mole and Bix**; lots of grand Bix. What an artist was lost through his untimely death.

**Bix, Lang and Mole** play also in *There'll come a time*, but they are not featured to any extent, the high spot in solos on this side being the one by Trumbauer on his alto. For the rest the record is mainly ensemble. They knew how to arrange in those days, too. There is more neat wit and more music in this delectable performance than one finds in a dozen records to-day.

\* \* \*

### Nat Gonella and His Georgians

*Fascinating Rhythm* (Gershwin) (v by **Nat Gonella**)

*Hesitation Blues* (Smythe, Middleton and Gilham) (v by **Nat Gonella**)  
(Parlophone F192—1s. 6d.).

*Blow, Gabriel, Blow* (Porter) (v by **Nat Gonella**)

*Hot Lips* (Busse, Lange and Davis) (v by **Nat Gonella**)  
(Parlophone F193—1s. 6d.).

I certainly hand it to Nat and his satellites, not only for having developed a way of their own for doing things, but for being able to keep on thinking out novel and amusing ways of presenting their tunes and so making each of their records a refreshing little entertainment. Continually to churn out new ideas is difficult enough when one is assisted by the greater range of effects that can be produced from a large orchestra, but when one is handicapped by the limitations of a small combination, with only a couple of trumpets and one saxophone in the "melody"

line, it requires almost genius to keep the ball rolling. Nevertheless Nat appears to find little difficulty in doing it.

He opens *Blow, Gabriel, Blow* with the boys chanting a wish that Gabriel will come and wash their sins away. In due course Mr. Gabriel obliges, and, having been suitably introduced, takes charge of the proceedings, which continue to be bright and amusing until the last clarion note is sounded. Nothing of any great consequence as explained in words, but the idea gets home by being well carried out.

As regards presentation, *Hot Lips* is not quite so successful. The stunt consists of Nat playing an obbligato in the first chorus, and breaks in the third, while the boys croak the words. Nat works hard in this third chorus, but it's too long for the sort of thing to be kept going. However, the record is pulled up to scratch again by Nat's two bars of really brilliant trumpet just before the last chorus, and I must not forget to mention the good tenor work by **Pat Smuts** earlier in the performance.

**Harold Hood** deserves the acknowledgment given to him on the label for piano which is the feature of *Fascinating Rhythm*, but as swing music *Hesitation Blues* is the best of the four sides. The Georgians have really excelled themselves in this one. The routine is good, the parts are well arranged, the boys play well and enthusiastically, and Nat hasn't blown his trumpet with such inspiration for a long time. There isn't too much singing and what there is goes on the credit side with the guitar licks that come in the same chorus.

### REGAL-ZONOPHONE

#### The Six Swingers

*Rhythm is our business* (Lunceford, Cohen and Kaplan) (v by **Marjorie Stedford**)  
*Star Dust* (Carmichael) (v by **Marjorie Stedford**)

(Regal-Zonophone MR1771—1s.).

Of all the tunes which have been unlucky on records I think *Star Dust* has been the

unluckiest. Deservedly one of the most recorded of all the tunes which have become classics of jazz (if one may apply the description to such a charming little morsel of melodic simplicity), there is hardly a time when it has not been sacrificed on the altar of attempts by the artists to be too clever. It has been played at every tempo but the right one, and has had bestowed on it every form of vocal, instrumental and orchestral treatment but the simple musical one for which it shouts.

Until this Regal made its appearance I believed the Ambrose version on red-label Decca (now withdrawn from the catalogue) the best, but unless my memory is letting me down I think this new performance by the Six Swingers is as good. It gives the tune its true atmosphere, firstly due to the fact that the tempo is not too fast, secondly because no attempt has been made at anything approaching extravagance, and thirdly because the playing is all so tasteful.

There are only two choruses. In the first the trombone and **Freddy Gardner** on his alto share the lead, and their playing is none the less attractive for its restraint. The second is vocal, and here I am bound to say that I think the record would not have suffered had it been all instrumental. However, **Marjorie Stedford** sings unaffectedly and pleasantly. Throughout **Max Abrams** keeps the swing at just the right strength on his drums, while **Geo. Scott Wood** strolls around the piano. This is unexpectedly nice playing from George, whose behaviour was not always too polite in those duets he did with Arthur Young in one or two of the Swingers' earlier records.

And in its way the other side is about as good. A bright sort of business with leanings towards Dixieland style in its ensemble passages, it gives all the soloists a chance to get off, and **Billy Farrell** on his trumpet is among those who make good use of their opportunities. **Marjorie Stedford** is again the vocalist. The faster tempo doesn't suit her so well, and anyway why have any singing? But there, I suppose the ordinary public likes it.

### Rumbas—but not this month

The announcement last month that special attention would henceforth be given in this section of THE GRAMOPHONE to rumbas and kindred Cuban dances appears for the moment to have become a case of counting the chickens before they were hatched.

There is really nothing new this month in this sort of dance music that calls for any particular comment.

Regal describe the **Gaumont-British Dance Orchestra's San Felipe** (MR1761) as a rumba, but however the tune may be treated in "Heat Wave," the film from which it comes, on this record it is played merely as a straightforward "commercial" fox-trot.

**Pickard's Chinese Syncopators** have a shot at *Ali Baba* (H.M.V. BD175), but Chinese temperament does not seem to be ideally suited to Spanish music.

Nor, if one had to judge from **Harry Roy's South American Joe** (Parlophone F207), could one believe is English temperament, though I am pleased to be able to say that his orchestra gets nearer to the spirit and idiom of the real rumba in *Campequina* (on

the reverse) if only because the composition seems to be more genuine.

Is it too much to ask that each of the companies which have them should give us one Cuban dance record by genuine native orchestra a month? Not only would these be welcomed for their educational value by English bands, who have little opportunity to hear and so learn the subtleties of this music, but also there is a rapidly increasing public for them.

Columbia, for instance, have quite a few discs by the Orquesta Tipica Cubana (whose *La Conga* and *La Comparsa de Los Congos*, issued on Regal MR1739, were, I thought, two of the finest authentic rumbas I had heard), to say nothing of other native orchestras. They handle also the French Pathé catalogue, which is full of rumbas, sons, congas, biguines and the like. Two others lying idle on their shelves are *Habana* and *Olas-que-van* by the Trio Cubani Weeno, Bravo et Gody. These were issued on French Columbia DF1403 and are most attractive performances.

EDGAR JACKSON.

# TRACTRIX HORNS

by P. WILSON

IN his British Patent number 278,098, Mr. Voigt has proposed to use the curve known as the Tractrix as the contour for a horn, and the remarkable success of the Voigt horn loud-speakers demands that some analysis of the probable properties of Tractrix horns should be attempted.

I am afraid that nowadays I am too far removed from my former facility in juggling with horn equations to give the analysis the attention it deserves, but at any rate I think I can open up the subject and indicate what seems to me to be the fundamental issues.

Mr. Voigt's argument is this. At a distance from a source of sound a particle velocity of 1 cm. per second is always accompanied by a pressure of 43 dynes per square cm. This law, he says, holds substantially up to a distance of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the wavelength from the source; at smaller distances the velocity increases at a greater rate than the pressure.

All this is readily demonstrated theoretically for a uniformly diverging spherical wave, for which the ratio of pressure P to velocity V is:

$$P/V = 42.8 Q \frac{\text{dyne sec.}}{\text{cm}^3}$$

(mechanical ohms per sq. cm.)

and Q is a factor depending on the difference of phase between P and V. At a point n wavelengths from the source:

$$Q = 1 / \sqrt{1 + 1/(2\pi n)^2}$$

When  $n = \frac{1}{4}$ ,  $Q = 0.8$  nearly.

Incidentally, this quantity 42.8 is always cropping up in sound calculations. It is the product of the density of air ( $.00129 \text{ gm/cm}^3$ ) and the velocity of sound ( $3.33 \times 10^4 \text{ cm/sec}$  at  $15^\circ \text{ C}$ ). Readers who were bold enough to tackle the appendix to Chapter IV of *Modern Gramophones* (Wilson & Webb) will recognise it also as the impedance per square cm. of a horn for the range of frequency in which the horn acts as a pure resistance load.

So far, so good. It is when Mr. Voigt deduces from this that the appropriate shape of horn is the tractrix that I fail to follow him. He says that the taper should be such that the sound is expanding as if the source was at a constant distance which is at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  wavelength of the lowest frequency at which full efficiency is required, and I cannot for the life of me see why. If this statement is true then unquestionably the appropriate curve is the tractrix. I may be able to revert to this argument later, and I hope that in the meantime Mr. Voigt may be persuaded to explain it further. At the moment I must confess that the idea of sound expanding in such a way that the wave front is always at a constant distance from the source is one which I cannot visualise as a natural phenomenon.

What interests me more at the moment is to see how the shape of a tractrix horn based on this argument compares with that of an exponential horn. Unfortunately the tractrix is not a very easy curve to draw on paper, though it is easy enough to draw it mechanically in sand. For the latter, all one needs to do is to attach a piece of string, of the "constant length," determined by the limiting wavelength, to a weight. Mark out a straight line on a stretch of sand and place the free end of the string on the line with the string stretched taut at right-angles to the line. Then move the free end along the line, pulling the weight after it. The weight will mark out a tractrix curve in the sand.

If I were called upon to draw a number of tractrix curves I should be tempted to do it mechanically in this way, since the equation of the curve in ordinary cartesian co-ordinates is an unwieldy affair. In either case it is easier to start from the open end, rather than from the throat as one usually does with exponential horns. With the tractrix horn there are

no complications about size of open end to give minimum reflection. The radius of open end is given straightway as one quarter the wavelength of the lowest frequency one designs to reproduce. Denoting this length by c the radius y of a section of the horn distant x from the open end is given by the fearsome expression

$$x = \sqrt{c^2 - y^2} + \frac{c}{2} \log \frac{c - \sqrt{c^2 - y^2}}{c + \sqrt{c^2 - y^2}}$$

the logarithm being Napierian and not to the base 10.

To use this expression for purposes of calculation, it is simpler to write

$$y = c \sin \theta$$

$$x = c \cos \theta + c \log \tan \theta/2$$

(the logarithm being Napierian)

and then work out the values of x and y for different values of  $\theta$ .

These two equations, of course, also determine the length of horn required for a given throat diameter and minimum frequency. Thus taking 64 cycles (wavelength 17 ft.) and throat diameter of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch, c is 51 inches and the diameter of the open end is double this or 8 ft. 6 in.

$$\sin \theta = \frac{1}{204} = .004902$$

$$\tan \theta/2 = .002451$$

$$\text{Nap log tan } \theta/2 = -6.01$$

so that  $x = 5 \times 51 \text{ ins.} = 21 \text{ ft. } 3 \text{ ins.}$  The horn will thus be 21 ft. 3 ins. long and have an open end of 8 ft. 6 ins. diameter. For an exponential horn with cut-off frequency at 64 cycles the rate of taper is  $64 \times .000201$  or .012864 and the radius of open end, assuming a slope at the mouth of 45

Axial distance from open end.	Radius of cross-section.	Slope.	
		Degrees.	mins.
0	1.0	90	00
.00033	.99502	84	17
.00262	.98033	78	37
.00869	.95663	73	04
.02005	.92501	67	40
.03788	.88682	62	29
.06295	.84355	57	31
.09563	.79670	52	49
.13596	.74770	48	23
.18370	.69779	44	15
.23841	.64805	40	24
.29950	.59933	36	49
.36635	.55229	33	31
.43828	.50738	30	29
.51465	.46492	27	42
.59485	.42510	25	9
.67833	.38798	22	50
.76459	.35357	20	42
.85319	.32180	18	46
.94376	.29259	17	1
1.03597	.26580	15	25
1.12955	.24129	13	58
1.22426	.21892	12	39
1.31990	.19852	11	27
1.41633	.17995	10	22
1.51339	.16307	9	23
1.61097	.14773	8	30
1.70899	.13381	7	41
1.80737	.12117	6	58
1.90604	.10971	6	18
2.00495	.09933	5	42

Table for determining Tractrix Contours.

degrees, is  $2160/64$  or  $33\frac{3}{4}$  ins. The open end is thus 5 ft.  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ins. in diameter (see formulae given on page 30, June 1934). The length of horn required works out to be 166 ins.

The tractrix horn is thus half as long again as the exponential and the open end is half as big again. It should be noticed also that the tractrix flares very rapidly at the open end to a slope of 90 degrees. It is clear, therefore, that the tractrix contour lies wholly within the exponential contour.

To complete this part of the story it would no doubt be convenient if I gave a table from which tractrix contours could be determined directly. The first point to notice is that all tractrix curves are alike, the size being governed merely by the "size of open end." It is, therefore, sufficient to have a table of radii of cross-section at different distances along the axis from the open end for an open end radius of unity. To get the appropriate curve in any particular case, one then multiplies both radii and axial distance by the open end radius. For convenience I also give the angle of slope at each point.

### A New Horn Loudspeaker

In the past I have paid my tribute to the Voigt Tractrix horn loudspeakers and the doubts expressed in the preceding note do not in any way detract from that tribute. I have been interested to find out, however, whether it is not possible to achieve a similar degree of efficiency of conversion from electric to acoustic power by other (and less expensive) means, and with a comparable standard of quality.

As I indicated last December, the first experiment I tried was to connect a R105 crystal speaker to square section horns that Mr. Godfrey had available in his workshop, and the success here whetted my appetite for more detailed experiment. I particularly wanted to try a horn of circular section built up in such a form that resonance of the material could be avoided or made negligible. Mr. Ginn kindly had built for me the bell portion of his Expert Senior horn with the flare extended to a mouth diameter of 4 ft. 3 ins., and this was set up in a wooden framework with a baffle 5 ft. square.

The throat is 12 ins. in diameter and is mounded on to another board on which the R105 driving unit can be mounted.

The experiments have been conducted in the open air, the speaker being arranged to discharge across a tennis lawn at my home. I have no doubt whatever that the quality of sound produced by the combination is far superior to that of any other public address speaker I have ever heard. The driving unit, however, did not seem to be very happy with anything approaching the full power from my 10-watt amplifier and after the first burst I never fed into it more than about 3 watts.

The first surprise was to find that the sound was definitely louder at a distance of 50 ft. from the horn than at 6 ft., while the polar curve showing lateral dispersion seemed to be quite good: certainly no difference could be detected by ear within an angle of 45 degrees on each side of the axis of the horn. The real shock, however, came when a neighbour complained to me that the sound was disturbingly loud (which is a mild paraphrase of the actual words used) at a distance of 100 yards and could actually be heard a quarter of a mile away. Such a degree of efficiency of conversion had not entered into my calculations. Fancy a range of a quarter of a mile from 3 watts output, notwithstanding a sequence of intervening hedges and trees; and this with clear articulation all the way and no overpowering sensation close to.

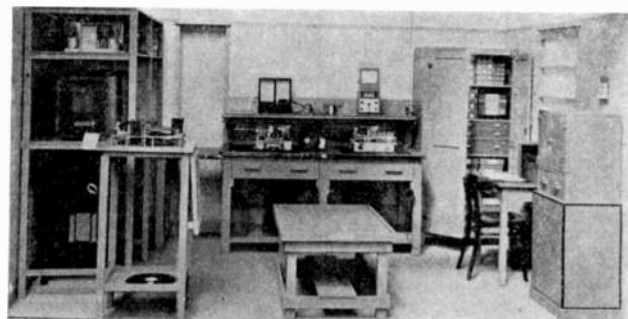
Naturally the experiment came to an abrupt conclusion and I have for disposal a wonderfully sensitive and effective loudspeaker! There may be some advantage in living in the Outer Hebrides after all! Now I am left wondering why it is that the inverse square law does not appear to operate in the case of this speaker. Whatever the reason, it seems clear that the property should be a most valuable one when the speaker is used in a hall. Quality, power and cheapness rarely go together. This is evidently an exception.

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## VOX Radio-Gramophone

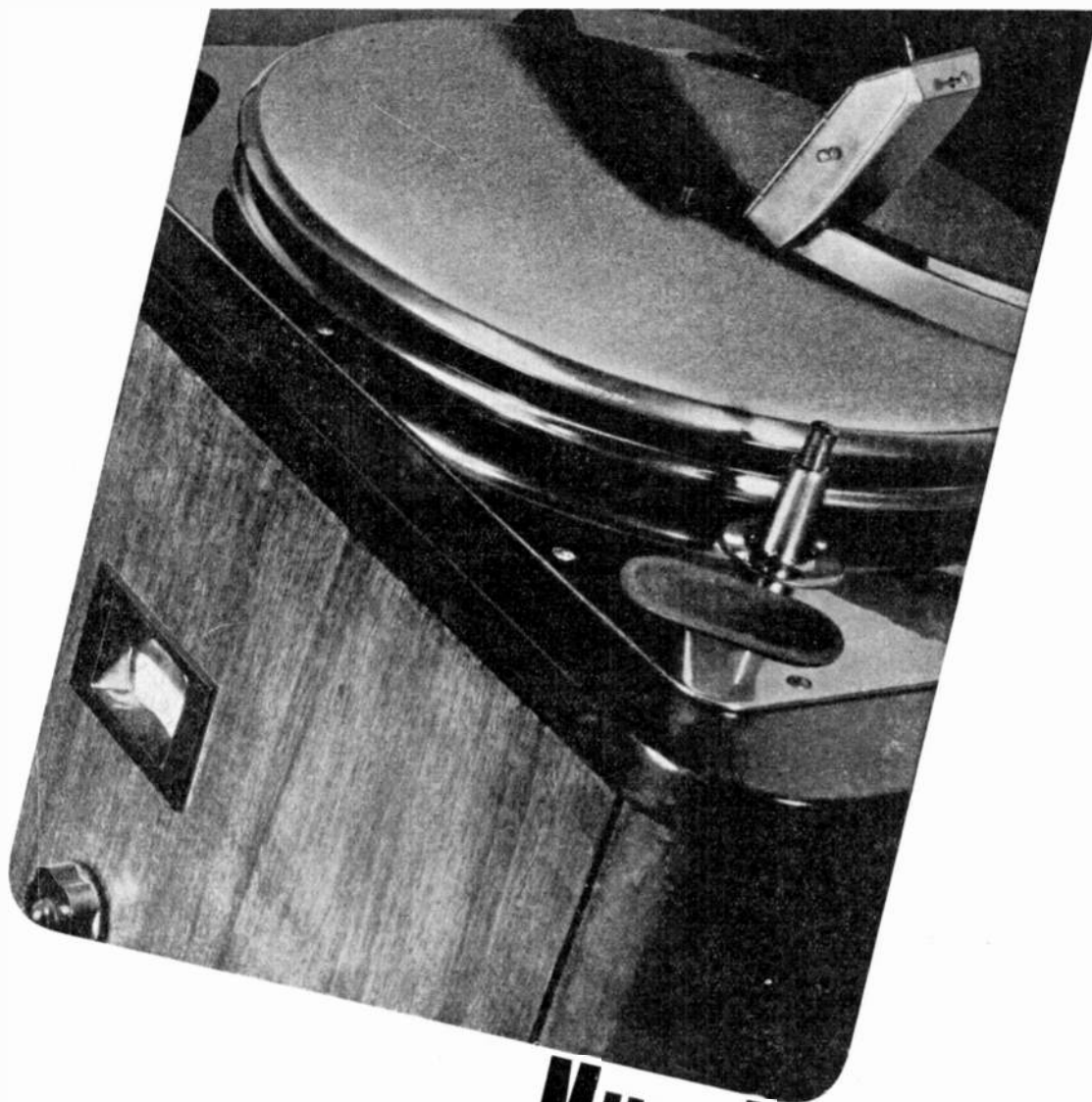
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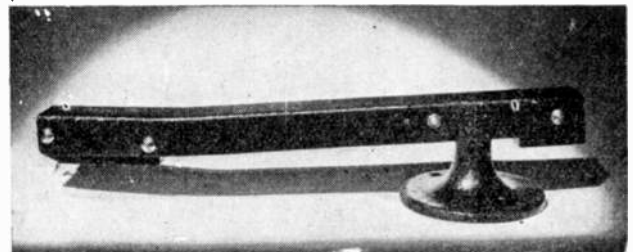
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# THE VOX A.C. RADIOGRAM MODIFIED

by G. WILSON

It is some considerable time since modifications of the Vox A.C. radio-gramophone were promised, but all kinds of obstacles have hitherto prevented us from carrying out our original intentions.

For the benefit of new readers, it should be explained that this radiogram was originally described in the November and December 1930 issues of THE GRAMOPHONE and included a special type of cabinet, still obtainable from W. J. Bond & Sons, Milton Avenue, Harlesden, N.W.10, which has many advantages over the conventional commercial design. The instrument illustrated in Fig. 1 was originally made by F. E. Godfrey Radio Ltd. for an Edinburgh reader.

It is perhaps well, before proceeding with the description, to outline briefly what our present intentions are.

Firstly, we do not propose to give a wiring diagram since reference to the circuit diagram and the panel and upper baseboard layouts should be sufficient to enable constructors to carry out the wiring. All one need remember in laying out the sub-baseboard components is to keep grid wires as short as possible and isolate, so far as is possible, anode circuits from grid circuits, and both from wiring which carries raw A.C.

Secondly, alternative push-pull output stage circuits will be shown diagrammatically: one incorporating the Mazda AC/P1 valves which were originally used and the other using Marconi-Osram PX valves.

Thirdly, there will be two separate component lists, one which specifies many of the original components used, in order that those who made up the 1930 model may modify it at a minimum of expense. The other list includes the modern equivalents and is intended for those who desire to modernise their equipment, using the higher power output stage.

We must make it quite clear, however, that our experiments have only been carried out using the AC/P1s in the power stage, so that the values of the voltage dropping and decoupling resistances given in the list for the new Vox radiogram circuit are only approximations, and thus may need some slight alteration so as to maintain the following voltages on the screen and anodes of the respective valves.

H.F. Stage (AC/VP1): Anode, 240-250; Screen 175-180 volts.

L.F. Stage (Triode portion of MHD4): Anode, 175-200 volts.

Power Stage (PX4s): Anode, 250-260.

The maximum anode voltage rating for the anodes of the PX4 valves given by the makers is 250, but so long as the anode current of each valve is kept within the 48 ma. mark (and a little over-biasing in a push-pull stage is sometimes an advantage) little harm will be done.

These preliminaries are essential since the new PX4 version of the equipment is really in the nature of a suggestion. At the same time we have no doubt that once the above voltages have been arrived at, the resulting performance will be, at

least, equal to that of the AC/P1 model, and, of course, there will be the added advantage of a larger power-handling capacity.

## The AC/P1 Version

As stated earlier, our experiments have been carried out using two Mazda AC/P1 valves in push-pull in the output stage, so that the resistance values are all appropriate and the set may be completed without experiment.

It will be seen from Fig. 3 that there is nothing really unconventional about the circuit. An inductively coupled band-pass filter precedes the H.F. stage which incorporates an H.F. pentode. This is coupled to one diode of the double-diode-triode (MHD4) by an H.F. transformer and C9. It is here, in the detector circuit, that an unorthodox method of utilising the voltage developed at this anode to bias the H.F. valve is used. Strictly speaking, it is a form of automatic volume control which is normally used to maintain a fairly constant input to the detector valve from aerial signals of different strengths.

Naturally, the A.V.C. is not so effective as in a superhet, where the H.F. magnification is much greater, but it does operate in a lesser degree. Here, however, the principal object is essentially different: it is to stabilise the H.F. stage and reduce noise while at the same time providing a means of operating a tuning indicator from a diode detector valve; and once the ganged condensers have been trimmed accurately there is no squealing or other signs of H.F. instability. Note that when no signal is being received the H.F. valve is unbiased and therefore runs into grid current; this heavily damps the grid circuit, reduces amplification, and cuts down noise.

The rectified signal is then passed on to the grid of the triode portion of the MHD4 through an H.F. choke (suitably by-passed by C11), C12, the single pole double throw switch S1, and the volume control R7. Note here that when S1 is thrown over to the gramophone position R7 is connected in shunt with the pick-up. Thus for such pick-ups as the Rothermel Brush Piezo model, which, by the way, functions well with this equipment, and the Meltrope, no other volume control is required.

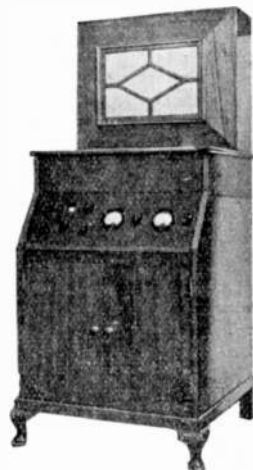


FIG. 1. The Vox Radiogram Cabinet and original chassis.

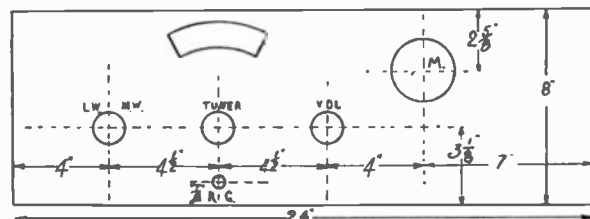


FIG. 2. The new panel layout.

Note, too, that the L.F. amplifier valve is permanently biased and thus there is no momentary "free-grid" when changing over from radio to gramophone.

Hereafter the circuit is conventional and calls for little comment. The grid stopper resistances R10 and R11 must be wired as close to the valve holders as possible; care must be taken to see that the electrolytic condensers C13, C14 and C15 are connected in correct polarity and the ratio of T2 must be chosen to suit the speech coil impedance of the particular

loudspeaker used. The buffer condensers C19 and C20 can be omitted for a start but must be included if there is trouble with modulation hum. This is a possibility, since the Wearite mains transformer used in the original equipment is not fitted with a shielded primary.

The fuses F1 and F2 are ordinary 2.5 volt flash-lamp bulbs.

It will be seen from Fig. 3 that only one milliammeter is used, but those who wish to make use of the 0-150 ma. meter used in the output circuit of 1930 model may connect it at the point marked X in the H.T. lead which goes to the centre tap of the output transformer (T2) primary.

The tuning meter M, now incorporated in the H.F. valve anode circuit, will need to be shunted with a resistance of approximately 15 ohms in order to increase the range from 0.2 to 0.10 ma. owing to the fact that the average anode current of the Mazda AC/VP1 is about 8 ma. Therefore

according to the spindle or bush sizes of the appropriate panel components. The meter aperture can be cut by drilling a series of small holes round the inside of the periphery of the  $2\frac{3}{8}$  in. circle scribed, and then cutting through the divisions with a key-hole saw and finally finishing off with a file and sandpaper.

The holes in the aluminium sheet for the valve holders are best cut with an ordinary  $1\frac{7}{8}$  in. centre-bit with the aluminium screwed to the plinth. The point of the bit then gives the centre point for the drilling of the  $1\frac{3}{8}$  in. holes for the H.F. and detector valve holders, and the  $1\frac{1}{8}$  in. holes for the remaining power and H.T. rectifier valve holders. Note that the  $1\frac{7}{8}$  in. holes are cut in the aluminium sheet only. When screwed down on to the wooden top the valve holders are practically flush with the aluminium.

The mounting of the rest of the components presents no

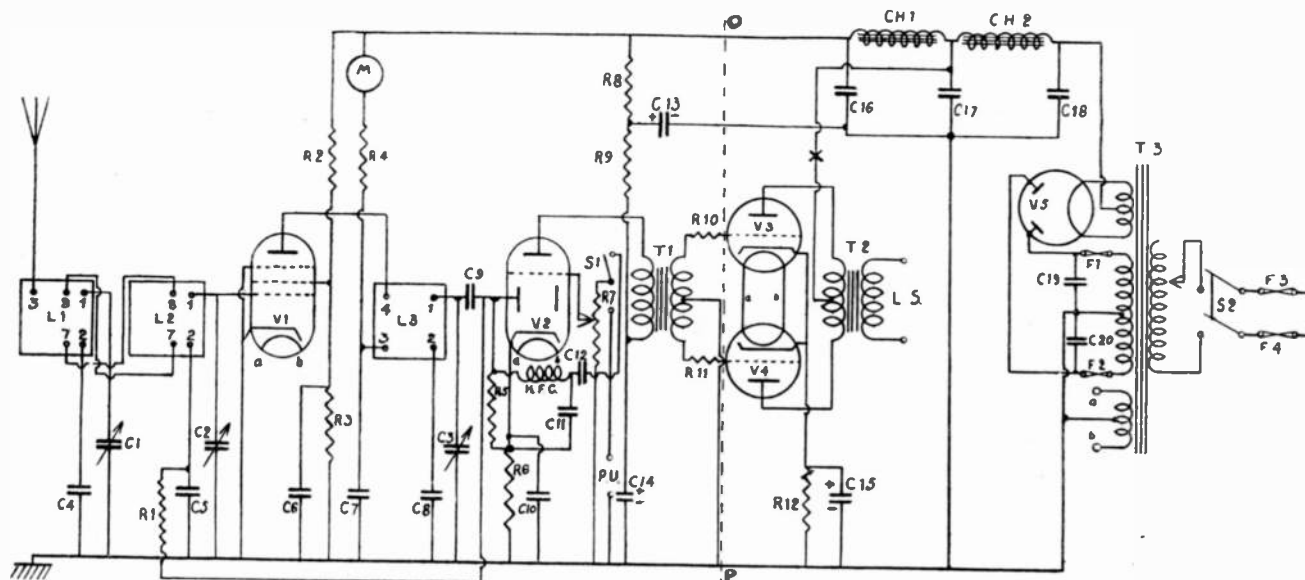


FIG. 3. The Circuit of the New Vox Radiogram.

the range of the meter must be multiplied five times. The meter resistance is 59 ohms, and in order to increase the range a resistance in shunt of roughly about one-quarter of 59 ohms is required. It is better to use a 15-ohm variable resistance, since then it can be adjusted so that with no signal full scale deflection is obtained. Any make of resistance will do, the smaller the better. The alternative is to unwind the 59-ohm resistance which was shunted across the meter originally, cut the wire into four equal lengths, rewind one piece on the former and adjust the resistance value by trial and error, gradually shortening the wire until the correct value is obtained judged by the position of the needle when the resistance is connected across the meter.

The dotted line OP close to the output valves in Fig. 3 is simply to show the point at which Fig. 5 (the PX4 output stage and power pack) commences, and is only for the benefit of those who wish to experiment with this alternative.

The actual construction is fairly simple. First of all a wooden plinth  $23\frac{1}{2}$  in. by 11 in. by  $1\frac{3}{8}$  in. deep must be made. Battens  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide by  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick can be used for the sides and a piece of 7 mm. ply for the top which can be nailed or screwed on. Over the whole of this a sheet of 22 gauge aluminium must be fixed by small countersunk head wood screws. Then mark off and drill the panel, which can either be of 7 mm. oak-faced ply or of  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. ebonite. We used oak ply and polished it with clear polish made from bleached shellac and methylated spirits. The dimensions of the dial aperture are supplied with the Polar Arcuate drive, and the other holes must be drilled

difficulties; clearance holes for the component fixing screws must be drilled in the aluminium and the components held by ordinary wood screws, except in the case of the mains transformer, which must be bolted down by 4 B.A. screws passing right through the chassis top.

Positions for the sub-baseboard components will suggest themselves as the wiring is proceeded with. The condensers, H.F. choke, etc., can either be screwed to the underside of the baseboard or to the side of the plinth, whichever is most convenient, and the resistances can be suspended in the wiring itself. There is nothing really intricate about this sub-layout; one only need remember to keep grid circuits to themselves and anode and raw A.C. wiring likewise.

It is better to use Glazite inserted in insulated sleeving for all wires that pass through the aluminium facing. The double-insulation minimises any risk of an accidental short circuit which may be caused by tight wires rubbing against the aluminium which, of course, is at earth potential.

Other necessary precautions are to use bare wire in metal shielded tubing for the lead from the grid of the MHD4 to the centre tap of R7 and also for the lead between the gramophone side of S1 to the pick-up terminal.

The aerial and earth, the pick-up and loudspeaker plugs can be mounted on three separate pieces of ebonite screwed to the back of the plinth with the sockets projecting through clearance holes drilled in the wood at appropriate distances apart and so as to register with the centre distances chosen for the ebonite mounting holes.

When the wiring is completed and the mains transformer tapping adjusted to the voltage of the house supply, the mains lead can be connected to the insulated plug originally used, the aerial, earth, pick-up and loudspeaker leads connected and the set switched on.

Then there is only one other adjustment to be made: that of ganging the variable condenser block so that each section remains in step throughout the tuning range. This is done as follows. First tune in a station of relatively low wavelength, say, for example, the London National transmitter, which has a wavelength of 261.1 metres. The correct tuning-point will be shown when the millimeter needle is at its lowest reading. Then with an insulated screwdriver (one can easily be made from a bone knitting needle, shortened and filed flat at one end) adjust the trimming condenser on C1, that is the condenser furthest away from the panel, so that the maximum signal is obtained as shown by the lowest reading obtainable on the meter. Then adjust the trimmers on C2 and C3 respectively in the same way. These adjustments, especially that to C3, will have to be carefully made as a fraction of a turn of the trimmer screws is sufficient to reduce the signal considerably.

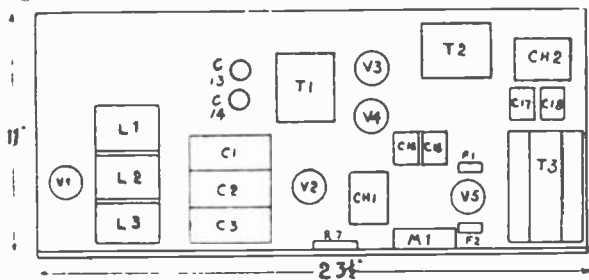


FIG. 4. The arrangement of components on the baseboard.

N.B.—C16 is composed of two 2 mfd. condensers in parallel. One 4 mfd. can, of course, be used.

When this has been successfully accomplished, tune in any station at about 200 metres or just above and repeat the whole process, this time commencing with C3 (nearest panel). During the trimming operation do not retune, but if it is found that the signal is still increasing when the trimmer on C3 has reached its limit, then screw in the trimmers on C2 and C1 by one complete turn each, retune for maximum signal and adjust the trimmer on C3 again. If this is carried out correctly trimming will not again be necessary unless the H.F. valve is changed or the voltages altered. If a new aerial is fixed up then retrimming will be necessary in that case too.

With a good aerial and earth system at least twenty transmissions are receivable at very good volume levels, and the majority with outstanding quality; at any rate that is our experience with the set in South-West London.

On gramophone the Meltrope pick-up and fibre needles give adequate volume, though not, of course, the same volume as with the original Vox circuit which had two L.F. stages preceding the power stage. The Rothermel Crystal pick-up, on the other hand, gives more output than is normally required, so much so that it is necessary to work with the volume control set very low, especially when using steel needles. With Burmese Colour or Voltwood needles or round-shank fibres the input to the amplifier is reduced and the general quality noticeably improved.

List No. 1

Components required as used in Original Vox Radiogram.

- S2 :—Bulgin.
- T1 :—Varley DP6.
- T2 :—Varley or Ferranti (to suit Speaker).
- T3 :—Wearite.
- CH1, CH2 :—Wearite Type HT2.
- C14, C16, C17, C18 :—Dubilier 4 mfd.

- V3, V4 :—Mazda AC/P1 valves.
- M :—Ferranti 0-2 Millimeter (see text).
- Plugs and Sockets :—Belling Lee Shrouded. Aerial, Earth, 2 Pick-up, 2 Loudspeaker.
- Meltrope Pick-up.

New Components required in addition to above for Modified Vox Radiogram AC/P1 valves in Power Stage.

- L1, L2, L3 :—Varley Nicore Flat Gang Unit ; Type BP57.
- C1, C2, C3 :—Polar Star Minor ; 3 × 0.005 mfd. with Arcuate Drive.
- C4, C5, C6, C7, C8 :—Dubilier .1 mfd. ; Type 4503.
- C9, C11 :—Dubilier 0001 mfd. ; Type 610.
- C10 :—Dubilier Electrolytic 50 mfd. 12 volt working ; Type 3001.
- C12 :—Dubilier Mica .1 mfd. ; Type B775.
- C13 :—Dubilier Electrolytic 4 mfd. ; Type 0283.
- C15 :—Dubilier Electrolytic 50 mfd. 50 volt working ; Type 3003.
- C19, C20 :—Ferranti .05 mfd. ; Type C3c (see text).
- R1 :—Dubilier 1 Megohm.
- R2 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 30,000 ohms.
- R3 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 25,000 ohms.
- R4 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 2,000 ohms.
- R5 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 250,000 ohms.
- R6 and R12 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 1,000 ohms.
- R7 :—Centralab Radiohm (Rothermel) 250,000 ohms.
- R8 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 2,000 ohms.
- R9 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 5,000 ohms.
- R10, R11 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 5,000 ohms.
- H.F.C. :—Bulgin ; Type HF9.
- F1, F2 :—Bulgin Fuseholders ; Type F5 (for Fuses see text).
- V1 :—Mazda AC/VP1.
- V2 :—Marconi Osram MHD4.
- V5 :—Marconi U10.
- Valveholders :—Clix Chassis Mounting Type. Two 7-pin, two 5-pin, one 4-pin.
- Sheet of 22 gauge aluminium 24 in. by 11 in. :—Paroussi.

The PX4 Model

In this 5-watt version the H.F. detector and L.F. stages are similar to those of lower power receiver, the only difference being an increase in the values of the resistances R2, R4,

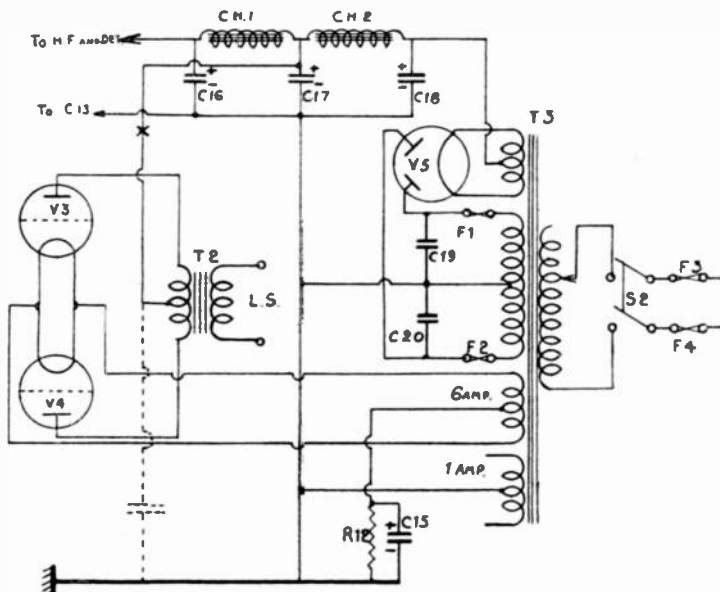


FIG. 5. The circuit diagram of the PX4 output stage and power pack.

R8 and R9, and a reduction in value for R3. The values given in the component list No 2 are only approximate and therefore the voltages will need to be checked with a voltmeter.

The dotted line OP in Fig. 3 shows quite clearly where the PX4 push-pull stage joins up with the preceding stages, so there should be no confusion about combining the two.

Now the total H.T. consumption of this valve sequence is roughly 110 ma., and since the mains transformer gives 350 volts at 120 ma. it follows that the PX4 valves will be very much over-volted unless some means of reducing the anode voltage is adopted. This can be done either by inserting a 1,000-ohm resistance at the point marked X in the H.T. lead or by using the field winding 1,000 ohms of a loudspeaker. The latter method is probably best since extra smoothing is obtained. The new Jaggard speaker or the Godfrey will function admirably in conjunction with this equipment. In each case a decoupling condenser of, say, 4 mfd. must be connected as is shown dotted in Fig. 5. A resistance of 1,000 ohms with 96 ma. flowing will obviously drop 96 volts. Adding this to the voltage drop of 27 across the Varley choke CH2, which has a resistance of 250 ohms, the total volts dropped is in the neighbourhood of 120. Even so the valves will still be over-volted a little owing to the fact that we are not taking the full 120 ma. and consequently there will be more than 350 volts available across C18. But so long as the current is kept within the 48 ma. mark one need not worry about this; a value of 400 ohms for the bias resistor R12 (Fig. 5) will probably do the trick, but it must be capable of passing the full 96 ma. without overheating.

Should there be any signs of instability in the output stage the insertion of a 100-ohm Varley Tag type resistance in each lead between the anodes of the PX4 valves and the outer terminals of the output transformer primary will put matters right. These, too, like the grid stoppers, should be wired as close to the anodes of the valves as is possible.

There is not much more which calls for special mention, except that the 4 volt 1 amp. filament winding, the 4 volt 2.5 amp. winding and the 4 volt 6 amp. winding should be used to feed the H.F. stage and the MHD4, the H.T. rectifier (MU12) and the output stages respectively. This arrangement seemingly overloads the 1 amp. winding, but the Varley transformer has good regulation and will stand it. Alternatively, the 6 amp. winding can be used for the MHD4 as well as the output stage, though this has the disadvantage of putting the heater of the MHD4 at a voltage above earth equal to the bias of the output valves and therefore at a substantially different potential from the cathode; there will thus be a stress across the insulator of the latter. The same panel and baseboard layouts as shown in Figs. 2 and 4 can be conveniently used, though it would be an advantage if the depth of the panel were increased to 9 inches instead of 8 inches as shown in Fig. 2.

#### List No. 2

Complete List of Components for New Vox Radiogram with 5-watt Power Stage.

L1, L2, L3 :—Varley Nicore Flat Gang Unit ; Type BP57.

C1, C2, C3 :—Polar Star Minor ; 3 × .0005 mfd. with Arcuate Drive.

C4, C5, C6, C7, C8 :—Dubilier .1 mfd. ; Type 4503.

C9, C11 :—Dubilier .0001 mfd. ; Type 610.

C10 :—Dubilier Electrolytic 50 mfd. 12 volt working ; Type 3001.

C12 :—Dubilier Mica .1 mfd. ; Type B775.

C13 :—Dubilier Electrolytic 4 mfd. ; Type 0283.

C14, C16 :—Dubilier Electrolytic 8 mfd. ; Type 0281.

C15 :—Dubilier Electrolytic 50 mfd. 50 volt working ; Type 3003.

C17, C18 :—Dubilier Electrolytic 8+4 mfd. ; Type 9203 E.

C19, C20 :—Ferranti .05 mfd. ; Type C3c.

R1 :—Dubilier 1 Megohm.

R2 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 50,000 ohms.

R3 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 20,000 ohms.

R4 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 15,000 ohms.

R5 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 250,000 ohms.

R6 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 1,000 ohms.

R7 :—Centralab Radiohm (Rothermel) 250,000 ohms.

R8 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 25,000 ohms.

R9 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 15,000 ohms.

R10, R11 :—Graham Farish Ohmite 5,000 ohms.

R12 :—Graham Farish Heavy Duty Ohmite 400 ohms.

S1 :—Bulgin Rotary S.P.D.T. ; Type S92.

S2 :—Bulgin D.P.D.T. ; Type S98.

H.F.C. :—Bulgin ; Type HF9.

F1, F2 :—Bulgin Fuseholders ; Type F5 (see text for Fuses).

F3, F4 :—Bulgin Twin Fuseholder with 1 amp. Fuses ; Type F14.

T1 :—Varley Push-Pull Input Transformer ; Type DP6.

T2 :—Varley or Ferranti Push-Pull Output Transformer to suit Speaker.

T3 :—Varley Mains Transformer ; Type EP33, 350-0-350v., 120 ma. ; 2-0-2v., 2.5 amps. ; 2-0-2v., 6 amps. ; 2-0-2v., 1 amp.

CH1 :—Varley ; Type DP23 ; 20H, 50 ma.

CH2 :—Varley ; Type DP10 ; 20H, 100 ma.

M :—Ferranti 0-15 Flush Mounting Milliameter.

V1 :—Mazda AC/VP1.

V2 :—Marconi-Osram MHD4.

V3, V4 :—Marconi-Osram PX4.

V5 :—Marconi Osram MU12.

Valveholders :—Clix Chassis Mounting Type. Two 7-pin, three 4-pin.

Plugs and Sockets :—Belling and Lee Shrouded ; Aerial, Earth, 2 Pick-up, 2 Loudspeaker.

Sheet of 22 gauge Aluminium 24 in. by 11 in. :—Paroussi.

Meltrope or Rothermel Brush Piezo De Luxe Pick-up.

Garrard Induction Motor, Type 201.

Jaggard or Godfrey Speaker with 1,000-ohm field.

## GRAMOPHONES, ACOUSTIC AND RADIO SPECIAL OFFER

From time to time we have directed attention towards that useful handbook "Gramophones, Acoustic and Radio." At the time the book was produced indications were to the effect that there would be a considerable demand for it. So there was; in fact, the demand exceeded our most sanguine expectations. Lately, however, orders have not been so numerous.

As an incentive we are offering a limited number of copies of "Gramophones, Acoustic and Radio" to readers of "The Gramophone" at the ridiculously low price of 7d. post free. This offer will remain open until 500 copies have been sold. So send in your applications early to "The Gramophone," 10a Soho Square, London, W.1. The inducement will not be repeated.

# THE GRAMOPHONE AS SINGING TEACHER

by PERCY COLSON

AM not particularly fond of the innumerable mechanical aids to happiness with which we are blessed—or cursed—nowadays. Life would be infinitely more peaceful if a good half of them were abolished. Fancy being once again able to enjoy strolling in the West End without risking one's life; to find real country within half an hour of London; not to be at the constant mercy of the telephone and obliged to invent lies at a moment's notice, and, above all, not to be inflicted with the sound of the wireless from morning to night! I can quite understand its value in remote country places where entertainments are few, and it doubtless makes existence more cheerful for chronic invalids. Its possibilities are, indeed, infinite, but until it has been improved beyond all recognition, "listening in" will continue to be unsatisfactory to the sensitive musical ear.

But the gramophone is quite another matter. To me it is one of the most fascinating and valuable inventions of the age. The mere fact that it preserves for future generations such lovely sounds as the voices of Melba or Caruso and those of world-famous personalities, renders it a thing unique, and, so far, its reproduction of the voice is its most satisfactory feature. In this respect it is incomparably superior to the wireless, for in the latter you are at the mercy of the passing moment. Your singer may not, and very often is not, at his or her best, or the transmission may be imperfect. With the gramophone you are subject to none of these disadvantages. A famous singer does not record if he is not in good voice, and even then, he makes the record again and again until he and the experts are completely satisfied with the result. A striking example of this is afforded by Madame Galli-Curci. Her musical reputation in this country was made by her records. In the flesh she was anything but satisfactory.

In this lies the immense value of the gramophone as a singing teacher. There should be a first-rate gramophone and a collection of the best singers' records in every singing master's studio.

Professors of singing—even the best of them—cannot, as a rule, show their pupils exactly how the music with which they are struggling ought to sound, especially when the pupil is of the opposite sex. The professor is often elderly; perhaps he has never had much voice, or as, alas, is so frequently the case, he has taken to teaching because he has been unsuccessful on the operatic stage or concert platform. He can—sometimes—show the pupil how to produce his voice, where to breathe, interpretation, and so on, and recommend him to go and hear such and such a singer. And that is all. The gramophone enables him to give a practical illustration of what should be the result of his counsels.

Supposing, for instance, that the budding *prima donna* is learning the rôle of Gilda in *Rigoletto*. The teacher can put on the old but still admirable record of Melba in *Caro Nome*, saying: "Listen, this is how it ought to sound." What a salutary lesson!—calculated, one would imagine, to cause the vanity of even the most conceited soprano to wilt. What tenor could fail to profit from hearing the exquisitely smooth and velvety production of Tito Schipa or Gigli? If the teacher wishes to impress on his pupil the importance of breath control, there are the records of that incomparable baritone the late Battistini to prove that even though *ars longa est*, breath can be still longer—no pun intended! Then there are Chaliapine's records to teach him how to express in a phrase the depths of tragedy or the most biting irony.

One can, in fact, command the instant advice of all the greatest singers in the world.

In England, however, there are few openings on the operatic stage for the young singer, but the gramophone is equally useful to those studying other branches of the art, particularly the difficult art of *lieder* singing. Elena Gerhardt has made many records of Brahms and Schubert. The delightful Elisabeth Schumann is a joy to hear in Mozart—how beautifully she sings Richard Strauss's *Ständchen*!—and John McCormack, whom many people associate chiefly with Irish songs, exhibits his faultless method in every other style of music.

The Gramophone Company has earned the eternal gratitude of *lieder* singers by issuing under the auspices of the Hugo Wolf Society the three volumes of Wolf's songs, all sung by the most famous singers of *lieder*, including Elena Gerhardt, who sings the whole of Book I, John McCormack, Friedrich Schorr, Alexander Kipnis and Gerhard Hüsch, accompanied by those great accompanists and musicians, Coenraad V. Bos and Edwin Schneider. There is a fourth volume already issued. As Ernest Newman says, "The Hugo Wolf Society will do more for Wolf in five years than we critics could do in a century."

Perhaps even more useful to students will be the records of Schubert's *Die Winterreise* (Winter Journey). For every lover of Wolf there are probably ten lovers of Schubert, and the cycle is superbly sung by Gerhard Hüsch, who as a *lieder* singer has few rivals. It is one of the most difficult of works to sing and is known in England chiefly by one of its songs, *Der Lindenbaum*, which is often sung as a separate number. These two works alone are an education in *lieder* singing.

How patient are all these great ones! They will sing the same song over and over again for you until you have—if your technical equipment is equal to the demand—mastered it. How much easier, too, than in the old days, when if you were studying any particular song and wanted to hear an authoritative interpretation of it, you had to search the concert announcements until some famous singer happened to include it in his programme. No waiting, and very little expense, if you have had the sense to invest in a good gramophone.

The gramophone is not kind to mediocrities, and it will be quite ruthless in its dealings with ephemeral reputations. In days to come the old will no longer be able to bore the young by telling them that there are no longer any singers to compare with those that flourished in *their* youth. "Ah! you should have heard so-and-so." "Well, let's get one of his records and see," youth will answer.

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# COLLECTORS' CORNER

by P. G. HURST

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

IT is satisfactory to find that, so far from the yield of fresh "collectors' specimens" petering out, as was foretold and even stated as a fact in the early days of "C.C.," it appears that with wider knowledge and publicity we touch fresh levels of interest and rarity. Even the very fact of the appearance of parasitic growths and would-be imitators may be taken as an indication of the hold that the cult of the early historical record has upon the imagination of our friends. Only the other day a very highly cultured amateur music-lover, who has literally and actually travelled Europe in search of new operatic experiences, confessed to me that of all the pursuits that have captured his fancy, none has so completely absorbed him as this record-collecting business, even though his personal achievements in this field had not amounted to anything very much.

But mark what happened. I always assure despairing collectors that if they want records badly enough, nothing will prevent their getting them; and surely enough in this very case there landed right at his feet one of those collections which some of us might dream about as a saint dreams of heaven.

I made a special journey to go and see it, and it was worth it; for it contained much that most of us have never seen and may never see. Almost the first thing that met my eyes was the G. & T. *L'Heure Exquise* by **Maurel**; this, of course, I had to hear before proceeding further: it did not do justice to the great man, but the voice was his, and to those who, like myself, have heard his exquisite rendering of this song, the record is priceless. It was possible to feel something of the intensity and earnestness of the man, without which he never opened his mouth to sing. What an *artist* Maurel was! I was reminded of "Mr. B." when he told me how, in the course of a lesson, Maurel gripped him closely to his side, so that he might both see every movement of the throat and mouth, and feel every movement of the body, while he sang Tosti's *Ninon* from beginning to end. Something to remember, indeed! My collecting friend had previously mentioned, with a nonchalance that I could not help admiring, that there was a *Non piu andrai*, by **Santley**, in the collection, but unfortunately a Black Label copy. This was my next objective; and it took me just three seconds to detect the Red Label underneath, and I contemplated in silence my first vision of this almost apocryphal rarity. Was I disappointed when I at last heard this record played? I was not. A more perfect rendering could not be imagined, and the recording was excellent. There was none of the "stunting" or exaggeration for which *Non piu andrai* is too often a vehicle, none of the breakneck speed which too often blurs and jumbles the rhythm: it was just Santley singing Mozart; and, like Toscanini's conducting, it was not possible to put one's finger on this or that, and say that here or there is where the artist was so absolutely right. But there was just that difference between the really great singer and the merely good

one, which expresses itself in an all-embracing *legato*, a serene, calm, and confident manner which at once brings back to the memory the genial smile and easy manner which were so characteristic of him. And yet the powers that were allowed, presumably, this classic to be lost for ever; well, the public's loss is the collector's gain—or one collector's, at any rate.

Next I came upon a nice batch of **Boronats**, though not the *Puritani* and *Last Rose of Summer*, which I value so highly, nor the *Zabava* or *Senza Amore*, which I envy Mr. Garnett; but there was the *Caro Nome*, the *Sempre libera*, and the *Cavatina* in *The Pearl Fishers*. I heard for the first time *The Fairy Lullaby* by **Louise Dale**, the wife of **Hamilton Earle**, both of whose records are Black Label, but are prized by English collectors above most Red Labels. This record is another gem, and it is amazing that G. & T. did not require more of her. For the third month in succession I have to mention the name of **Guerrina Fabbri**: the first time to say that her records were apparently unknown; the second to say that I had heard of a copy in Rome; but now comes the disclosure that in this same collection are two records by the last *coloratura* contralto before *Supervia*. She arrived at Covent Garden in 1887, singing Amneris in *Aida*, and *La Cenerentola*; and in view of the lukewarm reception given her in the latter rôle by such critics as I have read, it is interesting to hear her for ourselves, as it helps us to compare the standards of forty odd years ago with our own. Let me say at once that the records are magnificent—one being the *Rondo* in *La Cenerentola*, and the other the *Cavatina* in *Romeo e Giuletta*. Frankly, I think that Fabbri was technically a sounder singer than *Supervia*, as, to my untrained ear, there is none of that gap between the registers which reminds me of a train passing over points, which is characteristic of the present exponent, but which with her irresistible personality is all part of the fun. Fabbri's *coloratura* is faultless—but they studied in those days, and critics were probably less surprised to find perfection than would be the case to-day. But, talking of studying, there is a footnote in Mr. Toye's book on Rossini which sheds a flood of light upon what was considered necessary for a would-be singer to learn in that composer's day, which would certainly have alarmed the later Victorian period; while as to the present day, unless our singers have particularly sound constitutions, it might be dangerous even to tell them about it!

There were three or four **Parkinas**—delightful things all of them, especially *The Little Grey Linnet*, though *La Fée aux Chansons* is my favourite. I parted with a copy of this some time ago, to my present regret, as I cannot even remember what I got for it!

My recollections of this wonderful collection cover a great many more or less stock rarities, such as **Suzanne Adams**, **de Lucia**, **Melba**, **Caruso**, **Ancona**, and an album full of beautiful *Fonotipias* of the earliest pressings, mostly **Bonci**, some of the most glorious records of the most glorious singing that a collector can wish: there was also a **Maurel** in this album. We may welcome this "new" collection as a very real addition to our archives.



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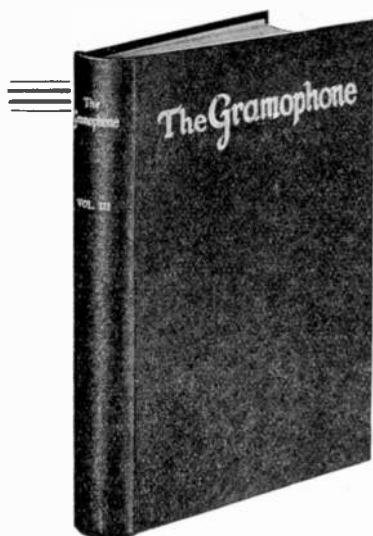
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My very highly respected co-contributor, Mr. Little, refers this month to **Conchita Supervia's tremolo** as though there were no doubt about it. He is not aware, of course, of the strains and stresses to which I have been subject since I first tackled the subject of *tremolo* versus *vibrato* some months ago. I have recently emerged breathless and somewhat dishevelled, but still with a gleam in my eye, from a long discussion with a Dutch correspondent who is something of a purist in musical matters, and who has attacked Sir Thomas Beecham's operatic conducting in such blistering terms that I think even that redoubtable baronet would feel positively nervous next time he sat in front of a microphone at Covent Garden if he only knew! However, on the subject of *tremolo* I stumbled upon a formula which my Dutch friend joyfully accepted as a *modus vivendi*: that was, that if we like a singer, we call it *vibrato*, but if we don't, we call it *tremolo*. All the same, a *vibrato* is a sign of strength and a *tremolo* is a sign of weakness; so if Mr. Little will concede to Conchita a *vibrato* we will say no more about it.

The gramophone as a means of revealing or suppressing a *tremolo* (I mean *tremolo* this time) is a factor to be seriously considered, especially in view of the assurance I have recently had from a correspondent abroad that a certain once-famous soprano, now remarkable only for her *tremolo*, has recently made some records which show no trace of it! The method, according to this correspondent, is to sing *pianissimo* and trust to the amplifier. He points out, however, that it sometimes happens the other way, and instances **Giannini** and **Basiola**, who are made (sometimes, I suppose) to appear less excellent than they are in reality.

In a recent number of the New York magazine *Stage* appears a positively frightening article which shows how a faulty note is actually amputated with a knife or similar instrument, and replaced with a proper one. True, this was a talking film; and the same article points out that when we admire the serene facial expressions of film singers while taking difficult notes, we must not be deceived into thinking that they have discovered something that the real singers didn't know. They are only pretending to sing. The singing is done under "proper" acoustical conditions, whatever they may be—perhaps the bathroom!

But to return for a moment to the business of record collecting, the Russian parcel to which I referred last month turned up trumps. **Mey-Figner's** 23123 *The Night*, by **Rubinstein**, is as exquisite as a slight acquaintance with the work of this supreme artist would lead one to expect. I found her name on a London opera prospectus of about 1890, but apparently her appearance did not materialise. Her photograph, in a peasant costume, appears in the 1903 celebrity catalogue, and her records are real treasures, and exceedingly rare.

Another was one by her husband, **M. Figner**, being 22596, *Sicilienne, Cavalleria Rusticana*. I think the taste for **M. Figner** must probably be acquired, and it is not difficult to see why his appearance at Covent Garden in 1887 evoked little enthusiasm, as he hardly carried enough guns for so large a theatre. But at the same time it is equally clearly discernible why he was picked as the tenor for the Jubilee State Concert, because what he lacked in dynamics he fully made up in sweetness and taste, while the vocal stream was steady and perfectly produced. He makes no attempt to achieve a *tour de force* with his *Sicilienne*, in the manner of **de Lucia**, who sings the whole of the conclusion on a single breath, but nevertheless he impresses us with the feeling that his less showy method demands an even greater degree of technique.

I have it on Mr. Gaisberg's authority that the **Figners** actually made the very first celebrity records—in Russia, of course; and this was probably before introduction of the Red Label, which was the invention of Mr. A. Michaelis, the manager of the Milan branch. These **Figner** records, and perhaps the **Vialtzevas** and **Chaliapins**, were made in the

winter of 1900–1901; but there is evidence that no 10-inch discs were actually on sale until November 1901.

An unusually interesting rarity in this parcel was 22823, *Veau d'Or* by **Chaliapin**, with large flush label and plain back, a Moscow record, of the same series as those shown in "R.M." The rendering is indifferent, not to say slovenly, but as only one other example of this series exists, to the best of my knowledge, it is valuable evidence that **Chaliapin's** voice was, in 1900, a true bass.

G. L. S. (Harlesden) is going ahead again; not content with the truly lordly haul reported here in June, he now adds **Boninsegna's** 53375 *D'amor sull' ali rosée* in *Il Trovatore*; 53419 *Bolero, I Vespri Siciliani* by the same singer; **Donalda's** *Vedrai Carino*; the exquisite though abbreviated *Barbiere* trio by **Huguet, de Lucia**, and **Pini-Corsi**; 052135 *Manca un foglio*, in *Il Barbiere*, by **Pini-Corsi**, not from the English catalogue, surely, and a real historical gem; the *Porter Song* by **Francisco**, a splendid piece of work; and some 7-inch **Berliners** and **Zonophones** by old favourites. G. L. S. adds to the historical scope of "C.C." by quoting from a book (unnamed) published in 1900, as follows: "The voice of **Nicolini** still sings, although the singer himself is dead."\* From the context it appears that a record was made in Paris in the studio of one **Lieut. Bettini**. I should imagine that one way of testing the authenticity of a record by **Nicolini** would be by the very grievous character of the singing, since even as long ago as 1880 the critics were finding his almost complete lack of control over his once fine organ well-nigh intolerable; and by 1884 he had practically ceased to sing, his place at the opera being taken by **Francesco Marconi**. In spite of the fact, however, that the critics hated **Nicolini** with a bitter (and possibly Victorian) hatred, I have it from the lips of a contemporary musician and artist that he was always her favourite tenor, and this dates from his latter, and worst, days! Perplexing, is it not?

**R. B.** (Milan) has negotiated a copy of the *Bohème* quartet on the 13½-inch **Fonotopia**, which is also a much prized specimen in my own collection. Singing and recording are excellent; and with such a cast as **Stehle, Camporelli, Garbin** and **Sanmarco**, the performance ranks beside that of the **Caruso-Farrar-Scotti-Viafora** combination, with the additional advantage of being uncut, and carried to the end of the act.

**L. R.** (Zandvoort) is able to reassure us that the **Navarrini** who recorded for **Fonotopia** is undoubtedly the famous *basso*, himself and none other, a mutual friend and brother artist having indentified the portrait in an old **Fonotopia** catalogue. So far, so good: but who was the **Navarrini** who sang only minor rôles at Covent Garden in 1908? Can anybody supply his Christian name? Collectors on the Continent are getting restive under the implication that their idol may have had this dubious page in his history.

Collectors will wish to join me in thanking The Gramophone Company for having taken a deal of trouble in investigating a few knotty points about early issues. It will be remembered that I called attention to a record by **Ancona** of *Il Sogno* in *Otello* numbered 52073 and apparently recorded in London, whereas the issue known to collectors was recorded in Milan and of a later numerical series. The Company have now traced three more London records of the 52073 series, namely 52072 *Mattinata* (Tosti), 52074 *Lucia (Ballade)*, and 3-32180 *Chanson de l'Adieu* (Tosti); and they add thereto the same *Prologo* and *Credo* which we identify with the Milan issue, together with 052076 *Serenade, Don Juan*.

I believe it is possible that the *Prologo* and *Credo* were re-recorded in Milan on the same catalogue numbers, followed by a "Z"; but I think I am correct in saying that none of these London records were issued, and that my own copy "slipped out," as the Gramophone Company suggest was the case with the two Red Label **G. & T. Bisphams** owned respectively by Mr. Garnett and myself.

\* **Nicolini** died in 1898.

## CORRESPONDENCE AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY REPORTS

*De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum.*

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

Echo

*To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.*

The recent correspondence about "pre-echoes" of certain recorded notes has interested me, particularly as I have observed the phenomenon in two piano records. A "pre-echo" of the opening chord of Fischer's playing of the Bach-Busoni "Prelude and Fugue in E flat" (H.M.V. DB1991-2) can be fairly easily heard (on my electric reproducer, at least). A similar effect occurs on the first side of H.M.V. D1065—Moiseivitch playing Chopin's "Scherzo, Op. 31"—in the short pause immediately before each of no fewer than eight heavy chords, four within  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. from the beginning and the other four at about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in. There is also a very faint, but definite, "pre-echo" about 1 in. from the end of the same side.

Is it possible that the effect here and on the Bach-Busoni disc is due merely to the pianist lightly touching the notes of each chord before he comes down on them heavily? This explanation seems unlikely, as one would not expect pianists with the technique of Fischer or Moiseivitch to need such an aid to the accurate striking of chords; though I should welcome a more authoritative view than my own on this point.

An interesting fact is that four of the same heavy chords occur about half-way through the second side of the Moiseivitch record with no sign whatever of a "pre-echo"; and, similarly, the second side of the Fischer record D1991 opens with as loud a chord as does the first side, but is preceded by only a pure silence.

Simla, India.

VICTOR HODGSON.

*To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.*

I have read with considerable interest the conclusions drawn regarding the "pre-echo" effect on certain records. Upon analysing facts as they stand, is it to be considered possible that before a sound is uttered or played by an artist it is recorded and called a "pre-echo," which in purpose is the reverse of an echo? I am positive that Mr. Wilson of your technical staff would not support this theory. In fact, I am ready to say that when we readers have done suggesting the cause of this phenomenal and displeasing effect, he will metaphorically "drop a bomb" and explode the affair, giving us good technical details.

Firstly, it will be noticed that there is usually a definite time lag between the first audible sound and the note or combination of notes proper. Is not that time lag the time taken to travel through one complete circle? The proof is to watch the record label for the duplication of that sound. One naturally deduces that in recording the stylus on a peak of electrical energy has given rise to considerable amplitude—sufficient in fact to disturb the wall formation of the previous groove. Hence a slight portion of the fundamental and its associate harmonics are impressed in that groove, an example being "La Bohème," "Non sono in vena," from the complete recording by La Scala (H.M.V. C1515, side 5); this fault is noticeable before a powerful soprano note. Another is Lawrence Tibbett singing "Lover, come back to me": in singing those words at the end of the record, the word "lover" is heard faintly prior to the intended word. Both records show this defect with both fibre and steel needles. The former example is also an example of "livening" (when the grooves appear to go in pairs, apparently when in recording the blank wax, while revolving normally and also moving laterally to make the grooves, the lateral movement is inter-

mittent yet of definite periodicity). This latter defect will bring certain grooves much nearer together than is normally the case. This can give rise to the first defect of one groove infringing the previous one.

Take the converse of this theory. If you play a record that has a sudden loud note of a percussive nature (i.e., "The Barber of Seville" Overture, H.M.V. D1835) with a badly sharpened fibre needle giving a large contact with the groove, it will give a "pre-echo" effect because it takes a minute portion of the powerful sound-waves in the following groove.

May I suggest that where a record containing a "pre-echo," as it is termed, is inaudible on certain instruments yet apparent on others, one instrument may reproduce considerable surface noise, thus obliterating the weaker "pre-echo." On another instrument that has a treble response that cuts off rather sharply at 4,000 l.p.s. with little surface noise the "pre-echo" is then apparent.

In the case of a record having "pre-echo" and a duplicate not having it. Well, if, as I understand, they record three "masters" for each recording that is to be made, it is quite feasible that one master is immune from this defect, while another may contain it. During the process from master-record to matrix, from matrix to actual record as a whole, it is quite likely to have a batch of records of the same recording yet assorted in "pre-echo."

Another type of fault that I do not think occurs frequently is that which is heard before the slow opening bars of "Tannhäuser" Overture, H.M.V. C2184-5. There is faintly heard some pizzicato string-playing in a different key that bears no relation whatever to the overture. So it can hardly be said that a section of the orchestra was just touching up a few phrases before commencing.

I hope this letter will be of some interest, as some people are content to call the "pre-echo" something phenomenal when it is, I consider, a little unfortunate when gauging the decibel value of a certain note or combination of notes in recording.

Lincoln.

T. H. W. H. HARRAN.

## Conductor v. Composer

*To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.*

With regard to the "Conductor v. Composer" essays, the winning entries of which I have just read. I think the ideal lies somewhere between the two, but, as is usual, the two extremes have been taken, excepting, perhaps, the admirable contribution of "Mr. X."

To quote Mr. A. L. Baeharach in *The Musical Companion*: "Music is not a science, but an art; in music an instant of true appreciation and perception is worth an age of learning and lore." Surely, then, we must allow the conductor certain scope for this insight into the composer's desires. This, it seems reasonable to suppose, cannot be done by sticking to the composer's expression marks as though they were "tram lines" and a departure from them would wreck the whole rendering.

Again, why should we suppose that a conductor has given a finished performance of a work at his first public performance? Is it not possible that even while that performance is taking place, some new vision, more "live" insight into the meaning of the composer should strike him? Why, then, if that new vision illumines the work to a greater degree, should he not

use it? There are several ways of arriving at great truths in a number of cases, and this, I think, applies more to music than anything else. A rendering which strikes me as being the exact interpretation of a composer's meaning may strike another hearer as sheer row, while that which appeals to him is completely out of the pale as far as I am concerned. The same *impression* may be given to two different people in two entirely different ways.

I know that from a conductor's point of view this leaves a dangerous loophole, and the possibilities of distortion, using the above as an excuse, are great, but that applies in almost every attitude we take. Those who desire to distort will do so, come what may.

It is left to the true artist to see the composer's meaning and to render the work as *he* sees it, not as other people see it, nor yet as he thinks other people ought to see it.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking you for the prompt delivery of the bound copy of Volume XII of THE GRAMOPHONE; and congratulations on the new cover!

Ilkeston, Derbyshire.

RAY J. BEAL.

### A Schubert Song Society?

*To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.*

Thanks for the splendid article on Volume Four of the Hugo Wolf Society, as a result of which I am enjoying in anticipation the records which will arrive at the end of this month. It is due entirely to THE GRAMOPHONE that I am now an ardent Wolfian. I think it was "P. L." who converted me by his splendid review of Volume Two of the Society. I had known only one Wolf song prior to the arrival of Volume Two—the "Epiphany"—and how much a better job does Hüsch make of that song than Schlusnus! I waited in vain for a similar article on Volume Three, but the article on Volume Four has made up for that omission. Although I am very keen on Wolf's songs, it is the songs of Schubert that hold a closer place in my affections. I was delighted to hear that Herr Hüsch has recorded the "Schöne Müllerin"—I had been hoping he would do this but had thought that such a joy would not be for me. What angels the Gramophone Company are turning out to be! Is it to Mr. Walter Legge that we owe our gratitude? Perhaps at some future date Herr Hüsch and Herr Müller will further place us in their gratitude by recording the "Schwanengesang." My set, sung by Herr Hans Duhan, could be improved on all round in comparison with recent Society issues. The actual recording is not as good as we are accustomed to nowadays and, although I am not qualified to speak on this subject, I think Herr Hüsch would make a better job of the cycle than Herr Duhan. Take the "Ständchen," for instance: Duhan gives a straightforward but rather heavy rendering of this song. It lacks the urgency and feeling it should receive. You have only to compare Duhan's rendering with John McCormack's (the 12-inch one)—despite those English words—to know what I mean.

But the *raison d'être* for this letter is a plea for the Gramophone Company to earmark as their next Society issue a Schubert Song Society. If the Societies are to remain an institution it will augur well for their future if at this stage they achieve a measure of general popularity; and what society will appeal more to the general mass of people than a Schubert Song Society. The Schubert sentiment has been fostered in the public at large by talkies and through the years by "Lilac Time"—so that the ordinary Peter Dawson-Gracie Fields type of gramophile will prick up his or her ears at the mention of a Schubert Album. I have not the time to look up my back numbers, but I think I am right in saying that Mr. Mackenzie mentioned the desirability of a Schubert Song Society some time ago. One has only to read Mr. Richard Capel's invaluable book to see what a host of attractive songs that are yet to be recorded. And what a galaxy of singers who record for the Gramophone Company, who

would, presumably, be available to the Society! Schumann, Gerhardt, Hüsch, Kipnis, McCormack—all types of voices—and perhaps Maria Ivogun, who has made an exquisite folk-song record. Can any kind reader supply the words of these four German folk-songs?

Wellington, N.Z.

E. McSHENY.

### The New Cover

*To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.*

Why, oh why, this horrible change in the cover of THE GRAMOPHONE? The only advantage in change is when it is for the better—at least that is my view as an unrepentant B.C. Tory.

The old cover was, at any rate, fairly cheerful and distinctive, but the new gloomy cover has the appearance of a microscopic enlargement of a morbid disease of a cockroach.

Putney, S.W.15.

JOHN A. BEAUMONT.

*To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.*

May I congratulate you on your new cover design and colouring. Although the old one was equally tasteful, a change, after a certain time, is always welcome.

Westcliff-on-Sea.

S. I. ROSEN.

### Favours and Faults

*To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.*

With your permission, I would like to be allowed to make a few observations on the comments of Mr. P. Wilson in his department, "Favours and Faults," in the June issue, in which he severely criticizes Mr. P. G. Hurst's stand on acoustic *v.* electric recording.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Hurst has reached his conclusions after having heard many famous artists in person and having made many intimate comparisons between their actual voices and the reproductions of them.

Unless we are to be led entirely astray by the insidious falsification and syrupy, synthetic smoothness born of radio methods, it seems to me that the only correct analysis of voice reproduction should be obtained by determining just how closely the reproduced voice simulates the original voice in every particular, timbre, shading and volume.

I have witnessed many test demonstrations in which an artist stood and sang in direct comparison with his or her reproduced voice as it came from a laboratory standardised phonograph, and which was so convincingly real that it was absolutely impossible for the audience to distinguish the actual voice from the re-creation. I have also heard this test made with various solo instruments with complete success.

Needless to say, these records were made acoustically by recording equipment which corresponded properly to the reproducing mechanism and was made possible only after long continued expenditure of time and money.

I have many of the records used by several of these artists in these tone tests, and also various electrically recorded discs by the same artists both of this and other manufacture. The point I wish to make is that invariably the electric records reveal the introduction of extraneous sounds and artificial timbre which would definitely preclude the possibility of successful comparison with the artist.

The established fact to remember is that only acoustic records played acoustically have ever been able to withstand the test of public comparison with the artist!

If any further evidence should be required as to the shortcomings of present electrical recording, we have only to turn a few pages to Mr. Henry R. Hubbard's article in the same issue in which he calls attention to the presence of distortion and extraneous sounds in even the latest records when played upon a highly sensitive instrument.

It stands to reason that the fewer the steps between the originating voice and the reproduction of it, the fewer the opportunities for distortion.

The present lack of a definite standard of reproduction technique upon the part of the record manufacturers themselves, is confession enough that there is no precision reproduction either possible or apparently desirable with electric methods.

It is a fact that the most commonplace singers *do* make reputations for themselves by dint of their close-up radio microphone coddling acts, aided and abetted by the men in the control room. Then, in response to public demand, the record manufacturers *do* perpetuate the crime on records and one need not go very far through the lists in the last issue to find examples!

It seems to me that the chief influence of radio methods on recording has been the substitution of frequency charts and meters for the human ear in determining the naturalness of results. While this procedure adds to human knowledge and provides data for future research, recordings are still made solely to listen to and enjoy and not for the purpose of furnishing beautiful graphs and charts for the engineers to look at.

I will never concede that any mechanical method of appraisal can replace the *musically* trained ear as a means of judging the quality of musical reproduction, and I will never concede any honest standard other than direct comparison with the original performance.

The gramophone needs more critical listeners with courage to speak up as Mr. Hurst has, and the business of recording needs more engineers who realise that their true function is to reproduce the original music and not to attempt improvements or establish a new art.

Syracuse, N.Y., U.S.A.

WALTER L. WELCH.

*To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.*

In his July letter, Mr. P. G. Hurst remarks that he is entitled to object when he finds musical truth misrepresented, even if he cannot put his finger on the exact gadget at fault. I quite agree; but it was surely indiscreet of him to say so with his finger actually on the scientist's symbols and equations at the time. He should not touch at random. Two months before, he had put his finger on the recording studio, plant and personnel. This is asking for a rap on the knuckles.

Many non-scientific folk share a common failing, the idea that a scientist is a figure of fun. I did not suspect P. G. H. of this weakness. Science and an ear for music are not incompatible. Einstein is a fine violinist; Borodin was a chemist. For the years of pleasure that his records have given him, Mr. Hurst owes a debt to science. It is base ingratitude on his part to disparage the labours of those who are successfully working to replace an empirical by an exact science of recording, i.e., one that is based on measurement. It is libel to suggest that they dress up voices with overtones and resonances and create synthetic stars. It is libelling many of your readers when Mr. Hurst infers that all share his own inability to understand Mr. Wilson.

Like most non-scientists who try to speak technically on gramophone problems, Mr. Hurst thinks and expresses himself loosely. His fundamental stumbling-block is inability to distinguish clearly between the *recording* and the *reproducing* of records. Inevitably, then, he reviles the process he neither sees nor understands, i.e. recording, for the faults of the process he operates for himself or observes in operation, i.e. reproduction.

The variety of good, bad and indifferent *reproductions* that can be had from electrical recordings has nothing to do with the issue Mr. Hurst has chosen to raise. He maligns the new *recording*, so far as the singing voice is concerned. It is no support to his case to talk about the way reproduction has become commercialised and standardised. The average commercial standard of reproduction may, or may

not, be distressing, but only the finest possible standard of reproduction can be considered when the recording is on trial. If Mr. Hurst's strictures on the modern recording of vocal records mean anything at all, they mean that the electrical recordings, when reproduced at their best, are inferior to acoustic recordings when reproduced at their best because the newer ones undergo faking processes, and are therefore lacking in fidelity.

Where is the evidence on which Mr. Hurst bases this thesis? I have sought it in vain in his writings. In fact, his articles suggest that he is so engrossed in the past and so impatient with most modern singers that he is unlikely to have wasted any significant sum on electrical recordings or bothered too much about their reproduction. I am perfectly willing to go a long way with P. G. H. in worshipping the great artists of the past and some distance with him in deprecating the singing of to-day, but on the purely technical point he has raised I part company with him altogether. After all, is it likely that an old hit-or-miss system that failed to record muted strings and double basses, caricatured the organ, murdered the chorus, etc., etc., could have been superior to the modern system when it came to recording the solo voice? True, it achieved a greater measure of success here than in almost anything else, but it did not even give consistent results in different hands (e.g., compare Fonotipia recordings of Amato, Barrientos, Bonci, Destinn and Stracciari with those by H.M.V. and Columbia).

Where record-makers have gone wrong, in my opinion, since electrical recording was begun, is in having so often recorded the singing voice with too big an amplitude. This is a double handicap to those who still wish to use an acoustic gramophone. In the first place, volume control with such a machine is primitive and strictly limited, and a singing voice when too loud is unnatural. When it is too loud even with a fibre needle, acceptable reproduction is out of the question unless the listener can retire to another room. In the second place, the louder the reproduction the more essential it is for the machine to handle adequately the full range of musical frequencies; otherwise the unnaturalness is accentuated. This means, of course, that a super machine is necessary. Given a really good electrical amplifier, however, with adequate volume control, the "over-loud" records lose their terrors and often reveal unsuspected beauties.

There is a simple way to realise the technical inferiority of the older process. Live without old recordings for six months, listening only to good electrical recordings on a first-class machine. Then go back to the older records. I do not recommend this to P. G. H.; after all, I am not entirely heartless.

Iford, Essex.

H. F. V. LITTLE.

Mr. P. G. Hurst replies—

Except that Mr. Little seems to have set up a fresh row of pins for me to knock down, I can find no new points to answer, as I consider that my letter in reply to Mr. Wilson still meets the case generally.

I will, however, sum up my own position thus: that given the best possible conditions, I believe *the acoustical record is a more reliable guide to the singing voice than is the electrical record.*

Mr. Klein recognised this: Mr. Mackenzie undoubtedly does; and so does every unbiased musical observer: so why bully me?

*To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.*

I only saw Mr. Wilson's remarks in the June issue of THE GRAMOPHONE on the comparative merits of the acoustic and microphone methods of recording after reading Mr. Hurst's reply this month, and I hope it is not too late to ask you to allow me to make a few comments on this vexed subject.

I suppose practically everyone admits the superiority of the microphone over the older system as regards the recording of chorus singing: the microphone is able to gather up music which proceeds from an extended space in a way which the horn was never capable of doing. But when we come to solo voices, it is quite a different matter. Even here, if Mr. Wilson's criticism had been more discriminating, it might have been possible to agree with him. I should be prepared to admit the superiority of microphone recording of the voice *in some respects*, but not in all, and not in the most important of all—fidelity to the tone of the original voice.

What I believe to be the truth was so well expressed by the late Herman Klein that I cannot do better than quote his words. He allows that the modern records are superior in "increased clarity of tone, elimination of extraneous noises; a more accurate definition of pitch; stronger, because more effortless, enunciation of consonants; a closer sounding voice; and variations of power and volume that the microphone is capable of transmitting with almost miraculous fidelity." He admits that these are very important advantages, but he says "The conclusion which has forced itself upon me after long and close observation is that the human voice as recorded in pre-electric days was easier to hear," and he goes on to say that in his opinion—an unrivalled one, let us remember—"the older recorded voice, thinner, smaller, and apparently more distant though it sounded, was truer to the original, besides being of a nature that made its timbre easier to grasp."

Mr. Klein also mentions with satisfaction Mr. Mackenzie's often expressed preference for the older records of particular pieces as compared with the new, and says "I cannot remember a single instance in which I have been of a different opinion." So if Mr. Hurst and others of us are labouring under an illusion, as Mr. Wilson thinks, we are in good company.

Leicester.

W. M. CLAYTON.

### Eileen Joyce

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

Major Hughes suggests that a statement in my recent article on Eileen Joyce "needs certain amplification," and proceeds to prove his point by "quoting from memory"! Had he re-read the article he would have seen that I wrote: "She continued her studies with Tobias Matthay. Then there was again an odd and unexpected set-back. She arranged to return to Germany," etc. This is surely far different from Major Hughes's misquotation: "She then studied at the Matthay School, and there was another unexpected set-back."

I have too much respect and admiration for the Matthay School and method to suggest as Major Hughes writes: "it might appear from this that the School was, in some unexplained way, responsible for the set-back," and I do not think that this construction can be placed on my narrative.

Both Eileen Joyce and Major Hughes read my article in proof; it was sent to them for verification of facts and of what there was of psychology in the article. Both expressed approval and agreement, so I think it is apparent that, at that time, at least, the narrative was not ambiguous to them.

Hampstead.

W. S. MEADMORE.

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

The record reviews of Mr. Alec Robertson have always been of real value in the past and a safe guide to prospective record buyers.

Last month, however, in reviewing the new piano record of Eileen Joyce, he has not, I am afraid, taken into account the fact that an artist is entitled to her own interpretation of a work. Personally, I feel that Miss Joyce's reading of *Reflets dans l'eau*, with the water occasionally becoming disturbed

either by a sudden gust of wind or perhaps the wing tip of a bird as it skims over the surface of the water, or by a falling leaf or twig from an overhanging tree, is far more rational than Mr. Robertson's idea of a perfectly calm, unruffled sheet of water. It is, after all, reflections in the water and not a frozen lake.

It also seemed very strange that the review of this particular record should have been left over until July when it was issued and advertised in June, particularly as only one other recording of the Debussy work is to be found in the catalogues, and as new records of works of which several recordings already existed were dealt with at the usual time: the month of issue.

I am glad to see, however, that in his last sentence your reviewer refers to Miss Joyce as "a genuine musician." If only more people, particularly concert organisers and the personages of recording companies, would take this fact to heart, we would be able to hear more of her artistic readings, both in the concert-hall and through gramophone recordings. When are we to be given the chance to hear Miss Joyce in a recording of a large-scale work?

With regard to Mr. Stanley Hughes's letter of last month. If, instead of quoting from memory, he had read, carefully, Mr. Meadmore's article he would have had no occasion to misquote from it by omitting the essential word "then" from the sentence. The original sentence (before Mr. Hughes altered it) read as follows: "She continued her studies with Tobias Matthay. *Then* (my italics) there was again an odd and unexpected set-back. She arranged to return to Germany," etc., and the paragraph tells in a perfectly lucid manner what the unexpected set-back was.

I fear that the habit of superficial reading is not conducive to a full understanding and comprehension of the contents of any article.

Chester.

R. P. WILLIAMS.

Mr. Alec Robertson replies—

I am grateful to Mr. Williams for his kind appreciation of my reviews and hope that I shall do nothing to shake his confidence in me in the future.

I not only entirely agree with him that every artist is entitled to his own interpretation of a work, but welcome, as the traveller in the desert an oasis, any signs of such a personally worked-out interpretation provided that such directions as the composer has himself given are respected.

Debussy did not casually write in expression marks, and it was Miss Joyce's failure to observe these which I was criticising. And as a matter of interest, is ice ever clear enough to reflect anything?

### Schubert and Wolf

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

Replying to Mr. Brimley Rees' letter in the July GRAMOPHONE concerning the misplacement of accent on the word "Ein" in Schubert's "Krähe" and Wolf's "Wie lange schon," it seems to me that in neither of these two instances should one condemn too dogmatically. I do not agree with Mr. Rees' belief that Wolf makes the same slip as Schubert, and whilst one must admit Mr. Blom's disapproval of Schubert's "Eine," I do not think the error so grave.

In the case of "Eine Krähe," it is true that Schubert suggests "one" and not "a" crow, by placing the word "Eine" on a down-beat. But this suggestion is not over-pronounced because, first, "Krähe" is also on a down-beat; second, both words commence on C (i.e., it isn't as if "Eine" began on a higher note than "Krähe"); third, whilst there is a descent of only one semitone from C to B in "Eine," "Krähe"

descends from C right to G, and this greater descent in tone tends to emphasize "Krähe," although, as Mr. Blom says elsewhere in his "Winterreise" notes: "musical notes are not most closely related to their next-door neighbours, but with some of those which have their habitation several degrees of the scale farther off." I am not, therefore, trying to disagree with Mr. Blom's criticism, and Schubert certainly suggests "one" and not "a" crow. But I do not feel he unduly emphasizes this, and surely the fault is not such a bad one: the continual down-beats admirably convey the despondency of the wanderer's footsteps, and the suggestion of one single crow is far more sinister and malevolent than the possibility of two or three other crows lurking in the background would have been, and therefore more in keeping with the gloom of the song.

Had Schubert emphasized his "Eine" as much as Wolf did his in "Wie lange schon," the mistake would indeed have been a bad one! In the Wolf song, too, the second line, "Ach, wäre doch ein Musikus mir gut!" reads with the accent on "Mu" and not on "ein." Wolf must therefore have had a definite intention in throwing the word "ein" into such high relief. The point is, the lady's life-ambition seems to have been musicians, and until God was kind to her, she had not even been able to get one!

In conclusion, may I add my name to Mr. Rees' suggestion of more Therese and Artur Schnabel songs.

London, W.C.1.

RONALD SHEPHERD.

## Twenty-five Years of the Gramophone

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

I have had a letter from my old friend Joseph Szigeti commenting on the above article which appeared in the May issue of THE GRAMOPHONE. The following extract may serve as an addendum to the paragraph on "Veterans of Recording," and, I think, will certainly interest readers:

"I am one of the 'old guard' of recording violinists, having made my first H.M.V. records with Fred Gaisberg in 1908 or 1909, which were so successful that they 'kept' their place in the Catalogues even during the war.

"In those days Kreisler, Kubelik, Marie Hall, von Vecsey were, I believe, the only violinists who recorded regularly.

"I resumed my recording in 1926 for Columbia and I claim to have recorded the first Bach solo sonata in its entirety on any catalogue. It was the G minor; Menuhin and Busch followed with the C major and D minor and I added the A minor shortly after."

Hampstead.

W. S. MEADMORE.

## South-East London Recorded Music Society

The meetings of the Society for the past two months occurred on May 11th and June 17th respectively, when programmes prepared by our own members were given.

"Music and Literature" was the subject chosen by Mr. Townsend at the May meeting and the Society had an opportunity of examining excerpts from Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," Longus' "Daphnis and Chloe," Lenau's "Don Juan," and the Lincolnshire folk legend "Brigg Fair," the literary works which were the inspiration of Berlioz' "Queen Mab Scherzo," Ravel's "Daphnis and Chloe," Delius' "Brigg Fair," and Richard Strauss' tone poem "Don Juan."

The June evening was given by our Mr. Graham, whose programme was that of a "Promenade Concert." The entire Garden Scene of "Faust" (Gounod) and Handel's "Water Music Suite" proved exceptionally fine recordings, making the meeting an enjoyable one.

G. T. TOWNSEND, Hon. Reporting Secretary.

## The Dulwich and Forest Hill Gramophone Society

Two programmes were given at the first June meeting, on Friday, 14th. The first was given by a new member, Mr. McNair, and consisted of pre-electric recordings of "Some Famous Singers of the Past." Excessive surface noise prevented appreciation of some of the records, yet, with fibres, the Mark XA reproduced the voices amazingly well—the characteristic timbres were there, although too often one got the old effect of them being strangled somewhere down in the horn; one could appreciate the enormous advance made since those brave pioneer days, to give us to-day's perfection in recording quality. At the same time, there was a certain robust naturalness about these old voices, not without its charm, which contrasted with the more "academic" polish of present day recordings. Are we sacrificing anything to "microphone technique" and the "knob control" of the recorder?

The best of these old recordings were: Mme. Kirkby Lunn, "My Ships," quality and diction good, but first half best; recording quality varied. Mattia Battistini, "Vittoria, Vittoria" (singer's personality well captured, together with robust voice quality). And a very fine recording of Caruso singing Massenet's "Elegie."

Mr. R. Garrett took the second half of the evening with a programme divided between Alfred Cortot and Heinrich Schlusnus; the latter's fine voice and diction were heard in Beethoven's "Adelaide," "Epiphany," by Hugo Wolf, and Strauss's "Ständchen."

To be able to hear works like Schumann's "Carnival" Suite and Chopin's "Fantaisie in F minor," played by an artist like Cortot, would alone justify the existence of Gramophone Societies. The former recording is a very fine one of this work, with its fantasy and racing melodies. One can only say of the Cortot recording of the Chopin Fantasy that the piano was there in the room! Cortot gives a wonderful performance, and flashes and ripples along ecstatically. The best piano recording to date, the writer thought, until, at the second June meeting on the 28th, Simon Barer was heard playing Liszt's "Rhapsodie Espagnole." Contrasted with the previous heavy recordings, here was one which showed that at last we are getting past that disappointing falling off in the upper register, and getting the same responses we have had from the base in the magnificent pianoforte recordings of recent years. Here were notes as light as dewdrops, recorded with such crystal clarity that some thought a new make of piano was being used. It now behoves us to cease talking of piano recordings getting better and better, now that the zenith, as exemplified by these three examples, has been reached.

The chief work heard at this meeting (new issues) was the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra's version of Beethoven's "Choral" Symphony. The recording seemed to vary and was a little "thick" at times. If it left one a little disappointed, it is due to the fact that this huge achievement of Beethoven is too big for recording, and requires space for its large-scale effects: even with such an orchestra as the Philadelphia Symphony, with such perfection as present-day recording can achieve, and with such reproduction as the Society's Mark XA can give.

Thoroughly enjoyable is the London Symphony Orchestra's playing of Handel's "Firework" Music. The instrumentation is beautifully clear-cut and stereoscopic.

In the June issue I gave the "Beatrice and Benedict" Overture as being by Orchestre Symphonique of Paris. This should have been London Philharmonic Orchestra (the Orchestre Symphonique was heard in Berlioz's "Symphonique Fantastique" on the same evening).

There is only one meeting in August, on Friday, 23rd, "New Issues." Meetings commence at 8 p.m. at the Kirkdale Café, Sydenham; visitors are always welcome. Full particulars from Hon. Secretary, Mr. F. T. Dixon, 48, Chartham Road, South Norwood, S.E.25.



# Records for the Lover of Chamber Music

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

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

### VIVALDI

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### WOLF

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